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LIFE IN PROCESS: THE LIVED-BODY ETHICS FOR FUTURE

The article explores the concept of 'life' via processual ontology, contrasting the approaches of substance and processual ontologies, and investigates the link between ontological assumptions and sociopolitical discourses, stating that the predominant substance ontologies also promote an objectifying and anthropocentric framework in sociopolitical discourses and ethical approaches. Arguing for a necessary shift in the ontological conceptualization of life to enable environmentally-minded ethics for the future, the article explores the tie between the sociopolitical discourses embedded in a worldview that is grounded in substance ontology and ethical frameworks. Whilst affirming this tie, this study also explicates the limitations and potential feasibility of a processual understanding of life, in the context of the existential disposition of the self-alienated lived-body self that is ontologically predisposed to objectification as a necessary pre-condition to human self-awareness.

Keywords: *life, lived-body, ethics, process, ontology, Posthumanism*

Introduction

In this article, I will explore the difference between substance and process ontologies in understanding life, and their corresponding influence on the sociopolitical discourse, arguing that environmental solidarity might function better if a profound change was implemented in the ontological understanding of life, moving toward a post-anthropocentric shift away from ego-centeredness. In addition, a processual understanding

of life, might also positively affect societal relationships, mitigating social alienation and the feeling of isolation, and human (as well as nonhuman) wellbeing in general.

This view is based upon the assumption that our understanding of life (and death) is, in the last instance, dependent upon the ontological disposition of the ‘understanding-agent’, i. e. the human self, and, thus, to a certain limit always context-dependent and socially constructed, yet, at the same time also materially embedded – namely, related to the actual material perceptual possibilities of humans, as materially embedded and enfolded¹ (processual) beings.

Hence, it is understandable that to a certain limit the decentering of the ego position (as proposed by different authors in environmental ethics and Posthumanism) is problematic, and our perceptual position always already takes part in reality-construction, even before clear and conscious decision-making is possible. Yet, at the same time, it seems plausible to assume that decentering of the ego-position is possible, as (1) the cultural limitations of the ontologically bound ego position are unclear and culturally varied – namely, different cultures already have varied perceptions of life and the self, and (2) the discursive praxis and attitudes, related to the understanding of life and matter have variously affected human-environment relationships, as well as human-human relationships over different time periods and spaces.

The proposal of the lived-body ethics, thus, considers both the necessity to acknowledge human selfhood, without which, any conversation of human responsibility and ethical stance is entirely impossible, as well as proposes a reconsideration of the self within a broader context of a processual philosophy of biology, thus, moving beyond an ego-centered, substance-bound ontology, to delineate the processual character of life and the self. In this context, ‘post-anthropocentric’ designates an attempt to

¹ This concept is used in place of the concept ‘embodied’, as a way to designate the carnality (*Leiblichkeit*) of the self, rather than a mechanical ‘embodiment’ of a self. Rather than being ‘endowed’ *with* a body, the self is to be understood as an intrinsic part of the processually constituted and perpetually maintained lived-body.

balance the traditional Western conceptualization of a world viewed via the ego-function of a lived-body self, by the processual instability of the selfhood, demonstrating 'life' beyond a 'life and death' dichotomy, funded by the ego-function of a self.

In an ethical context, at least two reasons for such reconsideration are apparent: a processual understanding of the self allows (1) to demonstrate human-environment interaction and interdependency, facilitating environmental solidarity,² as well as a posthuman understanding of nature, as a natureculture continuum, where human processes and natural processes are profoundly interwoven, and (2) to cultivate environmentally-minded attitudes and praxes in dealing with our life-world, thus, influencing the material conditions and human relationships. The second reason is linked to the ontological assumption of the naturecultured meaningful materiality, which rests on the observation that the influence of ideas on matter is undeniable as well as self-evident in different forms, for example, in agriculture and medicine, where the form of vegetables, as well as illnesses, are often humanly co-created in undeniably natural environments.

An ethical stance can, thus, not only facilitate a change in the conduct of individual human agents but also promote the development of otherwise-oriented technologies and ultimately change the material conditions themselves, mimicking the predominant ontological assumptions. For this reason, a change in the ethical paradigm principally requires a change in the ontological assumptions of a society, which is a stance that will be further argued in this article. Thus, the first part of the article articulates the concept of life within the processual philosophy of biology, beyond the dichotomy of life and death and considers the understanding of a 'self' in the context of the understanding of life. The second part of the article

² This term, first introduced in 2006, is coined to designate a compromise between ecocentric and anthropocentric ethics and highlights social and ecological interdependency. This article explores the lived-body ethics as such a compromise, based on the ontological position of a lived-body self in the context of the perception of the notion of 'life'. Mathevet R., Thompson J., Bonnin M., "La solidarité écologique: prémices d'une pensée écologique pour le xxi^e siècle ?" // *Ecologie & politique*, 2012/1 (No 44), pp. 127–138.

contextualizes this view with the concept of life in context with the experienced lived-body self via the notions of *being*, *becoming* and *having*, building a connection between the ontological disposition and the ethical sphere. In the concluding part of the article I then address some concrete ethical issues related to the currently predominant discursive perceptions of life and the self, in dealing with environmental, scientific and socio-political matters and argue for a refutation of substance ontology and dualism in dealing with today's ethical issues, by broadening the perceptual horizons towards the lived-body ethics built upon the concepts of senseful materiality and process ontology, i.e. life understood as a perpetual change of matter and energy beyond the dichotomy of life and death or nature and culture.

I. The Processuality of Life

What is life? Probably the ultimate question of this age, the answer to which might profoundly influence our future relationship with the world and with ourselves – i. e. our societal and environmental wellbeing. This question might seem too abstract to matter in the everyday life situations that pertain to ethics; yet, its philosophical consideration is necessitated by the ontological disposition of the human being, as well as emerges in the sociopolitical and ethical contexts of the Anthropocene.

In a traditional philosophically anthropological context, 'life' usually emerges in a dichotomic relationship with 'death' – this dichotomy, however, is unbalanced and ultimately adheres to the perception and experience of a self. How is life the opposite of death, if not through the eyes of an observer, for whom 'life' is a stable, substantial state, destroyed and ruined in death?

However, whereas the experience of 'life' can be attributed to materially embedded situations, the ontological status of 'death' might be overvalued,³ if a post-ego-centered approach is adopted. Ultimately, whereas

³ See Braidotti R. "The Inhuman: Life Beyond Death"// *The Posthuman*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013, pp. 105–142.

'death' has an important sociopolitical value, 'life' is a concept that goes beyond the circumstantial viewpoint of a species-perception. A dying entity compels us to experience the dispersion of life forces within a certain presupposed 'being' – i. e. the end of life in a perceptually stable form. It is certainly a particular kind of process with a meaningful impact on the ecosystem or societal system, where it occurs, yet, the energy, driving the particular form of life, cannot be said to be finished or ceased to be – the quantity of life on earth does not diminish, it is rather transformed in different processes, continued elsewhere and otherwise. This can be viewed from different perspectives, allowing a pluralistic interpretation. Thus, on a biological level, a blade of grass is 'reincarnated' in a cow's stomach, whilst a store-bought salmon becomes a part of me. Simultaneously, a philosophical or chemical perspective might allow a different interpretation.

Thus, when viewed from a critical posthumanist standpoint, life does not stand in a dichotomy with death, but rather includes death as one of its principle expressions.⁴ Rosi Braidotti states:

"Life is desire which essentially aims at expressing itself and consequently runs on entropic energy: it reaches its aim and then dissolves, like salmon swimming upstream to procreate and then die. The wish to die can consequently be seen as the counterpart and as another expression of the desire to live intensely. The corollary is more cheerful: not only is there no dialectical tension between Eros and Thanatos, but these two entities are just one life-force that aims to reach its fulfilment. Posthuman vital materialism displaces the boundaries between living and dying. 'Life', or *zoe*, aims essentially at self-perpetuation and then after it has achieved its aim, at dissolution. It can be argued, therefore, that Life as *zoe* also encompasses what we call 'death'.⁵

⁴ The logical relationship here might be analogical to the relationship of good and evil in a theological position where evil is only circumstantial, whereas good encompasses the whole of creation.

⁵ Braidotti R. *The Posthuman*, 2013, p. 134.

Such a stance might seem counterintuitive at first and should be examined more closely. How do we arrive at the dichotomy of life and death and why is it so important to us? First, certain kinds of presuppositions are needed to arrive at this dichotomy at all – most important of these is the presupposition of a substance ontology. One of the most notable philosophers, discussing human life as a way towards death is Martin Heidegger, and for him another question – ‘What is a thing?’⁶ is of the greatest importance. His work seems to reflect the whole Western tradition of philosophy and he is certainly not alone in asking: “Why is there something, rather than nothing?”⁷ When life is looked upon as a path towards death, the questioning of existence itself seems to logically follow, but rather than addressing that question, we might try to question its founding paradigm instead.

Western tradition of philosophy has hitherto been permeated by seemingly unanswerable questions – ‘what is a thing?’, ‘what is life?’, ‘what is anything?’ – these are all questions that seem to point out the indiscernibility of any life phenomena, leading philosophy further and further towards the instability of meaning – both the instability of the self as well as the unreliability of knowledge itself, reflected by the existential, psychoanalytical and poststructural traditions. The problem with this questioning, however, lies in the fact that rarely has the issue been raised, as to why the question of ‘what?’ superimposes all others, including, the question of ‘how?’, by delegating it to other sciences that deal with the more ‘pragmatic’ aspects of life. Rather than criticizing philosophy for being too ‘abstract’ or ‘inapplicable’, which is an aspect addressed by Heidegger, who states that the question ‘what is a thing?’ is one that makes housewives laugh, I want here to highlight the fact that the problematization when it occurs through the lens of a ‘what’ already presupposes a substance ontology, where

⁶ Heidegger M. *Die Frage nach dem Ding*, 1935/36, Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1984.

⁷ “Warum ist überhaupt Seiendes und nicht vielmehr Nichts?” See, for example, Heidegger, M. *Was ist Metaphysik?* (1929), Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1955, p. 21.

processes are always already hierarchically subjected to objects, and a 'how' is already an attribute and a consequence of lesser importance that can be dealt with outside and without the help of philosophical discussion.

Thus, the question 'what is a thing' and the understanding of life and death are significantly linked, as Heidegger's philosophy rightly reveals. By asking this question in this way, one already presupposes that thingness and fixedness precede process and transformation, thus, implementing an object-oriented substance ontology. Death here acquires a primary role, as the ultimate signifier of what it means to be alive. 'Being alive' becomes an attribute, a fixed state of being 'undead', 'being-towards-death' or rather 'being not-yet-dead', and all processes are subjected to the analysis of the 'on/off' functions of substance realities.

Yet, as already mentioned, this kind of argumentation has run its course towards a realization of the instability and unreliability of the self and knowledge of objects. Often, it also stifles philosophical investigation: one argues – if we cannot even understand what a thing is, how could we take upon us other, more complicated questions, how can we problematize the processes, in which these 'things' are involved?

This kind of complication might be a significant pointer that the whole underlying premise is wrong. What if, the self is undiscernible and indescribable precisely because of its actual instability, as it might be a part of interwoven processes that bear thingness only to our perception? What if things do not exist before processes and are only circumstantial bearers of meaning in our lifeworld? In *Everything Flows* John Dupré and Daniel J. Nicholson have published a 'Manifesto for a Processual Philosophy of Biology', in which they write:

"More generally, as we have already emphasized, the near universality of symbiosis makes the delineation of biological individuals to some degree indeterminate. Given all this, we should certainly not expect the tracking of entities over time to be a fully determinate matter. This may strike us as a problem, but the truth is that it is only a problem if we already assume that it should be possible to perfectly track entities through time in the first place, per the

essentialist stance generally associated with substance ontology. An ontology of processes, besides conforming to what biological research actually tells us about the living world, liberates us from the burden of this expectation.”⁸

These are the premises that allow viewing philosophical problems in a different light, from the viewpoint of a processual philosophy of biology, which proposes that the living world is a hierarchy of stabilized and actively maintained processes, rather than things.⁹ This position is supported by the biological science, where the processuality of life is self-evident – on all levels of organization, processes seem to underlie any sort of organizational forms that we have accustomed to regard as the foundational substances or particles. Cells, molecules, organs, and organisms are all stabilized processes, functioning via symbiotic relationships with their surrounding environments.

The authors write: “At no level in the biological hierarchy do we find entities with hard boundaries and a fixed repertoire of properties. Instead, both organisms and their parts are exquisitely regulated conglomerates of nested streams of matter and energy.”¹⁰ This observation, which, in the first instance, is predominately related to biological research, is foundational for the process ontology.

The broadly accepted substance ontology rests on the primary status of things and particles and highlights differentiation and branching – most significant processes for the distinguishing of individual organisms, objects and entities. In broader context, substance ontology is foundational for the subject/object distinction of Western philosophical thought, which is also at the basis of a reductionist scientific worldview resting upon the objectification of the world and leading to an objectification of the subjectivity or the self as well.

⁸ *Everything Flows*, p. 26.

⁹ Dupré J., Nicholson D.J., “A Manifesto for a Processual Philosophy of Biology”// *Everything Flows. Towards a Processual Philosophy of Biology*, ed. by Daniel J. Nicholson and John Dupré, 2018, p. 26.

¹⁰ *Everything Flows*, p. 27.

Contemporary biology, however, places a larger focus on symbiosis – a stance, championed, for example, by the endosymbiotic biology of Lynn Margulis,¹¹ who has dedicated her life to the research of symbiotic processes in bacteria at the core of all macrobe¹² life. In the words of Dupré and Nicholson:

“One of the most significant consequences of the processual hierarchy of the living world, then, is that it makes the physicalist dream of absolute reductionism impossible. The complex web of causal dependencies between the various levels means that we cannot fully specify the nature of an entity merely by listing the properties of its constituents and their spatial relations. It also means that we cannot pick out any level in the hierarchy as ontologically or causally primary. Whereas a substance ontology that presupposes a structural hierarchy of things only allows bottom-up causal influences, a process ontology has no trouble in recognizing that causal influences can flow in different directions.”¹³

Thus, in clear opposition to the reductionist or mechanical worldview, process ontology permits defending a neomaterialist naturalism or vitalism, which places meaning in matter itself, permanently tying the biosphere and cultural sphere together in an indistinguishable continuum.

The prevalence of symbiosis in the constitution of life forms and the ecological interdependency to which it is tied, together with the process ontology demonstrates life as a process, a perpetual motion of matter and energy. This has various philosophical implications. Three of them, which seem especially significant for building a bridge between ontological and ethical discussion, will be discussed further on in the article.

¹¹ Margulis L. *The Symbiotic Planet. A New Look at Evolution*, London: Phoenix, 2001.

¹² “The third domain, the Eukarya, is also mostly composed of microbes, so-called protists, but also includes multicellular organisms, animals, plants, and some fungi. To emphasize their almost cameo role against the backdrop of microbial life, I and my collaborator on this topic Maureen O'Malley are attempting to popularize the word 'macrobe' to refer to those organisms, such as ourselves, that are not microbes. It seems absurd that we should have a word for the great majority of life-forms, but none for the small minority that this word excludes.”// Dupré J. *Processes of Life, Essays in the Philosophy of Biology*// New York: Oxford University Press, 2012, p. 75.

¹³ *Everything Flows*, p. 27.

First, based on the abovementioned processuality it is possible to form a pluralist¹⁴ materialism, vitalist in the sense that it sees meaning in the flesh¹⁵ and beyond the human ego-function. Second, building upon this neomaterialist worldview, the ecological interdependency allows formulating a connection between ethical and ontological discussion (especially, in environmental ethics), and, hence, shows a possibility to build environmental solidarity upon the basis of such a process ontology. Namely, if we accept a processual worldview, which places culture in nature, as nature-culture,¹⁶ it logically follows that the ecological interdependency cannot be *only* natural, and cultural processes take (equal) part in the life cycles of the environments. Thus, the cultural presuppositions also take part in building our environments, which, seemingly paradoxically, would mean that an inadequate ontological premise might result in conditions that, although probably do not change the underlying constitution of the world (as far as physical laws go), nevertheless transform the materiality of our environments according to that ontological premise at hand. History, then, is written not only in the flesh¹⁷ – it is also written in nature, forming it according to our image, or rather – our image of nature.

¹⁴ Pluralist in the sense that it does highlight immanence (in a Deleuzian sense) but does not require reductionist realism and focuses on the different perspectives (in line with Nietzschean perspectivism) in which reality can be viewed, without reducing any of them to the others. See Dupré J. *Processes of Life*, Chapter 1 “The Miracle of Monism”, pp. 21-39, for a critique of reductionism and its monistic characteristics.

¹⁵ See, for example: “My vitalist brand of materialism could not be further removed from the Christian affirmation of Life or the transcendental delegation of the meaning and value system to categories higher than the embodied self. Quite the contrary, it is the intelligence of radically immanent flesh that states with every single breath that the life in you is not marked by any master signifier and it most certainly does not bear your name.” Braidotti R. *The Posthuman*, p. 138.

¹⁶ “Natureculture is a synthesis of nature and culture that recognizes their inseparability in ecological relationships that are both biophysically and socially formed.” See Malone N., Ovenden K. “Natureculture”// *The International Encyclopedia of Primatology*. Edited by Agustín Fuentes, John Wiley & Sons, 2017. See also: Haraway, Donna J. *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness*. Vol. 1., Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2003.

¹⁷ Sarasin Ph. *Darwin und Foucault. Genealogie und Geschichte im Zeitalter der Biologie*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2009.

And, finally, symbiosis as a founding principle of life-forms, stresses the intercardinality of all life as primary to the individuation processes, blurring the boundaries of individual lifeforms. Process ontology further destabilizes selfhood and demands a new problematization of the enfleshed selfhood – as the body does not provide the certainty of a ‘meat sack’ that it seemed to have. Porous, watery,¹⁸ home to microbial life forms – it is a conglomerate of life beyond death, a vehicle of constant change, both attenuated, as well as open to the world.

With this instability, a new kind of intercardinality and ‘ecological networking’ might also be demonstrated, as the image of a ‘porous body’, which might instil fear from the unknown and the unbounded, namely, expose the enfleshed vulnerability of the self, also opening up the horizon for a new kind of openness to the world. The body is not only constantly invaded by the world, but simultaneously also extended into the world. Thus, what constitutes individual life and self, is not only the inside processes of a body but also the outside, the environment at large, in which the individual is interwoven.

Characterized by process and meaningful materiality (namely, energy and matter), life here brings forth the earthly embeddedness as an important constituent of the human self, connecting the spheres of ethics and ontology.

However, it can be still questioned why and how substance ontology comes to the fore in the everyday discourse, and usually lays a foundation for the ethical discussion we, as a society, already have. Why does it seem impossible to think in any other way, besides the ego-function of our selves? How is it that the self is always seen as the ultimate source of ethical and cultural action and decision, and are we, in fact, able to take an epistemological leap and see the world via process ontology as meaningful materiality, or are we bound to objectify the world via our perceptual dualism?

To answer some of these questions, the concept of life should now be approached from the perspective of the enfleshed self – the site of experience, where life and death acquire their dichotomic status.

¹⁸ Neimanis A. *Bodies of Water. Posthuman Feminist Phenomenology*, London: Bloomsbury, 2017.

II. The Becoming Self

A paradox lies not only in the way in which humanity insists on destroying the grounds of its existence but also in the way existence has enabled the very force (namely, human cognition and self-awareness) that is now annihilating it. For what else is the fundamental source of the human mind, if not nature itself? It seems to be a dark Schellingian twist, lacking harmonious completeness.

The most significant constituent here is the becoming, namely, the historical, lived and enfolded self and the way life and death are experienced via individual selfhood. The instability of the self seems as old as philosophy, making it the most prominent evidence against substance ontology and its focus on concrete things and beings, but – perhaps paradoxically – this instability is also the source of dualist thinking that enables substance ontology in the first place.

The experienced instability of selfhood has become increasingly prominent in the course of the 20th and 21st centuries. On the one hand, due to a reductionist objectification of the surrounding world, which gradually crept into all levels of the human body, enacting an objectification of the subjectivity itself, and, on the other hand, due to the increasing individualism, which has resulted in a growing need of a stable identity and selfhood, thus, making the instability of such a selfhood more apparent.

The underlying paradox of the formation of a self as a process, which tends toward fixation, however, remains the same – the flow of life, when experienced via the self-awareness of an acting agent, such as the human being, is simultaneously the source as well as the main threat for the human self. Life presupposes living, and hence, is only thinkable as a process, while selfhood presupposes structure, something that maintains its stability. Life emanates as a formation of a self as an entity (a structure), yet, a structure presupposes a process – a change, which is destructive for the identity of a self that wishes to sustain its presumed stability. Life, in our experience, becomes the counterpart of death and acquires meaning only via its potential annihilation.

Traditionally philosophical anthropology posits human selfhood as an *inbetweenness* between *being* and *having*, nature and culture, etc. This scheme is reproduced in many philosophical traditions, including psychoanalysis (*being* a phallus and *having* a phallus for Lacan) and phenomenology of *Leib* (carnal or lived-body) – in the formulas of *Leibsein* and *Körper Haben*.¹⁹ On the whole, although the lived-body phenomenology refutes the mind-body dualism, both these schemes reproduce a human-environment dualism, either by attributing culture to the realm of *having* and symbolization (as largely in the case of Lacan) or by opposing nature to technology²⁰ and advocating a ‘return to nature’ (largely the case of *Leib* phenomenology), namely, a sort of bioconservatism.

If we accept human *inbetweenness* via the capability to objectify, it logically follows that the cultural abilities of humanity are transmitted only via the *having* orientation of life. For Freud, it, for example, means that civilization ‘and all its discontents’ as a clear derivative of the repressive powers²¹ – grim, but unavoidable destiny, the alternative of which would be an ‘animalistic’ life without culture.

The development of science today, however, forces to admit both these versions as naïve in their anthropocentrism,²² and the environmental crisis has exposed both a transhuman technopositivism (facilitated by a dualist ontology) as well as bioconservative naturalism as very problematic extremes. On the one hand, technopositivism and dualist thinking have produced many of today’s problems, but, on the other hand, it is

¹⁹ Böhme G. *Leibsein als Aufgabe: Leibphilosophie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*, Kusterdingen: Die Graue Edition, 2003, pp. 25–29, pp. 63–72.

²⁰ Böhme G. 2019: *Leib. Die Natur, die wir selbst sind*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag: Berlin, pp. 30–38.

²¹ Freud S. *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur*, Wein: Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag, 1930.

²² Anthropocentrism appears also in critiques of humankind that condemn our destructiveness toward our environments, as these critiques often undermine the role of unconscious forces that lead us in the formation of culture, which is apprehended and rationally evaluated only post-factum, as in the case of the climate crisis or the ‘sixth extinction’, but also in some clearly human occurrences, such as economic crisis, etc.

almost certain that most can only be mitigated by these same civilizatory forces and technologies – a life ‘after nature’²³ has already begun²⁴ and technology has become a significant part of our ecosystems. A different conceptualization, leaning heavily on Deleuzian themes, has, thus, become prominent – one that stresses life as *becoming* and could rightly be supposed as the counterpart of the process ontology in the field of ethics.

The focus on *becoming* refutes the dualism of *being* and *having*, by stressing the mere perceptuality of the *inbetweenness*. Namely, self-awareness is at the core of human inbetweenness, as it enables perceiving the world as an object. In this sense, the self is a self-alienation of the lived-body, by which it loses the ability to perceive *immediately*.²⁵ The cultural potential, however, is not conceived only via the ability to objectify – it is rather already present in nature. The reasons for this are at least twofold: (1) cognitive revolution could not be possible, if sensefulness and meaning would not be *before* the I-consciousness and objectifying power, thus, nature is the source of cultural activity and (2) today it becomes clearer than ever before that nonhuman life is not lacking in cultural and symbolic activity.

What makes humans *human* is, thus, not their culture *per se*, but rather the power of objectification enabled by self-alienation of the lived-body. The human/nonhuman distinction is, thus, blurred and less discernible than often imagined, at least as far as capabilities and ‘ethical life’ are considered as the defining factor. The power of objectification is also the source of substance ontology that enables human desire for fixation of the self, which is then threatened by the potentiality of ‘death’ – as expressed even in the ancient Epic of Gilgamesh, where the hero already strived for immortality.

²³ Purdy J. *After Nature. A Politics for the Anthropocene*. Harvard University Press, 2015.

²⁴ Although a different one might have never been possible – the human awareness, after all, is not unnatural.

²⁵ For a more elaborate analysis see lectures on lived-body phenomenology: Waldenfels B. *Das leibliche Selbst. Vorlesungen zur Phänomenologie des Leibes*, hg. von Regula Giuliani, Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 2000.

The closest illumination of this scheme is conceived in the way Erich Fromm conceptualizes *being* and *having*. For him, both *being* as well as *having* are cultural, human modes or directionalities of behaviour, and he differentiates between pathological and existential *having* orientations. Thus, he reflects the human potential for pathologically clinging to the wish to fixate one's identity, based on the actual ontological inevitability of objectification (the *existential having*) that enables it.²⁶ On the one hand, *existential having* is inevitable – it is the self-alienation of the lived-body that results from the objectification of one's self in an image of the anatomical/functional body. Via this existential having orientation a human being can perform difficult analytical tasks, build science and civilization, etc. Yet, on the other hand, this capability of the cognitive functions is not the only transmitter of culture, present *in the flesh*. A human being, living solely via *having orientation* would be impossible, but, imagining it, Fromm would characterize such a person like this: "When he thinks he grasps reality it is only his brain-self that grasps it, while he, the whole man, his eyes, his hands, his heart, his belly grasp nothing—in fact, he is not participating in the experience which he believes is his."²⁷

The feeling, thinking and sensing is already present *in the flesh*, namely, an inherent characteristic of the lived-body, partly transmitted through the objectifying self-awareness, and partly immediately felt and experienced and or thought preconsciously. Both directionalities are, therefore, deeply connected, yet, the distinction of *existential having* can explain the ego-centricity and anthropocentrism of the human being, as well as provides the opportunity to consider the limits of post-anthropocentric thinking.

Namely, if we assume life as a process beyond the dichotomy of life and death, we are nevertheless to accept that the formation of selfhood

²⁶ "...human existence requires that we have, keep, take care of, and use certain things in order to survive. This holds true for our bodies, for food, shelter, clothing, and for the tools necessary to produce our needs. This form of having may be called existential having because it is rooted in human existence. It is a rationally directed impulse in the pursuit of staying alive—" Fromm E. *To Have or to Be*, 1976a, p. 85

²⁷ Fromm E. *Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis*, 1960h, p. 109.

presumes the configuration of such a dichotomy, which is then perceived as the *existential having* – the human desire for self-preservation, stability, and property. As humans we are oriented towards acquiring things, data, researching concrete objects and distinguishing them from others. Ontologically the boundaries of the self and the world are much more blurred than we would like to believe. Julia Kristeva, for example, has expressed this problem with the notion of ‘abject’. *Abject*²⁸ for her is something that reminds us of the instability of our subject-boundaries, and the necessity to perpetually maintain and rebuild these boundaries, by differentiating ourselves from the world. Most prominently the bodily fluids, such as menstrual blood or urine are often recognized as such an *abject*. *Abjection* is the process of differentiation and becoming subject via the negation process of pushing out all reminders of our vulnerability. Thus, the process of *abjection* for Kristeva similarly describes the tension of the self, experienced where the transformation and creativity of *becoming* meet the objectifying desire for identity and fixation in the self-awareness marked by *existential having*.

The concept of *being* for Fromm, loosely corresponds to the posthumanist *becoming*,²⁹ as it designates the process and experience of being rather than a natural state or an entity. As such, it enables conceiving the lived-body self beyond the having orientation, thus, enabling a conceptualization of ethics beyond anthropocentrism, in as much as the lived-body self can be taken into account as a site for cultural agency and creativity, outside the dichotomy of life and death. The ability to conceive such a

²⁸ Kristeva J. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1980), Trans. by Roudiez L. S., New York: Columbia University Press, 1982.

²⁹ Fromm does not write from the standpoint of current ethical discussion, but such an interpretation is valid, taking into account that Fromm characterizes the mode of being as a mode of ‘activity’ and ‘creativity’, as well as views the human being as a being in process, for example: “Indeed, if we look at man’s development in terms of historical time, we might say that man proper was born only a few minutes ago. Or we might even think that he is still in the process of birth, that the umbilical cord has not yet been severed, and that complications have arisen that make it appear doubtful whether man will ever be born or whether he is to be stillborn.” Fromm E. *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, 1973a, p. 251.

processuality already indicates that the ego-centricity, although inevitable, is not all-encompassing, and the limits of the self are flexible and allow a different, processual self to be conceived, beyond the dichotomies set by a substance ontology.

Thus, whilst *existential having* indicates an inevitable objectification of the human lifeworld, it is not the only transmitter of culture, as already noted by prominent feminist thinkers, such as Julia Kristeva or Luce Irigaray. This 'other', enfleshed, felt and experienced cultural agency is immediately carnal (*leiblich*) and ontologically, phylogenetically and ontogenetically funds the human self-awareness and its objectifying functions. Conceived this way, the investigation and deeper understanding of the life as a process and the lived-body self as a processual, unfinished *becoming* might be a sufficient platform for building environmental solidarity between human and nonhuman actors, as the lived-body self is the site that allows us to feel and experience the processuality of life. At the same time, the lived-body self-alienation is also of importance in building such an ethical platform, as the existential having enables the conception of 'death' and is a unique cognitive instrument for the awareness of the instability and limitations of the self. Namely, without self-awareness and objectification, the perception of the processuality would also not be possible.

Simultaneously, this scheme also allows viewing human agency as culture-natured, without automatically condemning all civilizatory forces as unethical or contrary to nature, which makes this position suitable for contemporary ethical discussions. Whilst it acknowledges societal orientation toward a pathologization of the having orientation, it does not segregate this orientation from the rest of life's occurrences, either by attributing to it the whole cultural sphere or by condemning it as the sole source of destructive tendencies in humanity. Rather via an enfleshed conception of the self, it is possible to appreciate the importance of the experienced lived-body, to value both the creativity and destruction of life forces and to critically assess humanity's achievements, judging from how these affect our relationships with the world and ourselves.

In the final part of this article, I will, thus, turn to the existing socio-political discourses, indicating the importance of the lived-body ethics in assessing various issues that have hitherto been conceptualized mostly from the standpoint of a substance ontology that presumes a kind of dualism, either in the form of a reductionist or a mind-body dualism.

III. A Lived-Body Ethics for Future

Thus far, I have considered a processual understanding of life, as well as the limits of such an understanding in context with the self-awareness of the humankind and its place in the formation of substance ontology and the consequences of an objectifying view of the world. However, it remains to explain the necessity of a different conceptualization, namely, the issues regarding the predominant ontological and ethical views.

In the first part of the article, it was established that there are at least two viable ways in which to view life, both accessible to our everyday experience, without further scientific experimentation or study. Both views are almost unavoidably present in human self-perception of the world that exposes itself as both substantial and processual and, thus, enables two different ways of understanding life as either a perpetual process of creativity and dispersion (symbiosis and branching) or a state of 'being' (a fixation, a certainty, a self-evidence) in opposition to destruction, which is experienced as death. The second part of the article strived to conceptualize 'the self' with respect to 'life'. Selfhood is experienced as a tension between the desire for structure and fixation, i.e. the wish to perpetually *have* the experience of life and the experience of inevitable change and transformation further facilitated by the awareness of an inevitable (and perpetual) disintegration of life's forces. In short, 'life' is experienced both in its processuality, as the source of change and creativity and, thus, the founding principle of the self, as well as in the dichotomy of life and death, as something to hold on to, to try to grasp and insure. Seemingly paradoxical this tension of *becoming* and having is also at the core of the

self's paradoxical instability.³⁰ Thus, the flow of life acquires a fragility only with respect to a self-aware self, which enables the *having* directionality of human experience – a perpetual search for fixity and everlasting existence, which, if found, would also be the end of life – as life is only in motion.

This tension, however, is necessary, as, without the search for fixity and stability, identity would also be impossible. The *having* directionality is, thus, inevitable and necessary, but can also become pathological, if life's processuality is to be shut out of the equation, putting too much stress on the self-preservatory and controlling objectifying powers. A shift away from ego-centricity, therefore, cannot be complete annihilation of the human ego and place for subjectivity and the self must still be sought for,³¹ yet the processuality of life allows viewing the self in context with its founding powers, whereupon the lived-body ethics comes into focus.

To understand its importance, first the *pathological having* must be described. This strain of *having* directionality has been thoroughly analyzed by Erich Fromm in *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*,³² *To Have or to Be?*³³ and other works, as well as criticized by various poststructural and posthumanist authors, in their critiques of capitalism, patriarchy, reductionism and their underlying substance or object ontologies.

Pathological having refers to humanity's unique capability for destruction and claiming ownership, via its objectifying cognitive powers. On an existential level, this 'skill' has resulted in the Anthropocene, where adjustment in our species has been replaced by transformation and adaptation – by control, and when left to its whims, it has obvious disastrous consequences for the planet in general, as well as human-human and human-nonhuman interactions. Erich Fromm especially accentuates the

³⁰ Paradoxical, especially in the sense that something perpetually changing is still signified as a 'self', i. e. as a unity, a certain oneness.

³¹ On the possibility and necessity of conceptualizing a subjectivity in posthuman context see: Braidotti R. *Nomadic Subjects. Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.

³² Fromm E. *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, 1973a-eng.

³³ Fromm E. *To Have or to Be?* 1976a-eng.

capitalist society as permeated by a pathological form of *having*. This pathology arises from the imbalance in *being* (or *becoming*) and *having*, namely, from an overvaluation of objects *before* processes, and a focus on the preservation and cultivation of objectifiable valuables.

One could also characterize the *pathological having* in Deleuzian terms, as a *cancerous*³⁴ fixation, a self-replication, a lethal immobilization of all processes, which is often referred to as the ‘death drive’,³⁵ but actually strives for the preservation of life within the dichotomy of life and death. Life understood as a process ‘beyond death’ might, therefore, provide the necessary balance for this mainly mind-centered and disembodied perception of the fragile selfhood that feels threatened even by its bodily being.

For a more concrete description of the importance of the lived-body ethics, I will here, however, refrain from further theoretical explanation and provide some examples of sociopolitical discourse overridden by dualist imagery that, although scientifically implausible, continues to dominate the social sphere, hoping to provide sufficient evidence for the usefulness of a shift in thinking in favour of a process ontology and the lived-body ethics. Moreover, if the first part of this article discusses ontological dimension and the second – the existential dimension, now it seems necessary to turn to the social dimension of the problematic at hand, to provide another perspective on the importance of the perception of life in ethics.

³⁴ *Cancerous* is a concept here adapted from Deleuze and Guattari’s *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Cancer points toward a multiplication of fixedness, self-preservation for its own sake, similar to a pathological *having* orientation shows a pathological (imbalanced) preference of fixedness or self-preservation in an objective form, i.e., a striving to overcome the transformative, processual nature of the human self. See Deleuze G., Guattari F. *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 1987, p. 163.

³⁵ Fromm here insists on viewing the ‘death instinct’ as psychopathology: “In this view the ‘death instinct’ is a malignant phenomenon which grows and takes over to the extent to which Eros does not unfold. The death instinct represents psychopathology and not, as in Freud’s view, a part of normal biology. The life instinct thus constitutes the primary potentiality in man; the death instinct is a secondary potentiality.” Fromm E. *The Heart of Man*, 1964a, pp. 19–20.

The ethically problematic discourses today are certainly manifold, yet, they all seem to share one common characteristic – an inherent dualism (or a reversed, reductionist dualism), which highlights the necessity for a process ontology in the ethical sphere. These issues of the 21st century could be named as ‘the dangers of dualism’, and I will introduce some of their features here. These ‘dangers of dualism’ are thought to be threats to human dignity and integrity, as well as environmental solidarity. They are very diverse but could be categorized into two main groups: (1) threats to human dignity and intercarnal relationship, namely, human relationships with social environments, (2) threats to environmental wellbeing and solidarity, namely, human relationships with ecosystems. Both groups are interrelated and overlapping, yet, could be said to be chronologically distinct, as the first group adheres to problems already realized by Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, Luce Irigaray, and other poststructural authors, whereas the second group takes up a new direction, in line with critical Posthumanism, Neomaterialism, and environmental ethics. As Mark Halsey puts it: “Where once the sole objective was to control the insane, the young, the feminine, the vagrant and the deviant, the objective in recent times has been to arrest the nonhuman, the inorganic, the inert – in short, the so-called ‘natural worlds’.”³⁶

Parallelism, thus, is identified between the disciplining attitudes of biopolitics and the controlling praxis in managing our environments. I would like to argue that in both cases the dualism that still permeates human thinking, often prevents the society to acknowledge the actual amount of damage, and, thus, process ontology that also logically requires a lived-body approach is an invaluable asset to an ethical reconfiguration of our preset perceptions of the world.

This situation might be best demonstrated through the stories we (as a society) tell. Dystopian novels, such as *Brave New World*, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* and *The Clockwork Orange* – all share a common factor – a chemical or mechanical medium for transforming and influ-

³⁶ Halsey M. *Deleuze and Environmental Damage*. London: Ashgate, 2006, p. 15.

encing human subjectivity (mood, aggressiveness, etc.). All these novels have a certain ‘uncanny’ feel about them, enabled precisely via the use of chemical means for the transformation and disintegration of that, which feels like the most sacred as well as fragile possession – i.e. the human self, which seems to designate an invisible boundary for the use of technology, as well as surgical and chemical interference. Paradoxically this boundary today is still present in our thinking despite its actual and factual non-existence.

What might be astonishing, thus, is to realize that these kinds of stories tell a tale, not unlike real-life occurrences in the 21st century, but, like the main characters of the novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, we seem content to allow control permeate every aspect of our lives, or rather – we are not even aware of such control, as long as a certain level of a free subjectivity is retained. Used to the dualist paradigm of mind/body distinction, we are fine with allowing the control of our bodies – from security cameras to mood stabilizers,³⁷ if the ‘rational’ subjectivity is left untouched. This is, however, one of the main reasons capitalism as an institution continues to function and proliferate – by ignoring our *Leiblichkeit* we allow it to consume us without reflection, confident that this is not happening.

The only difference between *Brave New World* and us is here precisely the no-difference-at-all – we are identically unaware of the gravity of our situation. The danger in dualism is thus that an attack can be launched at our self-integrity without the society even noticing it as such an attack, masking it as an attack or a therapy or a praxis directed toward the ‘body’. Thus, when China employs a one-child policy, even overtly attacking women by forced abortions, it seems horrible, yes, but not the *Clockwork Orange* level horrible, as an illusionary free subjectivity is supposed to be left untouched. The same can be said about forced sterilizations in

³⁷ See Donnelly L. “Record Number on Happy Pills”// *The Telegraph*, April 20, 2014, accessed March 15, 2020. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/nhs/10775085/Record-numbers-on-happy-pills.html>

India and other countries, but what about our capitalist societies of the West?³⁸

History provides us with many similar examples, such as lobotomy, eugenics, male and female genital mutilations, and circumcisions as well as the 19th-20th century ovariectomies³⁹ - another exemplifying case that demonstrates the way Western objectification of the 'body' works, though, what is particularly astounding – today's data processing and resource management have not changed for the better, yet, except for academic and scientific circles and a few government policies in data protection, it goes largely unnoticed, as a sort of inevitability for social interaction and resource gathering.

If, however, the 20th century slowly exposed the dangers of valuing only the rational subjectivity of a person as the source and cornerstone of human dignity, the 21st century reveals a new threat to human-human and human-nonhuman interaction. Even if, to some extent, the mind-body dualism seems to be refuted and assumes a less threatening position in social interaction, medicine and the treatment of ecosystems, the outer boundaries of individual bodies still form a certain human-environment dualism that rests on a reductionist substance ontology, and is lacking a more nuanced view of the lived-body situatedness, an admission of the processuality of life, namely, the interconnectedness of all processes.

It is especially noticeable in the mental health sector, where the pharmaceutical treatment of patients often disregards the interconnectedness of the environment and the body. John Dupré especially accentuates the situation in the ADHD drug implementation on children – we are readily drugging millions of children by accepting a clinical explanation of the ADHD, without further analysis of the environment and human interconnectedness with the lived situations, which cause these phenomena: "It

³⁸ Christ A., Dörholt D., dir. *A Lack of Women in Asia*. Bildersturm Filmproduktion, 2018. Video, 42:25. From Internet Archive, February 27, 2019, accessed March 5, 2020. <https://archive.org/details/ALackOfWomenInAsiaDWDocumentary>.

³⁹ Laqueur T.W. *Making Sex: Body and Gender from Greeks to Freud*, London: Harvard University Press, 1992, p. 176.

is of course true that drug companies make many billions of dollars from their expertise in adjusting people's minds to the demands of the environment, and it is surely also true that it is much easier and generally cheaper for governments to point to the defects of individuals than to attempt to make positive changes in the environments to which people appear maladapted."⁴⁰

A similar lack of processual assessment is observable also in the treatment of depression, which, although accounts for the mind-body link of the human individual, often lacks the consideration of lived-body – social environment interconnectedness that will probably become increasingly important in future.

What would be gained by the lived-body ethics here is not the prohibition of any pharmaceutical, mechanical or technological means of invading our selfhoods or privacy – after all, the selfhood's instability and porousness already anticipate such an invasion and interconnectedness with the world, including with the cultural environment around us – rather, the deconstruction of the illusionary dualism would facilitate a more balanced, mutual participation in what we would like our lives to be and become and also raise the awareness of the actual invasiveness of any such means on all levels of being, eliminating the illusion of being affected on a strictly restricted physiological or societal level that does not affect our 'actual' subjectivity.

With this human-environment interconnectedness, we reach the site of overlapping in both initially distinguished categories of ethical interest, namely, the processuality, porousness and vulnerability of the human self translates also to the environment in general, and the same substance ontology related issues can be observed also in the management of our ecosystems on a planetary level, outside of narrower societal or psychological problems.

Immanuel Kant, in the Introduction of *The Critique of Pure Reason* writes: "Die leichte Taube, indem sie im freien Fluge die Luft theilt, deren

⁴⁰ Dupré J. *Processes of Life*, p. 36.

Widerstand sie fühlt, könnte die Vorstellung fassen, daß es ihr im luft-leeren Raum noch viel besser gelingen werde.”⁴¹ Although this citation further discusses Plato’s disregard for the senses, it could also characterize the whole Western tradition of science and transhumanist neo-Kantian attitudes in controlling and transcending nature in particular and demonstrates the self’s wish to be ‘free’ from the founding forces of its existence, which is illustrated by Fromm as the directionality of *pathological having*. The main concept here, again, is the disregard of the metaphorical ‘dove’ for the interconnectedness of life processes – the same air that makes the dove possible could also be regarded as a hindrance to its flight – a situation, not unlike the human predicament of the annihilation of natural ecosystems that are also our natural home and part of what gives us life in the first place. The air that we breathe, the water that we consist of – it is all part of us, as well as our ecosystems, yet, our object-oriented thinking has hitherto excluded this kind of interrelatedness to be taken into serious account.

Thus, it is only today that science starts to notice the “wood wide web”⁴² and forest ‘communication’ systems, as well as discuss the role of biodiversity in farming, and despite the co-constitution of human selves by the surrounding world, with no clear boundaries between what we can call a ‘self’ and what counts as the ‘other’, ‘natural worlds’ are still seen as an objectifiable resource. Invasive technologization, urbanization, and overproduction threaten not only our planetary environment, but also ourselves, and could well constitute part of the sociopolitical issues, discussed in context with the first category of ethical problems. For example, the causes for depression might have similarities with causes for cancer or

⁴¹ Kant I. *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (1781), Hamburg: Verlag von Felix Meiner, 1956, p. 43.

Translation: “The light dove, in free flight cutting through the air the resistance of which it feels, could get the idea that it could do even better in airless space.”// Kant I. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Translated by Guyer P., Wood A. W., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 129.

⁴² Giovannetti M., Avio L., Fortuna P., Pellegrino E., Sbrana C. and Strani P. “At the Root of the Wood Wide Web”// *Plant Signaling & Behavior*, 1:1, 2006, pp. 1–5.

other sicknesses, and, thus, societal alienation or mental health issues might also be part of environmental problems.

The importance of the processual account, however, highlights the need to reconsider our technologies and management systems in context with the *becoming*, enfolded and embedded self. This does not mean a 'return to nature', for this is impossible, as the ontological disposition of humans is already culture-endowed by nature itself, but a repositioning of the self in a non-dualist, processual context to ensure further existence of our planetary home and, thus, also ourselves.

Conclusion

In this article I have tried to demonstrate the interconnectedness of the understanding of life in substance and process ontologies and the sociopolitical sphere, as well as delineate the tie between the processual approach in philosophy and today's ethical sphere, to urge a broader application of lived-body ethics in dealing with future challenges in environmental and sociopolitical matters.

It could be rightly argued that this project is incomplete – it is still unclear as to how this ethical approach will function, and the limits of its applicability are still to be set. In this regard, I might say that (1) this is, of course, not a study without context – many have already contributed to the description of an enfolded and embedded selfhood and its ethical applicability in their work,⁴³ and (2) that this article still meets its aim to demonstrate the necessary link between the lived-body self and the ethical situation today, highlighting the processual aspects of selfhood as significant in ethical discussion and outlining the dangers of the previously dominant substance ontology. Furthermore, the article also strived to explicate the ontological limits and potential accessibility of a processual

⁴³ For example, in context with affirmative ethics of joy, and the ethics of care. See Bellacasa M.P. *Matters of Care: Speculative Ethics in More than Human Worlds*. University of Minnesota Press, 2017, Braidotti, R. (2018). "Ethics of joy". *Posthuman Glossary*, edited by Braidotti R. & Hlavajova M., London: Bloomsbury Academic, pp. 221– 224.

view of life, trying to build a usable platform for further ethical explorations.

In this article I have, thus, established the inherency of a dichotomy of life *vs* death in terms of formation of selfhood, as well as the possibility to view life in a processual manner, outside and beyond such a dichotomy. Both these dimensions of thought cut across our self-formations and the prevalence of either does seem to affect our sociopolitical discourse and ethical decisions and codes of conduct. For this reason, it seems necessary to highlight life's processuality in the wake of today's societal and environmental problems. The experience of this processuality, however, seems to relate to the view of senseful materiality and is more prominently noticed via the experience of an en fleshed and embedded self, whilst the dualist imagery of a mind-body or human-environment distinction leads the society towards pathologization of the *having* directionality of the self, namely, alienates and isolates the human actor from the surrounding environments, including from one's bodily being.

The substance ontology also leads us toward reductionist attitudes and praxis on societal, environmental and ethical levels, leading to the production of alienating and invasive technologies for the control and discipline of populations and ecologies. In contrast, a focus on the *becoming* and interconnectedness of the en fleshed and embedded selves could facilitate environmental solidarity, reestablish intercarnal relationships and build healthier societal environments for future generations. As the processual view does not institute strict boundaries between human and nonhuman lives or natural and cultural spheres, this approach in lived-body ethics also escapes the impossible decision between invasive technologization and bioconservative naturalism – both of which are built upon a variant of dualism – escapes utopian imageries and promises hope for the future ahead.

Anne Sauka

Dzīvība procesā: miesiskās patības ētika nākotnei

Kopsavilkums

Rakstā “Dzīvība procesā: miesiskās patības ētika nākotnei” aplūkota Džona Duprē pieeja procesu ontoloģijā, tās pielietojamība dzīvības izpratnē un atšķirības no substanču ontoloģijas, īpaši pievēršoties ontoloģiju un sociālpolitisko diskursu savstarpējības problēmai. Saikne starp sociālpolitisko situāciju un ontoloģiskajiem priekšpieņēmumiem rakstā tiek aplūkota caur miesiskās patības skatījuma prizmu. Raksta mērķis ir parādīt pastāvošo saikni starp miesisko patību un mūsdienu ētisko situāciju, akcentējot patības procesualitātes izpratnes nozīmi ētisku diskusiju kontekstā un iezīmējot līdz šim dominējošās substanču ontoloģijas fundētā duālisma bīstamību.

Raksta pirmajā daļā “Dzīvība procesā” problematizēta dzīvības izpratne viņpus dzīvības un nāves dihotomijas. Te komentēta procesu un simbiozes vērtībnostība dzīvības jēdziena izpratnē, pretstatot procesualitāti tradicionāli “lietiskai” pasaules izpratnei. Tradicionālā filozofiskās antropoloģijas kontekstā dzīvība bieži parādās binārās attiecībās ar nāvi, taču šī dihotomija ir ontoloģiski nelīdzvērtīga un attiecas galvenokārt uz patības pieredzi un uztveri. Kur gan vēl dzīvība parādās kā pretēja nāvei, ja ne novērotāja skatienā, kam “dzīvība” apzīmē stabilu, substancionālu stāvokli, ko iznīcina un izjauc nāves iestāšanās? Ontoloģiskā nozīmē “nāve” ir tikai dzīvības procesus raksturojošs mehānisms, kas neaptur un

neapstādina dzīvību (enerģijas nezūdamības likums), bet gan izkļiedē un transformē pastāvošās (nosacīti stabilās) dzīvības formas. Tad kāpēc lielākoties izprotam dzīvību kā pretstatu nāvei?

Filozofijā tradicionāli tiek uzdots jautājums par substanci – esamību, lietu, būtību. Kāpēc ir kaut kas, nevis nekas? Kas ir lieta? Uz dodot jautājumu šādā veidā, pats jautājums pozicionē “lietiskumu” kā fundamentālu, pakārtojot tam procesus. Līdz ar to filozofija un zinātne uzlūko dzīvību caur substanču ontoloģijas prizmu, kas orientēta uz objektu, pūloties fiksēt dzīvības lietiskumu. Šādā skatījumā dzīvības pastāvīgā transformācija un dzīvības formu nestabilitāte kļūst problemātiska, jo būtiski kavē vēlamu fiksējamību. Līdz ar to priekšplānā izvirzās nāves jēdziens, kas iezīmē nevēlamo patības stabilitātes sabrukumu un rada šaubas par esamības iespējamību nebūtības priekšā.

Džona Duprē piedāvājums procesuālā pieejā bioloģijas filozofijā parāda procesu primaritāti. Pretēji substanču ontoloģijas pieejām, procesuālitāte ļauj skatīt dzīvību ārpus dzīvības un nāves dihotomijas. Līdzīga ir arī kritiskā posthumānisma pieeja, kas ir balstīta galvenokārt jaunā materiālisma idejās un akcentē dabkultūras jēdzienu. Posthumānisma pieešums ļauj apsvērt ontoloģisko pieņēmumu nozīmi sociālpolitisku diskursu kontekstā – lietisks pasaules uztvērums liek uzlūkot pasauli atsvešināti un izturēties pret to kā pret “svešo”, turklāt ontoloģisko priekšstatu radītā pasaules aina pieļauj arī objektivizējošu iedarbi uz appasauli, kam ir reālas un bieži vien graužošas “taustāmas” sekas – izpostītas ekosistēmas, sociālā atsvešināšanās u. c.

Lai arī mūsdienu kritiskais posthumānisms akcentē postantropocentrisku skatījumu, joprojām neatrisināts ir jautājums par šāda skatījuma iespējamību, tāpēc otrā daļa “Patība tapšanā” aplūko procesuālās ontoloģijas uztvēruma ierobežojumus – proti, to, ciktāl cilvēka Es-apziņas pasaules objektivizācijas funkcija (uztvērums “ķermenis kā piederošais”) ļauj pieņemt un apzināt miesisko un materiālo pasauli tās procesuālitātē.

Procesu ontoloģija patības izpratnē ļauj izcelt nestabilitātes nozīmi – dzīvības kustība un transformācijas ir jebkuru dzīvības formu veidošanās iespējamības pamatā, līdz ar to patības nestabilitāte ir neizbēgamība, kas

vienlaikus nodrošina jebkuras patības/lietiskošanas dzīvības formas veidošanos. Es-apziņa miesiskajā patībā nodrošina iespēju konstituēt savu patību, nošķirot “es” no “cita”, un tādējādi radot pamatu substanču ontoloģijas postulēšanai. Tāda miesas pašatsvešināšanās savukārt ir neizbēgama, īpaši, ciktāl runa ir par cilvēka patību. Līdz ar to miesiskā patība, lai arī mainīga, apzinās savu nestabilitāti un vienlaikus pieredz tiecību uz pašsaglabāšanos, vēlēšanos “fiksēt” sevi konkrētās formās.

Šo patības pašobjektivizāciju filosofiskajā antropoloģijā iezīmē jēdziens “ķermenis kā piederošais” (*Körper Haben*), ko pretstata procesuālajai daudzējādībai, kas ir miesa (*Leib Sein*). Lai domātu procesuālu ontoloģiju un postantropocentrisku skatījumu kā tādu, ko iespējams integrēt ikdienas pašizpratnē un ētikas diskursos, šajā raksta daļā ar būšanas, tapšanas un piederēšanas jēdzieniem, kas skatīti caur Ēriha Fromma skatījuma prizmu, miesiskā patība parādīta kā tāda, kuras kultūras dzīve domājama arī ārpus es-apziņas objektivizējošās darbības. Konstituējot miesisko patību ārpus dabas un kultūras duālisma, patību arī apziņas un kultūras dimensijā iezīmē ne vien tās objektivizējošā tieksme uz pašsaglabāšanos, bet arī dzīvības procesualitāte, kas ļauj domāt jaunas ontoloģiskās pieejas iespējamību arī uztveres līmenī, vienlaikus rādot procesuālas ontoloģijas uztvērumu kā ierobežotu, ņemot vērā apziņas nepieciešamo pašobjektivizāciju.

Visbeidzot, raksta trešā daļa “Miesiskās patības ētika nākotnei” pievērsta procesuālas un miesiskās patības ētiskajām konsekvencēm un tiek analizēta eksistenciālās objektivizējošās uztveres kustības (*existential having*) patoloģizācija Rietumu sabiedrībā, ko Ērihs Fromms apraksta kā “patoloģisku” tieksmi uz “piederēšanu” (*pathological having*). Te aplūkotas arī duālisma reālā bīstamība un substanču ontoloģijas dominances saikne ar patoloģiskas objektivizācijas funkcijas vairošanos – kancerogēnu tiecību uz pašsaglabāšanos un fiksējamību – un tās izpausmēm cilvēku attiecībās ar vidi un līdzgaitniekiem (cilvēkiem un ne-cilvēkiem), pamatojot procesu ontoloģijas un miesiskās patības izpratnes nepieciešamību ekoloģiskās solidaritātes veidošanā nākotnē.

Atslēgas vārdi: dzīvība, miesiskā patība, ētika, process, ontoloģija, posthumānisms.