

SPECIAL PRINT
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Medicine and Ethics in Times of Corona

edited by

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LIT

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Biographies

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Byk, Christian, is Judge at the Court of Appeal in Paris, Secretary General of the International Association of Law, Ethics and Science and Chairman of the Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee of UNESCO (2017-2019). christian.byk@gmail.com: BEYOND PANDEMICS: THE REORANIZATION OF POWERS AND THE NEW FACE OF SOCIETY

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Dahlke, Dr. med. Eva physician in training to specialize in occupational medicine with a profound knowledge of emergency medicine and global assistance medicine. Postgraduate studies in medical ethics focusing on the interface between occupational medicine and ethics, primarily digital communication transformation concerning vulnerable groups: HOME OFFICE IN THE PANDEMIC: CURSE OR BLESSING?

DiEuliis, Dr. Diane is a Senior Research fellow at National Defense University. Her research areas focus on emerging biological technologies, biodefense, and preparedness for biothreats. Specific topic areas under this broad research portfolio include dual use life sciences research, synthetic biology, the US bioeconomy, disaster recovery, and behavioral, cognitive, and social science as it relates to important aspects of deterrence and preparedness. Dr. DiEuliis currently lectures in a variety of foundational professional military education courses across all the services: OF NEMESIS AND NARCISSUS: LESSONS COVID MAY PROVIDE FOR ENTERPRISES – AND ETHICS – OF GLOBAL HEALTH PROMOTION AND BIOSECURITY.

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Head of the Center for integrative bioethics at the same faculty. E-mail contact: donevdejan@fzf.ukim.edu.mk: BETWEEN EGO(CENTR)ISM AND COOPERATION: WOULD PEOPLE BECOME MORALLY DISENGAGED OR MORE ALTRUISTIC AFTER THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC?

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Elisovna, Prof. Dr. Guryleva Marina doctor of medical Sciences, Professor of the Department of biomedical ethics, biomedical law with a course in the history of medicine of the Kazan state medical University. Chairman of the Local Ethics Committee for clinical research of Kazan state medical University, member of the International society of clinical bioethics. Research interests: bioethics, ethics and standards of clinical research, history of medicine, public health. E-mail: meg4478@mail.ru: BIOETHICS AND PANDEMICS IN THE MODERN WORLD: COVID-19.

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Archdiocese of Luxembourg in times of extensive restructuring.-
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CONTROVERSY IN JAPAN'S TESTING POLICY AGAINST THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS DISEASE AND THE DIFFICULTIES SURROUNDING THE FACT.

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Lei, Dr. Ruipeng works at the Department of Philosophy, Centre for Bioethics, Huazhong University of Science and Technology, Wuhan, China. Contact E-Mail: lxp73615@163.com: ETHICAL AND POLICY ISSUES IN THE EPIDEMIC OF CORONAVIRUS IN CHINA. A DEFENSE FOR OFFENSIVE STRATEGY AGAINST THE SPREAD OF ZOONOSIS.

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Lolas, Dr. Fernando is Medical Doctor both at the University of Chile as well as the Central University of Chile: THE SYNDROMIC PERSPECTIVE AND THE NEED FOR HEALTH HERMENEUTICS.

Macer, Dr. Darryl, Ph.D., Hon.D., is Director, Eubios Ethics Institute, New Zealand, Japan and Thailand, Email: darryl@eubios.info: THE FOUNDATION AND FUNCTIONING OF THE WORLD EMERGENCY COVID19 PANDEMIC ETHICS COMMITTEE.

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Miller, Irene M. celloimm@aol.com, born in Berlin, a cellist, has practiced medicine in USA, China and Africa. Now retired, she lives in New Hampshire: THE HIDDEN COST OF SOCIAL ISOLATION.

Nezhmetdinova, Prof. Dr. Farida Tansykovna, PhD of philosopher, associate Professor. Head of the Department of philosophy and law of Kazan state Agrarian University, Federal expert in the scientific and technical sphere of the Ministry of science and higher education of the Russian Federation, President of the International society of clinical bioethics, member of the Local Ethical Committee for clinical research of Kazan state medical University, Deputy Chairman of the Local Ethical Committee for clinical research of Kazan Federal University. Research interests: bioethics, social and ethical problems of modern technologies, professional education. E-mail: nadgmi@mail.ru: BIOETHICS AND PANDEMICS IN THE MODERN WORLD: COVID-19.

Omonzejele, Dr. Peter, PhD, is a philosopher and bioethicist. He trained in bioethics at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa and at the University of Central Lan-

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Do we still need Ethics?

Morals hold the direction between opposite poles

Erny Gillen, Moral Factory, Germany

Abstract

The Corona crisis has created a collective situation worldwide for which many people were not prepared to subordinate their love for freedom, their ideas of self-realisation and their individual needs to social ethical requirements. This article shows which forms of ethics help to make productive use of existing moral reservoirs with their inner tensions for the future, before biological, climatological or technical constraints increasingly will reduce or even close down free choices. A supple and fluid morality, which aims at what is good, right, just and healthy, can learn from the way medicine deals with life crises.

Key words

freedom, health, medicine, morality, Moral Factory, self-realisation,

What morals are back?

Will the crisis triggered by the coronavirus also change our morals and ethics in the long term? It is already clear that we as a species are capable of changing our behaviour and actions very quickly and purposefully in the face of potential and real threats. For a long time, this evolutionary advantage, to which humanity owes its present cultures, was no longer as tangible and observable as it has been since the beginning of 2020.

When the severe COVID-19 disease broke out, there was a lack of proven therapies and the risk of over-stretching our health care systems was real. Slowly but surely, a unique and new collective situation emerged that infiltrated the consciousness of people around the world. The invisible virus could potentially affect anyone and it makes no difference. It came from the realm of nature, leaping from animals to humans as hosts and back again.

How would less scientifically developed cultures have reacted to this invisible and creeping phenomenon? Would they also have hidden and locked themselves away from the incomprehensible? Would they have protected themselves with prayers and expelled the virus and all those visibly affected by it with exorcisms? Would they also have washed their hands and protected their airways in the open street? Or would they have excluded particularly affected areas or groups from their societies? Narratives and images about plague, cholera, malaria or the so-called Spanish flu suggest that the current behavioural patterns are archaically deeply rooted in human beings, as not yet fixed animal (Nietzsche 1954: No. 61). The movement data freely provided by Apple and Google (Yogeshwar) even show that most people did not wait for the policy of lockdown at all, but had already consistently withdrawn from circulation days before the respective nationally declared crisis situations. Here it becomes clear that it was not politics that set the pace, but the actions of citizens and their expectations of politics.

The dictum "First the eating, then the morality" could have been well documented by extraterrestrial observers as well. The hamster purchases and police operations in shopping malls will be remembered as lasting images, as will the struggle for the last roll of toilet paper, condoms, or bottles of red wine in the otherwise busy temples of consumption in the Western world with their contemplative display cases and flaneurs. What the roll of toilet paper, the condom, or the bottle of red wine meant for individuals was the masks for the states that were not afraid to mobilise their also military means and forces for pirate shopping on the black market and to set up blockades in the open trading area. The observers from outer space could have documented another archaic reaction, namely the protection of territory. The sovereignty reflex of grown groups (Han) led to border closures in the European Union, for example, which are difficult to explain from an epidemiological point of view, and the largest ever worldwide return flights of the own population.

The external observers would probably have written in their logbooks: “As far as we can tell, an unseen phenomenon seems to provoke a largely orderly retreat into the safety of their own nests and groups. Within a few days and weeks it became quiet on planet Earth. The view to the highest mountains and into the depths of the oceans has improved considerably. The pristine nature spreads again to the cities and settlements. From this distance there is not (anymore) much of the reported human superiority to be seen. Whether and when the inhabitants will come out of their hiding places again cannot be predicted at the beginning of April 2020, according to the calendar applicable on planet Earth.”

What could not be seen from this great distance are the high moral achievements on the new front of the disease. Many people have not been idle in their initial shock. The will to live and survive made not only the individual but also the human species resilient and creative in dealing with the new enemy. Doctors and nurses, salesmen and transporters, producers of food and hygiene products were recognised as systemically relevant to this situation and received organised applause from the hiding places. A new public sphere, new forms of private, commercial and political communication emerged thanks to cables and virtual networks laid earlier, which made it possible to connect people who were otherwise physically close to each other and among decision-makers from the protected spaces. Despite all the self-isolation, people have found ways to communicate and to organise themselves locally, regionally and even globally, away from the increasingly better understood sources of danger. Their language and their ability to cooperate strategically under new conditions has also confirmed humanity as the crown of creation to the new viral contender called Corona. The love of freedom that otherwise isolates the individual, his exclusive ideas of self-realisation and individual needs had recognised and accepted the needs of the community as a current priority. We will come back to the different motives for this abrupt change in the behaviour of many.

At the time of writing this paper in June 2020, people still face their most difficult challenge. How should they organise their social and economic activities under the new conditions of the Corona crisis? The cyber-specialists from extraterrestrial space heard a hullabaloo in countless video conferences and telephone calls, as is typical for new beginnings. They were unable to determine the exact meaning because they lacked the code for the human language system. But the increase in the intensity of the conversations and several repetitive sounds such as ‘benefit’, ‘state’, ‘or’, ‘ruin’, ‘vaccine’, ‘therapy’ and ‘COVID19’ ‘and’ ‘politics’ alone suggested that at least three large clusters dominated the lively exchange.

The will to live and survive is also in the foreground in this phase, in which everyone slowly comes to the surface again, and with it the second nature of man, his morality. Non-governmental organisations and critical parties are openly raising the questions: in which directions society, public health and joint economic activity should evolve? How should the three public goods of ‘public health’, ‘social life’ and ‘economic activity’ be better balanced? The balance to be achieved must respect human rights as much as the natural environment, which must also provide future generations with its resources.

The United Nations and companies that are concerned about sustainability and justice join this discourse about people’s morality for the future. On the other hand those questions face a wall of silence or open resistance. Behind this wall stand united those who are convinced that the Corona story was just a serious accident. After the accident sites have been cleared up and the victims have been compensated, everything should continue as it was before the tragic event. It is to be feared that the old rifts between the one and the other, the good and the bad, the value conservatives and the open liberals will once again dominate the discussions. The either-or logic is back. And with it the big moral questions: What is good? What is right?

Using opposite polarities productively

It is precisely here at the interface of morality that it is worth pausing for a moment. Are we on a helpful track when we approach the questions of morality with exclusive answers? Does good exclude evil? Or are we dealing with a living polarity (Guardini)? If the not-good does not simply coincide with evil as its negation, but represents its opposite polarity, then both can be thought of together. What would apply to moral intentions should also apply to the determination of factual logic with its counter-concepts of 'right' and 'wrong'. If we dare to leave behind the exclusive dualism in order to allow productive polarities, we take a step into another way of understanding morals and ethics.

For this unusual understanding of morals and ethics as a continuous process between the polarities that determine them, we can learn a lot from practical medicine and nursing. This also moves between polarities, namely between 'healthy' and 'sick'. The one pole can only be understood in the tension with the other. Patients, nurses and doctors know what is going on in a person who experiences his body as healthy or sick for the first time. What happens to him opens up new dimensions that have always been present but were not consciously perceived. It is similar with moral bipolarity: it comes to the surface and into consciousness together with a dilemma.

Did the toilet paper hunters act right or wrong at the beginning of the crisis? Or perhaps they acted right and wrong? As a first step, I would like to argue that good and bad intentions determine us in a mixed and unseparated way, as well as our right and wrong actions. The next step will be to show how the respective opposites kinetically interact as polarities of a living tension. Before that, it will be clarified in more detail what a bipolar tension is in relation to a contradiction or an excluding dualism.

The problem addressed is as old as the history of philosophy. Well-known and controversial are above all the last great attempts of dialectic, with which Hegel and many others tried to resolve such tensions. In this process, the tension between polarities, such as rich and poor, those without rights and the powerful, is lifted to a third level in a tour de force of reason, on which the polar opposites dissolve and reconcile within the same people. Communism or socialism did not succeed to effectively reconcile the opposites in a given society. Rather, they have created or allowed new antagonisms and injustices to arise. Also Christianity in the discipleship of Jesus of Nazareth has not succeeded in opening a third way, but oscillates indecisively between opposite positions. At the same time, the One made its Founder did not want to abolish the law, but to fulfil it with his Sermon on the Mount.

Is the short phase of the collective situation of consciousness, created by the corona virus, of being one vulnerable human family enough to respond to dualisms and constraints with a philosophy of the living-concrete? Today's science and medicine could be our guide with their approach of trial and error on the trail of a renewed understanding of morality and ethics. Their approach owes its success, among other things, to Karl Popper's recipe, which reversed the logic of power through proof by the logic of falsification. In an open society, one can and should happily experiment. As long as society is willing to learn from mistakes, it remains in a logic of research. What is good and right, evil and wrong is not determined in advance, but is tested and openly evaluated with determination.

Nobody simply knows and there is no secret knowledge that is only accessible to a few. The search for therapies and vaccines to challenge the uninvited virus shows how science works. Interim results and hypotheses are controversially and respectfully examined and rejected, written and rewritten among experts. Science is the skillful handling of knowledge and

ignorance.

Politics, too, has had to come out before the people as a power that navigates from point to point between knowledge and ignorance, between certainty and uncertainty. Between acting too quickly and intervening too hesitantly, the crisis managers in the respective countries had to explain themselves almost daily on the basis of new findings and other arguments. As long as the plausibility and in some cases also the authenticity of the decision-makers was given, the majority of people followed what they understood and accepted.

In the first hot phase around COVID-19, the majority of us as humanity have proven that our morality is very quickly adaptable and changeable when we are individually and socially challenged. The observer from outside can easily prove this with the photographs of deserted places and streets, groups keeping their distance and the many masks that have become fashionable. The people on the outside behave differently before the crisis than during and after it. But why do they do this? Out of a moral conviction that they do not want to harm themselves or others? Out of selfish fear of being infected themselves? Out of pure fashion?

The danger of dualism lurks behind the answers, especially when one motive is qualified as good and the other as bad. Should we now focus on the reasons, i.e. the real moral question, the good and bad behaviour or the right and wrong doing? After the Second World War, now the penultimate collective experience of large parts of the world, common normative sentences were agreed upon in the constitution of human rights without giving reasons for them, because otherwise the signatories would not have found agreement (Kühnlein-Wils). Even today we all pay the price of this compromise of the powerful. Can our tolerance of ambiguity today withstand the fact that normative sentences are understood and justified in this way by the one and in another?

The direction within the polarities makes the difference

In order to decisively put a stop to the appearance and the real danger of arbitrariness or relativism, it is time to come to the productivity criterion of the theory of polarities¹. It inscribes itself in a philosophy of life, in dissociation from a philosophy of being or technology. Life as an expression of entropy develops along the fuzziness of the immovable. Where the blurs leave the subject free to choose, he or she is free to choose and to realise his or her decision as an individual. Where the subject does not leave its choice to chance, but submits it to its will, it acts morally and ties its expectation of the future to this decision.

Again, the constitutive contrast between ‘sick’ and ‘healthy’ from medicine can help us as an analogy. It all depends on the direction our actions take. The sick person can let go in his illness and surrender to it. But he can also struggle and fight for his dwindling health together with his doctors and nurses. In both cases one will avoid the extremes and try to keep the leading direction “health” in mind.

But are we even able to determine a direction? Many individual decisions, which are perceived as free, can today be calculated statistically and in part down to the individual person from their previous behaviour, that is to say: their choices can be foreseen (Zuboff). Yesterday’s

¹ I am here adopting the formal principle developed by Romano Guardini in his main work in the 1920s, (*Der Gegensatz*), however, without his idiosyncratic content. He formulated his theory at a similarly uncertain time as the one we are currently experiencing between latent and acute crises and uncertainties. The call for clarity, unambiguity and power was as great then as it is today. Between the great ideologies and narratives of liberalism, socialism or communism, he wanted to use his own doctrine of polar oppositions to clear a specific path for humane development that was not exclusive but inclusive.

economy before the corona break, which some are striving for again, can be described as a decentralised and interconnected planned economy in more or less open systems of competing and cooperating interests. With the 'just in time' or 'on demand' functions, production and distribution chains were created in the large data centres of the economy, which served the customer and his sometimes individualised product more and more efficiently, even into personalised medicine. The energy consumption for the virtual machine of our global economy is enormous and is constantly increasing. Some people see this form of satisfying their needs as having no alternative. They have built their lifestyle on the smooth running of this invisible market.

Since the price is paid in money and the costs to others and to nature are kept behind the curtain of not-knowing, the economic machine driven by money and profit can determine the rhythm of life of the payers as well as that of its maintenance staff. Incidentally, from the machine's point of view it does not matter who it serves or whether it stutters because of supply or demand. The bigger it is and the faster it turns, the more unimportant are the occasional local failures, whether on the input or output side.

This economy was massively slowed down and partly stopped by the lockdown for the sake of people's lives and survival. The hygienic conditions under which the economic machine can be restarted were quickly worked out and are already largely in place among the people. But even among the business lobbyists, the TINA representatives (There Is No Alternative) are making themselves scarce. The money-makers in the central banks and political leaders more and more link the holding of vast sums of money to moral conditions such as the renunciation of dividends or bonus payments, but also to more climate-friendly growth. Less audible are the voices demanding more justice for this 'reset' of the economy.

But who is to shape this bumpy and step by step new start with money borrowed from the future? Does money finally reveal itself in this reset as a narrative without any ties to services or products? To whom is the newly printed money entrusted? The customers, the producers or service providers? How do we finance the systemically relevant social and health centres? What role should the state play? What role is left to the decision-makers in the economic centres?

These questions and many more are open to free choices. The current blurs and acute uncertainties are a wide doorway for our freedom. Here and now, it must be enough to mention some alternatives and options, such as an unconditional basic income or low-emission or emission-free production. Again, it is not about playing off the right or the good against the wrong or the evil. Otherwise we would be back in the scheme of dualism. In this tense polarity, however, it is morally important to give a direction to one's choices and actions. Good intentions are better than bad ones, and right action is preferable to wrong.

The Corona situation has shown that we are able to reorganise ourselves quickly and purposefully as human beings if we recognise the situation, understand the reasons and accept them. In this still ongoing situation, will it be possible to develop a narrative for a good and just coexistence of all people worldwide in order to become more crisis-resistant and resilient to future threats to our species? Do we develop an open-ended moral language that unites us and uses the spectrum of polarities to make statements of direction that serve different interests?

In concrete terms, this would mean enriching the private and public discourse with questions of moral direction and justification. We are "back again from our hiding places" with our silent, tested and adaptable morals. We just have learned that life is not just routine, but remains open for beautiful and ugly surprises. In that vein we should now also be able to deal with our own anthropocidy in a relaxed and calm way: we can act good and bad, just and unjust. The Corona crisis has produced enough positive and negative situations and experiences that cannot be

divided up again dualistically, but sometimes flowed into each other unseparated and mixed up. In this field of tension, from which we cannot escape if we want to develop, it is important to give priority to the good and the right. And that, in turn, can only be done in discourse and action. We should no longer hide from our reasons and motives. In this explicit work on our morals, professional ethicists can, where desired and helpful, step in as moderators.

Professional ethics, which itself does not represent a moral point of view of its own, cultivates the philosophical craft of right argumentation and knows the pitfalls of naturalistic fallacy, for example, when a direct conclusion is drawn from is to ought. Medicine, military and slowly also the economic sciences have already partially integrated these competencies for their own humane development and use comprehensible moral arguments in dealing with their counterparts. These differ from biological, climatological or technical arguments. The latter do not automatically guide action, but provide data from the nature of things, which are to be incorporated into political and moral calculations. It is about goals and not about methods, as the nationally differing distance rules or multiple, hygienic and fashionable mouth and nose protection utensils show. Morality dies a slow death where it is replaced by practical constraint instead of being understood as a creative way to shape our freedom.

Test and evaluate freedom!

Which pairs of polarities can help us to shape the future in freedom and responsibility? As I have already explained, my thesis here is that moral thought and action is a matter of development that cannot be separated from the polarities of good and evil, right and wrong. Even from our wrong, evil or unjust actions we can learn how and what we can do better if we have the courage to attribute the negative to ourselves. None other than Pope Francis writes a remarkable sentence about this in *Evangelii gaudium*, his declaration of government for the further development of the Catholic Church: *“Even people who can be considered dubious on account of their errors have something to offer which must not be overlooked”* (n. 236).

Develop ideas for reality

We remain learners if we keep the polarity between reality and ideas permanently in mind and evaluate it. Which realities determine our lives, and which ideas? Especially the novel corona virus has shown us and still shows us that we have not yet fully grasped it with our ready-made ideas. Whether vaccines will ever be able to combat it is as open as the search for a drug. Whether business trips will ever regain their familiar and symbolic meaning is just as questionable as permanent home schooling. In any case, our wealth of ideas and the courage to implement them effectively has experienced an undreamed-of heyday with the crisis. What was introduced as a substitute solution may also partly survive beyond the Corona period, such as working from home.

But the reality that we create anew with our decisions is constantly changing. This reality must be examined with the primordial question of morality: Should we do that? We are back at the reasons and motives why we act in this or another way. These give life our identity and take it away from the rule of the nobody, as Hannah Arendt put it in a nutshell. Reality does not have to be as it is. Where it is fragile or blurred, we can work alone and together to change it. For this we need ideas that can be tested as hypotheses until they are discarded or sufficiently improved. In this way we give reality a first place and make it the benchmark for our ideas. Perhaps it is precisely our mass society that is about to breaking up into many new real segments, which will make it harder for future pathogens than the current monoculture.

Open existing spaces for time

A second polarity that can help us in the moral evaluation of meaningful next steps is the constitutive tension of space and time. We have first outwitted the virus with our understanding of space and time. By buying time by retreating into safe spaces, we have tactically deprived it of its breeding ground. The same tactic is used with the countless bridge loans. The self-invented time has often helped man to cunningly dig a pit for the stronger ones as they ascend from the realm of primeval nature. With time, we have been able to create ever new and larger spaces, which we have designed with our own cultures. As people who are at home on the go, we need spaces that change with us and our situations; not fortresses for eternity. Our fictional external observers from extraterrestrial space will easily recognise the traces of the new pathogen in the architecture and urbanism of the future, as well as we are able to follow the traces of the cholera epidemic along the underground sewers and wide boulevards in Paris and many other cities.

Learning Transfer

How we should use the time in the race against the impending climate catastrophe is another question to our morality, which we cannot avoid further in our current directly or indirectly threatened spaces. Whether we have enough time to work out technical solutions is uncertain. Just as uncertain is whether a few will manage to escape to Mars, while planet Earth is slowly becoming uninhabitable for most. With the polarity of space and time, time should be used to point the way for the design of our changing habitats. Together with our creative power to create effective and symbolic realities, the binomial space and time provides us with an excellent toolbox for shaping the future. Whether our lifelong and survival skills are sufficient to technically master the artificially intelligent and partly autonomous systems we desire is another major question for our morality and future. Since these systems do not share our sense of time, the risk is all the greater that we are in the process of outwitting ourselves with this last invention of mankind.

What ethical structures (Gillen (a)) should now be created in order to approach the questions of the future under the impulse of the corona crisis in an open, but cheerful discourse about our morals? Ethical advisory bodies have proven their worth, especially during the acute threat. Moral movements such as “Fridays for Future” or “Black Lives Matter” unite millions of people to denounce the bloody and dirty wounds of our future-blind economy and ruthless coexistence. The unmistakable calls for more justice among people and with nature need honest forums that test and evaluate changes in terms of hypotheses before they become radicalised, because no progress can be seen. Ethics as an applied philosophy should be further integrated into all areas of academic teaching and research. Decisive for the future will also be small-scale moral experiments by courageous citizens who, over time, will create alternative spaces and realities and thus effectively exemplify which other possibilities are realistic. Only lived morality is convincing. The Corona situation has also confirmed this in an exemplary manner.

Man has the resources to shape his life differently. If he orients himself again and again to the good, the right, the just and the healthy, he will find points of application as an individual and as a member of his species to shape himself and his environment in such a way (Gillen (b)) that the freedom of all of us will also in future become larger and not smaller. Freedom is the vehicle for our morality and responsibility. For them it is worth the effort!

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