

# Abstract





## ART AND ECOLOGY: TOWARDS AN ETHICAL CONSENSUS

Viewing the current generalized crisis (social, environmental) as representative of a deficient value system calls for a redefinition of the relationship between three realities: nature, society, and human consciousness. Our main argument is that, in this case, art can have a balancing effect vis-à-vis the excessive demands of scientific and technological rationalism. Thus, despite their considerable differences, a dialogue between science and art, with nature and life as reference points, could prove particularly fertile. An advantageous field for such a coming together is Ecological Science, since it essentially puts forth the concepts of “interdependence” and “innate value” of living beings. We therefore argue that: (1) Art, through experiential knowledge encompassed within the aesthetic experience, creates a higher-level emotional response, able to function as a moral motivation, and (2) Ecology, correspondingly, giving prominence to the innate value of living organisms as wholes, can trigger the feeling of responsibility towards them. Thus, guided by non self-serving motives, the holistic point of view, a common feature of Ecology and the kind of art which is mainly inspired by vitalism in a broad sense, is able to lead to an expanded ethical approach towards the phenomenon of life.

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DUALISM AND ICONICITY IN THE HERESIOLOGY  
OF THE 12TH CENTURY

The article examines the heresy of the Cathars in South France in relation to the Byzantine worldview, especially in regard to love life and iconicity. The Cathars seem to have originated in the heresy of the Bogomils of Byzantium and their “philosophy” seems to imply a kind of distrust toward iconicity as part of the illusionist nature of the fallen world. The Cathar view on love was manifest in their ideals of courtly love, according a predominant place to women and denouncing the medieval institution of marriage, and had no match in the anti-heroic conception of love as held by the Byzantines, according to H.-G.

Beck. For Philip Sherrard, the orthodox idea of love between the sexes granted a major role to iconicity as a form of divine incarnation in the reality of the couple. The article concludes with the epistemological caveats of Michel Foucault who distinguishes between the explosion of discursive practices about love and the hypothesis of repression, providing the guiding lines for a different genealogy of romance.

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NATURAL LAW AND HISTORICISM:  
FROM THUCYDIDES TO MARX

Though the origins of Thucydides' thought are scientific, its outcome does not avoid encountering historicism. Thucydides, while starting from the solid basis of human nature, which justifies the periodic repetition of historical events, concludes with an utter relativism as to the purpose of his work. Thucydides' aim of history is relative, subjective, and clearly under the influence of historicism. Thucydides justifies power: there is as much right as there is power; he believes in this natural right. However, the historical outcome –the justification of the imposition of power on the historical course– disconnects history from science, as defined by the ancients. On the other hand, Marx, failing to recognize a fixed human substance, which defines human action and encompasses ultimate human purpose, is even closer than Thucydides to historicism. While Thucydides started out from the eternity of human substance and came to the relativism of the imposition of power on the sphere of history, Marx holds that human essence is the product of class struggle, which is obviously governed by power relations in the historical sphere. The birth act of man is history, because human essence is how he shapes himself, how he self-empowers himself historically.

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## THE VISUAL HARMONY OF THE UNIVERSE INTO THE CREATION OF MUSIC: MIKIS THEOTHORAKIS' PHILOSOPHICAL THEORY

Mikis Theodorakis, the great Hellene composer, in exploring the noematic and existential depth of his personal experience concerning the relationship between the spectacle of the firmament at night and the creation of music, conceived his theory of Universal Harmony. The approach of the logic and the nature of this relation, according to the philosophical writings of Theodorakis, leads us to a metaphysically astonishing observation: the visual harmony of the universe is intimately present in the experience of musical creation.

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## JUSTICE, INTELLIGENCE AND MORALITY IN ANAXIMANDER

This paper deals with the values of justice, intelligence and morality in the thought of Anaximander. Through its course, it is supported that the first two values are carried by a different bearer, while the third is absent from the philosophy of the Milesian. More specifically, justice is attributed to the divine infinite nature (*ἄπειρον*), intelligence is attributed to human nature, while morality, along with a higher purpose of life, is excluded from human life, thus making survival the highest human priority.

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## THE SUBJECTIVE QUALITY OF HAPPINESS

What is happiness? Is it about feeling good or about being good? In other words, is the character of happiness subjective or objective? Since classical times this enduring question has haunted philosophers and, particularly in the modern era, scholars of other academic fields as

well. In contrast to Aristotle's notion of happiness, which is identified with virtuous activity, or Aquinas' perception of it as the vision of divine essence, both of whom state that happiness must be common to all men, philosophers like Montaigne and Bentham put forward the idea that happiness is determined by humans' individually differing needs or temperaments. Montaigne is convinced that happiness is a subjective state of mind and that contentment can be achieved within a private sphere of life which each person must be allowed to maintain. The subjective happiness approach dominates the thought of utilitarian philosophers such as Jeremy Bentham, who argues that happiness can be measured; it is a matter of experiencing pleasure and thus differs from person to person. Modern empirical researchers focus on subjective well-being, defining happiness as the degree to which an individual judges and perceives the overall quality of his life favorably. Most notably, psychologist Abraham Maslow maintains that human needs, although universal, are perceived and satisfied in a different way by each one of us, thus suggesting a personal path to happiness.

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#### ELEMENTS OF EURIPIDES' COSMOLOGY IN HIS PLAY ION

*Ion* by Euripides, 418/14 B.C., has an idiosyncratic plot as well as a semiological interpretative approach. In this paper, we will focus on the presence of the goddess Athena, who in her long monologue wonders about the quality of the divine energy and how she can affect the meaning of the play. Ion, according to our interpretation, symbolizes the soul, which being old, descends into the lower world, to experience polarity. In this journey, the soul forgets its origin, becomes trapped in matter, and becomes inactive; she then needs the presence of Athena to remember and consequently to know her ontological essence. The locus for the drama is the Delphi Oracle, which was chosen by the poet to emphasize the insightful dimension presented by humans. The god Apollo, although absent from the stage, is present in words of

the goddess Athena. The outcome is auspicious; there are numerous peaks, and the mystical discourse of Euripides emerges and makes itself manifest only to initiated souls. The facts signify the solution, and they point to the two natures of the soul: the material, which is represented by Creusa and Xuthus, and the spiritual, which is represented by the god Apollo.

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#### THE SOCIAL CONTENT OF SYMMETRY AS AN AESTHETIC CATEGORY

The aim of this paper is to clarify the concept of symmetry as an aesthetic category. This can be done by distinguishing between aesthetic symmetry and non-aesthetic symmetry, i.e. symmetry as a category of practical everyday life (e.g. as it is utilized throughout the labor process). In this context, some key philosophical approaches are examined, drawing from ancient aesthetics (Aristotle, Vitruvius), 18<sup>th</sup> century aesthetics (Kant's critique of the philosophical tradition of the Wolff-Leibniz school), and modern aesthetics (the case of the late Georg Lukács). Midway between the two extreme positions, the Socratic identification of the Beautiful with the Useful on the one hand, and Kant's rigid isolation of Art from the practical interests of everyday life on the other, lies –as the solution to the problem– a midway position (held by Vitruvius and later adopted by Lukács), which makes a clear distinction between aesthetic and non-aesthetic symmetry (the former is always related to a subject whereas the latter is not), while, at the same time, it recognizes the dependency of the former on the latter, i.e. the fact that aesthetic symmetry reveals in a sensory manner the same social content lying hidden beneath symmetry as a construct (non-aesthetic) principle.

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## COVID-19: FROM PHILOSOPHY OF LAW TO BIOETHICS

The Covid-19 pandemic has proven to be highly challenging context for the interpretation and application of bioethical concepts, principles and theories. The author considers that some key issues of private law philosophy, which have emerged from the circumstances of the pandemic, are equally crucial for addressing bioethical issues that have also arisen during the pandemic. Private law philosophy issues are dealt with in the first part of the article and illustrate how the pandemic alters interpersonal obligations by transforming the respective reasons for action which justify the co-existence of equal and free persons, e.g., as contracting parties. The philosophical point of view here should be that of non-distributive justice. But, according to the author's argument, a pandemic, and its consequences, cannot be effectively combated only by means of private or criminal law. For this purpose, restrictive measures of administrative law, e.g., in regard to travel, are absolutely imperative. These measures, however, are not of non-distributive justice: we need to move to distributive justice principles. Regarding bioethical practical dilemmas, which are addressed in the second part of the article, we also face the same transition problem from non-distributive principles to distributive ones. The paradigmatic case here is the doctor-patient relationship as a non-distributive trust relationship. But a national healthcare system is, in any case, based on distributive principles. It seems, thus, that bioethical reasons for action, connected with a legitimate and efficient plan to combat a pandemic, justify, within a scheme of social cooperation, the substitution of strong non-distributive personal relationships by weaker distributive ones.

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PUBLIC HEALTH AND PRIVATE LIFE IN THE AGE  
OF THE PANDEMIC. INITIAL THOUGHTS

The aim of this paper is to set down some initial thoughts regarding one of the many troubling issues that emerged in the era of the



pandemic. This involves the philosophical and bioethical grounding of the right to privacy insofar as this has been put under pressure and is threatened with violation nowadays. The pandemic has pushed societies towards adopting measures such as physical or digital contact tracing with a view to slowing down the spread of Covid-19. This has been extensively used in East Asia and China, and less in Europe. I will try to think through the supposed conflict between privacy and public health, arguing that the pandemic is a good opportunity for our societies to reflect afresh on our moral principles. To this end, we shall also address the parallel and thorny issue of the relation between rights and public interest. From a bioethical point of view we are not justified to sacrifice the right to privacy, because even in the extreme circumstances of public health crises, such as today's pandemic, we should not lose sight of the fact that our ultimate concern is not just the preservation of *life simpliciter*, but the full meaning of the life of a *person* (*bios*)

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## EPIDEMICS AS A HISTORICAL PHENOMENON

This paper presents an overview of the epidemics and pandemics from the times of the Old Testament to the days of Covid-19 and focuses mainly on the disruptive effects of the disease in the respective societies and the loosening of moral obligations of individuals to one another and to society as a whole. Further, this paper looks at the epidemics of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, most of which have been caused by modern-day living conditions and lifestyle, such as in the case of cardiovascular diseases, diseases of the respiratory system, cancers and diabetes. An excellent depiction of the totality of the problems that arise in societies hit by pandemics is presented by the leading Greek novelist Alexandros Papadiamantis in his novel *Βαρδιάνοξ στα σπόρκα* [*Guardian on the quarantined ship*], which concerns the cholera epidemic of the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, in which the author underlines the deficiencies of the Greek administration and the hostile sentiments that

developed between the quarantined travelers and the inhabitants of the small island where the ship was anchored.

The new Covid-19 pandemic presents some distinctive features, which merit our attention: 1. Although not officially acknowledged as a medical emergency situation, it has provoked state authorities to take measures similar to those applied in time of war. 2. Due to knowledge gathered in previous years about genomic functions, the virus's genome could be deciphered and sequenced just one month after its appearance, thus enabling scientists to go ahead with the design of new vaccines. 3. The resilience of the Internet, which although extremely burdened, was able to respond to the new needs, such as teaching and remote working. 4. The production and transportation of goods continued with no important delays. 5. The main problems arising from the pandemic are of political nature: a. Governments with populist characteristics (such as the USA and Brazil) underestimated the danger and were slow in implementing measures; b. Effective political cooperation between nations proved deficient.

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## BIOETHICAL QUANDARIES IN THE ERA OF THE PANDEMIC

The bioethical quandaries arising during the period of a pandemic are multiple and intractable. In the context of the present study, we will limit ourselves to the examination of the critical issues of: a) mandatory vaccination in order to manage the pandemic; b) compulsory medical tests, including temperature screening of the population; c) the use of experimental drugs; d) scientific freedom, when a group of scientists express an opinion that challenges the necessity of ordering a hard lockdown, without providing scientifically justified epidemiological studies to this end; e) making the wearing of face masks mandatory; and f) the individual responsibility of each of us in preventing the spread of the pandemic. Participation stresses the importance of education in bio-

ethics. Accordingly, this supports the notion that, once the fight for life and health is won, constitutional lawyers ought to take over the reins and determine that the nature of restrictive measures and healthcare policies adopted in periods of crisis, when the prime occasion for their implementation arose due to the pandemic, is one of extraordinariness.

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#### PHILOSOPHIZING ABOUT DEATH WITH THE EPICUREANS AND SCHOPENHAUER

This paper focuses on a series of philosophical arguments, put forward by the Epicureans and Schopenhauer, against the fear of death. It deals with Schopenhauer's take on Epicurus' argument that death is nothing to us since, when we are alive death is not, and when death comes we are not. Moreover, it examines Lucretius' argument that we should be no more troubled about the time after our death than we are about the time before our birth. In other words, that our post-mortem non-existence does not differ from our pre-natal non-existence. It then moves on to Schopenhauer's own argument that death is better than life, which is invariably full of pain and suffering, and, finally, his metaphysical argument that death is not in fact our absolute annihilation; our true essence, the will, remains untouched by death. In its last half, the paper focuses on Schopenhauer's views on true salvation, the denial of the will, and attempts to reconcile his views on death with his view that salvation can only be attained through being alive and fighting the will. Via a rigorous philosophical dialogue between Schopenhauer and the Epicureans, the paper ultimately moves to a consolation in the face of death and, what is more, to a much needed consolation in the face of the hardships of life.

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## VACCINATION REFUSAL, PUBLIC HEALTH, AND THE HARM PRINCIPLE

Refusal to undergo vaccination in normal no less than in emergency circumstances, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, draws its ethical justification from the ethical standpoint that moral agents should be allowed maximum freedom when it comes to issues related to their own, personal health. In this short paper I will assume that health related freedoms or liberties, together with any moral right that draws upon these, cannot be unconditional, but as is the case with all liberties their status and validity are dependent upon their compliance with the harm principle. Subsequently I shall try to substantiate my view that free riding is guilty of bringing about personal as well as impersonal harm, and therefore it cannot count as proper liberty. I will conclude with the view that immoderate rightism is susceptible to partiality and bias, and this demerit becomes even more evident in emergency situations, pandemics included.

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## THE PRIMACY OF HUMAN LIFE: MORAL DILEMMAS IN AN ERA OF PANDEMIC

Human life is generally considered as the cornerstone of our moral and legal values. The value of human life is usually derived from the disvalue of death, namely from the reasons that make death bad for the one who dies. This does not mean that it is solely a subjective value. To be sure, every person shapes their life according to their own conception of well-being. But, at the same time, human life is, irrespective of its content, a general value and an individual right that has to be respected by all, and protected by our legal institutions. Between these poles under which the value of life manifests itself various tensions can arise. The recent Covid-19 pandemic has brought to the fore the most serious among them. This paper investigates the severe dilemmas posed by the scarcity of medical resources and the inescapability of

determining priorities among patients. Several criteria are discussed: age, urgency, the degree to which death matters to each patient. The paper argues that the criterion of age should be regarded only as the *ultimum refugium* in the most extreme situations. Besides, it is argued that priorities shouldn't be set by the State, nor decided by individual doctors, but only established by guidelines of independent committees.

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#### HEALTH AND THE PANDEMIC. THE UNITY OF CLINICAL ETHICS AND PUBLIC HEALTH ETHICS

The paper addresses some main ethical challenges confronting human agency in the current time of covid-19 pandemic. It defends a normative framework of fundamental ethical principles relevant both in the field of clinical bioethics and public health ethics. It argues for the normative continuity between these two spheres of moral reasoning about action, and offers grounds for meeting seeming tensions between them. It particularly focuses on public health provision and examines the moral legitimacy of different kinds of mandates, from the standpoint of the demands of justice. *Prima facie* conflicts between individual rights and public health provision as a public good are addressed and dismantled, from the standpoint of an obligation-based account of human agency. The latter provides solid ground for the demand of living together under conditions of freedom, mutual respect, justice, care and solidarity, from the standpoint of all. Our social relationships presuppose the force of mutual obligations in enacting our duties, from which the requirement of mutual respect of our fundamental rights derives.

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