

Hans-Martin Sass

## Health and Happiness of Political Bodies

The book “Health and Happiness of Political Bodies” by Hans-Martin Sass is an extension of the author’s presentation under the title “Biocomplexity, Bioethics and Integration” from 2019, discussion about “Homo Faber and Homo Ludens” from his presentation held in Seoul in 2019, and parts of his book “Cultures in Bioethics” from 2016.

The book was published in 2020 by Verlag publisher. It consists of Introduction, References and eight chapters: *Bios is integrated, complex and adaptable*; *Integrative biology of political bodies*; *Tool use cultures: Homo Faber and Homo Ludens*; *Variations and modifications of political bodies*; *Special risks to political and corporate bodies*; *Cultures and modifications in the body of the Leviathan*; *Constructing healthy modular public bodies*; *A concluding narrative: The Little Town by the River*.

The guiding thought of the author’s work is the change that has occurred as a result of several significant events of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries: the Fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the Demolition of the WTC in New York in 1993, and the Corona pandemic in 2020. The mentioned events influenced the change of the societies’ biological, political, and corporate bodies, which resulted in the change of us as individuals.

In the 20th century, after Fritz Jahr’s definition of Bio-Ethical Imperative, bioethics “has grown from medical ethics and social and political strategies to multidisciplinary and integrated disciplines of research and consulting”. Even though Jahr’s definition is the starting point of a new understanding of the world around us and relations between every being as a part of that world, the author in the *Introduction* of the book submits wider integrated biocultural, corporate, and political “Bio-Cultural Imperative: Support direct human inter-action and common-sense as an end in itself and use hardware and software tools only in stabilising healthy and happy cultures in

the bodies of ecologies, corporations and politics.” Events such as the falling of the Berlin Wall and World Trade Center and the global Corona pandemic show us on what level biological, political and corporate bodies can change and how we change with them and in them. The reason for that we can find in the first chapter of this book, called “Bios is Integrated, Complex, and Adaptable”, where the author writes about bios as complex and integrated that is “larger than traditional biology: it covers all complex, adaptable systems (CAS) of natural and cultural biotopes and political and corporate bodies”. Whether we talk about individual or collective bios, specific for each bios is so-called “groupies expressed by species-specific and individual-specific degrees of the 8 C’s capacities: communication and cooperation, competency and competition, contemplation and calculation, compassion and cultivation”. For the understanding of the wide variety of authors and schools through history who talked about these integrated complexities, the author states a few of them; Reeves, Dragon Fu Xi, Confucius, Lin Yu, Vedic wisdom, Tat Tvam Asi, Adi Sahara, Buddhist reasoning, King Lothar, Heraclites, Jesus Christ and his quotation of Jewish Prophet Micah, Prophet Mohamed, and Fritz Jahr. The way plants and trees are not limiting themselves to one highly central brain (as animals and, in that sense, humans do) can be understood as to how S. Mancuse writes: “... the living representation of how stability and flexibility can be combined. Their modular, diffused construction is the epitome of modernity: a cooperative, shared structure without command centres, able to flexibly resist repeated catastrophic events without losing functionality and adapt very quickly to huge environmental changes. It is no coincidence that the internet, the very symbol of modernity, is built like a root system. When it comes its robustness and flexibility, nothing can compete with plants. We would do well to bear this in mind when planning for our future as a species”. In that sense, federal republics as the USA, Switzerland, and FRG “... representing more a strong and well-integrated tree than a dictatorial man. Would it be acceptable to compare the photosynthesis from ‘above’ (...) with ‘spiritual’ light from above (...)?”. Muslim scholar Al-Farabi compares human and political bodies as human beings having bodies, so does have cities and households. Each body has different parts, and each part has a specific role, and with their actions, “they come together in mutual assistance to perfect the purpose...”. Interestingly, the authors broadened this statement with another author, Hao-Cai Laing and his eight theses for integrating people’s health into political bodies and Sun Mio’s saying: “Superior doctors treat the state, better doctors treat a patient, common doctors treat the illness”. What the author suggests for us, following mentioned author, is: “... prepare for triage, natural disasters endemics, biomedical terror and warfare; establish survivable information networks; test and control that experts and materials are ready any time; provide full and open information to experts and citizens; involve citizens and communities as partners in

crisis prevention and management. As epidemics and other health risks may reach global proportions, it is a national self-interest as well as a human obligation to cooperate globally in creating a more healthy and harmonious world and to fight the spread of the disease". Furthermore, because humans are social living beings, we are: "... gifted and burdened with the conflict between individual and group interests". In that case, as "... photosynthesis keeps the metabolism of plants and trees alive and well (...) 'spiritual' light (...) keeps the physical and emotional metabolism of human individuals and collectives alive and well" because, as the author concludes this chapter, "What photosynthesis does for plants, religious or other spiritual values of human might do for the metabolism of healthy social human bodies".

In the next chapter, "Tool Use Cultures Homo Faber and Homo Ludens," the author writes about tools we use and how they influence our lives. In that sense, the author thinks that "personal and societal experiences and ecosystems grow bigger and more complex due to our complex tool use". Using so-called hardware tools (hammers, houses, cars), humans use so-called software tools "for shared social use, including values, customs, laws, traditions, festivities, parties and plays". Those software tools show us that we as humans can "build societies and networks including rules and values, nourishments and honours, Gods and Goddesses, good and evil spirits, languages and traditions, ceremonies and festivals, parties and plays". Furthermore, with this use of even more complex tools, as the author says, we have also modified our social biotopes. On the other hand, that kind of tool allows us to have stable and prosperous communities by dividing labour and expertise and enforcing legal and political tools. There is a difference in the hardware tools that we use. Some of them are technical (hammers and phones) and others are animated (plants and farms). Differences between these two kinds of tools are evident: animate life needs a variety of neurobiological chemicals, food, sleep, and they have emotions; inanimate does not have emotions, they are successful or unsuccessful, can be separate or coordinated. Till recently, we have cultivated animate tools by breeding and crossbreeding. That changed with Crispr-Cas9 technology that "given us the tools to directly construct life form tools, including manipulating human life". Mentioned tools and similar tools will "allow [us] to direct affect brain reaction for therapeutic purposes, but also 'brain enhancing' in a symbiosis with artificial empathy and intelligence". As the author writes, "while some traditional breeding results did potentially harm animals (...) Crispr will increase those conflicts. – Life emotions (...) require oxytocin and dopamine, while robot companions and machine learning are powered by electricity or other non-animated energy without requiring oxytocin". Considering that the author points out that robots of that kind will affect brain reaction for the therapeutic purpose directly, but also 'brain enhancing' in symbiosis with artificial empathy and intelligence. What is interesting here is the contrast that we could have in public

health care: “data will improve diagnosis and therapy but may also feed exploitation and destroy privacy”, and in that case, “businesses, the media and governments may use extended powers for guidance or control”. If we talk about the quality of human life, then we cannot consider just Growth National Product (GNP). GNP figures allow for economic planning, but the so-called Gross Happiness Product (GHP) is more important. Even United Nations adopted the pursuit of happiness and the GHP as an ideal instrument to measure the stability and health of a society and other political bodies. The author claims that we should take into consideration Zong’s proposal for reviewing classical Chinese concepts of family and family connectedness may serve as a model for new biocultures in the 21st century: “Following the wisdom of Chinese people on family happiness could help to build a harmonious society in the world: draw on their empathy, putting themselves in others’ shoes, addressing others’ needs and concerns, showing love for one’s nearest of kin one’s fellowmen and all living things”. The important thing to point out is that cultural, social, and political interconnectedness in the Confucian sense does not mean equal, but rather “differentiated and graded connectedness”. Furthermore, the author mentioned Rabbi’s Moses Mendelsohn’s quest for harmony and diverse and contrarian powers within social, cultural, and political bodies and rephrases it into the diverse bios of individual human and human communities into a bioethical suggestion: “Brethren, citizens, politicians, and leaders, if you want peace and harmony in our political life, then let us not lie about uniformity when adaptability, plurality, and modality seems to have been the blueprint in the wisdom of bios. No one among the bodies politic has a fully identical body structure and social interactions as compared to the others. Why do we hide from each other behind the masquerades of one-size-fits-all democracies or similar bodies, as the vital, interconnected, highly adaptable, diverse, and complex human bios has not without reason given us and our political bodies different shapes and shades?”. Even though robots can serve certain positive purposes, we all should always remind ourselves of Isaak Asimov’s Law of Robotics: “First Law: A robot may not injure a human being, or through interaction, allow a man to come to harm. – Second Law: A robot must obey the orders given by human beings except where such would conflict with the First Law. – Third Law: A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Law, or may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm”.

In the fourth chapter, “Variations and Modifications of Political Bodies,” the author writes that Hegel was wrong when he declared the European culture as the final point of history. Still, he rightly recognised that progress in history involves passions and influential people. “The narrative of ‘cunning of reason’ may be good as a vision, but the reality is different. Al complex adaptable and changing bodies of individual

and collective bios need permanent modification and adaptation to protect and to further develop and strengthen individual and collective bios.” What is essential for our social bodies and individual self-understandings depend on our extreme human competence for contemplation and calculation. Even though earlier in the past small communities could survive on their own and individuals were multi-tasking, today we depend on others, their expertise and supply. The critical question from this chapter is: “Could emotional and social robots topside our traditional cultures in friendship and lovemaking?”. Namely, robots do not need oxygen as we and plants and animals need, but they can provide us with oxytocin for bios interaction and happiness while they do not need it. Even though we could discuss this and use religions as an example, religions have not always supported the building of happy and healthy social bodies. As we depend on other humans and their expertise, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, we become more and more dependent on AI and other technological companions. More and more new scenarios in the 21st century influence modern biotopes of human cultures and societies and call into question their survival.

In the fifth chapter, “Special Risks to Political and Corporate Bodies”, the author writes about six risks to political and corporate bodies—the first one in global pandemics and biological warfare. The main difference between pandemics and biological warfare is in the enemies. In naturally occurring pandemics, enemies ate deadly pathogens; in biological warfare, the enemies are human aggressors. There are two weapons of defence to fight these enemies: complete, easy-to-understand public information and advice, good public health infrastructures, and pre-acute storage of remedies for easy distribution. The next important thing in fighting these enemies is the extraordinary means before the outbreak, such as reducing freedom of mobility and quarantines. To stop terrorist attacks, it is crucial to support healthy cultural and ethical environments and educate the populace to be risk competent and vigilant. The best defences against dangerous weapons are research and preparedness and a policy of threatening to retaliate similarly. The second risk to political and corporate bodies are electric risk and electromagnetic shock. Extreme lengths and kinds of radiation will interfere with our electric networks and may destroy hardware and software. States or criminals can initiate this or similar type of radiation for destruction. The third risk is confidence risk in paper and promise. The author writes that trade and commerce become worse and integrated and thus are prey to unintentional or deliberate attacks on essential trust. Individuals or state-supported hackers and criminals can create total havoc in the commercial life of the planet. High-frequency trading has not proven to be economically necessary or beneficial, and governments print paper money uncontrolled. Central banks and government markets distort markets by unpredictable currency moves, creating “trade anxiety”.

The most recent cynical strategy of the Central bank is to reduce the value of the paper money to initiate inflation and cause more inefficiencies in markets. Those inefficient interventions will reduce the value of government bonds and paper money in pensions paid by workers. That interventions and regulations have made the self-healing and adjusting market forces inefficient. The reaction by other central banks in changing their national interest rates results in developing market changes that will influence employment and profit. The fourth risk to the political and corporate body is revolt and repression risk. Today, Karl Marx would identify the unhappy and frustrated segments of populations transitioning from traditional to modern societies. The author writes: “Michel Foucault (1903) discussed the use of information and indoctrination methodology by nation-states in Europe since the 18th century: ‘when discipline is the technology deployed to make individuals behave to be productive workers, biopolitics is deployed to manage population; for example, to ensure a healthy workplace.’” A new political class conducts their business based on self-interest. Information, communications, and cooperation found in cyberspace can work in favour of state-controlled masses. It could work in favour of better transparency or even more successful corruption and exploitation. The fifth risk is territorial mix-up risk. In the past, communities had eremites who left society for emigrating into close communication and integration with non-geographical spiritual powers. Today those emigrants relocate to so-called “Second Life” or other internet territories on which they are famous. On the other hand, “nobodies” live unknown and are not socially integrated or even recognised in their private quarters. In that sense, the author points out that internet addiction has become one of the most challenging disorders to treat in psychiatric therapy. Last, the sixth risk is loss of control. Science fiction narratives often talk about the threat from artificial intelligence, turning against the existing balance of interaction and interdependence among the modern world of bios. Digital and microbial infrastructures on one side and biological, economic, social and political bodies on the other side are essential for the survival of the bios of modern culture. The problem makes the new complex adaptable and integrated collective and political bios more vulnerable. The six mentioned risks show that the risk of the impressive colossus of the modern global and integrated political body with its vulnerable cultural and economic organs has not yet been widely enough discussed.

In the sixth chapter: “Cultures and Modifications in the Body of the Leviathan”, the author writes about political and corporate bodies similar but not identical as individual bodies. Individual bodies might be more integrated than political, but political may come in more shapes and shades than individuals. What is similar for both kinds of bodies is in transition and interaction adaptation as part of life and the rule of life for both body types. Political bodies strive on the same 8C biological

properties: communication and cooperation, competence and competition, contemplation and calculation, compassion and cultivation. Good constituents for long and happy lives of political bodies are so-called 3F's: foods, funs, and faiths.

In the penultimate chapter: "Constructing Healthy Modular Public Bodies", the author writes that just as individual bodies and other forms of bios do not fit into one size for all, the same is true for public bodies. Because of that, even though the public things and beings were called "res publica", there are other political bodies called kingdoms, empires, democracies, etc. The purpose of the body politic is happiness and body healthy, and not power or commerce. In a situation where one part of the body becomes weak, distressed or threatening, the others or the entire body, states and societies that last long have a modular body or integrated or interacting parts, which allow for transformations and modification. Today, cyber-territories allow an individual to escape from the local neighbourhood if he/she does not want to, whatever the case would be. Even though this could weaken the local community, similar conditions would not make a strong and stable local community on which a larger body politic could rest. Making new neighbourhoods and high-rises and mega-cities fit to adapt flexibly to new modifications of the ever-changing body politic will strengthen the survivability by good interaction with geographical and cyberspace territories. Even though some societies are called "sclerotic" because they are unwilling or incapable to modify into the modern world, there is so-called "preventive health care" for political bodies. The cyberspace environment allows individuals and groups from afar to threaten our bios that were threatened in the past by foreign invaders, corrupt individuals, bad people, or family. As the author points out, we see a new "localism" as a form of our geographical patriotism in a complex adaptation and modification based on discontent in our cultural and political bios. That new localism could be or not be multicultural. It would be stronger and healthier if it would allow for cultural and social modularity. The reason for that is decentralisation and modularity. Centralised and not very modular political bodies have fewer opportunities to recognise and implement health and happiness from one of their organs to grass-root levels. That could lead to political failure and losing the sparks of individual and communal creativity, competition and innovation. Even though the enormously expanding bios of integrated geography and cyberspace could overwhelm individuals and communities with too much available information to cope with new information and options. On the other hand, reduction of complexity and modularity can become dangerous. It is more likely for that kind of reduction to be not the healthiest way of cultivating self-identity within the larger social and political body. Furthermore, in the text, the author gives us a comparison between two mythological animals: Behemoth and Leviathan, and suggests that the previously mentioned Gross Happiness Product

(GHP) could in the future be delivered by the interaction between two powers represented by mentioned Behemoth and Leviathan. (Behemoth as a gigantic land creature, and Leviathan as the most powerful sea dragon). In the past, big rivers such as Euphrates and Tigris, Yangtze, Danube, Rhine, Volga and Mississippi, and the Mediterranean Sea were main travel routes. With time, rivers and the sea were replaced with railroads and autobahns. As the author writes, we interplay between the geographical Behemoth giants and the cyberspace Leviathan dragons. Fascinating is the next author's thought: "Behemoth and Leviathan interact with each other. Our dreams are of Leviathanian nature, but they need to be embodied in the lands of the Behemoth for realised and lived happiness of people and communities". Even though there are many images between the two beasts, and some of them are mentioned by the author in this book, what is important to point out is the expansion of Lao Zi's insight into a Bioethical Imperative for the 21st century: "Cultivate yourself and life and virtue become true; cultivate individual and corporate persons, and virtue will be great; cultivate political and corporate bodies and virtue will be full; cultivate communication and cooperation and life will grow; cultivate compassion and competence and life will be rich; cultivate the worlds of bios and virtues will be wide.' In regard to building corporations and institutions as well-respected, rich, and successful corporate persons practising bioethics anywhere and everywhere in the world, we may say: Cultivate communication and cooperation and corporate persons and communities will be strong; cultivate competence and compassion and corporate persons and communities will be good; cultivate corporate persons and communities, and the neighbourhood will be healthy; cultivate the neighbourhoods and the world will be healthy and happy". Furthermore, "Cultures, communities and individuals need to redefine their roles in the struggle between the Behemoth and the Leviathan in shorter and shorter half-lives of adjustment and alteration". This geospace is the only one we have. The author points out that we could destroy it technologically or lose it by cyberspace migration and relocation. In that sense, the author concludes this chapter with a suggestion that we could discuss, through Fritz Jahr's Bio-Ethical Imperative, a wider integrated ecological, corporate and political "Bio-Cultural Imperative: Respect and support direct human inter-action and common-sense as an end in itself and use hardware and software tools only in stabilising healthy and happy cultures in the bodies of ecologies, corporations and politics" which was mentioned at the beginning of this recension and in the Introduction of this book.

Last chapter: "A Concluding Narrative: The Little Town by the River", is about the story that was influenced by the Prophet Mohamed's "Contract of Medina", and the author has used it in classroom teachings and conferences around the world.

The reason for that narrative is to encourage discussion about tolerance and to work together in happy and healthy diversified political bodies and urban biotopes.

Summarising all-important points prominent in this book, the given story discusses a stable political body connected by various trade and communication networks in a pluralistic harmonious society, leaving controversial ideological topics to future debates. It is an excellent way to conclude, but also widen the narrative of the book for future discussions.

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