Young Philosophy 2025

Conference Proceedings

Edited by Dimitris Galanis and Dimitar Ganev



Institute of Philosophy SAS, v. v. i.

80 YEARS
1946 – 2026
INSTITUTE OF PHILOSOPHY
SLOVAK ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, V.V.I.

YOUNG PHILOSOPHY 2025
CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

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2026

Young Philosophy 2025: Conference Proceedings
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Publisher:
© 2026 Institute of Philosophy SAS, v. v. i.
Bratislava, Slovakia

First edition: published in 2026

Publisher's Address:
Klemensova 19
811 09 Bratislava
Slovakia

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Language corrections: by the authors

Cover design and layout: Katalin Nun Stewart, PhD.
Institute of Philosophy SAS, v. v. i.

Cover Illustration:
Wassily Kandinsky, *Rain Landscape* (1911). Watercolor paint on paper.
Metropolitan Museum of Art. Creative Commons

ISBN 978-80-89766-14-7
EAN 9788089766147

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Introduction

This volume of the Proceedings of the Young Philosophy Conference gathers nine contributions based on papers that were presented at the 20th annual international conference for doctoral candidates and early-career researchers. The conference took place on June 17 – 18, 2025, at the Institute of Philosophy of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, v. v. i. in Bratislava, Slovakia, with the theme "The Future of Humanity: Philosophical and Interdisciplinary Approaches." It offered participants the opportunity to discuss issues related to human existence, ethical responsibility, technological change, historical progress, as well as political and social inclusion.

We would like to thank the Institute of Philosophy of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, v. v. i. for hosting and supporting the conference, as well as our keynote speaker, Ioannis Votsis, from Northeastern University London, for his valuable contribution. His lecture, titled "Rewinding the Past to the Present from the Future," explored possible future scenarios in light of technological advancements in artificial intelligence and examined how our actions today could help bring about the most positive outcomes tomorrow. We would also like to thank the organizing committee and everyone whose work contributed to the realization of the conference. We are more than grateful to the authors for preparing their papers for publication and to the reviewers for their careful evaluation. We would also like to warmly thank Katalin Nun Stewart for her efforts in preparing, typesetting, and designing the cover of this volume.

The contributions gathered here reflect the diversity of philosophical approaches represented at the conference. They bring philosophical anthropology into creative and critical dialogue with ethics, social and political philosophy, as well as the philosophy of history. We hope that the publication of these proceedings will help continue the dialogue that began at the conference and promote participation in future Young Philosophy events. In the remaining part of this short introduction, we would like to present the diversity of this dialogue, as well as how this diversity sheds light to different aspects of the central topic of the conference.

Áron Pallós reflects on human existence through the philosophy of Karl Jaspers, tracing the relationships between freedom, communication, and life in a technological society. Jonas Vanbrabant draws on *oikology* and Heidegger's thought to understand humans as beings in a condition of "intermediateness,"

and he distinguishes between the transgression of individual boundaries and the transgression of boundaries as such.

Denis Dulovics explores the effects of artificial intelligence on individual autonomy from a Kantian perspective. He explores how machine learning and recommendation algorithms can undermine the autonomy of humans as rational agents. To preserve such autonomy, the author proposes the adoption of technological practices that foster critical reflection and rational judgment. Desislava Angelova focuses on digital political communication, examining how identity rhetoric, misinformation, and echo chambers contribute to the construction of populist divisions between "Us" and "Them."

Matej Miklian presents the concept of "fluid nationality" as a means of making sense of national belonging. His contribution explores the possibilities and challenges of defining a new form of nationality that is both contingent in nature and at the same time collectively grounded. Eusebius Nkwagu addresses political power from the perspective of Emmanuel Levinas's ethics, and suggests that our encounter with the Other invites us to revisit the relationship between ontology, politics and ethics.

Markus E. Hodec provides an eschatological analysis of the relationship between the concepts of "the new" and "progress," and explores the ontological and historical implications of the identification of progressive renewal with the eschaton. Stanislav Spodniak examines our moral obligations toward future generations, focusing on whether self-sacrifice is rational from the perspective of individual interest and how the latter expands to the concern for the well-being of the individual's descendants. Finally, Jozef Sábo adds a logical perspective to the volume by examining how functions are assigned types in Transparent Intensional Logic 2025 and Transparent Procedural Logic.

We trust that the above contributions will encourage further discussion, both within their respective fields and across the variety of philosophical approaches represented in this volume. Above all, we hope you enjoy reading them as much as we did.

Dimitris Galanis and Dimitar Ganev
The Editors

The (Divine) Context of the Human in the Age Marked by Technology

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PALLÓS, Á.: The (Divine) Context of the Human in the Age Marked by Technology
YOUNG PHILOSOPHY 2025: CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS, 2025, pp. 7 – 16

I present the first results of my research that seeks to answer the question of how the human in crisis by modernity can find support again. Just because of this need the human can be grasped as existence, i.e. as an entity which is oriented outwards from itself, as the Latin term suggests (ex means out of, from.) Its openness, following Jaspers, can be described on scales of communication and transfer of tradition, conceived as perpendicular to each other. From the intersection of these, it opens onto a common origin that goes all the way back to the divinity. Although the broader the context of an investigation, the greater the risk, a narrow analysis of human would be inherently wrong. Moreover, the Jaspersian approach is particularly justified in so far as the logic of technology can eventually fragment the existence itself into a function.

Keywords: human – technology – divinity – Karl Jaspers – tradition

1. Introduction

To remedy the "ills of the modern soul" (Jaspers 2004, 125),[1] it is first and foremost necessary to fathom the very being of the human. In modern thought, as Csaba Olay points out, Kierkegaard introduces the expression of *existence* to the human to clarify "what and what constitutes it" in so far as it is "neither characterized by a mode of being in things [favourable to scientific approaches], nor by the abstract" (Olay 2013, 54).

[1] All quotes are my own translations either from German or from Hungarian.

From the point of view that the existence is not a thing, so not an entity standing by itself, I find it relevant that *ex* as the prefix of the Latin word *exsistentia*, means "out of, from" (Online Etymology Dictionary n.d.). The outward stance of the human expressed in the etymology of the Latin term, may justify the aspiration of Kierkegaard. For the same reason, I will use this term by discussing the nature of the human.

As for the expression of *existentialism*, it derives from Jaspers, who introduces it to distance his thinking from the "ontological exhaustion" (Olay 2013, 52) that the term *existentialism* suggests. This also reflects his definition of the existence in terms of freedom (Jaspers 1958, 311),[2] in which Jaspers shares with the existentialists of the canon, but he does not see the existence as a mostly self-focused entity according to the individualist approach (e.g. Sartre), nor remembers his approach of the existence to the Christian theology (e.g. Kierkegaard). Nevertheless I see him as being somewhat closer to the Christian view than the individualist, insofar as he grasps the existence in its – as freedom understood – openness (Jaspers 1985, 422),[3] from which follows its outward orientation: this stance implied in the etymology of the term can be conducive to the assertion of attitudes against individualism, even if it does not give them a right to exist *per se*.

In the following, I try to explore this still rare Jaspersian philosophy of the existence in a way to guide the further steps of my broader research, considering the stakes, i.e. possible benefits and risks of this approach.

2. The Openness of the Existence

I consider it of primary importance to clarify the question, what exactly is the Jaspersian openness of the existence, from which it can orientate outwards itself, even if it cannot reach any aim, since in its openness it is unlockable, merely "potential" (Rigán 2005, 41). On the basis of relevant texts, I find it possible to outline its openness on two perpendicular scales: on a historical and a communal; in my reading, the existence *opens* out from the intersection of these, in such a way that it is concentrated on entities beyond its finite and narrow being on both scales: On the scale called historical proceeds the transfer of the tradition ("Überlieferung" (Jaspers 2021, 33)), while the other one is mostly marked by the love ("die Liebe" (Jaspers 1985, 421)[4]) that plays a decisive role also in the transfer of the tradition. Importantly, for Jaspers,

[2] "Nur in der Freiheit können wir eigentliche Menschen werden."

[3] "Der Prozeß des Offenbarwerdens ist identisch mit dem Selbstwerden"

[4] "Das Offenbarwerden ist ein Prozeß in der Kommunikation,…in der Liebe."

relation – through communication – does not appear as a possible motive for dissociation but is created precisely so that openness can justify its own correctness. An example of orientation from the intersection might be the need to be embedded in the family relation. The fact that origin stories are not of the same length, nor the common grounds of the same width (the horizon of the religion, for example, points on both scales further than the horizon of nation and leads further than all others), does not diminish the significance of entities that are shorter on the historical and narrower on the communal scale, because only the orientation of the existence through them is relevant. At least as importantly, it shows that the existence, also in its freedom claims some kind of support; while it also serves through other existences what can be relied upon. On the question of the priority of the two scales in relation to each other, Jaspers puts it as follows: "the historical human [on the scale of transfer of tradition] is revealed only to love" [on the scale of communication] (Jaspers 1955, 232)[5] and in most cases, this happens, when the existence, through communication, conveys content considered valuable. In my view, although it is not always conscious, the existence is not without love in the absence of reflection. Love is even intensified, either by reflection on the commonality of the origin, or by the commonality with other existences recognized as originating from the own (e.g. a child). This puts the dilemma of priority of the scales in brackets insofar as it suggests that by the existence both vertical and horizontal openness are inseparable from each other, as opposed to, for example, the orientation of animals, which is at most horizontal. For this reason alone, I begin a detailed discussion of them with the historical scale, although it may be a speaking factor that *common*, understood on the scale of communication, can be understood in linguistically subordinate role as an indicator of *origin*, marking the historical scale.

2.1 On the Historical Scale

"Without the transfer of the tradition the newborn cannot be a human being..., after all...it is enriched by an education in historical change,"[6] writes Jaspers (Jaspers 2021, 33), which can be complemented by the fact that also animals can communicate in some way. Jaspers does not deny that hereditary determination can be reckoned with in the possibility of historical

[5] "Dieses geschichtliche Individuum zeigt sich nur der Liebe."

[6] "Ohne Überlieferung…kann der Neugeborene nicht einmal Mensch werden. Er wächst…durch die Erziehung in geschichtlichem Wandel."

development, he merely states that "we are human not by heredity, but by the maintenance of a tradition [because] in heredity human possesses something practically indestructible, whereas in tradition something absolutely perishable" (Jaspers 1955, 227).[7]

2.1.1 The Role of the Instability

Thus, for Jaspers, the transfer of the tradition appears not just as a condition of existentiality, but in its temporal uncertainty as a value-giving factor. Although, like its permanence, the threat of its disappearance can also lend it value: this insight is part of the explanation of the difference in value between a finite person and, for example, an object that can be produced in countless copies: in its openness existentiality is unfixable, because it is opened for the orientation (which is only possible in openness). Instability allows value to be formed as well as lost, but its effect does not end here: the sustaining power of dynamics (Jaspers 1985, 359)[8] can be illustrated by several examples from physics, just think of the motion required for flight. And the process can hardly amount to mere repetition: because, beyond the fact that the closed structure of repetition does not imply a real openness on either the vertical or the horizontal scale, any one-to-one experience of repetition would lose the value-giving factor of the possibility of passing.

2.1.2 The Danger of the Instability

Although I have not encountered in Jaspers' writings the eventuality discussed below, insofar as the existence reflects the instability of the content of tradition, it may end up making not only the existing tradition but also the process of its transfer frivolous. And if it is a condition of existentiality, such a levelling can have very serious consequences. However, even if the process of the transfer were threatened by an imaginative rather than real breakdown, I see in the permanent reflection on the common origin the basis for sustaining the necessary dynamics; because it is useless, that both the tradition and the existence – that encounters it – are made dynamic by contact with the tradition, if then the existence blocks the process. I believe, however, that the persistence of tradition in the marked reflection can continue to be shaped by symbols, not to discuss yet the "ambiguous," "varied" and to the concrete existence given

[7] "Wir sind Mensch noch nicht durch Vererbung, sondern immer erst durch den Gehalt einer Tradition. In der Vererbung besitzt der Mensch etwas praktisch Urzerstörbares, in der Tradition etwas absolut Verlierbares."

[8] "Formation is alive, form is dead." ("Lebendig ist die Formung, tot ist die Form.")

Jaspersian ciphers of the transcendence (Hügli 2011, 124, 125, 127). Although their historicity (Jaspers 1955, 212) can make them frivolous and their fixedness is against existentiality, I see their essential feature not in these conditions, but in their reference to the common origin. What counts, is the deeper meaning they cover. Furthermore, even symbolism can have a sustaining dynamic in so far as it can be recognised as a tool of the communication. This leads to the scale perpendicular to the historical one.

2.2 On the Scale of the Communication

The existence, as Jaspers puts it, "is itself only insofar as it is in communication with others and with the world" (Jaspers 1974, 52),[9] and although also animals are capable of a kind of communication, by the existence communication allows such a transfer, that is not specific to animals. The interweaving of the two kinds of openness is explicitly expressed in the already quoted Jaspersian sentence: "This historical human is revealed only to the love" (Jaspers 1955, 232).[10] In other words, the detachment from the world of instincts is not only a characteristic of the transfer of tradition mentioned, but also of the love directly manifested in the openness on the scale of the communication. For Jaspers love is first and foremost a sacrifice ("der Opfer"), which he speaks of as a condition of humanity (Jaspers 1958, 92).[11] This kind of love is the most expressive illustration of how an existence points beyond itself.

2.2.1 The Role of the Instability

At this point, I believe, the possible criticism of Jaspers, that, in assuming the existence in openness, he does not consider the role of detachment in self-determination, becomes refutable. Jaspers is very much aware of the other, but he draws the opposite conclusion from the difference than the representatives of the individualism: self-surrender as openness can, in his view, prevent the existence from trapping itself as a self-focused entity. It idealizes not separation, but community by values. The former implies less the latter more and the existence within serves something to rely on. However, even openness reveals a kind of narrowness, insofar it is focused on a value whose form and content are limited, and which is even visible in the temporal exposure. This problem, however, can lose its significance by the earlier statement, that the

[9] "ist er selbst nur in dem Maße, als er es in Kommunikation mit anderem Selbstsein und mit der Welt ist"

[10] "Dieses geschichtliche Individuum zeigt sich nur der Liebe."

[11] "here is no humanity without sacrifice." ("ohne Opfer kein Menschsein")

existence remains necessarily potential. The main component of instability is also that Jaspers' openness is a matter of choice that can be made by the freedom of the existence alone, since determinacy would deprive it of the dignity of being able to choose correctly. In this way, also dignity follows from the instability: the latter's role, beyond that of preventing us from imprisoning ourselves, is to give us the condition of our dignity. Inherent in dignity is the impossibility of the realization (it means remaining potential), the possibility of losing the content of the tradition, and even the difficulty of making sacrifices. These do not let the existence being calculating. Taking up also on the communal scale the aspects discussed above, not only the transfer of the tradition can become frivolous, but also the communication in its back-and-forth effects, which may empty and thus – again, according to the logic of the thought process, rather than realistically – finally eliminate the communication as a condition of existentiality, and thus the process of the transfer of the tradition itself. This means partly that there is a threat to the transfer on both scales, and party it highlights the fact, that, like the transfer of the tradition, also the communication can only be characterized just by a certain degree of (closed structured) repetition, and that its instability plays sustaining role. But the fixity of symbols can be a risk in this case, even if they can help to recognise the common origin. Nevertheless, the paradox of this eradicative effect of unchangingness is in analogy with the illusory contradiction of the sustaining power of dynamism. And I see the emptiness of the communication as avoidable – also at the level of thought – if something follows from the constant recognition of the origin as common, if its dynamics brings existential connections into play; because an important, if not essential part of the sense of origin must be, that to which its modifier refers, that it is *common*.

2.2.2 The Danger of the Instability Or Why the Existence Must Be Embedded

Thus, if we concentrate not on the actual elements of the tradition, but on its deeper meaning reflected in the dynamism of the continuous revival of the consciousness of a common origin, the openness on the horizontal scale – on that we really can be human – is preserved, and even: the existence on both scales grows beyond itself by concentrating on entities with a broader spectrum than itself (on the scale of communication) or on entities with a more durable nature (on the historical scale). It turns instability to an advantage by transforming itself into entities independent of its physical existence, thereby not only minimizing the consequences of the own death – as a threat of

instability – but also living on a larger spectrum than if it had defined itself as an individualist by separation.

3. Further Factors

This brings us closer to answering the question of the opportunities and risks of the Jasperian approach. However, two factors, even if their detailed discussion would go beyond the scope of this paper, are important to outline before any conclusions can be drawn. I think it is worth starting with the more easily graspable one.

3.1 The Impacts of the Technology

According to Jaspers the phenomena in the industrial society are interfering the desired outward orientation, which he finds problematic, even if the existence cannot get rid of its potentiality: making a sharp distinction between openness and interconnection, Jaspers writes already in the 1950s, that, due to the increasingly pervasive logic of technology – in the apparatus of absolute domination – finally even the existence becomes mere function (Jaspers 1958, 399)[12] and even its entertainment ("Vergnügen") serves only making fit for work again (Jaspers 1958, 450). Moreover the function-being implies, also in Jaspers, substitutability (Yousefi 2021, 58).[13] The situation is made more serious by the fact that the broader framework of technology is a mass existence ("Massendasein" (Jaspers 1932, 37, cited in Olay 2013, 62)), which, even in its communality, is not known for its freedom as well as openness, but rather for narrowing its members' thinking, making them fanatic. As a further problem all this happens at planetary level, which does not contradict the fact that functionalisation has a fragmenting effect, but cuts off the openness of existences worldwide. If connectivity is not openness, it is to be feared that this tendency could give rise to conflicts, that are unsolvable not only because of their unprecedented large dimension, but also because of the technical arsenal (allows them getting so extensive). If the Jaspersian diagnosis is credible, the way, in which he approaches to the existence is even less negotiable.

3.2 The Appearance of the Divinity

As for the other factor, Jaspers relates the freedom of the existence, as a condition of its opening on any scales, directly to the divinity, when he says:

[12] "Das Menschendasein wird im Apparat der einen absoluten Herrschaft zu einer Nivellierung bloßer Funktionen gebracht."

[13] "Der Mensch…als ein ersetzbares Wesen funktioniert"

"The human who is conscious of his freedom gains certainty of the divinity.... Why?...I do not obtain my freedom by myself: I receive it" (Jaspers 1989, 47). Although this brings us to one of Jaspers' most controversial ideas, instead of reflecting on it, I can only deal here with, what his statement means for the train of thought above. The emergence of the divinity – that could be posited as (the origin of the) common origin – was foreshadowed almost throughout the study. I think that the openness, even in the possible absence of the divinity, works against the consequences of the death, which is mentioned as a danger of the instability. The appearance of the divinity is, however, the least negligible circumstance for the stakes of the Jaspersian approach to the existence, because while it follows from the previously statements, that the existence in its openness can resonate with the being, that is also ungraspable, with the appearance of the divinity this being goes beyond itself (Pallós 2025, 48 – 49). The being, furthermore, is indivisible, which indicates, that the love has the most to do with it, a statement which, even if Jaspers would protest against it, could even raise the possibility of the Jaspersian justification of the Christianity; *because the wages of sin is death* (Romans 6:23). Although this could also be the subject of a separate study, this is how the existence, the religious tradition as the context of it in the form of a symbolic system, and the centre of the religious tradition, the divinity, can come together. The obstacle to reflection may be, that with the divinity not only the existence, but also that being refers to a broader dimension, which even in itself is ungraspable. A further difficulty is, that Jaspers does not seem to show sufficiently the contrast between the being and its creator (Jaspers 2004, 5 – 21). Supposedly it is sufficient for the existence to resonate with the being in its openness; which occurs in the divinity-given instability which is partly the instability of the existence (because in sacrifices it transforms itself) and partly the instability either of the concrete content it passes on or of the reflection on a common origin. By the absence of determinacy, the divinity also gives dignity to the existence by not allowing it to be guided by calculation. Perhaps that is why the creator is inscrutable, along with his paths. But it can be said, the existence ultimately relies on the divinity, and not without meaning, insofar as "in the absence of cognition, it is not thinking itself that stops, but only the compelling thinking in categories" (Saner 2011, 136).

4. Conclusion

In any case, the appearance of the divinity seems to make the field of thought to which Jaspers invites us, impenetrable. The risk of his approach to the existence, lies precisely in this: his multifaceted thinking can hardly be kept within a logical framework of verifiable statements. At the same time, this comprehensive context can not only prevent thinking from getting lost in partial truths, when examining the existence from a (e.g. psychological, sociological) point of view, but grasping it in its ungraspable character, that can bring us closer to it even in this matrix, than thinking, that looks at it objectively. This encourages to a Jaspersian approach of the existence, moreover his reflection on the effects of technology – due to its actuality – makes it urgent to examine them from his view. Especially because Jaspers questions the risk of his approach even before he recognizes it as a risk: after all, for him, "philosophy is being on the move" (Jaspers 1989, 11).

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Bounded: Challenging the Age of Trans with an Oikological Anthropology of Intermediary Man

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VANBRABANT, J.: Bounded: Challenging the Age of Trans with an Oikological Anthropology of Intermediary Man
YOUNG PHILOSOPHY 2025: CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS, 2025, pp. 17 – 24

Considering transhumanism, transmigration, transsexuality, the first part of the 21st century can rightfully be called the age of trans; people technologically enhance their bodies, leave their countries of birth, change sex. If the human being is no longer bound(ed) by its body and birthplace, where then do its borders lie? It is argued that man, to be and remain human, is intermediary, fundamentally bound in-between. For "what is man"? From an oikological viewpoint, taking up Kant's famous question initially implies another question, a phenomenological step back: where is man? After all, each and every one of us, livings beings, is always already somewhere. Speaking with Hans Rainer Sepp, we are in a body within a social lifeworld, which makes this embeddedness an intermediateness: echoing Heidegger, our body is between birth and death, living in-between other bodies in the world etc. Insofar as a human being can indeed transcend its body and world, it is argued that this transformative transcendence can "only" be temporarily, as a "mere" transposition (evermore) going from one condition of intermediateness to another.

Keywords: oikology – anthropology – in-between – trans – body

1. Introduction

To this day, (not only) philosophy is being haunted by a treacherously simple question of anthropology: "What is man?" which according to Kant himself, who indeed raised this question, is actually *at the basis* of his three famous questions (1) "What can I know?" (2) "What should I do?" and (3) "What can I hope for?" (1800, 25). And today, (not only) philosophy is anthropologically

being challenged by what the Dutch writer Connie Palmen calls "the age of trans," that is the timeframe in which the human being is no longer bound by his body or country of birth (2023). Amongst other phenomena, we will zoom in on transhumanism, transmigration and transsexuality.

Thinking Kant and Palmen together, the question of the human being is a transcendental question of man's boundaries, for surely "trans" or "to transcend" implies some "limit" to be surpassed. Consequently, in our view the question of *what* man is, is being preceded by the question of *where* – within which borders – man is. This strategy goes back to the philosophy of oikology as currently being developed by Hans Rainer Sepp, which – coming from the Greek *oikos* meaning "house" at large – he understands as intercultural phenomenology of the place, of the position, perspective, location, situation (2014, 3 et seqq.). The (not only) philosophical gain of this approach or method is that it takes seriously the genealogically prior, yet all too often overlooked or dismissed "somewhere-ness" of each and every enquiry and enquirer, overlooked as if he were (meaninglessly) residing in some intellectual utopia or supposed neutral location: *theoría*. Rather, since every living being, be it as subject or object of investigation, is always already somewhere in a place that somehow matters (to say it with a twist: nobody is nowhere), this place must transcendentally be taken into account as condition of possibility of all that follows, and thus of all philosophical investigation too, not least regarding "frontier" questions on limitation and transcendence.

So where is man, from an oikological point of view? Sepp scrutinizes our "house" and distinguishes the therein residing "in-dividual": on the one hand, we are *in* our body (echoing Plessner both in the subjective *Leib* and in the objective *Körper)*, and on the other hand, we are *in* the world (which accounts for our sociality) (2018, 282 – 283). To say it with another twist: nowhere in the world, nobody has no body. In so describing man's embeddedness, Sepp has special attention for the In-Between, stating that this structure of locality always already characterises human existence inherently, notably in the way he experiences his world with his body, never plainly coinciding with either one of them (2024, 122). Now, in taking this account one (oiko)logical step further, we do not only situate man as being in an in-between-constellation, in addition we understand man as *being in-between altogether*; in other words: man not merely as being intermediately, but formally as intermediate being, not just bodily divided in the world, but worldly divided in the body. In short, "man" means "in-between-man," since the human being is ubiquitously marked by intermediateness (Cf. Vanbrabant 2024).

Answering the question of where is man, we argue that the human being is in an in-between *and* forms an in-between of himself: epistemologically, each person is between what she can and what she cannot know, never fully omniscient and never fully ignorant; ethically, each person is between good and bad, at no point merely evil nor goodness itself whatsoever; perception-wise, each person is in-between what she can see and what is out of sight; existentially, we are between who we are and who we become; psychoanalytically, we are between desire and satisfaction, and so on and on, ontologically, biologically, scientifically, psychologically, politically, etc (Vanbrabant 2024). To tackle the questions of trans, we'll first underpin these intuitions with Heidegger.

2. Heidegger's Dasein as Dazwischensein

Human-related concepts of in-between are found throughout the history of philosophy; no later than with Plato and Aristotle in antique times, thereafter with canonical Arabic and Christian philosophers of medieval times and, after an apparent break in early modern times, again since Nietzsche and with the most diverse figures of contemporary, especially phenomenological philosophies. But it is to Heidegger's credit – hence our current focus – for having truly established "the In-Between" (*das Zwischen*) on the philosophical agenda, indeed also as substantive. In particular, this intermediarity concept is at the basis of his Being-There (*Dasein*), which – so our argument goes – following *Being and Time* really is Being-In-Between (*Dazwischensein*, in our terms), relative to the human being. First, however, it must be shown that Heidegger, contrary to common believes, does not actually reject the idea of a philosophical anthropology.

It must be recalled that Heidegger's goal with *Being and Time*, and for that matter his entire oeuvre, was as clear as it was opaque, namely an ontology of Being itself, whereby his original strategy was to start from an existential analytics of Being-There, which is primary in ontic-ontological regard and indeed regards us (1977, §4, 18). And just as *Dasein* was thus of subsidiary concern to *Sein*, in turn the question of a possible anthropology was of subsidiary concern to these: Heidegger explicitly stated he himself doesn't seek to develop a proper ontology of Being-There, albeit that, if this would be undertaken, such ontology *should be built* if one *would seek to ground* ones so-called philosophical anthropology on a proper philosophical, that is ontological basis (1977, §5, 23). In any case, to get to the Being of Being-There and ultimately to Being itself, Heidegger explicitly dismissed traditional, so-

called ontotheological anthropologies of antique and Christian signature (according to him residing in any given anthropology up until "today"), which erroneously understand man as rational animal or as transcendent entity (1977, §10, 65). What Heidegger favoured was an anthropology in the sense of "onto-anthropology," as Philippe Cabestan calls it (2015, 232), namely of the human being in the light of Being itself, a preference still harboured in his post-war years as for example the *Zollikon Seminars* show (2018, 551, 637, 830, 837 etc.). Yet, on Heidegger's part, some doubts on the philosophical feasibility of this anthropology remained, and it was surely not of his personal priority to develop it, and of course this is far beyond our current scope as well.

That said, we should not refrain from extrapolating some characteristics of Heidegger's Being-There to our In-Between-Man. Let us recall his notions of "Thrownness" (*Geworfenheit*) and "Project" (*Entwurf*) as developed from paragraph 29 onwards in *Being and Time (1977, 178 et seqq.)*. It is fair to say that each and every one of us, human beings, can recognize him- or herself in these. In Heideggerian terms, to be born means being thrown into the world. From the very start, we find ourselves in-between other people, society, expectations. Being thrown into the world is rather deterministic (Heidegger speaks of *Faktizität*; cf. 1977, 180), as one cannot choose the place where one finds herself thrown. But since the place is a place in-between (cf. 1977, 176), and not some kind of forever fixed place, we have to possibility (cf. 1977, 191) to undo this determination, namely by undertaking a so-called project (cf. 1997, 193) from within the being-thrown. In German, the words *Geworfen* and *Entwurf* share the same root, from *Werfen* or "To Throw," whereby the "ent" of *Entwurf* is a sort of negation, so quite literally the Project is an undoing of the Thrownness, a sort of annulation, repeal. With Project or *Entwurf*, Heidegger basically means envisaging oneself somewhere (else), from within his original positions to other and further dispositions (cf. 1977, 180: "Woher und Wohin"). Hereby time is the necessary condition for this movement to be possible; *Dasein* speculates on what should be whilst affirmatively reflecting on what has been, in general advancing towards death (1977, 311 et seqq. on Zeitlichkeit and Sein zum Tode). Thus to the extent that our worldy place is a place in-between, to occupy places, to move-on, implies being dynamically in(-between) time. This of course denotes that *Dasein* is never absolutely, never merely, never fully, never only here nor there, nor then or then at some point in time. When *Dasein* is on the move, realizing his very potential in doing so, *Dasein* cares, to mention another famous Heideggerian word: "Care" or *Sorge*, that is how *Dasein's* existentials come to manifest themselves in the spatiotemporal advanced in

dealing with his condition. By the end of *Being and Time*, Heidegger takes up *Dasein's* birth and death and states: "As Care, the Dasein *is* the 'In-Between' " (1977, 495, cf. 310; our translation, original emphases). Thus, *Dasein* or Being-There is *Dazwischensein* (in our terms) or Being-In-Between indeed.

3. In-Between and Transcendence

Now to our second part on the age of trans. When we understand the human being as a being in-between, fundamentally multi-bounded by certain albeit flexible limits, and when we rightfully understand "trans" as transcendence, as a surpassing, an exceeding or possibly an overcoming of certain limits, what could transmigration, transsexuality and transhumanism mean? Let us put them one by one in our light of intermediateness.

First transmigration, which – in the demographic sense of transnational migration – refers to people leaving their country of origin for one or more new countries, whereby, in combining the original culture with the new culture(s), they keep in touch with peers both in the former and the latter. In other words, transmigration denotes people repeatedly moving across several national and cultural borders. What is implied here by transcendence? Surely it doesn't mean the borders themselves have been overcome, for they remain in place; without them, border-crossing would be impossible. In fact, either having migrated or not, the (possible) transmigrant finds himself in a constellation of in-between: first, in country A, he wanted to go to country B (thus in his expectations and projections being in-between A and B), then, having arrived in country B, he necessarily remains relatively anchored in country A (wherein he was thrown by birth, now being as it were in-between B and A). You can leave your country, yet your country cannot leave you. What changes, is the (always somehow intermediary) position of the migrant-person relative to these borders. So to the extent there is some transcendence, it cannot mean the transmigrant's being in-between as such has been transcended, rather his original in-betweenness has been *extended*, allowing for greater movement in-between, with more possibilities in terms of language, networks etc. Thus (only) the relative narrowness of this person's liminal intermediarity is transcended.

Second transsexuality, understood to refer to persons who've changed the sex they were biologically attributed at birth, so to align with the psycho-physical characteristics of their felt gender identity. For example, a trans woman was considered masculine but wishes to be understood as female, whether or not following sex-changing treatments or (other) aesthetic

measures like crossdressing. Now in terms of trans and between, what happened here? First, this person was somewhere in-between being a man according to society and being a woman according to self-experience. Then, after transgressing masculinity towards femineity, he / she entered a new in-between, between aligning with the desired female gender identity and acceptance or rejection of the former maleness: you can choose to be a woman, but you cannot choose having been (deemed) a man. As with transmigration, the in-between itself remains in place, because sex or gender as such is not being suspended. But unlike with transmigration, it is not so that the first intermediarity got expanded by the second one, because generally a trans woman would not want to go back to being male. Whereas with transmigration, the in-betweenness is a matter of *overlapping in terms of culture*, with transsexuality, the in-betweenness is a matter of *overwriting in regards to the body*, (merely) in that way transcendent. Yet again, with transsexuality as with transmigration albeit in a different sense, the new in-between-constellation allows for greater dynamics within, in this case because the person will no longer suffer from dysphoria as when she was in the wrong (undesired, uncomfortable) body, now living life more fully instead.

Third transhumanism, of which we discern its commonly mentioned goal of transcending our biological limitations. What could this mean? For one, it could mean *to enhance* our abilities; for example with a hearing device or implant, the range of frequencies the recipient hears can be expanded from sounds between 100 and 600 hertz to everything between 20 and 20000 hertz, whereby of course a clear intermediarity remains in place. In this first case, the body in the sense of *Leib* (lived body) has been (re)given more possibilities through the improvement of the *Körper* (extended body). Furthermore, transcending biological limitations could mean *to stretch* our expected lifespan, which is a common goal of medicine, for example in helping an ill person reaching the age of 80 instead of the expected 50, and here the intermediarity of time between birth and death itself remains in place. In this second case, the body in the sense *Körper* has been (re)improved thereby giving way to the *Leib*. Considering both cases, transhumanism is about enrichment, within the between of digital technology and organic embodiment (and their interplay). What transcending our biological limitations cannot mean, however, is *to abolish* the human being's in-between-constellation as such by somehow literally delimiting his body, for example with the goal of hearing "all" frequencies or reaching "infinite" age, in other words towards supposed omnipotency resp. immortality. For such delimitation of the body were

tantamount, not necessarily to annulling the *Körper* (since the extended body at large might well refer to the in-corpo-ration of inorganic matter like semi-conductors or prostheses into the sphere of the organic), rather it were tantamount to the annulation of the *Leib* as conscious instance capable of sensually organising the (improved) organic, of making sense of it. It is fair to say that being human means to be born and to die as a complex embodiment resp. an embodiment complex featuring a "coextension of lived body and physical body" (Fuchs 2021, 147), being limited in-between birth and death. So if this finitude were suspended beyond the sensual or the conscious or the experiential namely to the benefit of the transmitting *Körper* at the expense of the receiving *Leib*, if thereby this lifeworldly situation of intermediarity were suspended, then the human being itself too would be suspended, possibly in favour of something else. This other creature might well be possible and in unlikely ways even desirable, and this bio-robot-like being would even feature interesting moments of in-between of its own, but, without *Leib*, it would no longer be human, as the related term of posthumanism in this sense might denote. In all, insofar as transhumanism is concerned with the goal of transcending human biological limitations, we argue that this is possible only with respect to the human body, namely by engaging in the interplay between the transmitting *Körper* and the receiving *Leib*, whereby we discerned a tendency in transhumanism of taking the recipient too as fully *Körper* instead of *Leib* (at least partially), thereby neglecting human in-betweenness. Machines will brake but are repairable; humans are broken but cannot be repaired.

4. Conclusion

Narrowing down the question of "what is man?" to the underlying question of "where is man?" in view of the age of trans-phenomena, it can be concluded that the human being can transcend many limits in many different ways, but not the limitation in itself, since in any case, he is bound in a liminal constellation of in-between. For what *is* man, when he is not only in an intermediate disposition but furthermore intermediarity in and for himself? When the human being is indeed somewhere in-between, his essence might well be absolute and relative at once, being both necessary and contingent: oscillatory.

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Autonomy in the Digital Age: A Kantian Perspective on Artificial Intelligence

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DULOVICS, D.: Autonomy in the Digital Age: A Kantian Perspective on Artificial Intelligence
YOUNG PHILOSOPHY 2025: CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS, 2025, pp. 25 – 35

This paper deals with the impact of artificial intelligence on individual autonomy in the context of Kant's ethics. At a time when individual decisions are increasingly influenced – even shaped – by algorithmic recommendations and predictive models, the question arises as to what extent humans can retain their autonomy. Shaped by a digital environment that is formed by a network of algorithms, individuals are gradually ceasing to be active creators of their own decisions. Instead, they are increasingly exposed to the influence of opinions and recommendations conveyed to them by impersonal systems. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that technologies influencing decision-making and autonomy are designed with the intention of shaping user behavior. This situation may result in a weakening of moral responsibility and a reduction in freedom. Nevertheless, we argue that autonomy can be preserved, provided that individuals retain the ability to critically reflect on the outputs of artificial intelligence (as well as other technologies) and accept them only if they are consistent with rationally justified moral judgments. In the digital age, it is therefore particularly important to develop the capacity for critical reflection and rational judgment, which Kant considered the basis of moral autonomy. Without them, freedom risks losing its essential content.

Keywords: autonomy – digital age – freedom – AI – Kantian ethics

1. Introduction

Artificial intelligence systems (hereafter AI[1]) are increasingly shaping the environment in which we live; digital virtuality is gradually transforming our social reality. Today, AI co-determines the conditions under which we make decisions and act. An ever-growing number of areas in our daily lives, from content consumption on social media and modes of social interaction to decision-making in healthcare and the judiciary are at least marginally influenced by algorithmic systems. The question of what it means to be autonomous in an increasingly digitalized world has thus become especially pressing. When an external factor such as an algorithmic system enters the decision-making process, there is a risk that individuals cease to be the sole authors of their decisions, and their freedom becomes diminished.

Current literature addresses this question but rarely from a distinctly Kantian philosophical perspective, although there is a substantial and growing body of literature on the relationship between AI and human autonomy (Catena 2026). However, the main focus of debate around AI lies elsewhere, particularly on issues such as the protection of privacy and freedom of thought and expression in the context of fundamental human rights (Teo 2025), the use of AI in armament and warfare (Ulgen 2017; Hoffberger-Pippan 2022), and the risks of discrimination arising from the design and training of algorithmic systems (Orwat 2023). In philosophy, moreover, the concept of autonomy is more frequently applied to the purportedly "autonomous" status of AI systems themselves (Hoffberger-Pippan 2022). It is precisely this imbalance that forms the starting point of my analysis, which focuses on the conditions for and the protection of human autonomy in an algorithmically mediated environment.

In this paper, I focus on a perspective that has thus far been insufficiently explored: the threat to human autonomy in the Kantian sense which is arising from the non-transparent and manipulative mechanisms of behavioral

[1] For the purposes of this paper, we understand artificial intelligence "as the tangible, real-world capability of non-human machines or artificial entities to perform tasks, solve problems, communicate, interact, and act in ways comparable to biological humans. Its functioning can be considered through two main parameters: the level of performance and the level of autonomy. The level of performance refers to what AI can do, such as 1) carrying out tasks, 2) making decisions, and 3) generating predictions. The level of autonomy refers to the extent to which AI acts independently, depending on how much human input, interaction, or supervision is involved. Similar to humans, AI can demonstrate different degrees of "intelligence" depending on these two dimensions—its performance and its autonomy" (Gil de Zúñiga et al. 2024).

conditioning employed by algorithmic systems. Attention is directed to algorithmic systems and software solutions that possess a high degree of operational independence in decision-making and that influence human behaviour, decision-making, and interaction in ways that may gradually weaken the capacity for critical reflection and rational judgement thereby undermining the very foundations of moral decision-making.

We ask: to what extent can human beings remain autonomous in environments saturated with algorithmic influences; how can their capacity for independent and morally grounded decision-making be safeguarded; and what normative criteria should guide AI development to ensure it does not threaten human dignity and freedom? Our theoretical framework is based on Kant's conception of autonomy. We argue that AI threatens human autonomy whenever it replaces or bypasses the individual's capacity for rational self-legislation, and that safeguarding autonomy therefore requires both ethically designed AI systems and critically reflective moral agents. On this basis, we first reconstruct the relevant elements of Kant's theory, then analyse the mechanisms of algorithmic influence, and finally propose normative and regulatory foundations for the protection of autonomy, dignity, and freedom.

2. Kant's Conception of the Autonomous Individual

In Kant's conception, autonomy is linked to the capacity for self-legislation and is thus understood as the ability to act in accordance with principles that the individual has rationally established for themselves — principles that would also withstand the test of universalizability. At the same time, an individual's autonomy is inseparably connected to their human dignity. Kant makes this explicit when he writes:

> Our own will insofar as it would act only under the condition of a possible giving of universal law through its maxims, this will possible for us in idea, is the proper object of respect; and the dignity of humanity consists just in this capacity to give universal law, though with the condition of also being subject to this very lawgiving (Kant 2014, 59).

This point is likewise underscored by Thielscher: "For Kant, this freedom of choice and autonomy (the ability to come up with moral principles) is the decisive reason for dignity" (Thielscher 2025, 4063). Acting based on principles that are universal in the sense that they could be accepted by every rational being is, for Kant, the foundation and indeed the necessary condition of human

dignity, for it is precisely this capacity that removes human beings from the realm of nature and situates them within the intelligible world.

The second important part, we have to mention, is the principle of humanity: "Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, and never merely as a means" (Kant 2014, 48). The morality of action thus stems from a person's respect both for themselves and for other beings, whose autonomy and therefore human dignity is likewise recognized. At this point, it should be noted that the principle of humanity reveals the emphasis on the dialogical nature of human existence, as interpreted by Sikora, who writes: "Only autonomy establishes the proper relationship to the other. Only the other makes the possibility of autonomy possible" (Sikora 2021, 24). This shows that, even within the conception of the autonomous individual, who ought to arrive at practical laws by virtue of belonging to the intelligible world, the dialogical character of the world and the recognition of one's autonomy, and thus one's human dignity, by others, remains an important aspect. Such recognition is possible only on the assumption that everyone is autonomous in their actions.

The broadly outlined elements of Kant's conception should help us adequately understand the relationship between individual autonomy and the influence of AI. In considering the relationship between human autonomy and AI, two further aspects merit emphasis. First, a morally acting being, cannot be reduced merely to their actions. Autonomy, in the sense, is founded not on what we do, but on the reason why we do it. A decision taken under manipulation, coercion, or non-transparent influence is not an autonomous decision even if it is a decision we would have made in the absence of such influences. From this, we may also infer that, within Kant's ethics, it is not possible to ascribe autonomy to AI in the same sense as to a human being. Autonomy is intrinsically connected to the fact that the human being belongs to the intelligible world. This claim is somehow challenged by Zerilli, who emphasizes that:

> The human brain, too, is largely a black box.[2]...Even when a sentencing judge provides reasons allocating weights to various statutory factors, the

[2] Black-box models are machine learning or statistical systems whose internal workings and decision-making processes are not easily understood or interpretable, effectively hiding their internal logic from the user a lack of explanation that poses practical and at the same time ethical problems.

> actual inner processing logic behind the allocation remains obscure (Zerilli et al. 2019).

With this Zerilli (2019) argue that both human and algorithmic decision-making involve elements of opacity and that the existence of a "black box" does not by itself justify treating AI decisions differently from human decisions. Nevertheless, from a Kantian perspective, opacity alone is not the decisive issue. Human decision-makers remain capable of moral responsibility, justification, and participation in normative practices, whereas AI systems do not possess these capacities in any comparable sense (Hakli – Mäkelä 2019; Vacek 2026). Consequently, even if both forms of decision-making exhibit epistemic opacity, they differ fundamentally with regard to moral agency and responsibility.

The second aspect is the fact that a human being must always be regarded as an end in themselves. Every AI system capable of influencing human action should operate in a way that respects the human capacity to weigh, reject, or accept the influence that AI exerts upon them. Yet this is not always the case, as Teo also points out:

> The lack of transparency, the complexity of AI systems, its relative autonomy and dispersed nature can dilute causation to mere influence. It can be challenging for individuals to uncover where in the AI system pipeline which caused the harm or to discover the reason it did so (Teo 2025, 2268).

If the user is not approached transparently and does not know on what basis the AI acts as it does, they are deprived of the possibility of making an autonomous choice, since they do not possess all the necessary information.

Taken together, these aspects highlight the problem that AI system designers must fix. People must remain free in their relationship to the diverse range of algorithmic programs, and these programs must, in turn, enable them to be autonomous. Naturally, it cannot be expected that every person will even have an interest in ensuring that their thinking and actions are autonomous. Indeed, Kant himself arrived at his conception only after recognizing that human beings are rarely autonomous in their conduct, as he points out in his 1784 essay What is Enlightenment?, where he writes: "If I have a book that thinks for me, a spiritual adviser who has conscience for me, a doctor who prescribes my diet for me, and so on, I need not trouble myself at all" (Kant 2016, 148 – 149).

Kant's conception of autonomy provides a normative foundation for how we should think about the legitimacy of AI systems. This conception offers a

basic framework within which we can ask whether such systems preserve or diminish the individual's capacity to act autonomously and to be the source of their own practical laws. In the following section, we will show how current AI methods particularly those involving personalization, recommendations, and behavioral predictions threaten individual autonomy and should therefore be examined from the standpoint of moral philosophy.

3. How AI systems Undermine Autonomy and Dignity

Over time, the individual acclimatizes to an environment that predicts and steers their behavior, gradually weakening their capacity for autonomous judgement. This constitutes a moral regression, in which practical reason is replaced by adaptive behavior. This process is mediated by various AI systems embedded within commercial platforms, which do not confront the user with a neutral set of options but instead configure the very environment by determining what is displayed, in what order, and at what time. Google, Netflix, TikTok, and Spotify sort and filter content to maximize engagement rather than to promote autonomy. Zuboff describes this mechanism as "instrumentarian power" (2019, 10), which does not control the person directly but bypasses them through behavioral analysis: "It is no longer enough to automate information about us; the goal now is to automate us" (Zuboff 2019, 10). The result is the already-mentioned illusion of autonomy: the individual may feel that they are making free choices, even believing that no one has interfered in their decision-making process, yet the very premises of those choices have been determined by a non-transparent system. However, recommendation systems do not necessarily undermine autonomy merely by being deployed. Their impact depends on users' awareness of how these systems operate and on their ability to critically evaluate algorithmic recommendations. Individuals with sufficient digital literacy may actively use recommendation systems while remaining capable of directing and even strategically shaping the recommendations they receive. Problems arise primarily when recommendation systems operate opaquely and users remain unaware of the behavioral mechanisms influencing their choices.

Predictive personalization takes intervention a step further: AI and various algorithms predict what users want or will do based on their data traces. In Twilight of Democracy, Applebaum describes how targeted advertising, made possible through various AI systems and stolen data, was used during Brexit to precisely target voters using their personal data (2020, 90 – 91). This can be seen as AI systems undermining autonomy by deliberately shaping people's beliefs

and behaviour. A similar problem arises with digital nudging (Orwat 2024, 11), where the design of interface elements steers the user towards "desired" behaviour. Another risk, which can occur under the influence of AI, although it cannot be said to result solely from AI, and which is described by Teo (2025), is moral exclusion. AI systems can, automatically and not necessarily intentionally, deprioritise or downgrade certain individuals on the basis of historical data, thereby reproducing existing inequalities. From a Kantian perspective, however, a person's dignity is independent of their usefulness or likelihood of success; it is inherent to every individual. Black-box models, whose internal workings are incomprehensible even to their developers, exacerbate this problem: when decisions cannot be explained or challenged, the individual is transformed from a moral subject into a passive recipient. These aspects of AI and similar systems are problematic in Kantian ethics. If an action results from stimuli that the individual neither understands nor evaluates, they do not act on the basis of reason. Laitinen and Sahlgren (2021, 5) note that moral autonomy requires both internal capacities (reason, judgement) and external conditions (access to information, freedom from coercion). The methods of AI use described above fail to meet the external conditions for autonomy and therefore undermine and narrow the space for critical reflection.

The erosion of autonomy and dignity is therefore often not an unintended error, but a logical outcome of optimization processes that prioritize efficiency. Defending individual autonomy thus requires not only technical fixes but also a critical examination of the very logic that transforms persons into objects of management. For this reason, in the following section we aim to present and summarize a set of measures that can address this problem.

4. Safeguarding Autonomy in the Age of AI

The preceding sections have demonstrated that many contemporary AI systems, despite their technical sophistication and operational efficiency, frequently fail to uphold the fundamental respect owed to the individual as a rational being. In the digital age, where human conduct is increasingly shaped by opaque and often unaccountable systems, being autonomous and capable of critical reflection is not merely more difficult; it is more urgently necessary than ever. Without it, the individual risks being relegated to an instrument of algorithmic optimization; with it, they remain a moral subject, capable of resisting manipulation and safeguarding their capacity for self-determination. This is why the pressing question is not simply what artificial intelligence can

achieve, but far more importantly what it should be permitted to do, and how it must be designed and governed so that it treats human beings as ends in themselves and actively reinforces, rather than undermines, their autonomy.

An ethically appropriate AI must therefore actively strengthen the user's capacity to think, judge, and act as a free moral being. From a normative standpoint, it is thus necessary to refine the lens through which we view AI systems: critical reflection should not be treated solely as a matter of the subject but must also be demanded as a guiding principle in the very design of AI systems, ensuring that potential users are given the conditions to exercise such reflection. AI systems should not merely respect autonomy by avoiding coercion; they should also actively create the conditions under which reflection can take place. As Kant states:

> In the realm of ends, everything has either a price or a dignity. That which has a price can be replaced by something else as its equivalent; but that which is elevated above all price, and therefore admits of no equivalent, has a dignity (Kant 2014, 53 – 54).

AI systems should be based around the dignity of the person, which is irreplaceable, and not around price, performance, or replaceability,

For this ethical vision to be realized, system designers must go beyond the framework of mere technical usability and orient themselves towards what may be called moral architecture, design strategies that support autonomy rather than passively automating behavior. The EU Artificial Intelligence Act, for example, implicitly builds on Kantian ethics, when states that "AI should be a human-centered technology and should serve to enhance human well-being." Achieving this requires several key strategies. Some of these are embedded in the European AI Act, which employs relevant concepts such as transparency and explainability, since these are precisely the safeguards that help ensure individual autonomy in relation to AI. Transparency in the European AI act should mean that users must understand how and on what basis decisions are made. Closely related to that, is explainability, whereby system outputs should be accompanied by reasons that are comprehensible to the user. What we wish to add is that AI systems should be used with a focus on moral relevance. In domains such as justice, healthcare, education, or human rights, AI systems must recognize the moral weight of decisions and defer to human judgement when the normative consequences are high.

If we applied those design principles to building AI systems, those systems would be consistent with the Kantian concept of autonomy because they

would preserve the individual's status as an autonomous subject. The aim of AI systems should therefore not be to simplify decision-making or, worse, to replace the human decision-making process with that of an AI system. The goal should be for the decision to be genuinely one's own.

A Kantian approach thus leads us to regard AI not as a replacement for human judgement. The moral status of the person is not lost because of technological progress, but it can be gradually obscured or undermined if we fail to build technologies and institutions that respect, enable, and safeguard the conditions of moral freedom. Kant's conception of autonomy is not incompatible with the digital environment, but it does require active defence. This means that individuals must cultivate the capacity for critical reflection, and AI systems must be assessed not only for their performance but also for how they affect moral autonomy.

5. Conclusion

This article has defended the thesis that preserving autonomy in the age of AI requires an ethical approach to algorithm design. We have argued that autonomy cannot be reduced to freedom of choice, which may in fact be merely illusory. Rather, autonomy is the capacity to act from reason, on the basis of principles that we have, through critical reflection, recognized as universally valid norms. In the Kantian ethical framework, particular emphasis must be placed on upholding the principle of humanity. From this perspective, many current applications of AI especially those involving behavioral prediction, nudging, profiling, and non-transparent decision-making are morally problematic, as they threaten the fundamental capacities that define us as moral beings: judgement, reflection, and responsibility.

From a Kantian ethical perspective, we have shown that AI systems often lead to a state in which the individual is treated as an object rather than presumed to act on the basis of a self-imposed moral law. While these systems promise personalization and optimization, they frequently instrumentalize the user in ways that undermine their autonomy and, by extension, their dignity. As the discussion has demonstrated, however, this development is not inevitable. If autonomy is vulnerable to the way AI systems are designed, then a properly conceived design can protect and even promote individual autonomy. It is therefore essential that the ethical design of AI systems be considered from the very outset of their architecture. From the aesthetic dimension of the interface to the way the system communicates, justifies its outputs, and enables their contestation and reflection, the AI designer should

always ask the fundamental question: Is this system designed to respect the user's autonomy? If the answer is "no," the system must be modified.

In this context, the Kantian conception of autonomy offers a counter-paradigm rooted in dignity, reason, and the capacity for self-determination. It is essential that this approach be applied not only in the development but also in the actual use of AI systems. It reminds us that the goal of technology is not to replace human judgement, but to support its exercise. Because autonomy must not be sacrificed in the name of efficiency, its protection is a normative responsibility, one that must be addressed primarily at the level of AI system design and implementation.

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Identity Rhetoric, Disinformation, and Echo Chambers in Digital Populism: Constructing the "Us vs. Them" Narrative

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ANGELOVA, D.: Identity Rhetoric, Disinformation, and Echo Chambers in Digital Populism: Constructing the "Us vs. Them" Narrative
YOUNG PHILOSOPHY 2025: CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS, 2025, pp. 36 – 43

Populism has gained a central role in shaping European and world politics, leading to an unprecedented shift in state politics globally. Populist rhetoric, rather than politics itself, is pivotal in maintaining constituents' support through divisive messaging that polarizes social groups based on social status, ethnicity, religion, or beliefs. This article examines how identity politics rhetoric is exploited by populist movements, the connection between disinformation and identity politics in populist discourse, and how echo chambers intensify polarization. Using literature review and Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis, this research explores how populist actors construct "Us vs. Them" narratives, reinforce group identity, and delegitimize opposition through discursive strategies within digital environments.

Keywords: digital populism – identity politics – disinformation – echo chambers – polarization

1. Introduction

In recent years, there has been a growth and expansion of nationalist, extremist and populist movements in Europe and the world, which are beginning to form new political directions on current and significant topics. Various factors influence this process, and one of effects is the polarization of political positions and ideological messages. Major political events across the world have now shown how populism can shift election results, transform opinions and affect world economy and politics.

The 2016 Brexit referendum illustrates how populist discourse has transitioned from the political margins to the heart of national decision-making. The campaign advocating for the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the EU was spearheaded by voices critical of immigration and globalization, notably Nigel Farage. Similar populist trajectories can be observed in Hungary under Viktor Orbán and Poland under the leadership of the Law and Justice Party (PiS), both of which have implemented policies at odds with EU principles concerning judicial autonomy and media freedom.

In Italy, the 2018 alliance between the far-right League and the anti-establishment Five Star Movement signaled the convergence of right- and left-wing populism. This momentum continued in 2022, when Giorgia Meloni of the Brothers of Italy ascended to the role of prime minister, marking a new phase of nationalist-populist governance. Germany's Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) has gained traction at the regional level by focusing on immigration skepticism and opposition to the EU. Meanwhile, Marine Le Pen's persistent advancement to the final stages of France's presidential elections reflects the enduring appeal of far-right populism there.

Populism reached a critical juncture in 2024 when anti-establishment parties collectively secured approximately 32% of the vote across Europe (Solace Global 2024). This shift was evident in the June European Parliament elections, which saw 60 populist parties from 26 EU nations win seats—up from 40 parties in 22 countries during the 2019 elections (Ivaldi – Zankina 2024). The factors driving this trend include economic anxiety, immigration pressures, and the perceived erosion of national autonomy. Populist actors often thrive on identity politics and scapegoating, empowered by their ability to communicate directly with the public through strategically used social media platforms.

The election of Donald Trump is the result of a highly emotionally charged and populism based electoral campaign centered around promises to keep his constituents from threats like poverty, immigrants, non-Americans. His messages were broadly and easily spread via digital platforms and resulted in mass and hysterical support and hope for salvations from such threats.

1.1 Research Questions and Hypotheses

Having in mind this background, the present article will aim to examine the role and importance of echo chambers for dissemination and reinforcement of disinformation and how identity rhetorics is utilized by populist actors. Three hypotheses will be tested. First that disinformation dissemination is promoted

and amplified within echo chambers especially when it aligns with pre-existing identity narratives, creating self-reinforcing belief systems. Second, that digital platforms algorithms favour identity-based disinformation dissemination. And third, that identity rhetorics and identity disinformation is broadly used in populism rhetorics due to its emotionally charged nature as it serves its purpose to reinforce identity boundaries between the in-group ("the people") and an out-group ("the elites," "the others").

1.2 Methodology

To examine the research questions posed in this article a multidisciplinary approach will be used to address the questions complexity and interconnection. First, literary review and analysis will be used to examine the conceptualization of the core definitions and terms used as a basis for the research. References will come from political science, communication theory, and media studies, which provide the foundations for understanding populism, identity politics, disinformation and digitally related phenomenon. Second, the role and interaction of digital media, disinformation and contemporary populism implied in this article will be examined by secondary data comparison analysis based on studies from digital sociology and information science. Thirdly, the use of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), specifically the framework developed by Teun A. van Dijk, integrates elements of linguistics, social psychology, and sociopolitical analysis.

2. Conceptual Framework

2.1 Populism

Populism is a complex and contested concept with varied interpretations across disciplines. It is commonly understood as a political discourse or strategy that opposes "the pure people" to "the corrupt elite," often using emotional, anti-institutional, and polarizing rhetoric. Scholars such as Margaret Canovan and Cas Mudde define it as a "thin-centered ideology" or a political style rather than a full ideology (Canovan 1999; Mudde 2004). Others, like Laclau, frame it as a political logic constructing collective identity through opposition (Laclau 2005). As Malinov states "populism is not an ideology" and its flexibility allows it to align with both left- and right-wing ideologies, adapting to context-specific grievances (Malinov 2007).

2.2 Digital Populism

Digital populism has emerged as a distinct phenomenon shaped by the dynamics of digital communication, diverging from traditional populism through its use of online platforms. Researchers such as Kim (2008), Bartlett (2011), and Castells (2012) elaborate that digital tools offer populist actors low-cost, direct, and unmediated communication with supporters, enabling emotional engagement, verbal aggression, and the bypassing of traditional institutions. To the purpose of this article, digital populism is defined as a political strategy and style that uses populist rhetoric through digital channels, leveraging immediacy, low-cost communication, algorithmic amplification, and digitally enabled citizen participation (Angelova 2024).

2.3 Disinformation and Identity Disinformation

Disinformation has existed and been used always in history as its importance and impact has increased in the digital age. For Wardle and Derakhshan (2017) contribute to the conceptualization of disinformation offering a typology of information disorder that includes misinformation (unintentional falsehoods), disinformation (intentional deception), and malinformation (truth used to harm). A recent and deep analysis on identity driven disinformation conducted by Carlos Diaz Ruiz and Tomas Nilsson (2023) concludes on the following definition:

> Disinformation is an adversarial campaign that weaponizes multiple rhetorical strategies and forms of knowing—including not only falsehoods but also truths, half-truths, and value-laden judgments—to exploit and amplify identity-driven controversies (Diaz Ruiz – Nilsson 2023, 18).

2.4 Echo Chambers

Echo chambers are social and communication structures in the digital environment, formed through processes of homophily, algorithmic content management, and interaction between users with similar views (Terren – Borge-Bravo 2021). Echo chambers limit access to opposing opinions and reinforce pre-existing beliefs (Levy – Razin 2019). According to Nguyen (2020), they represent epistemic structures that not only exclude other perspectives, but also undermine trust in them through the manipulation of authority.

3. Social Media Algorithms and Disinformation

As communication nowadays passes in its large part through digital channels and especially social media, dissemination of messages is dependent on the way digital platforms work and function. Social media use various and undisclosed algorithms for that purpose and what is known is they offer users content based on their preferences, past behaviour and interactions with other online users. Social media have commercial interest for content to reach more and more users so they promote it and for it to become viral and largely viewed, interacted with and shared.

In a recent research conducted by Elena Broda and Jesper Strömbäck (2024) they perform an extensive review and analysis of how disinformation is spread across social media platforms and they conclude that their algorithms unintentionally amplify disinformation, as it often presents emotionally charged, polarizing, and sensational content which can outperform neutral, factual reporting in terms of engagement and is why disinformation messages can be favoured.

4. Echo Chambers and Identity Based Disinformation

Digital citizens are influenced by their internal homophily and organize themselves into echo chambers. In "Echo Chambers and Their Effects on Economic and Political Outcomes," Gilat Levy and Ronny Razin (2019) divide them into two components: chambers - individuals segregate with people with similar preferences, beliefs, or attitudes; echoes - individuals are influenced by the beliefs of those they communicate with in their chambers, in an illogical way.

Based on the analysis of literature made and as a synthesis of extensive theories, 3 main rhetorical tools of identity disinformation can be identified:

The Ideological Square (van Dijk 2006): All identity rhetoric analysed follows a predictable pattern: emphasizing the positive things about "us," emphasizing the negative things about "them," de-emphasizing the negative things about "us," de-emphasizing the positive things about "them."

Victim-Hero Framing: In-group members are framed as victims of elite control or media manipulation. Simultaneously, they are heroes resisting lies—this creates a moral obligation to act and share content.

Adversarial Epistemology: Argumentation itself is identity work. Users participate in ongoing adversarial dialogues that reify their worldview.

5. Identity Rhetoric and Disinformation in Populism

As acknowledged in the theoretical part of this paper populist rhetoric is a communication tool to divide society on an in-group and out-group basis. In an experimental cross-national study performed across 15 countries, Bos, Schemer, Corbu and others try to understand how identity framing is used by populism. They isolate two major populist rhetoric approaches—anti-elitism identity frames and exclusionist frames (anti-immigrant) (Bos et al. 2020).

In a study focused on how economic distress and identity threat shape populism messages, Manunta et al. (2022) demonstrates that economic distress contributes to support for populism not only through material grievances but via status-based identity threats. When people feel economically marginalized, their belonging and efficacy motives are frustrated, making them more receptive to populist narratives that validate their sense of exclusion and offer blame-oriented explanations.

6. Conclusions

This article has demonstrated that identity rhetoric, when combined with disinformation and amplified by digital echo chambers, forms a potent mechanism for populist actors to construct and reinforce polarized "Us vs. Them" narratives. Through a multidisciplinary framework, the research tested and confirmed three hypotheses:

First, disinformation is effectively disseminated within echo chambers where identity-based narratives align with users' pre-existing beliefs and emotional investments. Second, social media algorithms structurally favour emotionally charged, identity-reinforcing disinformation due to their engagement-driven design. Third, identity rhetoric is central to populist discourse because it simplifies complex sociopolitical realities into emotionally resonant narratives of victimization, heroism, and opposition.

The research confirms that across varying contexts—whether through economic marginalization, cultural anxiety, or political alienation—populist actors instrumentalize identity threats to generate support. The article contributes to contemporary academic discourse by synthesizing both well acknowledged and more recent analyses and applying van Dijk's CDA model to secondary case study data.

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Rethinking the Nation: Fluid Nationality in a Postnational Era

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YOUNG PHILOSOPHY 2025: CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS, 2025, pp. 44 – 54

In an era marked by the decline of the nation-state as the primary locus of identity and political allegiance, the concept of nationality resurfaces as a central concern of philosophical reflection. This paper proposes the original concept of fluid nationality – not as a dissolution of national identity, but as its transformation into an ontologically unstable and epistemologically open condition. Nationality is no longer presupposed; it is lived. It is not inherited, but continually re- enacted within situated contexts of everyday life, mobility, and discourse. Fluid nationality is contingent – unstable, mutable, and ephemeral. Identities do not belong to us; we pass through them. Nationality becomes not something that binds us to territory or origin, but something that emerges in movement, in relation, in memory, in anticipation. Within this space, the collective "we" begins to fragment, the sense of obligation to the nation as a value-laden entity weakens, and the very understanding of national belonging is reshaped. Against the backdrop of the tension between essentialism and constructivism, the paper explores whether a political "we" can exist without being anchored in a national framework – and if so, what it might be grounded in. The nation becomes a question, not an answer – a philosophical problem of our time. Thus, fluid nationality does not only signify a crisis of identity, but also the possibility of new forms of collective existence. It may be precisely within its uncertainty that a space opens for radically rethinking the very notion of national belonging.

Keywords: nation – postnational era – identity – fluid nationality

1. Introduction

Why do nations still matter in a world of blurred borders and shifting identities? What once seemed eternal – rooted in blood, language, or land – now shifts with movement, memory, and encounter. Nationality reveals itself less as inheritance and more as a journey: a search for belonging that is never finished, always negotiated. No longer a state of "being," but a process of "becoming," it is shaped by memory, choice, and the desire for meaning. The nation is not a fixed essence, but a question we must ask anew – one that can both connect and divide, give direction and unsettle.

In this article, I propose the concept of "fluid nationality" as a way to understand these transformations – not merely as descriptive phenomena, but as an analytical lens for exploring how national belonging is experienced, negotiated, and reshaped in contemporary Europe. By framing nationality as a dynamic, flexible, and continually evolving process, this approach highlights both the challenges and opportunities of living with plural identities in a globalized, culturally interconnected world.

2. The Transformation of National Identity: From "Being" to "Becoming"

The traditional view of the nation assumes its existence as natural and unchanging – as an entity rooted in origin, culture, language, customs, or a specific territory. This essentialist perspective allowed us to see the nation as a stable and natural framework of identity, providing individuals and communities with a sense of belonging, continuity, and security. In this understanding, the nation appears as something "given," with deep roots in history, mythology, and shared experience. Such a view also assumes that each person has a "natural place" within a particular nation, to which they belong through their ancestry, language, or culture.

However, today, this assumption can no longer be taken for granted. Globalization, mass migration, cultural hybridization, and digital interconnectedness challenge fixed frameworks of collective identity and open up new spaces for its redefinition. In the era of late modernity and transnationalism, national identity is becoming increasingly flexible and layered. Nationality is no longer something simple or self-evident – not something that can be clearly determined by origin or place of birth. On the contrary, it becomes the result of a process of identification, an act of recognition, and sometimes even a political choice. Identity is no longer anchored in a fixed "self," but is shaped over time – constantly moving between past and present, between the individual and the collective.

These changes can be especially seen in the Contemporary European context, where historical experiences of political shifts, multi-lingualism, and cultural overlap have strongly influenced the way national identity is formed, reflected upon, and re-interpreted. This region carries a tension between tradition and transformation, between an essentialist understanding of the nation as something unchanging, and a more fluid view of it as a process. In this environment, identity does not appear as unified or self-evident, but rather as layered, historically conditioned, and fluid. It is precisely in this regional ambivalence – in the experience of constantly redrawn borders, shifting regimes, and a plurality of cultural codes – that the question of national belonging emerges as both a philosophical and political challenge.

Here, national identity takes the form of a continuous movement between collective memory and present-day self-definition – not as a fixed point, but as a dynamic space between the past and a possible future. This is why the European case can be seen as a condensed image of broader global processes: not as an exception, but as a reflection of an uncertain present, in which the idea of the nation is drifting away from its "natural" essence and turning into a question – one that is open, contested, and inevitably philosophical.

This shift has important consequences for how we understand the nation and nationality. While the nation was once seen as a "natural" community, today it is increasingly viewed as an imagined social construct – a community held together by narratives, symbols, and collective representations. As a result, the concept of nationality moves from a fixed framework to a more flexible and open one, and the question of "who we are" is no longer obvious. Identity is increasingly shifting from the realm of "being" to that of "becoming" – into a process that is open, unstable, and often driven by political and moral motivations.

In the postnational era – defined by the weakening of traditional ties between the nation-state, identity, and political belonging – the question of nationality is returning to the field of philosophical reflection with new intensity.

One of the most sensitive issues raised by this questioning of the nation is the concept of national identity. It forms one of the main pillars on which national belonging rests – or from which it distances itself. As the British sociologist Anthony Smith argues in *National Identity* (1991), national identity cannot be understood as a single, homogeneous phenomenon. Rather, it is one expression of multiple identities that overlap with one another – such as religious, class, regional, or ethnic identities. Smith further emphasizes that

national identity is closely tied to ethnic principles – to ideas of shared memory, myths, values, language, or a common living space. While this approach confirms the connection between nation and ethnicity, it also raises the question of whether this connection is natural or constructed (Smith 1991, 1 – 18).

It is at this point that different perspectives begin to diverge. One view understands national identity as a means of drawing boundaries in opposition to others – boundaries often shaped by hierarchies, where the "other" is not regarded as equal. Another interpretation, however, suggests that national identity is less an organic reality than a carefully crafted fiction: an imposed construct, assembled from disparate and inconsistent elements, which are later presented as if they were natural and self-evident (Hobsbawm 2000, 15).

National identity, then, is not only a matter of historical roots or cultural continuity – it is also an ontological question. It is about who we are, how we know it, and who gets to say it. As Samuel Huntington argues in *The Clash of Civilizations* (2001), people define their identity in relation to what they value most – language, values, ancestors, institutions – but also in contrast to what they are not. National identity is therefore not just an inner sense of belonging; it is also a tool of social exclusion (Huntington 2001, 14).

This dynamic becomes especially important in times when globalization and mobility blur the boundaries between nations and cultures, while also intensifying feelings of threat that lead to the reactivation of national frameworks. National identity also holds strong mobilizing power. As William Bloom observes in *Personal Identity, National Identity and International Relations* (1990), identifying with a nation can lead to psychological unification – moments when a group feels empowered to act as a single body, particularly when it perceives itself to be under threat. It is in these moments that nationalism becomes an active ideology, interpreting reality through the lens of "us" versus "them" (Bloom 1990, 52).

This underscores, once more, a fundamental flaw in conceiving national identity as morally neutral. In reality, identity is never devoid of ethical weight; by its very nature, it is suffused with values and structured around a sense of belonging that simultaneously includes some and excludes others.

3. Fluid Nationality

In today's social, cultural, and political context, national identity can no longer rely on old essentialist foundations that tied it to fixed origins, a single language, or clearly defined territory. Such a framework fails to capture the complexity of the modern world, where identities are shaped by global

movements, transnational relationships, migration experiences, and digital interactions. National identity is no longer homogeneous or exclusive; it is layered, changing, and often goes through reinterpretation or questioning. To insist on outdated concepts is to ignore shifting social realities and the risks of excluding those who don't fit neatly into rigid national categories. I propose the concept of "fluid nationality" as a way to understand these processes – not merely as descriptive phenomena, but as an analytical lens for exploring how national belonging is experienced, negotiated, and reshaped.

This is why it is essential to approach national identity as a dynamic phenomenon – something that is constantly being shaped and reshaped in dialogue with current social conditions and global trends. At the root of people's attachment to the idea of a nation is a basic human need for self-affirmation and for belonging to a meaningful collective identity. This "attachment" can be understood as a kind of instinct for the soul's survival, even stronger than the instinct for physical survival. This deep inner drive helps explain why, even in an age of globalization, migration, and cultural blending, the need to belong to a nation still exists – though it is undergoing a significant transformation (Lemberg 2003, 76).

As the traditional foundations of national identity no longer fully reflect current realities, the concept of *fluid nationality* offers a possible response. Fluid nationality sees national belonging not as a fixed category based on origin or language, but as a dynamic and flexible process – one that can change over time, space, and context. This perspective allows for different forms of belonging to be recognized without denying the personal importance of the nation as a source of identity and emotional support.

Redefining national identity – not as a solid structure, but as a process shaped by time and space – also leads to a (de/re)construction of what the nation means, where its boundaries lie, and how individuals and communities experience, express, and reshape this belonging across different social and historical contexts. Fluid nationality is ontologically unstable and epistemologically open: it doesn't exist as a fixed essence, but as a set of dynamic and situated practices, memories, expectations, and interactions.

Nationality is *experienced*, not *owned*; it emerges through movement, relationships, and in the personal and collective stories that are constantly evolving.

One might wonder whether, in a post-national era, it even makes sense to continue discussing national identities and the concept of nationality – whether this is just a relic of the past or a topic that still matters in today's social and

political debates. I believe that even in this post-national era, it remains meaningful – perhaps now more than ever – to reflect on national identity and nationality. Such reflection is a direct response to the conditions of our present.

The discussion of fluid nationality helps us understand how our sense of identity and belonging is changing in political and social reality. It reveals the tension between the desire for rootedness and the experience of constant movement – between the need for a shared "we" and the risk of its fragmentation. It also invites us to seek new forms of solidarity that reflect the complexity and dynamism of today's world – to think about how we can live and work together under changing conditions.

Thinking about national identity also raises the question of what kinds of relationships and connections are most commonly associated with the concept – how national belonging is expressed, shaped, and legitimized in both individual and collective consciousness. When analyzing these expressions, we can identify several recurring types of bonds that play a key role in shaping identity: political affiliation, the idea of family, emotional experience, religious parallels, and art. These dimensions all point to the same conclusion: national identity is not a static construction, but a dynamic phenomenon whose meaning changes depending on cultural, social, and historical context.

4. Metaphorical Kinship?

It is common to conceptualize national identity through the lens of metaphorical kinship, a perspective often expressed in the language of family: fatherland or motherland, brothers and sisters, and the inheritance of our ancestors. These expressions create a sense of belonging to a community that feels like a family. While kinship systems vary across cultures, the idea of "family duty" is a universal one. As a social unit, the family forms the foundation of most societies.

In societies where kinship ties are weakening and social polarization is increasing; national belonging often emerges to fill the resulting emotional and social void. As explored in Thomas Eriksen's *Ethnicity and Nationalism* (2002), the nation functions as a substitute for the security and sense of belonging traditionally provided by the family, acting metaphorically as a "parental" figure that offers unity and cohesion while regulating behaviour through social and institutional norms. These mechanisms evoke strong emotions, which become integral to identity formation. Eriksen describes this phenomenon as the ideology of the nation-state, demonstrating that the strength of this ideology shapes how stable or flexible national identity feels. When the nation-

state ideology is dominant, national belonging is often perceived as fixed and naturally given, with continuity, collective memory, and shared roots reinforcing a more rigid sense of identity (Eriksen 2012, 178 – 179).

On the other hand, when the ideology of the nation-state weakens – whether due to globalization, growing societal pluralism, or changing value systems – space opens for viewing national identity as something more fluid, contextual, and personally experienced. In this sense, the fluidity of national identity increases as the ideological pillars of the nation-state erode and decreases when those pillars are reinforced.

We can see this in the link between the institutional power of national frameworks and the individual's space for identity variability. A strong national ideology imposes a narrow definition of who "we" are, along with "our" values, history, language, or culture. It creates boundaries that leave little room for alternative or evolving identities. In such settings, national identity is often seen as an obligation or loyalty, not a choice.

When these ideological pillars weaken, the unified framework breaks down, allowing individuals more freedom to shape their identities – they respond to new cultural influences, blend national affiliations, and create more personalized relationships with the nation. In this way, the fluidity of national identity is a symptom of the declining hegemonic power of the nation-state in shaping identity.

But it's also true that a rigid national narrative can trigger the opposite reaction – not internalization, but rejection. If the national framework narrowly defines who has the "right" to feel part of the nation, marginalizes alternative identities, or unrealistically idealizes cultural homogeneity, it can alienate segments of the population. In such environments, fluid identity doesn't just mean weakened ties – it can also mean shifting identities. People may gravitate toward other national frameworks that offer more openness, tolerance, or personal relevance. These new frameworks don't have to be formal; they may involve cultural orientations, symbolic affiliations, or transnational ties.

Paradoxically, the more rigid and exclusionary a national narrative becomes, the less it solidifies identity; instead, it often provokes transformation and hybridization, deepening the very fluidity of national belonging.

In the context of fluid nationality, this emotional aspect takes on a new meaning – it becomes not just a source of belonging, but also a tool for transformation. Emotions rooted in daily experience, cultural practices, and collective symbols can help people shift from one identity framework to another. Here, fluidity doesn't mean a lack of emotional bonds – it means the

ability to transfer those bonds. It's the capacity to emotionally connect to a different symbolic community that offers more dignity, recognition, or meaning.

If the emotional foundations of identity – like pride, shame, nostalgia, or resentment – are no longer fulfilled within a given national framework, that framework may lose its hold, and new emotional ties may form elsewhere, often beyond the geographical or historical borders of one's "own" nation. Emotionality, then, is not an obstacle to fluidity – it is its driving force. It is emotional unrest that motivates the search for new belonging in today's complex network of transnational identities.

Even though emotion is often seen as an inseparable part of national identity, this view shouldn't go unquestioned. Emotionality can be overemphasized; it may romanticize collective belonging and obscure important structural or political factors in identity formation. While emotions are important, they are also unstable, subjective, and easily manipulated – making them vulnerable to exploitation for political or power-based purposes.

Within the framework of fluid nationality, it can be argued that emotional turbulence may obstruct the unfolding of "authentic identity" transformations – if such a thing as "authentic identity" exists at all. Furthermore, emotions can be used to reinforce rigid national identities – especially when they are tied to deeply rooted symbols and historical narratives. In such cases, it is not fluidity but emotional continuity that can block the loosening of national identity and the creation of new bonds.

From this perspective, it is essential to also focus on the rational, discursive, and critical aspects of national identity. These allow us to reflect on our national belonging in a way that isn't based solely on emotional loyalty.

5. Fragmentation of the Collective "We"

A central feature of national identity lies in its capacity to mobilize individuals into a collective. This occurs when a group, bound by shared symbols and a sense of belonging, acts as a unified body, especially when it perceives its foundational meanings to be under threat. Yet this mobilizing power depends on the strength of the nation as a framework of values. When that framework falters, the cohesion of the collective "we" unravels, and society faces an identity crisis, in which the shared symbolic language no longer suffices to bind its members together (Hroch 2011, 38).

National identity has historically served to distinguish people from others, often along hierarchical lines. Today, however, this defining function is

evolving, shifting from confrontation toward the coexistence of multiple, parallel affiliations. Collective identity is no longer a fixed structure but a network of temporary connections, and mobilization can occur outside the national framework, grounded instead in shared values, activism, or common experiences (Hobsbawm 2000, 15).

This transformation forces us to reconsider what today forms the basis of a shared "we" and what its limits are. However, this shift is not without consequences. As nationality stopping to be a firm anchor, the traditional collective "we" that the nation created also fragments. The sense of commitment to the nation as a value entity weakens. Collective belonging becomes a matter of choice or situational agreement, rather than inheritance or natural duty.

This leads to a question: can a political "we" exist without being rooted in the national framework? If so, what would it be based on? Shared values? Moments of solidarity in specific situations? Or new forms of imagined communities that go beyond the borders of states and nations? In the current crisis of national identities, we can find an opportunity for critical reflection and re-evaluation of the foundations of collective belonging that were once taken for granted. As traditional ties between nation, state, and identity weaken, space opens up to explore more inclusive and flexible forms of belonging that can better respond to the challenges of a globalized, plural world.

Uncertainty can serve as a moment of creative reframing, allowing national identity to be conceived not as a fixed and exclusive framework, but as an open, dynamic process encompassing multiple stories, experiences, and perspectives. Identity often becomes most visible in times of crisis, emerging from the shadows of the "given" into a consciously shaped stance for which we bear responsibility both individually and collectively. Such moments invite reflection on the values we wish our identity to embody – openness, solidarity, equality, or historical continuity. The crisis of national identity is thus not only a source of tension or nostalgia but also an opportunity for transformation: to discover new symbols, languages, and forms of belonging that respond to contemporary diversity. Fluid nationality embodies this duality – on one hand, it threatens fragmentation and isolation as traditional anchors dissolve; on the other, it opens the possibility for more flexible, inclusive, and non-exclusive forms of collective existence, offering the potential to imagine political communities beyond claims of origin or blood.

6. Conclusion

Let us continue to question the nation – even in the post-national era. Although the nation no longer represents a rigid identity framework, it remains worthy of philosophical, political, and existential inquiry. As this reflection shows, national identity has shifted from an unchanging essence to a pluralistic process – it has become a dynamic space where individuals and collectives seek grounding and recognition.

This epochal shift does not mean the nation loses its importance but moves into a new mode of meaning: from a given fact to an interpreted and negotiated concept. In the crisis of national identity, there is an opportunity – not for a definitive rejection of the nation but for its critical reassessment. The question of the nation and national belonging has not disappeared – it has only changed form. And precisely for this reason, it deserves our attention: not as nostalgia for lost unity, but as a challenge to seek new forms of nationality in a time when "who we are" is no longer fixed but constantly being recreated.

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Ontology and Dynamics of Power: Emmanuel Levinas' Ethical Frame

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NKWAGU, E.: Ontology and Dynamics of Power: Emmanuel Levinas' Ethical Frame
YOUNG PHILOSOPHY 2025: CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS, 2025, pp. 55 – 67

Ontology presupposes "human relationship to things such as self, world, and others" (Howe 2006, 423). Daly argues that "ontology is political and the political is intrinsically ontologically informed" (Daly 2022, 341). Ontology shapes the worldview from the perspective of power. Politics concerns power dynamics – who controls what, who uses it, and how. The main political motive is self-interest, and the main goal is Spinoza's conatus. As such, political actors need power to survive; the more power they have, the greater their chances of survival. Ontological drives are the tools of political strategy. In this paper, I explore Levinas' ethical theory in the context of the prospects and challenges posed by new geopolitics and nationalism. Drawing on Levinas' ethical theory, I argue that ethical consciousness shapes and reinforces our understanding of the humanity of the human person – the fundamental feature of humanity. His ethical position offers hope for the future of humanity.

Keywords: ethics – geopolitics – nationalism – ontology – politics

1. Ontology and Politics

Ontology is the science of being, existence, and reality. It explores what exists and the nature of that existence. Ontology has inherent drives towards power. It underpins political thought by providing the fundamental concepts and categories upon which political ideologies and systems are constructed. Therefore, political theories are based on ontological premises. Ontology and politics are deeply connected. Every political structure assumes a certain understanding of reality: what exists, what matters, and who is significant. In

ontology, there is neither separation nor independence because of the inherent relationship between everything and every being. According to Howe, ontology presupposes "human relationship to things such as self, world, and others" (Howe 2006, 423). Anya Daly argues that "ontology is political and the political is intrinsically ontologically informed" (Daly 2022, 341). Ontology informs and shapes politics and political activities. Ontology and politics are intrinsically connected. Ontology controls the worldview from the perspective of power. Thus, ontology shapes the concept of power. Politics is about power in the context of control, domination, "influence and the influential" (Lasswell 1958, 13). Thus, it revolves around power dynamics – "who gets what, when, and how" (Lasswell 1958). At its core, politics is the ability to influence or control others, including shaping their perceptions and beliefs – what others think, believe, accept, do, avoid, reject, etc. It is grounded in the ontological framework of power and control, where authority defines relationships and structures. Within the political sphere, human beings are understood through the lens of Spinoza's concept of immanent causality: as either active agents who exert influence or passive recipients of it (Spinoza 1985, EIII, Def. 2). They occupy positions of either command or subordination, engaged in a continuous negotiation between action and submission. Thus, the concept of power is the core of political theories. Political theories are grounded in ontological thinking. They are inherently ontological. Thus, politics simply follows from an ontology. The main political motive is self-interest, and the main goal is Spinoza's "conatus" (Viljanen 2011, 127). As such, the political actors need power to survive – the more power they have, the greater their chances of survival. Ontological drives are the tools for political strategy.

Margaret Stout describes ontology as "a theory of existence, being, or reality" (Stout 2012, 388) and explores political ontology and its implications for human identity and social life. According to Stout, although human beings are separate, they are homogeneous because they are parts of Being (Spinoza 1994, E1P15). There is a sense of Parmenides' unity or oneness in their identity (Stumpf – Fieser 2003, 18). Human beings exist in a hierarchical relationship with Being and with one another in an immanent relation (Nietzsche 1974, § 57). The universe resembles a web of life filled with complex interconnections within the cosmic net, where everything has mutual causality. There is a continual effort to ascend the hierarchical ladder. Stout connects the concepts of ontology and politics into what is known as political ontology. She explains the relationship as follows:

> The terms, political ontology, ontology and political theory, are in a directional causal relationship: ontology suggests the possibility and/or correctness of only certain political forms. For example, modern Western ontology is associated with the static, plural universe of positivism, atomistic individualism, and materially self-interested human beings, which leads to modern liberal political forms. In this way, political ontology depicts both what is and what should be – it describes what is believed to be the constitutive Good (Stout 2012, 390).

Stout's insight establishes the connection between ontology and political ontology. Political ontology shapes geopolitics and nationalism by determining how political communities understand Being, identity, territory, sovereignty and belonging. These ontological assumptions influence how states define their interests, justify territorial borders and pursue power within the international order. This relationship provides a framework for understanding in greater detail how political ontology informs the dynamics of geopolitics and nationalism.

2. Geopolitics and Nationalism

Geopolitics and nationalism are closely linked ideas that have shaped world history and still influence international relations today. While geopolitics is the world space – land, ocean and air – of global power, nationalism is the emotional force that moves the political players. It is a strong force in geopolitics, guiding how states behave and interact worldwide. It can provoke conflict, promote expansionist policies, and increase interventionism as countries focus on their perceived national interests. Recent trends show a rise in nationalism, alongside populism and techno-nationalism, which affects global trade and supply chains, even as many issues still need multilateral solutions.

While human geography is a subfield of geography, geopolitics is a subfield of human geography (Flint 2022, 2) that concentrates on the interaction between geography, power, and politics in shaping international relations and global strategy. This is because "geography and society are mutually constructed. For political geographers, this means that politics makes geographies, and that the geographies that are made are not politically neutral" (Flint 2022, 2).

Colin Gray supports the argument that all politics is actually geopolitics, since all politics always works within a particular geographical context (Mayer 2016). Geopolitics, therefore, refers to "the interaction between power relations and geography" (Flint 2022, 3) – the distribution of political power within a geographical space, encompassing land, water, and air, among various

political actors in the context of control, domination and influence. According to Flint, geopolitics

> Is about the exercise of power. It is about geography. It is about actions. It is about how we portray, or represent, those actions. It is about how the powerful have created worlds. It is about how the weaker have resisted such efforts and, in some contexts, partially constructed their own worlds. It is about a multitude of connected actions and actors and the geographies they make, change, destroy, and maintain (Flint 2022, 1 – 2).

Geopolitics is the world space with its countries, land, oceans, airspace, resources, and borders where nations as the players compete for influence, position, and security through their strategic moves – such as wars, alliances, trade deals, and territorial claims. The powerful states gain advantages by exerting their influence and pressure in the world's affairs through their political power, state behavior, and international relations.

Geopolitics holds both prospects and challenges. As nations navigate, shifting power dynamics, technological advances, environmental concerns, and socio-economic transformations, geopolitics becomes both more complex and more influential. Even though it fosters cooperation and mutual growth, there are more competitions, conflicts and fragmentation. While "geopolitical competition and conflict play a central role in canonical accounts of the emergence of nation-states and national identities" (Soehl – Karim 2021, 406) by creating external threats, which strengthen nationalist sentiments within the country, nationalism can destabilize geopolitics by provoking ethnic conflicts, secessionist movements, and territorial disputes. Nationalism frequently fuels geopolitical rivalry, while geopolitics provides the platform and resources for nationalist ambitions to flourish. Nationalist pride prompted European empires to compete globally for colonies (Hobsbawm 1987, 67). Geopolitical strategy drove aspirations such as German expansion. The Cold War between the two rival superpowers – the U.S. and USSR – was framed in geopolitical, ideological, and nationalist terms between freedom and socialism. In the contemporary era, Russia's invasion of Ukraine combines geopolitical strategy with Russian nationalism. Similarly, China's nationalism is linked to territorial claims in the South China Sea and Taiwan. U.S. nationalism, encapsulated by the slogan "America First," influences its role as a global power. The same applies to Europe; rising nationalist movements pose challenges to European integration policies.

The transition from a Western-led unipolar order to a more multipolar world is reshaping global governance by expanding the influence of emerging powers and regional organizations, fostering more diverse, cooperative, and regionally driven approaches to security and shared challenges. The unipolar World Order refers to a system dominated by the West (Hansen 2000, 112). It is important to understand that the concept of the West is not geographical; it is global and organic. Its historical influence is rooted in shared values and standards shaped by Christianity and the Enlightenment. As a result, the West includes Western and Central Europe, parts of Eastern Europe, the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Conversely, the multipolar world order pertains to other non-Western systems. The emergence of non-Western powers such as China, India, and Brazil is changing global influence away from a Western-dominated unipolar system. This development will balance global governance, diversify leadership, and foster new alliances. Multipolarity presents an opportunity for diversity. In a multipolar world, no single state actor holds dominance. This scenario allows for innovation in problem-solving, as middle powers like India, Brazil, South Africa, ASEAN, and Gulf states can promote issue-specific solutions without being entangled in the U.S.–China rivalry. Concrete examples include Brazil's efforts to preserve the Amazon and Africa's expanding role in food security.

Regional integration has become an increasingly important strategy for states to enhance collective security, strengthen economic cooperation, and address shared challenges amid growing uncertainties in globalization. Some setbacks to globalization, such as trade wars, pandemic disruptions, and nationalist politics, have heightened the awareness of many states to turn towards regional integration as a more reliable framework. Regions like the African Union (AU), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the European Union (EU) are becoming strategic platforms for states to balance sovereignty with collective bargaining power, thereby advancing regional cooperation. They foster regional stability, trade, and collective problem-solving, especially in areas such as health, climate change, and security. Regional integration also transforms security systems. In the Western alliance, NATO demonstrates how military integration offers a collective deterrence system to its member states. In the Sahel region, an alliance of security dynamics and collective defence is evident.

Technological diplomacy is emerging as a central dimension of global power, with states leveraging advanced technologies, innovation, and digital cooperation to enhance strategic influence, shape international standards, and

address shared global challenges. Geopolitics and technology are becoming increasingly intertwined. The concept of technological diplomacy – using technology both as a tool of foreign policy and as a subject of negotiation – is gaining prominence in global power relations. In the past, power was solely assessed by military strength, security, political influence[1] and economic power, reflected in GDP size, trade dominance, control over global markets, natural resources like oil, gas, and rare earths, as well as financial influence through currency strength, global banking reach, and overseas investments. In the contemporary era, nations are investing in digital and cyber diplomacy, space programmes, and AI governance. Technological capabilities – such as AI, quantum computing, biotechnology, cyber technology, and semiconductors – are strategic assets that define a country's influence, control over supply chains like rare earths and chips, 5G infrastructure, technology alliances, for example, U.S.–Japan–South Korea on semiconductors, EU digital sovereignty, and BRICS technological cooperation. Scientific and technological influence, along with geostrategic power, innovation, space programmes, and geographical advantages such as control of key sea routes, borders, and chokepoints, constitute new frontiers of diplomacy. These can foster shared frameworks and global standards, helping to avert conflict and promote innovation.

Global problem-solving has become a defining feature of contemporary geopolitics, requiring rival states to combine competition with cooperation through multilateral frameworks to address shared transnational challenges. The geopolitics of the 21st century concentrates on how political, economic, and cultural power are mobilized to tackle shared global challenges. This marks a shift from rivalry to co-opetition. Traditional geopolitics views adversaries, such as the U.S.-China, U.S.–Russia and EU–Russia, mainly in terms of military and economic competition. Although these rivals still compete, they collaborate on planetary issues and existential threats, like climate change, cybersecurity, AI governance, migration, energy, food, and space governance. Therefore, the pressures of global problems lead rival states towards hybrid models of competition and cooperation. The U.S. and China may clash over trade, but they still co-develop frameworks for AI safety and emissions reduction.

[1] Political influence, including sway over international organisations like the UN, WTO, IMF, and World Bank, diplomatic reach, alliances with NATO, regional groups, bilateral treaties, and aspects of stability and good governance.

Furthermore, these mechanisms address transnational issues such as pandemics and terrorism. International cooperation through multilateral organisations, like the UN and WHO, coordinates responses and shares resources effectively. The future of geopolitics will be judged less on which state dominates and more on which state can solve problems at scale while managing rivalry.

Great power rivalry is increasingly shaped by nationalism and identity politics, intensifying geopolitical competition, weakening international cooperation and increasing the risks of conflict, economic fragmentation, and global instability. The geopolitical competition and identity-based politics intersect to create both opportunities and challenges for states. The challenges of geopolitics and nationalism in great power rivalry include heightened security dilemmas, weakened institutions, economic fragmentation, nationalist-fueled flashpoints, alliance tensions, greater escalation risks, and identity-based ideological divides. Together, they contribute to a more fragmented and unstable international order where managing rivalry becomes significantly harder. Great power rivalries are increasingly influenced by nationalism, which turns competition into a zero-sum struggle and raises the risk of conflict. Nationalist rhetoric (Puri 2004, 4) amplifies geopolitical disputes, such as the U.S. – China tensions over Taiwan and the South China Sea and Putin's "special military operation" (Hodge et al. 2022) in Ukraine. This undermines global cooperation by paralyzing institutions like the UN, WHO and WTO, and fuels protectionist economic policies, including sanctions, tariffs, and technology restrictions. Nationalism also intensifies territorial disputes, weakens alliances, and compels states to take sides in global alignments, limiting leaders' flexibility to compromise. As rivalries are framed not only in strategic but also civilizational and identity terms, they become more intractable, increasing the likelihood of escalation.

Resource competition over critical assets such as energy, minerals, water, and arable land – especially in the Arctic, Africa, and the South China Sea – are intensifying the potential for conflict, environmental degradation, and human displacement. "The Arctic includes all areas north of the Arctic Circle and the associated eight Arctic states, i.e. Canada, Denmark/Greenland, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, the United States and Sweden" (Sweden's Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2011, 11). According to the United States Geological Survey (USGS), the Arctic harbors natural resources of around 22%, 18% of oil and 30% of natural gas 126 in its territory (Buchanan 2016). This is one of the main points of interest in the region.

Nationalism and populism are increasingly reshaping geopolitics by prioritizing national sovereignty, identity, and popular legitimacy over multilateral cooperation, thereby influencing foreign policy, global governance, and international alliances. Nationalism is a political ideology that emphasizes loyalty, identity, and devotion to one's nation, often prioritizing sovereignty and unity over external influence (Puri 2004, 31 – 32). It fosters unity within but can also foster exclusion and hostility towards other nations and citizens. Conversely, populism frames politics as a struggle between "the pure people" and "the corrupt elite" (Molloy 2018). In foreign policy, populists often portray international institutions, globalism, or multinational corporations as "elites" undermining the people's sovereignty. Together, nationalism and populism shape geopolitical choices such as skepticism towards international institutions, a preference for bilateral over multilateral agreements, and a willingness to challenge globalization. Rising nationalist sentiments weaken multilateral cooperation, reduce foreign aid, and lead to withdrawal from international agreements. Notable examples include President Donald Trump's "America First" (Flint 2022, 6) slogan, which rejected multilateralism, criticized NATO, withdrew from the Paris Climate Accord, as well as Europe's ascent of nationalist-populist parties, such as in Hungary, Poland, and Italy, challenging EU integration and democratic norms. In India, Hindu nationalist populism influences regional geopolitics, particularly in South Asia. President Putin's Russia employs populist-nationalist narratives to justify foreign interventions and territorial claims (Vorobyov 2022), such as in Crimea and Ukraine. Latin America's populist-nationalist leaders challenge U.S. influence, promote protectionism, and seek alliances with alternative powers. From the perspective of nationalism and populism, geopolitics shifts from being rule-based and cooperative to being driven by identity, sovereignty, and immediate popular legitimacy.

In geopolitics, nationalism is a potent force for unity and independence, but also presents notable prospects and challenges – namely, exclusion, aggression, and authoritarianism in international cooperation. It strengthens national unity and identity by fostering shared values, social cohesion, and collective purpose, while promoting political participation and aspirations for self-determination. Nationalism enhances social cohesion by fostering a shared sense of history, culture, and language. It promotes national pride (Soehl – Karim 2021, 412) and solidarity, especially in "times of crisis" (Puri 2004, 5) or external threats and empowers nations or ethnic groups to seek autonomy or

independence – particularly from colonial or oppressive rule, as seen in anti-colonial movements across Africa and Asia. It can also lead to increased political participation and governance that reflects the will of the people.

Identity politics in foreign policy reinforces nationalist and populist narratives that prioritize the sovereignty of "the people's nation" and often portray outsiders and supranational institutions as threats to national interests. With reinforcement of nationalism and populism, "the people's nation" becomes central, framing outsiders – immigrants, refugees, neighboring nations, or supranational bodies – as threats. Nationalist governments prioritise sovereignty over collective global action, such as climate change agreements, migration treaties, and trade pacts.

Exclusion and xenophobia, often fueled by nationalist rhetoric, undermine social cohesion, international cooperation, and democratic governance by fostering discrimination, isolationism, conflict, and the erosion of human rights. Xenophobia is hatred or discrimination against foreigners or outsiders, often rooted in an "us and them" (Copland 2019) mentality. It has historically triggered conflicts and wars. It was the root cause of World Wars I & II, civil wars, secessionist movements, and the breakup of Yugoslavia. It undermines global cooperation, fostering isolationism, withdrawal from international alliances such as the UN, the WHO, the EU, or the WTO, and impairs efforts against climate change and global health. Nationalist rhetoric is frequently used to centralize power, suppress dissent, justify censorship, repression, or human rights abuses, and erode democratic institutions. These prospects and challenges reveal both the possibilities and the limits of power-oriented politics, paving the way for Levinas' ethical frame as a practical corrective to the ontological and power-oriented assumptions underpinning geopolitics and nationalism.

3. Levinas' Ethical Frame

Levinas' ethical argument presents a profound rethinking of ontology and power dynamics. His work represents an ethical inversion of traditional Western thought, especially in its concepts of the Other, subjectivity, and responsibility. Western philosophy is inherently ontological and ontology is inherently totalizing. Levinas argues that ontology tends to reduce the *Other* to the *Same*, assimilating differences into a homogeneity so that the subject can be controlled and comprehended (Levinas 1969, 42). To resist totalization is to escape thematization, not to be fully known, grasped, or dominated. In Levinas' (1969) framework, ontological power is understood as ethical power.

According to him, ontological power and intellectual spontaneity are radically inverted and limited when confronted by the ethical presence of the Other (Levinas 1969, 43). This marks a shift from control, domination, influence and mastery to responsiveness and service. Contrary to traditional ethics, which is ontological because it is derived from Being, he argues that ethics is anarchical, primordial, pre-linguistic, pre-historical, pre-rational, pre-theoretical, and pre-ontological (Levinas 1981, 101). Its core principle is the infinite responsibility for the Other (Levinas 1969, 244). In his argument, responsibility precedes freedom because one can be free only after fulfilling their responsibility for their neighbor (Levinas 1981, 161).

In line with Levinas' ethical argument, ethics needs to be kept present within the "immanent frame" of political institutions, at least as a trace, to incessantly correct the political. It is indeed a fact that every (even liberal) political institution, which may have been designed to safeguard the interests of all members in theory, in practice often protects some specific interests more than others. In such a situation, Levinas holds that "the face-to-face serves as a corrective to the institutions and the laws of political society: "But politics left to itself bears a tyranny within itself; it deforms the I and Other who have given rise to it, for it judges them according to universal rules, and thus as in absentia" (Bernasconi 1999, 79).

In his ethical argument, Levinas provides the resources to integrate ethics with politics. Ethical politics commits itself to the sensible dimension of human existence, the altruistic Other. Ethics is an encounter with the Other that demands an asymmetrical response. "In the meeting with another person's naked Face, I become confronted with all other people, who are just as much in need of my help as the one who stands before me" (Burggraeve 1981, 36).

When politics becomes responsive to the ethical demand of the Third (Levinas 1969, 212), it ceases to be self-legitimating and becomes continually answerable to ethical responsibility. In Levinas' argument, the ethical dyad expands into the political triad with the presence of the multiple others (Levinas 1981, 157), thereby making comparison, fairness, and justice necessary. Ethics does not replace politics; rather, it orients, guides, and humanizes it. Ethical responsibility serves as the normative horizon that continually calls political institutions to account. Because politics is necessary to enact laws and establish institutions that administer and enforce justice, Levinas maintains that politics must remain grounded in ethical responsibility for the Third. Political institutions become the practical embodiment of ethical responsibility. Politics is, therefore, legitimate only insofar as it remains

answerable to the foundational responsibility to the Third. In this way, political activity gives practical expression to ethical responsibility through institutions that embody ethical justice, protect human dignity and uphold humanitarian obligations. Ethical responsibility is thus translated into political structures that restrain arbitrary power and continually subject the exercise of sovereignty to ethical scrutiny. Levinas' ethics functions as a regulative ideal, demanding that power remain ethically accountable. Rather than abolishing the dynamics of power, it transforms them from an end in themselves into instruments of ethical justice and service to others. Ethical politics, therefore, mediates governance by ensuring that the exercise of power remains continually oriented toward ethical responsibility, ethical justice and an ethically accountable state.

4. Conclusion

Levinas' ethical theory seeks to awaken our ethical consciousness and draw humanity away from political acrimony, economic exploitation, class divisions, and religious fanaticism – guiding us instead toward a recognition of the humanity of the Other, which he sees as the foundation of true human existence (Levinas 1969, 39). According to Levinas, ethics begins with the encounter with the Other that demands an asymmetrical response (Levinas 1969, 43). His ethical frame displaces traditional notions of power rooted in domination and mastery, rethinks them through the lens of responsibility, vulnerability, and substitution. Ontology, instead of grounding ethics, is *disrupted* by the ethical – by the face of the Other – which interrupts the primacy of Being and calls us into question (Levinas 1969, 43). When politics becomes intertwined with ethics, thereby becoming responsive to the ethical demand of the Third, politics is no longer independent of itself but instinctively answerable to the ethical needs of the Third. Since the counterpart to the egocentric Self is the altruistic Other, Caygill argues that Levinas' ethics envisions a politics grounded in universal responsibility. For both thinkers, protecting individual dignity is the fundamental feature of humanity (Caygill 2002, 95). Finally, this paper has demonstrated that Levinas' ethics offers a practical political ontology that serves as a corrective to the ontological and power-oriented assumptions underlying geopolitics and nationalism, enabling political institutions to remain ethically accountable without abandoning the realities of power.

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Eschatology and Progress: When the New Becomes the Last

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HODEC, M. E.: Eschatology and Progress: When the New Becomes the Last
YOUNG PHILOSOPHY 2025: CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS, 2025, pp. 68 – 73

The Christian tradition is not typically associated with innovation and progress. However, within the history of ideas, a distinct theological discipline, eschatology, is devoted entirely to the consideration of the new. The concept of eschatology has been intensely discussed since the 17th century, not only in theology, but also in other fields. Philosophers such as Friedrich Schleiermacher, Ernst Bloch, Paul Tillich, Karl Löwith, and Emmanuel Levinas have debated it. Eschatology is characterized by a unique interpretation of progress and dynamics because it equates the new with the last. This concept has implications for philosophical conceptual work, ontology, the history of science, and the general debate on progress. In eschatology, the renewal of humanity coincides with its end. However, wouldn't that mean beginning the analysis of the new in the wrong place?

Keywords: eschatology – progress – philosophy of history – Neos – Kainos

1. Introduction

The question of the future of humanity is as old as intellectual history itself. As finite beings, we are essentially interested in our own mortality and the future of our species. This interest extends far beyond merely describing our existence. The human is not only a living being, but also has a world-forming effect. This means that the human world is human-made. This applies to epistemology, ethics, aesthetics, and philosophical anthropology. Therefore, the big question, "What is the future of mankind?" is inevitably humanistic and anthropomorphic. This is an advantage because, if history were not human-made, it would be hubris or dissociation just to ask about one's future

as a human being. Indeed, the question literally forces itself upon us. First and foremost, humanity can therefore be glad that we can ask about the future, because this means, in the self-referentiality that comes with it, that we can influence that future.

Throughout the history of philosophy, perspectives on the future of humanity have been clearly defined. The main positions are outlined in the announcement text for "Young Philosophy 2025": Heraclitus attributes war as the origin of all things to define the impermanent nature of the world using the metaphors of consuming fire and flowing rivers. In contrast, Parmenides unifies thinking and being, ultimately placing the world in a static, unchanging state. In his dialogues, Plato, like Aristotle in *De Generatione et Corruptione*, paints a picture of a cyclical history of world and humanity. This idea was adopted in Hellenism and early Christianity but reformulated into a linear perspective. The Renaissance, in turn, adopted the cycle of rebirth as its own, and with Hegel, the interplay of the static and dynamic in history itself entered into a dialectical relationship. Finally, the 20th century shattered all previous frameworks in terms of historical circumstances and historical-philosophical theory.

2. The New in Early Christianity

Let's start with Greek influences and the early days of Christianity. The Greek language has two words for "new." One is "νέος" for something new that is continuously developing. Neos does not contradict the past and is essentially temporal. The Greek word "καινός," on the other hand, also means "new." Kainos, however, develops discontinuously and contradicts what came before. Kainos is that which was not there before or has not yet arrived. Thus, it is essentially qualitatively constituted.

Regarding early Christianity, the affinity toward "kainos" is evident in the name of the New Testament because, in Greek, the New Testament means: Kainē diathēkē (καινὴ διαθήκη). Kainos, the supposedly stronger and more radical "new," has prevailed over Neos in the naming process.

The word "kainos" appears a total of 38 times in the New Testament. It is usually understood as a not-yet, or something new that lies in the future. In its promise to replace the old with the new, the new that is longed for here indicates the aura of a salvific event. In Mark, the teaching of Jesus is primarily described as "new": "They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, 'What is this? A new [καινὴ] teaching—with authority!' " (Mark 1:27).

In the Epistle to the Romans, the new is seen in light of replacing the old: "But now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we are enslaved in the newness [καινότητι] of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the written code" (Rom. 7:6).

Text passages in which both neos and kainos can be found are particularly revealing. For instance, consider Paul's letter to the Colossians:

> Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices and have clothed yourselves with the new self [νέον], which is being renewed [ἀνακαινούμενον] in knowledge according to the image of its creator (Col. 3:9-10).

Neos indicates continuous human change, while kainos expresses a transcendental act: the divine touch as the ultimate trigger of change. Neos refers to different and changing states, while kainos refers to the process of becoming itself.

For the sake of completeness, it should be noted that "neos" appears 29 times in the New Testament. There, it refers to the traditional Platonic meanings of being young, immature, and easily influenced. A particularly meaningful passage can be found in Matthew:

> Neither is new [νέον] wine put into old wineskins; otherwise, the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins are ruined, but new [νέον] wine is put into fresh [καινούς] wineskins, and so both are preserved" (Mt 9:17).

The same figure can also be found in Mark:

> Similarly, no one puts new [νέον] wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost, and so are the skins, but one puts new [νέον] wine into fresh [καινούς] wineskins (Mark 2:22).

Thus, both Mark and Matthew prepare for the totalization of the new in its specific Christian meaning. According to them, a new doctrine is not enough; a new man and a new covenant are also needed. Catholicism is concerned with the whole. The word itself, "katholikos" (καθολικός), meaning "concerning the whole," points to this.

Until then, the new, in its two meanings of neos and kainos, stands largely in parallel with the classical tradition of the terms. The neos-new is more closely related to the ancient original than the kainos-new, yet both explore the historical significance of the term.

This changed with the Book of Revelation. In John's formulation, the Apocalypse undergoes a fundamental conceptual shift.

3. Eschatology

Throughout the history of ideas, a prominent perspective on the fundamental interaction of statics and dynamics in the philosophy of history has emerged: eschatology (τὰ ἔσχατα – "the last things"). Christian theology has dedicated a whole discipline and a teleology to the phenomenon of the new with eschatology. However, this eschatological view of the new has an essential peculiarity. Eschatology associates the new with the last and, consequently, with the end.

The word "eschatology" first appeared in the 17th century, replacing terms such as "de novissimis" and "de extremis." In 1677, Abraham Calov used the term "ΕΣΧΑΤΟΛΟΓΙΑ sacra" in a chapter heading in "Systema locorum theologicorum." The term "eschatology" also appeared in the title of Philipp Heinrich Friedlieb's 1644 work, *Eschatologia seu Florilegium theologicum exhibens locorum de morte, resurrectione mortuorum, extremo judicio, consummatione seculi, inferno seu morte aeterna et denique vita aeterna.*

From the 17th century onward, the new gained increased power and radiance within Christianity. However, this significance is not expressed through a dynamic emergence. On the contrary, the new is set aside as the ultimate eschaton. Nothing more will come after it; it becomes an ultimatum. The Kainos-New is totalized with reference to the Book of Revelation and thus forms the special case that we call the eschaton. Karl Löwith recognizes a clear break with antiquity, noting that the Greeks were more modest. They did not presume to know the ultimate meaning of world history but instead focused on becoming and passing away (Löwith 1983, 14).

By placing the new as an eschaton, it becomes unattainable. This unattainability from the future teaches us retrospectively about our own present impossibility of the new. The Book of Kohelet, also known as Ecclesiastes, makes no secret of this: "What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done; there is nothing new under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9). We must wait for the new; that is the motto of the eschaton. However, this not only makes the new impossible to attain, but also ahistorically obscures the past, thus preventing any movement in history.

Ernst Bloch's "The Principle of Hope" also subjects the new and the eschaton to intensive analysis. Repetition is excluded, thus rejecting a cyclical view of the world as found in antiquity. On the other hand, the new overcomes

the temporal aspect of repetition by transcending time itself. Third, the new is formulated as the last in such a way that one might suspect: beginning and end are equated (Bloch 1976, 232f.). Theodor W. Adorno succinctly formulates this idea: "Luridly the horror of the ending lights up the deception of the origin" (Adorno 2005, 226).

The totalized and mystified new thus turns into the last, and thus into the very oldest. The internal differentiations, dynamics, and dialectics of the new are eliminated. The new is — and this cannot be emphasized enough — totalized. Or, as John has Jesus say: "And the one who was seated on the throne said, 'See, I am making all things new [καινὰ]' " (Rev. 21:5).

4. Ways out?

The moment the new is defined as an eschaton, it loses its dynamic metaphysics of becoming. However, this essential aspect of becoming protects the new from the aporias that occur with a static definition. Ultimately, the new loses its own concept as it coincides with the old in its forward-looking impossibility. Thus, historical progress or even movement is also declared impossible. In eschatology, the newness of Kainos, which distinguishes progress[1] from continuous development, is exclusively the result of divine action.

Advent (adventus, meaning "arrival") offers Christians a way out of this aporia. It is the moment in history when the old is still present, but the new—the coming of the Lord—has not yet arrived. However, Advent also forms the concept of a utopian newness that must remain eschatological. As a utopian (οὐτοπία – no place) concept, it cannot be assigned to a place. In this case, we are not dealing with a philosophical concept of the new. Understood eschatologically, the new and progress elude the place of history if the truly new is an eschaton and only an eschaton. However, if progress and the emergence of the new occurred continuously in the past and during Advent, they would not carry any newness, at least not the newness of Kainos.

As a category of faith, progress remains eschatologically available, albeit with the epistemological limitations of a borderline phenomenon. Such a phenomenon, like one's own death or the apocalypse, cannot be experienced. However, as a philosophical topos, progress is precisely separated from an eschaton because the movement of progress's becoming excludes a coincidence of the new with the old. Consequently, progress cannot be

1 For a more detailed formulation of the concept of progress with regard to the new, see Chapter: "Fortschritt" (Hodec 2024).

conceived within eschatological philosophies of history—or at least not dynamically. Whether the idea of an original goal can be reconciled with the idea of progress is a question that is worthwhile not only for theology but also for philosophy.

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New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition (2021): National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

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On the Self-Sacrificial Duty Toward Future Generations

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SPODNIAK, S.: On the Self-Sacrificial Duty Toward Future Generations
YOUNG PHILOSOPHY 2025: CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS, 2025,
pp. 74 – 81

This contribution explores the justification for a moral duty of self-sacrifice on behalf of future generations. Concern for the well-being of future generations is often perceived as a net loss for us, requiring the suppression of our interests and egoistic tendencies. From this perspective, self-interest appears to contradict the moral duty we ought to uphold. However, this contribution challenges that assumption. It argues that our self-interest and concern for future generations need not conflict. Since the good of our progeny is part of our good, we have reason to make sacrifices for them and these sacrifices are not without compensation. More broadly, this contribution contends that individual interests may transcend personal existence and that their pursuit is justifiable on agent-relative grounds.

Keywords: future generations – moral duty – rationality of action – self-interest – self-sacrifice

Introduction

Imagine that middle-class parents have two small children. These parents won €25,000 in the lottery. They had long dreamed of taking a trip around the world together, but due to a lack of funds, they had always postponed it. Now they finally have the opportunity to go on this journey. However, while planning it, they started to feel guilty. They realized that they could instead deposit the money into a savings account for their children. After years of interest accumulation, it could give their children a more comfortable start in life.

This fictional example highlights apparent conflict between the interests of the parents and those of future generation. It seems that in such cases, a zero-sum game takes place, where the interests of one must give way to the interests

of the other. However, this conflict can be framed not only as a clash between the interests of parents and their children, but also as a tension between the moral duty to act in the best interest of one's children and conceptions of rationality that define rational action as the pursuit of self-interest. Prima facie, parents have a moral duty to act in the best interests of their children. On the other hand, prima facie, it is rational to act in one's interest. If this holds, then an action taken for the benefit of one's children or future generations might be morally commendable, but not necessarily rational.

This paper aims to argue that the tension between the moral duty to act for the benefit of our offspring and the rationality of pursuing our self-interest can be reconciled. A key premise already well established in the literature is that our well-being is partly dependent on the well-being of our progeny (Brink 1990, 1992; Hocutt 2008; Rosati 2009; Carbonell 2018). However, the issue of the contingency of this dependence also needs to be addressed.

The first part of the paper examines the tension between the moral duty to act on behalf of future generations and the rational pursuit of self-interest. The second part proposes a solution in the form of a partial dependency of an individual's well-being on the well-being of their progeny. The third and final part addresses the issue of the contingency of this interconnectedness between an agent's well-being and the well-being of others.

1. Self-Interest vs. Moral Duty toward Future Generations

In the literature, numerous approaches attempt to explain why parents have moral obligations toward their children, or more generally, why we have moral obligations toward future generations. For instance, the theory of causal responsibility holds that if we bring someone into the world, we are responsible for their existence and the needs and suffering that come with it (Shiffrin 1999; Archard 2014). Competing consent-based theories, on the other hand, hold that parental moral obligations arise only through the voluntary acceptance of responsibility for another person, such as in the case of adoption.

In the case of moral duties toward future generations, we should mention the deontological approach, which holds that moral duties are justified by the fact that future generations will also be rational beings and therefore deserve the same moral consideration as those who already exist (Nagel 2012). There is also the utilitarian approach, according to which there is no reason why the effort to minimize suffering and maximize happiness should apply only to people who already exist (Singer 2011). Those who are yet to be born should

also be included in this utilitarian calculus. Furthermore, some authors combine elements of both approaches (Jonas 1984).

However, the aim of this paper is not to prove whether or not such moral obligations exist, nor to argue that one of these approaches is better than the others or, conversely, that any of them is untenable. In this paper, I simply assume that such moral obligations do exist. The paper aims to explore whether, if these obligations exist, they are compatible with conceptions of rationality that define rational action as acting in one's self-interest. The theory of rational egoism offers this approach to rationality.

Rational egoism holds "that it is necessary and sufficient, for an action to be rational, that it contributes to the well-being of the agent" (Shaver 2009, 2). The most well-known proponent of rational egoism, Ayn Rand, argues that acting in one's rational self-interest is not only moral but the highest moral purpose of life. Her distinctive Objectivist ethics "holds that the actor must always be the beneficiary of his action and that man must act for his rational self-interest" (Rand 1964, 6). In this context, Rand does not mean by "rational self-interest" that some interests are rational to pursue while others are not, but rather that pursuing self-interest is, by its very nature, rational. What is not rational to pursue, however, is action based on emotions or whims (Rand 1964, 9). Instead, rational egoism consists in pursuing one's long-term self-interest, guided by reason, values, and integrity.

I will allow myself here to set aside the numerous criticisms that have been raised against Rand's philosophy and her Objectivism,[1] because I am interested in a different issue, I am interested in the following problem: suppose that the egoist is right in claiming that it is rational to pursue one's self-interest. Can we, in that case, justify actions in favor of future generations?

2. Self-Interest and Shared Well-Being

Typically, when authors aim to reconcile the tension between the interests of parents and children, they appeal to the idea of shared or relational well-being. The premise is that our well-being is, to some extent, interconnected with the well-being of our loved ones (Brink 1990, 1992; Hocutt 2008; Rosati 2009; Carbonell 2018). For example, Hocutt (2008, 440) in this regard points out that we do not merely have selfish interests in being well; we also have selfless interests in ensuring the well-being of those we love. In his own words:

[1] For criticism of Rand's Objectivism, see, for example: (Rachels 1974 or Huemer n.d.).

> most of us care about the welfare of at least something or somebody besides ourselves. We love our families, our friends, our neighbours, and our country – as well as our pets, our sports, our hobbies, our social clubs, our lands, and our creations. Therefore, their interests are among our interests (Hocutt 2008, 439).

In a similar fashion, Carbonell remarks:

> typically, we not only desire what is best for our loved ones, but consider their well-being and our own to be intimately bound together. It is not simply that we desire that our loved ones' lives go well, nor simply that we take their lives going well to be one of the things that makes our lives go well (that is, one of the constituents of our well-being). It is, rather, that we sometimes simply cannot pry apart their welfare from our own (2018, 341).

Based on this, in the context of future generations, we can say that the interconnectedness of well-being enables an agent to act in the interest of their descendants while also aligning with their self-interest. It is often our selfless desire for our descendants to thrive that makes this alignment possible. The thought that they might, for example, live in a devastated or ruined environment causes us distress and stands in tension with this selfless concern.

However, a question arises as to whether benefiting others while also serving one's interests truly constitutes self-sacrifice. Rand is sceptic in this regard:

> If a man who is passionately in love with his wife spends a fortune to cure her of a dangerous illness, it would be absurd to claim that he does it as a "sacrifice" for her sake, not his own, and that it makes no difference to him personally and selfishly, whether she lives or dies (Rand 1964, 31).

If Rand is correct, it raises the concern that true self-sacrifice for a loved one may be impossible, since any action taken for the benefit of a loved one is, to some degree and in some respect, also advantageous to the agent.

I believe that way out is offered by Rosati (2009), who argues that for an act to qualify as self-sacrifice, it is sufficient that the agent experiences a gross loss of well-being, not necessarily a net loss. In other words, according to Rosati's approach, an agent may forfeit some aspect of their well-being in one respect, yet not be overall worse off, since the loss can be offset or compensated in other ways. For example, as in Rand's case, a husband may lose a fortune but save his wife's life, and paradoxically be better off overall because of his self-sacrifice. This is why, as Rosati notes, "self-interest and self-sacrifice need

not be utterly opposed: an act can both advance a person's good and constitute an act of self-sacrifice" (Rosati 2009, 314).

However, irrespective of the terminological debate surrounding the concept of self-sacrifice, one can conclude that, thanks to the inter-connectedness of well-being, it is often beneficial for the agent to act in the interest of others, such as future generations. This is why such actions can be rational according to theories like rational egoism. Rationality and acting in the interest of others can therefore be compatible. In Hocutt's words:

> behaving rationally does not mean only advancing one's selfish interests. It means doing what promises to advance one's interests, which may be selfish or unselfish. Therefore, one can be both rational and unselfish; one can even be both rational and self-sacrificing (2008, 440).

The problem we need to address, however, is this: what if we do not have those selfless personal interests? The interconnectedness of well-being is a contingent fact. Does that mean that a person lacking such connected well-being with others cannot act in the interest of future generations or others more generally and still be rational? This is the question I address in the next section.

3. What If One Is Not Empathetic?

Now, let us consider a possible objection to the argument in favor of agent-relative reasons to act for the benefit of future generations. The concern is that our non-egoistic preferences toward our progeny, such as our children, grandchildren, and future generations, are a contingent fact. That is, they arise under specific conditions and are neither universal nor necessary. This raises an important question: what if a person, let us call them S, does not possess these non-egoistic preferences? In such a case, S would lack the natural agent-relative reasons to prioritize or act on behalf of future generations. As a result, S may not feel morally or emotionally compelled to make sacrifices for the benefit of those who come after them.

Nevertheless, I believe that there is a response to this objection. This response follows from the following quote by Derek Parfit:

> Hedonists have long known that happiness, when aimed at, is harder to achieve. If my strongest desire is that I be happy, I may be less happy than I would be if I had other desires that were stronger. Thus, I might be happier if my strongest desire was that someone else be happy (Parfit 1984, 5).

The idea behind this quote is that people often experience greater hedonistic happiness when they care about others or pursue meaningful goals, rather than

when they focus solely on seeking their pleasure. There is growing empirical evidence suggesting that acting in the interest of others enhances one's subjective well-being (Curry et al. 2018; Regan et al. 2023; Chen 2024). Studies have consistently shown that prosocial behavior, such as helping others, giving to those in need, or engaging in volunteer work, leads to greater happiness. This implies that for psychologically typical individuals (that is, non-psychopaths), altruistic behavior may not only be morally commendable but also instrumentally rational, insofar as it contributes to a richer and more meaningful life. Many psychopaths, by contrast, tend to lack access to many of these affective rewards, which may explain their generally lower levels of reported life satisfaction (Durand 2018).

May I add that the tendency to find joy in acting for the benefit of others reflects a virtue that can be cultivated and strengthened over time. Of course, individuals differ in their natural inclination toward this virtue; some possess it more strongly than others. What matters is that, from an egoistic perspective, it can be rational to develop non-egoistic preferences or virtues, if possible, since they tend to enrich one's life and may increase overall well-being. For example, a psychopath may experience less happiness than a neurotypical person precisely because they cannot find joy in the things that typically please others. In this sense, it can be in an egoist's interest to develop non-egoistic preferences, including those that involve caring about future generations.

Conclusion

There appears to be a tension between our interests and the interests of future generations. However, our well-being is at least partly connected to the well-being of our descendants. Many of us hold non-egoistic preferences and genuinely want the lives of our children, grandchildren, and future generations to go as well as possible. However, what if someone, let us call them S, does not have these non-egoistic preferences? Even then, S may still have reason to cultivate them, if possible, since developing non-egoistic preferences could ultimately enhance their own well-being.

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Type Ambiguity and Function Individualisation in TIL 2025 and TPL

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SÁBO, J.: Type Ambiguity and Function Individualisation in TIL 2025 and TPL
YOUNG PHILOSOPHY 2025: CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS, 2025, pp. 82 – 97

This article analyses rules for attributing type to functions and relations in Transparent Procedural Logic (TPL) and Transparent Intensional Logic 2025 (TIL 2025). Both systems employ a type theory that classifies entities into certain types. This type theory is called a ramified hierarchy of types. The article shows that the definition of Closure and τ-closure permits multiple types to be attributed to the domain and range of the same function v-produced/v-constructed by these kinds of constructions. This multiplicity of types might cause ambiguity when assigning a type to this function. The article proposes adjustments to current definitions for Closure and τ-closure to mitigate this feature.

Keywords: TPL – TIL 2025 – ramified hierarchy of types – functions

1. Introduction

Tichý (1988) developed a logical system of Transparent Intensional Logic (**TIL**). This logical system was later developed into a full-fledged system of transparent intensional logic by adding further relevant definitions and rules by Duží, Jespersen and Materna (2010) and Raclavský, Kuchyňka and Pezlar (2015). TIL has been applied in research on many semantic problems, including the analysis of hyperintensional contexts (Jespersen and Duží 2022). Further development of TIL resulted in several versions of transparent logics, namely, Transparent Intensional Logic 2025 (TIL 2025) (Duží – Jespersen 2025),

Transparent Hyperintensional Logic (**THL**) (Raclavský 2020) and Transparent Procedural Logic (**TPL**) (Kosterec 2024).[1]

These systems of transparent logic are based on the technical apparatus of the λ-calculus[2] and model computation as the application of partial functions (Pezlar 2019). The computation is modelled[3] as operations with specific entities called constructions in TPL and procedures in TIL 2025. A construction presents its value through a process[4] called v-construction in TPL and v-producing in TIL 2025. Both terms stand for the same process of computation in these transparent logics. Still, this distinction is respected in the article (thus, the term *v-producing* is used when discussing TIL 2025 and the term *v-constructing* when discussing TPL).

TIL 2025 and TPL distinguish several kinds of constructions/procedures, specifically: ***Trivialization, variable, Execution, Double Execution*** and ***Composition*** in TIL 2025, and ***trivialization, variable, execution, double execution*** *and* ***composition*** in TPL.[5] In addition, TIL 2025 employs Closure and TPL τ-closure. Both ***Closure*** and ***τ-closure*** are used to perform abstraction over an input value, and their output value is the mapping/function[6] obtained[7] by abstraction.[8]

In general, a construction can also take another construction as its subprocedure/subconstruction. Russell observed that a specific kind of contradiction occurs with relation to self-reference or reflexiveness. One of the

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[1] This article will focus exclusively on TPL and TIL 2025. These logical systems differ from each other regarding rules for collisionless substitution and free occurrence of variables. These differences modify how computation works in those systems. On the other hand, these differences have no bearing on the topic discussed in this article.

[2] The λ-calculus was originally conceived by Church as part of a general theory of functions and logic, intended as the foundation for mathematics. Its subsystem dealing with functions became a successful model for the computable functions. This system is called the *lambda calculus* (Barendregt 1992).

[3] Constructions are understood not only as syntactic signs, but as extra-linguistic entities (Duží, Jespersen and Materna 2010, 3).

[4] The terms v-construction and v-producing refer to an abstract process, not a sequence of steps.

[5] In this article, standard notation for constructions and operations with constructions is used (like the attribution of types, v-construction/v-producing and substitution). It is assumed that the reader is acquainted with this standard notation. This notation is explained in detail in Duží, Jespersen and Materna 2010 and Kosterec 2024.

[6] The entity *mapping* can be identified with a function.

[7] The process of their computation differs according to their respective definitions. These differences are not relevant to the discussed topic.

[8] For example, Closure $[\lambda x\ [{}^{0}+\ {}^{0}2\ x\ ]] \to_{v} x = x + 2$ and τ-closure $[\lambda_{\tau} x\ [{}^{0}+\ {}^{0}2\ x\ ]] \to_{v} x = x + 2$.

examples that he provided is the famous case of the set of all sets that are not members of themselves (Russell 1908, 222). This kind of contradiction is also known as the vicious circle paradox. As a solution to these kinds of contradictions, Russell proposed a type theory that classifies entities into (pairwise disjoint) types, i.e. sets of objects. If at least one of the types in type theory is further split into orders 1, 2, …, n, such a type theory is called a ramified theory of types (Raclavský 2017, 408 – 409; Kosterec 2017).

The example of the vicious circle paradox in TPL/TIL 2025 is: $x \to_v x$.[9] If this is the case, the variable x must have been assigned as its own value by the valuation.[10] This would lead to a vicious circle if allowed. Transparent logics must include safeguards against such vicious circle paradoxes. TPL and TIL 2025 employ type theory to prevent these self-referencing cases. This set of rules for the classification of entities into types is called the ramified hierarchy of types.

In this article, the ramified hierarchy of types is analysed for both TPL and TIL 2025. Both logical systems employ similar rules for classifying objects into types. The article compares these rules with rules governing *Closure* and *τ-closure.* that, according to the definitions of *Closure* and *τ-closure,* the function v-produced/v-constructed by these kinds of constructions can have multiple types attributed to it. This creates room for ambiguity in the assignment of type to the function. The article proposes a change that tries to avoid this.

The article is structured as follows. In the first part, the definition of the ramified hierarchy of types in TIL 2025/TPL is presented, and an explanation is given of how these rules work. In the second part of the article, I will provide examples to show how differences in the types of a function v-produced/v-constructed by the Closure impact the identity of the function. Then I will propose adjustments to definitions for *Closure* and *τ-closure.* The article ends with a short conclusion.

2. The Ramified Hierarchy of Types in TIL 2025/TPL

This section provides a definition of the ramified theory of types and explains its application. The full definition for the ramified hierarchy of types is

[9] The sign $\to_v$ indicates v-producing/v-constructing under given valuation v both in TIL 2025 and TPL.

[10] Valuation is a total function that attributes a value to all variables. These values are then used as inputs when these variables are employed in computation. Therefore, all obtaining of a value from a construction (constructing/producing a value) happens under a certain valuation. This is indicated*v* in the terms *v-constructing* and *v-producing*.

provided only for TIL 2025 in the main text of the article; the definition for TPL is referenced in the footnotes.[11]

TIL 2025: Definition 1.1 (types of order 1)[12] Let B be a base, where a base is a collection of pairwise disjoint, non-empty sets. Then:

i) Every member of B is an elementary type of order 1 over B.
ii) Let α, β_1, ..., β_m (m > 0) be types of order 1 over B. Then the collection ($\alpha\beta_1$... β_m) of all m-ary partial mappings from β_1 x ... x β_m into α is a functional type of order 1 over B.
iii) Nothing is a type of order 1 over B unless it so follows from (i) and (ii).

The base for the type system in TIL 2025/TPL is formed by any type of objects apart from constructions. There is no specific requirement for the types of objects that should be part of the base. In that regard, TIL 2025/TPL are open-ended logical systems (Duží – Jespersen – Materna 2010, 43). For analyses of natural language, the *objectual base* is usually chosen.[13] An object O belonging to a type α is an α-object, denoted 'O/α' (Duží – Jespersen – Materna 2010, 43). For example, the notation 3/τ represents that 3 belongs to the type of real numbers (which is a base type). Every type of entity different from a relation is called atomic.

Functions have molecular types, meaning their type is determined by the types of their domain and range. For example, the relation mapping class of students/ι to real numbers/τ has type (τ ι)[14] and the function of addition "+" mapping two real numbers to their sum has type (τ τ τ).

[11] TPL employs a similar set of rules, which it adopts directly from Tichý's original TIL (Kosterec 2024, 48 – 55; 168). For the topic discussed in this article, the differences between those two sets of rules are not important. To show the similarity between the ramified hierarchy of types in TIL 2025 and TPL, we will also provide a corresponding definition for TPL in footnotes.

[12] A similar definition of this rule in TPL is as follows: TPL: Def. type of order 1 over B Let B be a base. i) Every member of B is a type of order 1 over B. ii) If 0 < m and α, β_1, …, β_m are types of order 1 over B, then the collection (α β_1 … β_m) of all m-ary (total and partial) mappings from β_1, …, β_m into α is also a type of order 1 over B. iii) Nothing is a type of order 1 over B unless it follows from (i) or (ii).

[13] The objectual base consists of: type o, which is the set of truth-values {T, F}; type ι, which is the set of individuals (the universe of discourse); type τ, which is the set of real numbers; type ω, which is the set of logically possible worlds (the logical space) (Duží – Jespersen – Materna 2010, 43; Duží – Jespersen 2025, 10).

[14] In the notation, the range is designated by the left-most sign after the left parenthesis; the other signs stand for the domain of the function/mapping.

All base types (both atomic and molecular) are types of order 1 and higher (see below).

TIL 2025: Definition 1.7 (ramified hierarchy of types) Let B be a base. Then:

T_1 (types of order 1) defined by Definition 1.1.

C_n (procedures of order n)[15]

i) Let x be a variable ranging over a type of order n. Then x is a procedure of order n over B.
ii) Let X be a member of a type of order n. Then ^0X, ^1X, ^2X are procedures of order n over B.
iii) Let X, X_1, ..., X_m (m > 0) be procedures of order n over B. Then [X X_1... X_m] is a procedure of order n over B.
iv) Let x_1, ..., x_m, X (m > 0) be procedures of order n over B. Then [$\lambda x_1 ... x_m$ X] is a procedure of order n over B.
v) Nothing is a procedure of order n over B unless it so follows from C_n (i)-(iv).

Constructions/procedures have their order, which determines to which type they belong. The order of a variable is given by the order of the type over which it ranges. Similarly, the order of Trivialization is given by the order of the type to which a trivialized entity belongs (the same applies also to Execution and Double Execution).

For example, let v be a valuation under which the variable $x \rightarrow_v 1$. Then the variable x must range over type τ (otherwise it could not have the number $1/\tau$[16] assigned as its value). Consequently, the variable x is a construction of order 1. Since 1 belongs to type τ of order 1, the Trivialization ^{01} is also a construction of order 1.

The lowest order of Composition and Closure, which are compound constructions, is the same as the lowest common order of constructions that are their parts.

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[15] A similar definition of this rule in TPL is as follows: TPL: Def. construction of order n over B Let B be a base. Let τ be any type of order n over B.
i) Every variable ranging over τ is a construction of order n over B. ii) If A is of (i.e. belongs to) type τ, then ^0A, ^1A, ^2A are constructions of order n over B. iii) If 0 < m and X_0, X_1, …, Xm are constructions of order n, then [X_0 X_1 …X_m] is a construction of order n over B. iv) If 0 < m and Y as well as distinct variables x_1, …, x_m are constructions of order n over B, then [λ_τ x_1… x_mY] is a construction of order n over B. v) Nothing else is a construction of order n over B unless it so follows from (i)–(iv).

[16] The sign "/" denotes, in this context, the attribution of the type to which an entity belongs.

TIL 2025: T_{n+1} (types of order n + 1)[17]

Let *n be the collection of all procedures of order n over B.

i) *n and every type of order n are types of order n + 1.
ii) If 0 < m and α, β_1, ..., β_m are types of order n + 1 over B, then (α, β_1, ..., β_m) (see T_1 ii) is a type of order n + 1 over B,
iii) Nothing is a type of order n + 1 over B unless it so follows from T_{n+1} (i) and (ii).

The rule i) TIL 2025: T_{n+1} (types of order n + 1) is very important because it leads to ramification of the type theory in TIL 2025/TPL. This part of the definition combines two rules into one section. It is important to distinguish them.

Firstly, it says that *n is a type of order n + 1. Type of order n + 1 in this context refers to the first line of the definition, which says that type *n is a collection of constructions of order n over B. This means that the variable x from our previous example, which is a construction of order 1, belongs to type *1, which is therefore a type of order 2.

It is also important to note that a construction has an order that differs from the order of types. The order of the type to which a construction belongs must be at least one higher than the order of this construction.

This rule also says that every type of order n (including types of constructions *n and base types) is also a type of order n + 1. This has implications for the order of all types, but consequently also for the order of constructions (and the determination of types to which these constructions belong). This rule leads to branching of constructions into multiple types and thus provides a basis for ramification of type theory in TIL 2025/TPL.

Let us analyse this rule in the context of our previous examples. Type τ, the set of real numbers, is of order 1. At the same time, according to the rule i) TIL 2025: T_{n+1} (types of order n + 1), this type is also a type of order 1 + 1, thus a type of order 2. We must keep in mind that this rule i) TIL 2025: T_{n+1} (types of order n + 1) is re-applicable. Therefore, τ, the set of real numbers as a type of order 2, is also a type of order 3 and so on. The lowest order 1 for the type τ (the set of real numbers) follows only from rule i) TIL 2025: Definition 1.1 (types

[17] A similar definition of this rule in TPL is as follows: Def. Type of order n + 1 over B Let B be a base. Let *n be the collection of constructions of order n over B. i) *n is a type of order n + 1 over B. ii) Every type of order n over B is a type of order n + 1 over B. iii) If 0 < m and α, β_1, …, β_m are types of order n + 1 over B, then the collection
(α β_1 … β_m) of all m-ary (total and partial) mappings from β_1, …, β_m into α is also a type of order n + 1 over B. iv) Nothing is a type of order n + 1 over B unless it follows from (i)–(iii).

of order 1). However, this type τ is also of a higher order (2, 3, 4 … and so on) due to the re-applicable nature of the rule i) TIL 2025: T_{n+1} (types of order n + 1).

This increase in the order of type τ directly impacts the order of the variable x that ranges over it. While x remains a construction of order 1 (since τ is a type of order 1), it is also a construction of order 2, 3 and so on. This is because the type τ also has higher orders according to the rule i) TIL 2025: T_{n+1} (types of order n + 1).

As we observed, the type to which a construction belongs is determined by the order of this construction. The variable x is a construction of order 1. Therefore, it belongs to type *1, which is a type of order 2. At the same time, the variable x is also of order 2. This means that x, besides type *1, also belongs to type *2, which is the type of order 3. Consequently, this variable x also belongs to types *3, *4 and so on. Each construction, therefore, belongs not only to one type but to a countably infinite number of types.

This is also true for variables that range over types of order 2 and higher (or constructions belonging to these types of higher orders). For example, assume a valuation v under which the variable $y \rightarrow_v x$ (the variable y ranges over type *1). The variable y is of order 2 (since the order of type *1 is 2) and therefore belongs to type *2 of order 3. At the same time, the order of type *1 is also 3, 4, etc. Thus, the order of the variable y increases correspondingly. Therefore, the variable y also belongs to type *3, *4 and so on (it is the same situation as with the variable x).

It is important to mention the difference between $y/*2 \rightarrow_v x$ and $z/*3 \rightarrow_v x$. The variable y ranges over type *1 and the variable z ranges over type *2. Both variables have the variable x in their range, since x belongs to both type *1 and type *2. However, variable y and variable z do not have the same range. Since the variable z ranges over type *2, it ranges over a type to which the variable y also belongs. This is not true for the variable y because type *1 does not contain the variables y or z. The range of variables is not affected by an increase in the order of types over which they range. This can also be seen in the fact that even if the order of the variable y increases to order 3 (thus it is also the same order as the variable z), the order of the variable z cannot be lowered to 2. Thus, the lowest order of these two variables can never be the same.

From this, two main observations can be made. First, the ramified hierarchy of types provides the smallest order for a construction. The construction also has every higher order, increased by 1, countably infinitely many times. Second, each construction belongs to every type *n of order higher than the order of this construction. At the same time, a construction cannot

belong to any type of order lower than or the same as the order of the construction itself. This prevents a variable from ranging over the type to which it belongs. Consequently, this blocks a vicious circle from occurring in TIL 2025/TPL.

The rule ii) TIL 2025: $_{Tn+1}$ simply states that the order of a molecular type increases in accordance with the increase in the order of types that it consists of.

3. Type of Functions v-Constructed by Closure and τ-closure

The type of functions v-produced/v-constructed by Closure and τ-closure is determined not only by a ramified hierarchy of types but also by definitions governing these kinds of construction. This section provides definitions for Closure from TIL 2025 and TPL. I will analyse them in turn, and I will show parts of the definitions that create ambiguity in the classification of functions/mappings v-produced/v-constructed by these kinds of constructions.

The full definition for Closure in TIL 2025 is as follows (the highlighted parts concern type classification for the function v-produced by Closure):

TIL 2025: Definition 4.1 (procedure)

iv) The Closure [$\lambda x_1 \ldots x_m$ Y] is the following *procedure*. Let $x_1, x_2, \ldots, x_m$ be pairwise distinct variables **v-producing entities $B_1,\ldots,B_m$ of types $\beta_1, \ldots, \beta_m$,** and **Y a procedure *v-producing* an α-entity**. Then [$\lambda x_1 \ldots x_m$ Y] is the *procedure λ-Closure* (or *Closure*). It v-produces the following **function *f*/($\alpha\beta_1, \ldots, \beta_m$).** Let $\{y_1, \ldots, y_k\} \subseteq \{x_1, \ldots, x_m\}$, $k \leq m$, be the subset of those variables that occur free in Y and let $v(B_1/y_1,\ldots,B_k/y_k)$ be a valuation identical with v at least up to assigning objects $B_1/\beta_1, \ldots, B_k/\beta_k$ to variables $y_1, \ldots, y_k$, respectively. If Y is $v(B_1/y_1,\ldots,B_k/y_k)$-improper (see iii, v, vi), then *f* is undefined on $<B_1,\ldots,B_m>$. Otherwise, the value of f on <B1,…,Bm> is the α -entity $v(B_1/y_1,\ldots,B_k/y_k)$-produced by Y.

The definition iv) TIL 2025: Definition 4.1 (procedure) states that the molecular type of function f v-produced by Closure is at range the same as the type of entity v-produced by Y and at the domain is determined by types of entities v-produced by variables $x_1, x_2, \ldots, x_m$.

For example, assume a valuation v, a variable x/*1 ranging over base type τ, a Trivialization ^{0}1/*1 and a Closure [$\lambda x\ ^0$1] /*1. The Closure [$\lambda x\ ^0$1] v-produces a constant function mapping any real number to the number 1. The entities v-produced by x are of type τ (since this variable ranges over this base type). The Trivialization ^{0}1 v-produces an entity 1, which is also a real number of type τ.

Therefore, the molecular type of the function v-produced by [λx ^{0}1] is (τ τ), thus [λx ^{0}1] ->$_v$ (τ τ). The assignment of type to this function is not problematic, and the definition provides a clear type for the output function of this Closure.

What if we want to have a Closure v-producing a function that maps constructions to the real number 1? We can modify our example as follows. Assume the valuation v, a variable y/*2 ranging over type *1, the Trivialization ^{0}1/*1 and a Closure [λy ^{0}1] /*2.

This Closure [λy ^{0}1] should v-produce a constant function mapping constructions of type *1 to the real number 1. Therefore, the molecular type of this function should be (τ *1).

However, it is important to pay close attention to the actual formulation of the relevant parts of this definition. The rule clearly states that the type of this function at its domain is the same type as the type of entity v-produced by the variable y. The variable y v-produces (any) of the constructions belonging to type *1. However, the type of these constructions is not only type *1. As was discussed in the previous section, every construction belongs to multiple (a countably infinite number of) types. The only requirement that it must fulfil is that the order of these types is higher than the order of the construction itself.

Therefore, all constructions v-produced by the variable y are also constructions of type *2, *3 and so on. Consequently, according to the definition of Closure in TIL 2025, the possible types of the function v-produced by the Closure [λy ^{0}1] are all of these: (τ *1); (τ *2); (τ *3)[18]...and so on.

The definition of Closure links the type of domain of the function v-produced by it to the type of object v-produced by variables after λ. Consequently, if those variables v-produce entities belonging to multiple types, multiple possible types may be attributed to the output function's domain.

The same is true with regard to the determination of the type for the range of the functions v-produced by Closure if an object v-produced by Y is a construction. Assume a valuation v, a variable x/*1 ranging over base type τ, a variable y/*2 ranging over type *1, a Trivialization ^{0}y/*3 and a Closure [λx ^{0}y] /*3.

The Closure [λx ^{0}y] v-produces a constant function mapping all real numbers (from type τ) to the variable y. Consequently, the molecular type of this function should be (*2 τ). However, the definition of Closure clearly states that

[18] It is important to note that the rise in the order also happens with regard to τ, which is a base type (as we stated in Section 2 of the paper). However, this rise in its order does not change the identity of objects belonging to it. Therefore, it does not affect the range of the function with τ as its range.

the type of the range of the function v-produced by the Closure [λx ^{0}y] must be the same as the type of the object v-produced by the Trivialization ^{0}y. The Trivialization ^{0}y v-produces the variable y, which is of type *2. At the same time, this variable y belongs to every type higher than *2 as well. Consequently, according to the definition of Closure in TIL 2025, the possible types of the function v-produced by the Closure [λx ^{0}y] are all of these: (*2 τ); (*3 τ); (*4 τ) … and so on.

Therefore, the definition of Closure also links the type of range of the function v-produced by it to the type of object v-produced by the construction Y. Consequently, if this construction Y v-produces an entity belonging to multiple types, multiple possible types may be attributed to the output function's range.

It may be seen as just a small technical feature in the definition of Closure. On the other hand, types *1, *2, *3 … and so on contain different constructions. Type *2 contains all constructions from type *1 and all variables ranging over this type. It also contains all Trivializations, Single Executions and Double Executions[19] of these constructions plus all compound constructions created from these constructions and relations between them (Kosterec 2024, 55). Types *1 and *2 differ clearly in the identity of entities they contain. Therefore, a function of type (τ *2) has a wider domain than a function of type (τ *1). Similarly, a function of type (*2 τ) has a wider range than a function of type (*1 τ).

Mathematical functions are identified by their domain and their range. Therefore, functions of type (τ *2), (τ *1), (*2 τ) and (*1 τ) are all different functions. Functions in TIL 2025 do not belong to multiple types; they belong only to one molecular type that is specified by the type of their range and the type of their domain. Therefore, the function v-produced by the Closure [λx ^{0}y] /*3 from our example should be only of type (*2 τ). Molecular types also have orders, just like other types. The lowest order of the type (*2 τ) is the same as the lowest common order of types *2 and τ, which means that it is the type of order 3. The order of this type increases in accordance with the increase of orders of types *2 and τ. Therefore, type (*2 τ) is also of order 4, 5 and so on. However, this increase in the type's order does not change the type of this

[19] With regard to these Double Executions I am referring to a Double Execution of the form ^{2}X, where X is a member of *1. In this case, the Double Execution is of order 2 and therefore belongs to type *2 (as follows from ii) TIL 2025: Definition 1.7). The situation would be different for a Double Execution that v-produces as its value a construction X. Such a Double Execution can also be of a higher order than 2.

function from the type (*2 τ) to some other type (as is the case with constructions).

Moreover, the type of a function determines how a function operates in a Composition. To clarify this point, we can extend our previous example as follows. Assume the valuation v, the variable y/*2 ranging over type *1, the variable z/*3 ranging over type *2, the Trivialization ^{0}1/*1 and a Closure [λy ^{0}1] /*2 and Closure [λz ^{0}1] /*3.

Both the Closure [λy ^{0}1] /*2 and the Closure [λz ^{0}1] /*3 v-produce a constant function mapping constructions to the real number 1. The type of this function should be, in the case of the Closure [λy ^{0}1] ->$_v$ (τ *1) and in the case of the Closure [λz ^{0}1] ->$_v$ (τ *2). If we, under the valuation v, use the Closure [λz ^{0}1] in the Composition [[λz ^{0}1] ^{0}y], the output value is the number 1. However, if we use the Closure [λy ^{0}1] in the Composition [[λy ^{0}1] ^{0}y], then this Composition is improper. This result follows from the fact that the variable y, as an argument v-produced by the Trivialization ^{0}y, is not of the same type as the domain of the function v-produced by the Closure [λy ^{0}1]. This clearly demonstrates that the difference in the type of domain in these otherwise very similar functions modifies how these functions behave in computation in TIL 2025.

Therefore, the issue with the type attribution to the range and domain of the function v-produced by a Closure is directly tied to the issue of function individualisation. This highlights the necessity for a precise understanding of the type of v-produced function in the Closure's definition.

Consequently, if Closure were to v-produce a function with different types for its domain or range, it would not be a single function but several different functions. This result would contradict the definition of the Closure, which allows for only one function to be v-produced by each and every Closure.

For the definition of Closure to work properly, it is necessary to clearly state the preliminary conditions under which the Closure operates.

The types β_1, …, β_m, of entities v-produced by variables after λ, and the type α of α-entity in the definition of Closure, do not refer to the arbitrary types these entities hold within the ramified hierarchy of types. Rather, they are the specific types of these entities assigned for a particular Closure. Although not explicitly stated in the definition of Closure, this point is understood by how the definition is applied.

In the next section of the article, I propose an adjustment to its definition by which to limit the room for possible ambiguity in the type assignment to the output function of Closure.

The definition of *τ-closure* in TPL differs from the definition of Closure in TIL 2025. TPL adopts this definition directly from Tichý's original TIL (Kosterec 2024, 42; 168). Therefore, it is important to test these features specifically with respect to the actual definition of *τ-closure* in TPL. The full definition for τ-closure in TPL is as follows (the highlighted parts concern type classification for a function v-constructed by τ-closure):

TPL: Def. v-constructing

vi) Let x_1, …, x_m be distinct variables that ***v*-construct objects of type ξ_1, …, ξ_m.** The ***τ*-closure** $[\lambda_\tau\ x_1 \ldots x_m Y]$ *v-constructs* the following **mapping** *f*, which takes **any tuple X_1, …,_X_m of the respective types ξ_1,…,ξ_m** into that **member (if any) of *τ*** which is $v(X_1/x_1,\ldots, X_m/x_m)$-constructed by Y, where $v(X_1/x_1,\ldots,X_m/x_m)$ is like v except that it assigns X_1 to x_1,….,and X_m to x_m.

Type τ is not identical with the objectual base type τ (which denotes a set of real numbers). In the definition of τ-closure the type τ does not represent a specific base type of real numbers but can stand for any type by which the τ-closure is specified. To distinguish between these two usages of the symbol "τ", I will, from now on, use the sign "τ" while referring to the base type of real numbers, and I will use the sign "***τ***" in bold script in relation to τ-closure. The type ***τ*** must be given alongside other specifications of the valuation for the τ-closure (Kosterec 2024, 42).

Rule vi) TPL: Def. v-constructing clearly states that the resulting mapping maps objects X_1, …,_X_m to a member (if any) of ***τ***. The definition specifies that this object, into which the objects X_1, …,_X_m are mapped, is a member of this particular type ***τ*.** This identifies the range of the mapping directly with the type ***τ*,** not with (possibly multiple) other types of its member.

Therefore, other types of the member of ***τ*** are not relevant for the determination of the type of the range of the mapping v-constructed by τ-closure. Even if the type ***τ*** is a construction type *n, it must be clearly specified with regard to τ-closure beforehand. The identity of this type ***τ*** is not changed by the increase in its order. Therefore, this type τ is unambiguously determined by the specification of τ-closure. Consequently, there is no ambiguity in the determination of the range of the mapping v-constructed by τ-closure.

To further clarify this point, we can use our previous example. Assume the valuation v, the variable x/*1 ranging over base type τ, the variable y/*2 ranging

over type *1, the Trivialization ^{0}y/*3 and a τ-closure [λ_τx ^{0}y] /*3, where τ is *2. Then [λ_τx ^{0}y] ->$_v$ (*2 τ).

With regard to the domain of the mapping, the situation with τ-closure is virtually the same as with Closure. The τ-closure also links the type of domain of the v-constructed mapping to the type of object v-constructed by variables after λ. Consequently, if those variables v-construct entities belonging to multiple types, multiple possible types may be attributed to the output function's domain. Therefore, the room for ambiguity in the determination of type on the domain of the mapping v-constructed by τ-closure in TPL is the same as in the case of functions v-produced by Closure in TIL 2025.

4. A New Suggestion to the Type Determination of Functions and Mappings

This section proposes changes to the definitions of Closure and τ-closure. Firstly, I propose changes to the way the type is determined in the domain of the functions/mappings v-produced/v-constructed by Closure and τ-closure.

It is important to point out that only variables can form a part of Closure and τ-closure after λ. Therefore, only constructions that are variables determine the domain of the functions/mappings v-produced/v-constructed by these kinds of constructions. What is important to note is that variables range over only one specific type. This type has various orders, but it is still the same type. Therefore, the range of every variable is always unambiguously specified by the type that this variable ranges over. The identity of this type is not affected by a change of order of the type nor by a change of order of the variable. This can be used to adjust the definition of Closure and τ-closure to block the multiplicity of types on the domain.[20]

With regard to the domain, I propose the following changes in definitions of Closure and τ-closure in TIL 2025/TPL (proposed changes are in bold script):

TIL 2025: Definition 4.1 (procedure) [adjusted domain].

iv) The Closure [$\lambda x_1 \ldots x_m$ Y] is the following *procedure*. Let $x_1, x_2, \ldots, x_m$ be pairwise distinct variables v-producing entities $B_1,\ldots,B_m$ **ranging over** types $\beta_1, \ldots, \beta_m$, and Y a procedure *v-producing* an α-entity. Then [$\lambda x_1 \ldots x_m$ Y] is the *procedure λ-Closure* (or *Closure*). It v-produces the following function *f*/($\alpha\beta_1, \ldots, \beta_m$). Let $\{y_1, \ldots, y_k\} \subseteq \{x_1, \ldots, x_m\}$, $k \leq m$, be the subset of those variables that occur free in Y and let

[20] A version of TIL presented by Raclavský, Kuchyňka and Pezlar formulates the definition of a type of function v-produced by Closure in a similar manner (Raclavský, Kuchyňka and Pezlar 2015, 31). In this version of TIL, the issue of this function's domain type does not occur.

$v(B_1/y_1,\ldots,B_k/y_k)$ be a valuation identical with v at least up to assigning objects B_1/β_1, …, B_k/β_k to variables y_1, …, y_k, respectively. If Y is $v(B_1/y_1,\ldots,B_k/y_k)$-improper (see iii, v, vi), then *f* is undefined on $<B_1,\ldots,B_m>$. Otherwise, the value of f on <B1,…,Bm> is the α -entity $v(B_1/y_1,\ldots,B_k/y_k)$-produced by Y.

TPL: Def. v-constructing [adjusted domain]

vi) Let x_1, …, x_m be distinct variables that **range over** type ξ_1, …, ξ_m. The τ-closure $[\lambda_\tau\ x_1\ldots_{xm}Y]$ *v-constructs* the following mapping *f*, which takes any tuple X_1, …,_X_m of the respective types $\xi_1,\ldots,\xi_m$ into that member (if any) of τ which is $v(X_1/x_1,\ldots,\ X_m/x_m)$-constructed by *Y*, where $v(X_1/x_1,\ldots,X_m/x_m)$ is like *v* except that it assigns X_1 to x_1,….,and X_m to x_m.

These changes guarantee that the domain's type is linked to the type that variables range over. It is necessary that entities $B_1,\ldots,B_m$ fall into this type; otherwise, they could not serve as values for these variables under original definitions. Therefore, these adjusted definitions behave in all other aspects as the original definitions. The only difference is that the new rules unambiguously determine the domain of the output function/mapping.

Regarding τ-closure, there is no problem with the determination of the type of range of the output mapping (as follows from the discussion in Section 3). Thus, this solves the potential ambiguity of type determination for TPL.

Regarding Closure, there is also an issue with the ambiguity of the type of range of the v-produced function. Moreover, Closure (similarly to τ-closure) ought to v-produce a function even in the case that Y is v-improper or even improper full stop.[21] Kosterec pointed out that the current formulation of the rule iv) TIL 2025:[22] Definition 4.1 (procedure) does not allow for determining the type of the range of output functions if Y is v-improper (Kosterec 2024, 76 – 77).[23] Kosterec observed that the definition requires having an object v-produced by Y, and then the type of this object links to the type of range of the output function. However, if the construction Y does not v-produce any object, there

[21] These extreme cases are known as degenerate functions in TIL.

[22] Kosterec formulated this objection against the previous version of TIL known as TIL 2010, but this objection is still valid in the case of TIL 2025 because this part of the definition is the same as in the previous version TIL 2010.

[23] However, he did not propose a solution to this problem specifically for Closure (Kosterec 2024, 76 – 77).

is no basis for the determination of the range's type of the output function.[24] Thus, TIL 2025 lacks clear rules for determining the types of range with regard to degenerate functions.

It is important to reiterate that the construction Y (which is abstracted-over) determines the range of the output function of Closure. However, this construction Y can be of any kind, not just a variable. Therefore, the solution to the problem must be formulated specifically for each of the kinds of construction in TIL 2025. This aspect of the definition of Closure will be subject to further research and is not addressed in this article.

5. Conclusion

In this article, the ramified hierarchy of types in TIL 2025 and TPL is compared with the definitions of Closure and τ-closure. The article shows that the definitions of Closure and τ-closure, in certain cases, permit attributing several distinct types to the same function v-produced/v-constructed by Closure and τ-closure. I proposed adjustments to the definitions of Closure and τ-closure. These adjustments limit the feature with respect to the domain of the function v-produced by Closure and by τ-closure, both in TIL 2025 and TPL.

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[24] This is a main reason why Kosterec prefers τ-closure to Closure as a more suitable kind of construction.

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