

justice but rather a recognition of one of the difficulties the humanities will have to face. Surely we can expect interdisciplinary research of philosophy, literature, criminology, psychology and other fields of knowledge to be important with respect to meeting this difficulty and the pointers that McGregor provides in this book are much needed!

Narrative justice proves to be a project with the potential to answer two very important questions that have been raised in contemporary academia: (a) the question of how should one go about the defense of the humanities against the pressure coming from neoliberal quantification and (b) the question of which (if any) approach could be employed in order to combat the rising threat of extremist violence and terrorism that is present throughout the modern world. The central thesis of narrative justice that the cultivation of narrative sensibility could reduce criminal inhumanity has the potential to address both of these questions and therefore it has to be taken seriously. I think that McGregor demonstrates that the thesis of narrative justice holds against most of the criticism on the theoretical level. I identified one of the problems with it, namely difficulties involved in its application, and I argued that any theory belonging to the context of aesthetic education will face those issues. Thus, my claim should not serve as an objection to narrative justice per se, but rather highlight the enormous amount of work and empirical research that will have to be done before any step towards practical application can be undertaken. I conclude that narrative justice proves to be an important development within the wider context of philosophy and the humanities. I strongly recommend this book to everyone interested in ways in which narratives and ethics interact, and in the wider social context within which we run the risk of inhumanity.

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*Tiziana Andina, Petar Bojanić (eds.), Institutions in Action. The Nature and the Role of Institutions in the Real World, New York: Springer 2020, 150 pp.*

Philosophy is a humbling profession. Even after 20 years of “dabbling” in it, I am often confronted with the Socratic “I know that I know nothing”, or at least its more moderate version “I wish that I knew more”. The same sentiment in me was also provoked by this book, as I went into the task of reading it with the preconception that I am familiar with what institutions are, only to be confronted with the different aspects on the subject that have once more proved that I was wrong in my hubris.

But, let us focus on the book. *Institutions in Action* by editors Tiziana Andina and Petar Bojanić is a part of the Springer’s series “Studies in the Philosophy of Sociality,” which main aim is to provide important contributions to the rapidly developing field of social ontology. As social ontology is the field of study that investigates correlation of nature with the social world, its focus is on various entities that appear in the world as a product

of social interaction. As such, social ontology is especially interested in the analysis of social groups, but other investigated entities also include social classes, genders, races, language and of course, institutions.

In general, social ontology could be regarded as a branch of metaphysics, as its research is mainly concerned with the nature of entities. However, it is also hard to strictly demarcate the social ontology's field of research, as its investigation of social entities oftentimes overlaps with one of social sciences. The difference lies in the approach, which in social ontology is more detailed, it asks the "big questions" about the nature of our social world. Furthermore, social ontology as a term has been widely used in recent times, but its topic has been a subject of philosophical inquiry since ancient times.

As editors in the preface of the book claim, their aim was to collect contributions from distinguished scholars from various theoretical and methodological orientations, in order to investigate the theory related to the nature of institutions, their identity and normativity, with the overall goal of bringing the debate back to the centre of social ontology. To do that, the book's main aim is to answer a simple question—"What are institutions?" Of course, this question begets new questions, such as, how can we define institutions, and can we arrive on a single agreeable definition? Of course, *Institutions in Action* does not stop there, but also tries to answer related questions whether institutions could be considered collective subjects, or do we have to understand them differently, as a class of specific objects with particular properties? And if the institutions are understood as a class of specific objects, what kind of entity they would be and what properties would define them? And finally, what kind of relationship is there between the institutions and the singular subjects and what and how many types of relationships can there be between institutions?

As it is evidenced by the questions, ontological inquiry takes precedence in this book to other areas of philosophy, such as moral and political philosophy, that also commonly deal with the institutions. But it does not mean that it evades the questions relevant to that fields, as the question of the relationship of institutions with the individuals is intermittently invoked throughout the book. For instance, the question whether institutions are collective subjects or are they different from the sum of individuals that compose them has repercussions on political and ethical debates, as prolonged existence over time (which is one of defining properties of institutions) enhances the trust between the institutions and citizens. And the trust is necessary condition for the proper functioning of institutions, that is, protection of individuals through the application of justice.

Finally, "Institutions in Action" also deals with the relation of institutions and elements that have normative basis, such as norms, laws, and contracts. This relation, in turn, provokes questions such as "can we reasonably understand normativity as the foundation of institutions?" And if the answer is positive, should we think of normativity as external or internal to the institutions?

First of the essays in this interdisciplinary collection is "Social Corporations as Social Institutions" by one of the leading authors in the field of social ontology, the Finnish philosopher Raimo Tuomela. In it he argues that "social corporations" (e.g., school, hospital, mail service) ideally function as

a kind of “extended” social institution. Such an extended institution, in turn depends on more basic institutions like language, money, and property. It also provides services by their host group for its target group. Tuomela argues that ideally properly functioning social institutions should be based on “full-blown we-thinking,” as well as the collective acceptance of a fact or property as institutional. Moreover, the creation of institutions ideally requires we-thinking in which group members together create an institution by the act of declaration (or at least by an agreement). Tuomela’s account gives evidence for the claim that the social corporation that in general is “by the people for the people” functions as a social institution in the extended sense. In more general terms, a social corporation exists in a host community (or state) and involves a normative organization with positions – thus statuses and powers – for the individuals.

Francesco Guala and Frank Hindriks in their “Institutions and Functions” tackle the general questions on the ontology of institutions by using a functionalist approach. They identify the types of institutions by their function or the coordination problems they solve. Their idea is that this functionalist approach provides some insights into the limits of reform, or the extent to which institutions like marriage, property, or democracy can be modified without turning them into entities of a different kind.

Snježana Purić Samaržija in her “Epistemic Virtues of Institutions” considers how through the use of our everyday speech we attribute moral values not just to individuals, but also to institutions. By doing so we assume that institutions are bearers of epistemic features for which they can be blamed or applauded. In the essay, she inquires how can we responsibly ascribe epistemic features to institutions and assess the meaning of attributing virtues and vices to institutions. Finally, she offers the preliminary position that an epistemically virtuous institution is an institution which applies scientific knowledge (knowledge about what is real) in everyday life (knowledge about how to act) in order to improve the quality of overall life for all (knowledge about what is good or bad for citizens).

In the title of his essay “What Is an Act of Engagement? Between the Social, Collegial and Institutional Protocols” Petar Bojanić already presents us his main research question. In it he tries to describe this special kind of social act and to determine the function these acts have in relation between various agents. He also tries to define their significance in the transformation of a group into an institution or higher order entity. His premise is that there are acts whose aim is to engage all others, since they refer to all of us together, and in so doing reduce negative (social) “acts”, as well as various asocial behaviours within a group or institution. In that manner, he considers that engaged acts could alternatively also belong to a kind of institutional act, since they introduce certain adjustments to the institution, by changing or modifying its rules, and increasing its consistency and efficiency.

Next essay “Play It by Trust: Social Trust, Political Institutions and Leisure” by Nebojša Zelić tries to explore the connection between institutional arrangement and social trust. First, he discusses why trust is important for democratic institutions, but also why it is an indispensable element of the welfare state institutions. Second, he outlines the various understandings of trust, in which he gives special emphasis on social trust. Third, he

describes how institutions contribute to generating and sustaining social trust. And finally, he asks us to seriously consider impacts of institutions on our leisure time, which could be understood as a catalyst of social inclusion, which is, in turn, the precondition of social trust.

In “Individual Morality and the Morality of Institutions” Thomas M. Scanlon discusses the relationship between moral philosophy and political philosophy, that is, he discusses the morality of institutions and the content of moral standards governing the relations between individuals and institutions. This issue leads him to conclusions on individual morality, which deals with standards applicable to individuals. On the basis of a contractualist conception of individual morality and a conception of the morality of institutions that follows Rawls’ theory of justice, his article addresses the question of the foundations of the obligation to comply with institution-defined standards that are directed towards individuals. Finally, Scanlon focuses on the difficulty of rationalizing that obligation in the case of unjust institutions.

“States and Transgenerational Actions” by Tiziana Andina aims to analyse the metaphysical structure of transgenerational actions and to show that they are a necessary condition for the existence of social reality. She suggests that, in order to understand the structure of social reality, it is not enough to consider it as a complex architecture with a certain structure at a certain point in time. It is also important to analyse its basic elements, paying particular attention to its components that change over time. Social reality needs transgenerational actions in order to exist and endure. In other words, there can be no social reality, organized as we know it, without transgenerational actions.

“From Capital to Documedia” by Maurizio Ferraris is a complex text bursting with ideas in which he highlights what he calls a “documedia revolution”. He starts with Documedia which indicates the allegiance between the constitutive power of documents and the mobilizing power of media. He outlines this great transformation, showing how we, as humankind, moved from Capital to Documedia, passing through Media. It is his opinion that from Documedia, one must start today to understand the ongoing social transformations as well as human nature, leaving Capital to historians.

On the other hand, “The Basis of European Cooperation” by Jonathan Wolff tries to provide a philosophical explanation for a scheme of cooperation that is European Union. He argues that to understand the purpose of the EU it is essential to debate about the underlying understanding of cooperation. This, in turn, will have implications on issues such as immigration policy and political union. Unfortunately, this debate has not taken place to the extent it is required, and as Wolff’s analysis suggests the Brexit is one of the consequences.

The final text in this collection, “Ways of Compromise-Building in a World of Institutions” by Emmanuel Picavet represents an exploration of the institutional challenges during the proposed implementation of general principles. He pays special attention to principles such as rights, which receive a recognised moral interpretation. In the article, he argues that the implementation process is basically associated with power allocation issues,

which cannot be reduced to lateral, technical problems, but on the contrary, they help shape the institutional effectivity and collective significance of principles.

To conclude, the book does deliver on its promise on providing an interdisciplinary view on topic of institutions. Still, this is not a book that will give you simple and clear answers if you just want to familiarize yourself with the subject. On the other hand, if you want to further your knowledge, or you just need a fresh perspective in your research on the topic of institutions, the articles by eminent scholars compiled in *Institutions in Action* are a great place to start.

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*United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Report 2020. The Next Frontier Human Development and the Anthropocene, director and lead author Pedro Conceição, New York: United Nations, 412 pp.*

The series *Human Development Index* published under the auspices of the UN has been for three decades of its existence an invaluable source both of data and of analyses of global development, its achievements and problems. Developed by the economist Mahbub Ul Haq, it has been inspired and supported by the work of the Nobel laureate Amartya Sen; indeed, the present volume begins by Sen's tribute to Ul Haq, who passed away in 1998. The series offers invaluable materials to theoreticians interested in global development, and, relevantly for our reader, to philosophers working on global issues and on perspectives of cosmopolitan approach to ethics and politics. The present volume is particularly interesting in this respect, since it deals with the most burning global issues. The issues, collected here under the general title of "Anthropocene" encompass ecological themes, prominently climate change and pollution, and health issues, made recently prominent by the new pandemic. Thus, the book sketches the new playground on which the cosmopolitan debate is taking place, quite different from the traditional one that has inspired pioneering contemporary authors, like Peter Singer, some decades ago.

The Part One entitled "Renewing human development for the Anthropocene" develops this new diagnosis, and the last, Part Three offers the quantitative data. However, the Part One concludes by pointing to the direction in which the problems diagnosed could be solved, and the road to solution is the topic of the central part, Part Two, entitled "Acting for change". "We are entering the Anthropocene: the age of humans" the section begins. And goes on by claiming: "For the first time in our history the most serious and immediate, even existential, risks are human made and unfolding at planetary scale." (20–21; the numbers in brackets stand for pages). The "Anthropocene" the word was coined and the concept introduced by Eugene Stormer in the 1980s and popularized by Paul Crutzen in the 2000s (see Frank Biermann 2018 *Global Governance in the "Anthropocene,"* in Chris Brown and Robyn Eckersley (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of International Political Theory*, Oxford University Press, 467–479).