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Life-friendly who we are and who we want to be

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1 Introduction

In the midst of multiple crises—ranging from the climate crisis and biodiversity decline to an imagination crisis and general well-being challenges—our current era, often labeled the Anthropocene, reflects a profound disconnect from life-friendly practices. This disconnect is evident across various levels, as highlighted by Norreklit and Paulsen (2022), permeating our institutions with a forgetfulness of the living world.

The many crises we face today – ecological crisis, biodiversity crisis, climate crisis, imaginary crisis¹ and a thriveability crisis – are in our eyes, different aspects of a deep life-crisis. This multifaced crisis is interlinked with and caused by – we suggest – the dominant institutions developed in modern time. This due to the fact that these has been based on and pervaded by logics, semantics, governances, and narratives that do not sufficiently care for the good life, in a comprehensive way, including all earthly life. In short, contemporary institutions – such as education, law, economy, and politics – are constituted on life-forgetfulness.² As a response to this, we in this paper propose life-friendliness as a term, concept, value, and interpretative framework that might help to start a journey to re-create a life-friendly society, humanity, and guiding narrative about who we are and who we want to be. The basic idea is that if we want to create good lives – overcoming the life crisis and life-forgetfulness – we must act and think in life-friendly ways. What this can mean is the aim of this paper to dive into and explicate.

In section one we present the idea that it matters what narratives we tell about who we are and who we want to be. We call such narratives life-narratives. We make a distinction between dystopian and life-friendly life-narratives. This distinction is elaborated in the rest of the paper. The aim of the distinction is to become able to evaluate our contemporary life-narratives and change them when needed into becoming life-friendly, not dystopian.

In section two we turn to the crucial questions: what is life, and what is a good life? Our thesis is that the good life must be the intentional end-goal of life-friendly activities. Yet, in an age of life-forgetfulness, it is exactly a good understanding of life and what a good life is, which is lacking. On the other hand: because we are living beings, we can never in absolute terms forget what life is, because we are life, as long as we live; and we also always already have some sense of what a good life is – a life where life thrive. On this background we in section 2 try to explicate what life basically is about, the good life. Without a sound idea of the good life, it is not likely that we can form societal

¹ Cf. Haiven, M. (2014). *Crises of imagination, crises of power: Capitalism, creativity and the commons*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

² See Norreklit, L., & Paulsen, M. (2022). To Love and Be Loved in Return: Toward a Post-Anthropocene Pedagogy and Humanity. I M. Paulsen, J. Jagodzinski, & S. Hawke (red.), *Pedagogy in the Anthropocene: Re-Wilding Education for a New Earth* (s. 217-240). Palgrave Macmillan.

institutions in life-friendly ways; rather they will most like not be life-friendly if they are not “in contact” with what a good life can be.

In section three we elaborate on the concept of friendliness. We make a distinction between friendship, which is rare and exclusive, and friendliness, which is entirely inclusive and should be present in all we do and think. We argue that genuine friendliness is life-friendliness, meaning that the latter is not just a form of the former; rather friendliness if understood fully is life-friendliness. Also, we interlink this with the idea of the good life and argue that life-friendly ways of life commit themselves to the good life in an encompassing way. Or more precisely: to be life-friendly is to seek and support a good life – a life where life thrive, in all its diversity and splendor.

In section four we turn to the social world, elaborating on how life-friendly narratives, logics and semantics can be imbedded into our society, and what difficulties it will meet, when facing dystopian narratives and practices.

Lastly, we end our paper with summarizing our thoughts about life-friendliness.

2 Life-friendly narratives

2.1 Life and life-narratives

Our life activities influence – and are influenced by – narratives about who we are, what situation we are in, what our life is about, what we do, what we want, how successful we are etc. We call such narratives *life-narratives*.

There are several *lie-narratives* about who a specific person is. There is her personal *self-narrative*, there are the *other-narratives* about her made by people who know her (but perhaps not know her very well), and there are *dark-narratives* hidden in various public and private files that profile her.

When we are concerned with producing a good life, we aim at contributing to and improving life, which also influence our life-narrative - especially our self-narrative - in the direction of a good life.

Example: Charles is concerned about producing a good life in his garden. He organizes it in such a way that he loves to be in the garden. He cares for the plants and gives them what they need to grow and thrive. He also cares for human visitors, who visit his garden. He makes a special place in the garden, where he can sit when the sun goes down, witness its splendor. He also makes good spots for the animals who enter the garden, a pond for the salamanders, and old log for the insects, and so on. Doing all this influence his self-narrative: Because of the activities he can tell himself (without lying to himself) that he is a good person that care for life and have some success in being a good gardener. He can be pleased with himself. His self-narrative gives him peace, joy, and comfort, in his life. In sum: He can love who he is.

It is not only activities that influence the narratives. Narratives also influences endeavors and thus activities. There is an ongoing *circulation of impression and expression* that drives the activities. This circulation aims at securing the meaning of one's life. People's impression recognizes and interprets what they did and how it worked out, the expression is their active interpretative response to the perceived situation. A person's life-narratives are based on her interpretation of such ongoingly flows of impressions and expressions. However, her interpretation is guided by habits and principles of interpretation which influences endeavors and thus what she expresses in her response.

Example: Charles has developed a self-narrative of himself being a gardener that cares for all life in his garden. Now, a herd of deer enters the garden in the night and eat up a lot of plants and destroy many good things. Charles is in a dilemma. He could build a fence to protect the garden against the deer, that would be possible. But would it turn him into a not so good person with regards to the deer? Later a lot of plants are “attacked” by hordes of aphids, and many plants die. Again, Charles is in a dilemma: should he use some kind of remedies to get rid of the aphids, and thus protect the plants? Or would that damage his self-narrative as a person that care for all life? Such kinds of life dilemmas happen all the time. How much they happen and how they happen, depends on the interpretative framework of Charles. If for instance, he does not see the aphids or the deer as truly part of what we ought to care for, he might try to exclude them from the garden and still uphold a non-lying self-narrative of himself as a person that care for life in the garden, but perhaps not for all life? Thus, his negotiation between his activities and self-narrative will depend on his co-interpretative framework: how he interprets and how he understands the good life, what it includes and perhaps excludes.

Life-friendliness is important in interpretation of impressions and expressions (interpretative responses). We argue that life-friendliness in interpretation is a condition for creating the good life. Life suffers if life-friendliness is out

of fashion in social practice. We argue that when this should be the case, i.e., if people do live in unfriendly contexts, then it is possible to change the social climate and reintroduce life-friendliness by consciously adopting it as a principle one endeavors to implement it. As any social attitude it is contagious. Contrary to most other attitudes it is desirable. Resilient endeavors to implement it in an unfriendly environment is likely to regenerate life-friendly habits. This improves the good life and thus satisfying self-narratives.

Example: For many years Charles has sprayed poisons to protect his plants, just as his neighbors. As a habit. Yet someday Charles gets a new neighbor, who do not spray poison. The neighbor tells Charles that the poison is not good for life, and there are other methods to make the Garden flourish, thus more life-friendly. Because Charles wants to care for life, he easily adopts to this new practice of not spraying poison, and only after a short while he cannot understand he for so many years did sprayed poison, when it was not life caring. Having now a garden, where he is not always out for destroying a lot of life, makes him happy about himself and his role in the garden.

People's self-narrative is basic to their life because it drives the meaning-circle and thus the very self-activity that characterized their life. People wake up with their self-narrative in full operation in their head. We do not only open our eyes and see and recognize the world around, but we also know who we are, the main elements of our situation and history, including the endeavors to improve it, that we are currently engaged in. These are endeavors that serve to do something that would influences our self-narrative in a way we desire. This narrative is an interpretation. Of ourselves, the other and the world. The course of action it initiates is influenced by the basic principle and habits of interpretation, including their degree of life-friendliness. Alternates to life-friendly may be lack of concern for life and/or lack of friendliness.

Other people's narratives of a person, the other-narratives, vary depending on their relation. To a person the relations between self-narrative and other-narratives are essential, especially in relation to people with whom they cooperate. To create fruitful relations, where people complement each other to produce a good outcome suitable of a good life, a common understanding of each other is important. We call this common understanding *reflexivity of life-narratives* - i.e., the other-narrative mirrors the self-narrative sufficiently to create a common understanding. It is basis for trust, security, well-being, creativity, and efficacy in interaction. However, when self- and other-narratives are incompatible, then the expectations to each other differ, which creates insecurity and problems of cooperation. Securing reflexivity is important to cooperation. Reflexivity is the result of life-friendly communication.

Example: The neighbor who did not spray poison did not have a narrative of Charles as a bad or evil person. Instead, the neighbor recognised Charles as a life-caring gardener that Charles in his self-narrative is. The Neighbor recognised this through talking friendly with Charles. Through this recognition it became possible for the neighbor to inspire Charles to think critically about poisoning and adapt to the new non-poisoning practice. The friendly communication about life made it possible to create reflectivity, in between the two neighbors, meaning that Charles begun to think about the incompatibility of spraying poison, and re-attacking life on a daily basis, while at the same time telling himself that he is as person who cares for life.

A third form of life-narratives are the *dark narratives*, e.g., narratives collected in data-files that institutions and businesses create of people (but also other forms of dark narratives such as gossip or telling stories about someone who is not present). Their content and even their existence is mainly unknown to people they concern. Earlier dark narratives were limited to folk rumors, and with the invention of writing and beginning state build also public records needed by administration to run public institutions, and sometimes people could upon request obtain insight in the data. To influence the data directly is generally not possible. However, IT has enabled business and institutions create big data, i.e., collections of files with profiles and narratives of all people that are visible on the internet. These files are dark narratives. Their existence and especially their content is mainly unknown to people concerned.

The practical impossibility for people to know and influence the content of dark narratives, the lack of direct communication to establish reflexivity between self- and dark-narratives although they are used to manipulate people makes them threatening and *dystopian*. Dystopian practices are practices that are the opposite of life-friendly. They are life-hostile, aggressive, careless, destructive, and they undermine the self-determination that is a part of the good life. The dark narratives support dystopian practices that treat people as manipulable object or marionette puppets (and/or limit their possibilities for influencing the narratives directly). It may combine with research how to manipulate people and control them. Such dystopian vision appears to be an important part of the visions that are brewing to form the future. This form of dystopia may be particularly sinister because it tries to combine foreign power over people's life

without them knowing what is going on. The best and simplest way to overcome this problem is if governance adopts a life-friendly approach.³

To create the good life, a life-friendly approach is necessary. It is puzzling that it is important to point this out, since it is a truism. However, considering the many dystopian activities of society with its comprehensive destruction of life and living conditions in the biosphere by industrial production and consumption, the constant warring politics by governance, and the production of stress and anxiety in the social practices, it is obvious that dystopian practices have replaced life-friendliness in many contexts.

This necessitates people to develop weird and irrational life- and self-narratives. Warring countries define themselves as good, environment destructive societies define themselves as progressive and the best in the world, and societies with high levels of stress and anxiety define themselves as the best, happiest and most democratic societies ever. Being part of such practices people cannot create credible self-narratives as contributing to the good life. It is unavoidable for people to contribute to environmental destruction, to the warring practices, and to creating stress and anxiety. Since people know what they do, their self-narratives must try to ignore the dystopian implications of their life as part of the society in order to maintain an acceptable image of themselves. To survive they must in their self-narrative distinguish: 'this (bad) is forced on me by environment, it is not my intention, not really me. This (the good) is what I want, this is the real me.'⁴ They may believe that society does it for a greater good, although it is obvious that warring, stress, anxiety, and environmental destruction are dystopian.

Example: Charles is not only a life caring gardener. He is also works in a partly state-driven company that creates and maintains data systems. These systems are sold to schools, making them able to monitor students' behavior and how well or poorly the teachers are doing in improving students' results. He was educated as a computer programmer because he grew up finding it fun and creative to make funny small computer games. Yet, he has now ended up, it seems to him, in a job that he does not really care for or find good, but he cannot find a better job. He has a feeling that he is trapped. He needs to earn money to make a living, so he thinks, but at the same time, he recognizes that what he is forced to do in his job "is not him." Therefore, his work is not a core of his self-narrative about who he is and wants to be; rather it defines him negatively. He senses he is caught in a trap.

We adhere to a Socratic interpretation of these problems: that bad is mainly a result of insufficient insight.⁵ We believe that people basically want to be good people, i.e., people that are life-friendly, and contribute to the good life. Dystopian activities are the result of confusion concerning the importance and meaning of life-friendliness and good life. We do not consider human beings as inherently evil, despite an ongoing repetition of life destructing activities runs through human history. Human beings are the most dangerous and life-destructive being. Still, history also demonstrates human love for its social and natural environment and fellow human beings. Dystopian behaviors do not seem to be random but to follow patterns. This indicates that they are influenced by leading cultural traditions and ideas, that - hopefully - can be influenced by improved understanding. Therefore, we believe it is important to contribute to the development of understanding life-friendliness and its importance to the good life.

In the following we outline the concepts of friendliness, of life, of a good life, and basics of the communicative strategies of the narratives.

2.2 *Life-friendly or dystopian*

A good life depends on a friendly form of living. Thus life-friendliness is a basic ethical and social value.

Focus on the value friendliness and especially life-friendliness in communication and practice has become increasingly important. The problems humans face on Earth are mostly self-inflicted. They are caused by comprehensive planned dystopian activities decided by the different governance that are and have been in power. The dystopian activities encompass destruction of the pleasure to work, of the biosphere by industrial production and consumption, and of human life and cities by warfare. Society needs to replace dystopian practices with life-friendly practices. It will not do to produce some wild-west ad hoc solutions to solve climate change by spraying nanoparticles in the air or just install mega-big wind and solar energy systems. This is short term profit motivated as all previous 'solutions' that end creating even worse conditions in the future.

³ Gandhi and Gorbachev are exemplary.

⁴ Experiments like the Millikan experiments illustrate how easily people accept a social authority as the responsible for unethical acts that they do perform.

⁵ Plato: *Gorgias*. ca. 380BC.

A new way of analyzing is needed in which the destruction of values caused by practices is calculated in advance and not something for future generations to sort out. 'Wild west' solutions cause more harm than good. The consequences of long-term destructive consequences of industrial consumerism have - finally - become obvious even to governance. It does however tend to use the same dystopian methods to solve problems as were used to produce them - i.e., new short-term power and profit generating practices disguised as solutions. We need comprehensive creativity and inspiration to develop tools that are not dystopian. It does not come by itself.

Example: To reduce CO₂ emissions, the company where Charles works, set up solar cells on the company's building. It also shifted to power from gigantic wind turbines, installed in so-called wind farms, subsidized by the state. Thereby, it lives up to new standards for power consumption and emission quotas. Yet the company keeps on with the not so much life-friendly activities, and its demand for power is still increasing. In addition, the production of the solar cells, and windmills is ecologically damaging. It creates enormous amounts of environmentally harmful waste. In the production line of solar cells and lithium batteries, people are harmed. And so on.

Of course, it can be discussed how much harm is caused by this and that, but what is beyond doubt is that this will not in itself help Charles, the poor, or any others to create a more life-friendly living. The logic of these changes is to keep on with the same non-life-friendly life, but now use solar cells and wind power.

3 Life

3.1 The good life

We take for granted, that the desired goal is a good life. Task of being alive is to create a good life. Friendliness is part of a good life. The significance of friendliness is the role it plays in the good life. Living beings desire a good life. The good life is the aim of their activities and should be promoted by social institutions.

The question, what *the* good is, is a misunderstanding. It has no answer.⁶ Living beings including humans strive for a good *life*. The good life is the end goal of everything. Instrumental goals form transitive chains – (a) is good for (b) that is good for (c) etc. The chain must come to an end. This end is the good life. The good life is the goal that is a goal in itself. It may, but does not need to, be an instrument for another goal. Good 'things' are either the good life or part of it, or conditions that lead to it.

The good life is the only end goal of the activities of living beings. No activity, nothing can be good for dead things. Dead things can be good only as instruments for the living. A reason for this is that dead things neither thrive nor suffer. They have no feelings. If robots someday have feelings and can be happy, enjoy things and suffer, this will change. Not only animals but also plants thrive or suffer according to the things they experience. Their experience leaves marks in their development as it does in humans and other animals. Care for the good life is the basis for human endeavors. Activities must be life-friendly. We think this holds true for endeavors of all life.

What is a good life? What things create a good life? and what role does life-friendliness play? Although it is a truism that life-friendliness is good for life, human practices are regularly ruled by a different opinion, believing that dystopian practices - aggression, violence, killing, and destroying - are good. How are such opinions possible?

One explanation is that a type of social Darwinism is used to explain the practice. By social Darwinism we mean the belief that competition is the driving mechanism of selection and survival. The winners of competition are the fittest and they survive. Competition involves fighting the competitors. Thus, this perception may be used to legitimate dystopian practices towards competitors. Politics and economics may be inspired by this perception.

However, dystopian practices are not a consequence of social Darwinism, only an interpretation of it. Those who use dystopian practices may lose the competition. They may even undermine the conditions of their existence, as demonstrated by the dystopian precarization of the environment. The fittest are those who use life-friendly practices to integrate and cooperate with others to create beneficial living conditions instead of fighting and destroying the other.⁷

⁶ Moore, G. E. 1903. *Principia Ethica*. The open question argument illustrates that the question "what is the good / goodness?" is a misunderstanding and can have no answer. Compare: The question, "what is *the* size?" makes no sense. It has no answer. There is no '*the* size.' But asking what the size of something specific makes sense, and answers may be given. Similarly with the good. The question "What is the good?" makes no sense. The good does not exist. But for anything in the world one can ask, whether or for what it is good.

⁷ Compare Kropotkin's line of analyzing the origin of species.

By replacing dystopian practices with life-friendly practices one may replace dystopian destruction of the biosphere with life-friendly practices that improve the living conditions.

Furthermore, the analysis of survival of social Darwinism is not the same as an analysis of the good life. Survival is not the same as good life. Survival may be a life of misery. Even if dystopian practices should increase the chances of survival, they would still be dystopian and not at all produce the good life. The striving for the good life is inherently striving to avoid a dystopian life based on aggression, fear, and suffering. If the good life is the value aimed at, it is not worth it. - While the welfare state at least to some extent aimed at creating conditions for a good life, the (post-welfare) states presently display more dystopian practices aiming at power and control.

Some perceptions of the good life are metaphysical interpretations of humans sidelining that they are living beings. In such 'life-forgetful' interpretations the fact that humans are like animals and plants is considered outlandish. It is presupposed that humans are something special, a higher order of existence than ordinary living creatures. And it is thought as well that friendliness is an ethics amongst human beings only because plants and animals are something different.⁸ This attitude has only apparently promoted civilized social behavior. It has not delimited dystopian practices. The reason for this is that if human beings are not inherently living beings, then their life is not inherently to be protected and promoted by the ethics of civilized practice. Thus, these lofty perceptions of human beings are used to – or can very easily be used to – legitimize dystopian practices from warfare to torture, even today.

In addition, such lofty perceptions are inconsistent because the fact that humans are living beings penetrates all practice in these dystopias.

3.2 *What is life?*

A living being is a fragile self-active being.

Living beings are fragile, unstable, vulnerable. Without more or less constant supplies they die. And even with supplies, they eventually die. To be alive – as long as it is possible – they are constantly active to create good life conditions, acquire and process supplies, and enjoy their activities and experiences.

Yet, the fragility does not define life. There are many fragile things - brittle glass and porcelain - that are not alive. The continuity of activity also does not define life. There are many things that are constantly active - the sun, the ocean - without being alive.⁹ The activities of living beings have a purpose. However, many non-living things - such as a meal or a tool - also have a purpose. Thus, having a purpose does not suffice to define life.

Characteristic of life is that the living being by itself (to some extent and, in some sense, together with other living beings – never absolutely by itself) determines its activities and decides what it does based on its desires and recognition of its situation. Since it is constantly active, the process of self-determination is also constantly ongoing. Some of the self-determination is automatic such as the metabolism. Others are a response to the opportunities and challenges it observes in the environment. This is what is meant with the *self-activity* of life. Life uses its activities to 'overcome' its fragility and realize its desires. The fragility and self-activity constitute a *synthesis of life*. The specifics of the fragility and the self-activity vary amongst species as amongst individuals (both being more or less changeable). When the synthesis collapses, then the living being cannot stay alive by its self-activity. It is in a precarious state and needs help to survive.

Another way of putting this is to say that a living beings' self-activity is always an activity that co-act *with otherness*, activities of other living beings, and processes of non-living entities as well. In only 10 percent of the cells of the human body can the human genome be found. Thus, 90 percent of the cells of the human body are 'determined' by human otherness (bacteria, fungi etc.).¹⁰ And only because of the ongoingly persistence of these 'other' beings, but also

⁸ See for example Derrida, J. (2008). *The Animal that therefore I am*. Fordham University Press. and Haraway, D. (2008). *When species meet*. University of Minnesota press, for critiques of this kind of human exceptionalism.

⁹ At least not in the full sense, because perhaps the sun and the ocean *are* also alive in some proto-sense, that we also sense, as truly living beings, when we relate to the Ocean and the Sun – they are very much, it seems, self-active living beings, just like us. Or in more general terms: The Sun, the Ocean etc. are pre-conditions of life, of our very possibility of being alive; meaning that this “not-in-it-self-fully-living-universe must be in such a way that it can make life possible, and in that sense, it is pregnant (!) with life – it has the capacity to give birth to life, to let life appear, come through in the first place – and what is more special to life than given birth?! So, in some sense, the whole universe is alive, it gives birth to life, out of and in itself; and thereby by definition is alive – or become alive; and we are therefore “only” the manifestations hereof. Cf. for instance Schellings' philosophy of Nature.

¹⁰ See for example Haraway 2008: *When species meet*.

the whole concrete universe of non-living matter, is the human being able to exist at all. Self-activity of the living being is therefore always already a form of acting together *with* the earth, the sun, the other living beings, the atmosphere, etc. Breathing for instance, in, and out, is on the one hand done by the living being, as its self-activity; and if it stops breathing, it ceases to exist. At the same time, it always necessarily breathes along with countless other beings who must provide some form of activity to enable the living being to breathe. When the living being breathes, it does so *with* the world.¹¹

A special case of this is, that some species, like humans, are born almost in a collapsing state on an individual level and can only survive through care of others. Another case is that species like ants, or some ants, it seems, can almost only survive through being a part of a collective ant community. But despite such variations, all living beings are dependent on in some form or another other living being to recreate the synthesis. Through billions of years life has experimented with becoming more stable, less fragile, more self-active.

In a life-friendly environment living beings cooperate to maintain life. The synthesis of one being is connected to the synthesis of other living beings in an ecosystem that constitutes a life friendly environment. They have different skills and develop specialized pattern of cooperation by adapting and complementing each other. To do so the life-friendly and highly diversified eco-system is run by a network of mutual recognition and communication across species differences to handle the complexity of complementary activities. The system also integrates, distributes, and utilizes non-organic resources of energy and minerals thus promoting the overall life-friendly living conditions.

The theory that a species - human beings - lives in competition *against* all other beings is dystopian. Human health depends on a complex diversified ecosystem. By damaging this system humans damage their own health. Dystopian practices of manipulating people to control them and sideline their self-activity forces them into a precarious state. It is a social induced illness that makes it impossible for people to develop life-friendly self-activities to cope with the fragility and desires of life. Dystopian practices weaken self-activity and thus the synthesis of life of people for others to take advantage of their resources.

Life thrives when it can unfold its self-activity, despite its fragility, when it can enjoy life and create even more life – “living outcomes” – that is, give birth to new life that can develop an even more life-rich, life-friendly, and thus “livable” environment. Or in other words: Life thrive when it can enjoy life and re-generate even more fantastic new forms of life. Even a small kid knows this, when the child enjoy painting, enjoy the life at the riverbank, enjoy and recognize how a flower for instance sprout and blossom full of life; and consequently, also feel sorrow, if and when life dies, are being destroyed, limited, fails, breaks down etc.

To sum up: basic characteristic of life is both the synthesis of fragility and self-activity, and the wonder of joy and thiveness. It is the latter that mark the axiological dimensions of all life; if life were only a matter of ever improving the synthesis of fragility and self-activity, making life more stable and robust, life would be no more than mere survival. How enjoyment and thriving can emerge, is still a mystery, but what a fantastic mystery!

If we turn to human beings, like Charles in our example, it seems to us that they develop self-narratives with which they organize life in coordination with others. The self-narrative leads human activities according to its understanding of itself and its possibilities to create a good life. It is important that a person perceives herself as good and valuable and that she understands life-friendliness as constitutive of the good life and that she is not misled to believe in dystopian strategies. Because her self-perception can be influenced by the characterization of her by others (including authorities), there is a social responsibility - especially by authorities - to support a positive and adequate self-perception of the other in the communication to promote the good life and life-friendly attitude of participants.

When the life-synthesis functions and self-activity (in co-ordinance with the world of otherness) succeeds in re-making a making life anew in enjoyable ways, then life thrives. This is the good life. When it fails, then life struggles and suffers, becomes ill and dies. Although living have an “inbuilt” pattern of development that involves thriving, suffering, and dying. This applies to plants, animals, as well as human beings, although all species and individuals do it differently. All living beings – plants, mushrooms, bacteria, birds, mammals including human beings etc. – thrive or suffer as they develop and eventually die. The life as part of a shared symphony in unison with others and die dropping out of the music and losing the contact to the other.

3.3 Characteristics of a good life

We know from children, animals, and plants that there is a good state in which they are active, full of ideas and good spirit. They thrive. Thriving is the basic signal of a good life. Thiveness of the self-active living being describes a special way of being in the world, together with otherness. No living being can thrive – or even exist – in itself. Thus, to

¹¹ See for example Coccia, E. (2019). *The life of plants: A metaphysics of mixture*. John Wiley & Sons.

thrive, is to relate to otherness in a special way, which is equivalent to the outburst “I love to live in this world”. And correspondingly vice versa: a plant with hanging stems and leaves that does not thrive is almost like saying “I do not love to live in *this* world”. And thus, it also follows: if we want to help a living being to thrive, the most important is to help it with becoming in a world it can love. For a plant, it can sometimes be as simple as bringing a little water, some light, and some nutrients to its world.

If we are in doubt whether people are living a good life, we can observe whether they are thriving - active, in good mood, with good energy, and make other people feel well just by being around. On the other hand, aggressivity, stress and anxieties, laziness, looking tired, confused, or ill are signs that life is not so good. These behavioral signs tell a story about the world people live in. It is often a different story than the story people give when asked whether they live a good of satisfactory life. Communication is part of deliberate strategies and may not be trustworthy. People have many reasons to hide their condition. They may want to deceive for various reasons, but they may also themselves be unaware that their self-narrative misleads themselves.

The values that drive people are based on what they love. Love forms a commitment of the self that the people, activities, and phenomena they love. If their love relations break down, then people lose lust to live. The time of good life is over. Love gives them the reason to live, do things and give the best they can.

Life loves life. Life-friendliness is an expression of love of life. People love life. They feel well in a living environment, not in a dead world. Human beings do not only adapt to the environment. They create their environment. The whole world is so much shaped by human beings that geologists are pondering that this is a new age, the age of the Anthropocene, where human beings form the Earth. This underscores how important it is that life is ruled by life-friendly narratives that are concerned with improving the conditions of life, and that dystopian practices are being sidelined. The overall aim of social practice and development must be the improvement of living conditions, the fertility of Earth and cultivation of social life to integrate life friendly conditions.

4 Friendliness

Friendship is important in ethics (Aristotle¹²) as in theory of social communities (Tönnies¹³). Friendship is a relation. It delimits groups of people that are friends. With this concept there is a difference between the relation between friends and the others. The others are often the barbarians, enemies or belong to a different layer of power within the society. The concept of friendship may therefore be used in dystopian contexts.

Friendliness is different. It is an attitude towards the other that permeates character and behavior. It treats the other, and the whole world of values in a friendly way, i.e., a way that is generally supportive and protective towards their value - no matter whether they are friends.¹⁴ Our focus on friendliness as the general attitude and form of communication and interaction aims at a promoting a comprehensive social environment in which the good life includes life as a rich comprehensive phenomenon, the many cultures, species and ecosystem as a whole (Cicero¹⁵). Life-friendliness is *encompassing*. It includes all life.¹⁶ This does produce various dilemmas, but they must be coped with in a life-friendly manner. An attitude is not life friendly if it does not include all life. The inclusivity is basic.

To distinguish between the "us" and the "them" - the good and friendly versus the bad and hostile - is discriminative and dystopian. No doubt the others probably have weaknesses that can be criticized, but this behavior is to create a dystopian situation.

Friendliness inspires others to be friendly too. Attitudes are contagious. They possess a communicative power. Thus, it should be easy to spread friendliness. However, other attitudes - including the hostile and dystopian attitudes - are contagious too. The question is, which attitudes are more *resilient*. Friendly attitudes have the advantage that they are sympathetic and thus attractive and appealing. However, attitudes that are promoted by social media and authorities

¹² Aristotle: *Nicomachean Ethics*, ca. 350BC. Book VIII // 1155a3, 1156a16-1156b23. See also book *bog II.7 and bog IV.6, for elaboration on friendliness (still denoted as philia)* as a social virtue, that apply to *all* social situations, including meetings with strangers.

¹³ Tönnies, F. *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*. 1887.

¹⁴ Similarly: The 'neighbor' in the commandment 'to love they neighbor' originally (in the Book of Moses) meant to love those of they own kind and did not include the other, the barbarians. Jesus' teaching changed this. For instance, the parable of the merciful Samaritan interprets the neighbor as anybody that is near you.

¹⁵ Cicero: *Laelius de Amicitia*. 44BC.

¹⁶ This also mean that while friendship can be exclusive, life-friendliness understood as *friendship with life*, is in its genuine form *all-inclusive*, because it is not friend with some, not others, but with *all* life – and the whole universe as a potentially living being. Thus life-friendliness can also be understood as *friendship with the world*.

that define the social narratives may use threats, produce anxiety, and distort factual conditions. These forces are powerful and may sideline soft friendly attitudes as not being strong enough to create protection.

However, there is expectation that media and authorities have dignity, i.e., the self-respect to be honest, reliable, and trustworthy. Otherwise, their narration loses power. Dignity and self-respect depend on their self-narrative. This narrative cannot replace life-friendly motives with dystopian motives and abandon ambition of the good life without losing dignity and self-respect. Dystopian power does not establish personal dignity because she knows that she is not honest. Dystopian rulers play games. They look smart and successful, are admired, and feared. But they lack sincerity and cannot hide the loss of dignity, because they know who they are. Dystopian attitudes suffer from an element of self-negation. Despite their contagious nature they are not social, not life-friendly, not committed, they are gaming.

Friendliness in interaction aims at helping each other, creating reflexive life-narratives to produce a good relation, as well as to support the other to achieve a good and viable self-narrative that makes her happy with her life. These are complementary aims. If a person does not understand her own situation, friendliness still involves helping her although it may be complicated because it seems to challenge her self-narrative. These situations of asymmetric knowledge are common - e.g., parent-child, teacher-pupil, professional-client - and demanding concerning trust and communicative skill.

4.1 *Life-friendliness*

Life-friendliness qualifies friendliness. For friendliness to be good it must be life-friendly. Friendship is in itself always good. However, if it is friendship in a group that is engaged in dystopian practices then it is not life-friendly. Life-friendliness is encompassing. Friendship amongst warriors or murderers is not life-friendliness.

The reference to life is the basis for creating a culture that aims at realizing the good life. It aims good relations amongst living beings. This means that life narratives are reflexive and that they aim at promoting good life and good living conditions. The encompassing nature of life-friendliness sidelines visions of special rights for the dominant, the exceptionalism, whether race or nation or species.

Life-friendliness influences the values operating in the self-narrative and the formation of intentions. It influences the form, content and pragmatics of communication and interaction.

Life-friendly form is attentive, honest, open, and responsive to the concerns of the other. It is attentive to obtain an adequate impression of the concern of the other, and to ensure that the other understands the intention of responding expressions.

Content is life-friendly in that the intentions aim at realizing values of the good life. Thus, they are based on knowledge about the conditions of life. Search for knowledge about life is driven by life-friendliness.

Thus, life-friendliness denotes bringing oneself into a special relation to life – a relation where one tries to listen as well as respond friendly to life. Life as a dialogue partner. A relation, where one seeks the good life – making life good and let life tell what life already knows will be a good life (and make such searching, listening, questioning, and answering of life pivotal in one's life).

When western culture took its outset in *philosophia*, wanting to become friend with wisdom, Sofia, aiming for a special 'friendly' relation to her, it also started a kind of life-forgetfulness. Friendship with wisdom (meaning love of searching for wisdom that one does not have, acknowledging one's own non-knowledge) degenerated over time to more sterile forms of knowledges and further to almost exclusively searching for and applying technical mastery (i.e., instrumental knowledge), adding to a dystopian dead world of manipulations. How could that come? Part of the answer might be that it was gradually forgotten that the original wisdom that the Greek wanted to befriend, was always implicitly the wisdom of the good life. But the relationship to "the good life" was by time broken and forgotten. Knowledge was still searched for, perhaps even "good knowledge" or "knowledge of the good", but not life knowledge, wisdom of life (as something you can only live). Also, life was bizarrely reduced to 'social life' among a few human friends, being free, within the structure of the Polis, the city. All other forms of non-sedentary life were related to not as free, but as wild, resources and objects to be exploited, dominated, manipulated, categorized as instances of general entities – atoms, elements, species, enemies etc. Thus, the core of the culture was removed from centering on the good life.

Instead of *philosophia*, friendship with wisdom, we should therefore perhaps start over again, with the original intention of making friendship with the good life. That is bringing ourselves, as far, as possible, into a special relation to the good life: a relation where we try to form our life in such ways that we act as a good friend towards life, *and* also

one day perhaps become worthy to be seen as a friend of life. *Biophilia*¹⁷, some have called it, but perhaps *philozoë* is more apt, or as we suggest in this paper: *life-friendliness* as the basic value and name of this attitude, one takes, if one really seeks to find and promote the good life.

The pragmatics of life-friendliness encompass the activities necessary to realize the conditions of the good life. This involves the realization of the factual possibilities to make the life narrative pragmatically realistic with the values of the good life to form the intentions that the life-friendly narrative is enacting.

4.2 *The resilient self-narrative*

The endeavor to live in a life-friendly way is basic for creating a self-narrative where people are in accordance with being a living human being. It promotes sincerity, self-respect, and dignity. The consciousness of the commitment to the good life in an encompassing way creates the resilience that is needed not to succumb to the contagiousness of dystopian attitudes.

4.3 *The difficulties of life*

Yet, life is not easy. Life is hard, as Aristotle says.¹⁸ All living beings are condemned to death, from the very moment of their birth. No human beings can live without destroying other living beings, thus we are born to be killers. For many, life is a misery. They grow up in a violent world, are raped, and treated badly in multiply ways. They are suffering from depression and trauma. Others loses their kids, their loved ones, and cannot find meaning. Some become sick, lose body parts, and go through enormously pain and then die. Life seems to be brutal, unfair, and not “someone” you would like to befriend. Or as Hobbes famously put it: life can be solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.¹⁹ Life is trouble (Sorge). One could therefor ask: does we with our concept of life-friendliness not once again perform a metaphysical betrayal of the original difficult of life?²⁰

We hope not. Of course, we will not deny that life can be hard. But it can also be wonderful. And a lot of life troubles are results of exactly not being life-friendly. By life-friendly we do not mean to say that life is easy, no real friendship is easy. Yet, easiness is not a value in itself. Isn't it rather the opposite, when we carry out something which is hard, that we are most alive? But perhaps it's after all a choice, in a Fichtean sense, when all comes down: steering life into its multifaced face we can either choose to see a friend coming towards us, or at least try to welcome what is coming, in a friendly way, or we can say: this “coming” is not something for us, goodbye life. Yet, to stay in life and act life-negating, not life-friendly, is perhaps both self-contradictory and ethically problematic, perhaps understandable, but probably not possible to hold up as a desired way of being in the world?

Another way of putting it is this: it is not life in itself, as something alive and living, which is miserable: what is miserable is always lack of life, limitations of life, negations of life, harms done to life, even by life itself (out of lack of knowledge, sense and/or powers to create good life). Life friendliness is an attitude that seeks friendship with life, in itself, the living and the alive-moments of life, present to some extent, at least potentially, in all life, being the essence of life. It's an attitude that welcomes the living of life, cares for the living, support the living life, listen to it, enjoys it, try to be it, unfold it, celebrate it, multiply it, make it even more alive and living. It's an attitude that realistically try to get as much good life out of life, as possible. It's an attitude that try to sustain and recreate the conditions of a good life – life as alive and living, a life that we can enjoy together, *despite all misery*.

5 The social and the world

5.1 *Inclusion and the good life*

To analyze life-friendliness we distinguish between inclusive and exclusive attitudes. In a narrative, inclusive attitude is expressed as a conjunction, “both-and”, an exclusive attitude is expressed as an exclusive disjunction, “either-or”. There is a third form, the non-exclusive disjunction - “either-or, maybe both”. While these logical forms are applied in all contexts, we are concerned with the attitudes of including and excluding people and other living beings - either

¹⁷ See for example Wilson, E. O. (1986). *Biophilia*. Harvard university press.

¹⁸ Aristotle: *Nic. Ethics* 1106 b.

¹⁹ Hobbes: *Leviathan*.

²⁰ See for example Caputo, J. (1987). *Restoring Life to Its Original Difficulty* in his *Radical Hermeneutics*. Indiana University Press, where he argues that we should “face up to the difference and difficulty [in life] which enter into what we think and do and hope for, not to grind them to a halt” (p. 7).

they are included as protected members of the life world of the social group, or they are excluded and considered as something that can be used or - if they are considered problematic - destroyed at will.

Inclusivity differs from identity. The included members are all different from each other. Cooperation presupposes reflexive communication in which they understand each other, their special skills and interests. This is life-friendliness. It enables them to adjust and cooperate based on self-activities and create a good life. If they were identical then reflexive communication would not be necessary. They would automatically understand the same. The variety amongst them enables them to explore many possibilities, develops a higher level of intelligence than if they were identical, and ultimately create new differences, new life.²¹ This goes hand in hand with a higher level of love, enjoy and interest in the world with its richness of possibilities due to its varieties. Life friendliness creates high levels of learning and cognitive agility which enable the group to develop and create a good life. Intelligent life-friendliness enables the group to include more and more life-forms and contribute to the development of a diversified nature as their home.

While life-friendly attitudes are inclusive, exclusive attitudes are dystopian. The dystopian approach tries to control the environment based on lower integrational intelligence than needed to manage the high complexity of inclusive divergence offers. To avoid becoming overburdened dystopian governance excludes the sources of divergent behaviors and aims at unifying the included group. Life-friendly complex organization based on cooperation between complementarities and synergetic differences is replaced by top-down hierarchies where members of a given level are uniform and controlled from above with minimum self-activity. People that resist and maintain self-activity are being excluded unless they are able to make themselves invisible and hide.

Dystopian attitudes are a threat to an inclusive life-friendly society. The latter therefore faces a dilemma: either to protect itself by excluding the dystopian attitude and thereby adapting an exclusive attitude or to accept the exclusive attitude and thereby again accepting the exclusive attitude. In both cases it integrated the dystopian exclusivity it wanted to exclude. The survival of inclusivity depends on the ability to overcome this dilemma. To overcome the dilemma the usage of the third, intermediate logical form is needed: the non-exclusive disjunction, either-or and possibly both.

Similar logic issue operates at all levels in the biosphere. the nature of life presupposes that a biotope has a high level of diversity to create a viable livelihood. Diversity is a condition for developing the complementary self-activities that are necessary for the biotope to regenerate and produce ever new differences. If an intrusive species enters a biotope, it may destroy the existing ecosystem because it destroys the diversity. Thus, inclusivity is essential for life. If an exclusive power takes hold of a society, it may destroy certain groups, reduce the diversity, and make the biotope collapse, static and vulnerable.

The use of non-exclusive logical form enables the transition from absence to the presence of new qualities and phenomena. It is deeply rooted in communication and working with concepts. Life-friendly concepts rarely (if ever) have sharp borders; they apply to fuzzy-logics. There are transition periods and a certain element of arbitrariness where transition begins and where it ends. The sharp asymmetry between a phenomenon and its absence is a mental construct and does not reflect reality.

Example: does it rain? "It is raining" is true or false - this is exclusive. But this rule is constitutive. It is needed because it enables decision making, for instance to decide whether one should use an umbrella. In reality there is a gradual transition from dry weather to rain.

It is characteristic of life, that it develops and produces transitions. The self-activity aims at producing good life out of the available conditions (which is at the same time transformed to new conditions). With increasing intelligence (understood as creative power), this develops to creating loveable life-friendly environment. In a dystopian development, which destroys the fruitful diversity that is basis for life, it transforms to destruction of life-friendly environment. Perhaps the most important contribution of the life-friendly attitude and intelligence is that it does not focus on exploiting the life conditions for specific usages and outcomes; rather it create good life by caring for the regenerative powers of the living conditions.

Example: Dystopian monocultural land use exploits and uses the land for external means and does not care for the land in itself. Life-friendly land use, on the other hand, cares for the land, and supports and sustains the regenerative powers of a good life vibrant soil, full of life, and thus enabling good life conditions, that is conditions for production of differences, not sameness – the latter excluding all differences, as in the dystopian monocultural land use.

²¹ See for example Deleuze, G. (1994 [1968]). *Difference and Repetition*. Bloomsbury.

The life-friendly development enables transforming something to something new and different, something of low quality to something new and high quality, new phenomena and new life forms emerge. The skill to create or support such development is inherent in life – and Being as such. Out of earth comes living beings. Out of the green plant comes colorful flower etc. Live is a story of emergence of something new and fully fantastic. Thus, life is procreative, and every birth brings something new, creates a difference or a set of differences, and thus opportunities for the creation of ever new differences.²²

When it comes to human beings, we also have a life form which shapes ever new phenomena that change the environment. The more-than-human Nature, that innovated and created development of the mighty biosphere, created a being that takes on the role of innovator and develops new phenomena and life forms. But human beings have a shaky hand and do not always trust their own abilities. Thus, they often replace life friendly transition and emergence with dystopian oppression and destruction.

The process of inclusion is a process of learning - thinking, observing, trying, receiving guiding advice, continuing until a result is achieved. It is cultivated by the non-exclusive logic. Children learn to become skillful adults that can run practice by learning all things necessary to function as self-actors in the community. They begin from almost nothing, almost unable to do anything. They are protected by being excluded from participation in risky activities. Gradually they acquire the skills needed, become more and more involved, and they end as master performers - a good hunter, a good doctor, etc. When their skills are developed and recognized then they are finally included as trusted self-acting partners in the groups that need their skills. Their judgment and self-activities are treated as on par with that of others. They are now fully included. The period of transition is over. A new phenomenon emerged, the self-acting doctor, hunter, chef, mechanic, etc.

While they are learning they are not members of the acting groups (or not members in the same way). They are protected members of the community. Thus, they are both included and excluded. The inclusion is framework for transition. This is the nature of a life-friendly society: a framework for transition and self-activity. Learning itself is a self-activity supported by teachers and other supervisors. Because they use a life-friendly attitude they support the transition by learning. Without life-friendly mentors learning becomes poor. It may even produce trauma because dystopian teaching is destructive to the self-activity of the pupil. It is against the essence of life.

The basic evaluative concept that runs the process of development is the concept of *goodness*, understood as “being good at life” – developing and/or sustaining life skills and life knowledge; powers to regenerate, support regeneration, and powers to foster ever-new differences in productive ways. Some species appear to be good at life, being as they are, provided they are living under good life conditions, while other species, like humans, must learn to be good at life along the way. Yet, this difference between species is relative. All living beings are developing entities, co-learning, and co-developing in interaction with their live environment.

In the human life-friendly society, the “good at life” are those included. People are included because they are good people – good to take care of life. People are excluded from activities because they are not good at them. If a doctor is not a good doctor at all, we don’t want her to be a doctor, in that state (of development). The child is included because it is a lovely child that smiles and makes people feel happy. Then it is included as a good child because it is leaning and enjoys learning. Still, it is excluded from specialized activities. But when it has learned the necessary life skills, including the special technical skills needed, then it is a good doctor, hunter, chef etc. and thus included in the group of actors trusted to perform activities by its own decisions. The motivator, being good at life, is basic recognition as being a loved and protected part of the community in the position it is in. That it is good at life means that its self-activities are life productive, and therefore can be appreciated and trusted. And it is recognized that its learning through self-activity creates good life skills and attitudes. When the supported process of development is finished, and the life skills are good enough then they are included in the group of actors. This gives them position and a responsibility and enables them to teach others. But it does not stop their learning process. Generation of ideas is inherent to human beings and probably all living beings. Without it, life loses its luster. This is the good life.

In the world of the good life, becoming a good self-acting member of the society, is the aim and possibility for healthy people. The development is guided by the concept of becoming better and eventually becoming good at life (both in general and in some specific area). This is a world that is life-friendly.

A dystopian society on the other hand is based on excluding standards that aim at enabling a minority to control the population and sideline self-activities of people. Dystopian practices prefer the exclusive over the non-exclusive either-or. People are humiliated, sidelined, put in jail, or pushed into poverty, unemployment, or even as refugees. This

²² See for example Bergson, H. (1998 [1911]): *Creative Evolution*. Dover Publications inc.

absolutistic either in or out makes exclusion threatening. There may be no way back to become included in a dystopian society. Thus, stress and anxiety become dominant motives.

The character of hierarchies of power is important in the differentiation between life-friendly and dystopian. Dystopian hierarchies are top down, and the top has the power to exclude people at lower levels. In a life friendly society, people on all levels have self-activity and self-organize. The value to be created by the organization are not only the value of resulting product or service, but primarily the quality of the life at work, that they are life-friendly and satisfy criteria for the good life: thriving people, high activity, good spirit, enthusiasm for the work, flow of knowledge and ideas, production of new differences, supporting life's regenerative powers etc. Employees must be able to sideline and replace leadership that is unable to promote such conditions as continuous stress, anxiety, incompetent leadership, mobbing, unfairness, and similar poor leadership performance and leadership that does not care for life and good living conditions, at the most important.

The fact that some attitudes are dystopian and therefore undermining life-friendliness necessitates that these forms are excluded from the ongoing inclusive practice. This should not mean that they are excluded from society, but that they enter new learning programs to be included in other contexts, or they should retire. While protecting people and practices from crime is a result of problems such as disabilities, negative self-narratives, mobbing and inadequate learning, etc. Problem solving at high as well as low levels should be analyzed as a process of life-friendly communication aiming at creating narrative reflexivity - and not by violence, neither in the population nor amongst nations.

5.2 *Social contract*

The shared and cultivated understanding of the good life in a life-friendly society – and thus the intention to promote the good life – is the implicit social contract which is the basis of the social inclusion.²³ Contrary to the good life is the dystopian control by exclusion, destruction, oppression, terror, and fear. It is not based on an ethics of the good life but an ethics of the best.

The ethics of the good life is inclusive. The ethics of the best is exclusive. To be good at life, to be life-friendly, is not good enough to the ethics of the best. The ethics of the best is discriminative. The policies of the supreme, of the exceptional, of the leading race, of the civilized versus the barbarian etc. are examples of the ethics of the best, which obviously discriminate and exclude the others from influence, access to self-determination, and even life. The ethics of the best is and ethics of the dystopian, of the bad and evil. It dissolves the social nature of the society. Life-friendliness is social, while exclusion, aggression and destruction are anti-social. This not only applies between countries and cultures but also inside the states and the many organizations. Although competition can be a part of self-activity where participants contribute with various ideas, then if all those who did not win then lost and became disregarded and excluded then we have a society whereby far the most people are losers. This is different from being good as in the life friendly society of the good life.

How does inclusion work? How does it create the good life? Through life-friendly language games with which people organize the cooperation, integrate the many self-active ideas and contributions. People trust each other in that they believe each other, they take for granted that the other is trustworthy, honest and adjust information when she believes that the other has misunderstood something.

A special puzzle is, how is it possible with a language with some thousand words and associated concepts to function as vehicle for the expression and understanding of any of the ideas that people envision.

There is a special issue here: The concepts are defined in general and abstract terms in lexical, dictionaries and technically in scientific theories. These definitions are general. We have noticed the vague and gradual borders of common concepts. We all know what rain is: when raindrops are pouring down. But this is abstract. When it comes to practice something specific is needed. The meteorologist needs much more specific definition of rain. This applies to all concepts. If they are used in practice, then people use specific interpretations which satisfies specific criteria. Each practice is based on specification of its concepts. The specification may change over time, but without the specification practice does not function. The specifying definitions modifies the abstract concepts to make it usable in practice. No practice can function without sincerity concerning the specification of the concepts. The learning process to become good at life and thus able to actually act in life-friendly ways (and not only have the intention) in specific settings,

²³ By social contract, we basically mean an implicit legal obligation among living beings, committing each other to mutual flourishing, see for example Serres, M. (1995). *The natural contract*. University of Michigan Press. Yet, we focus on an obligation we as humans commit to, in the social language games, that include humans, as well as other living beings. This mean that the social contract is also eo ipso an environmental commitment.

involves learning to respond situationally, mediating between general concepts and interpretative frameworks, and listening to the unique, new, specific, and singular otherness of the concrete situation. The life friendly communication of the good life is based on care that people share approximately common understanding of the concepts or at least can understand more or less, how the other understand and use them, and then be able to enter co-production of new concepts and ideas. This cannot be achieved a priori by textbooks, because each practice - in a good society - is expected to have its special use to support optimal self-activity of the participants and create optimal learning to the development of the profession.

Dystopian practices are however common. These are practices of trapping people by leading them to believe that a typical specific meaning is at use for later to claim that they misunderstood the situation. There is a host of deceptive communicative strategies at use by media, by narcissist partners, by leaders etc. These dark activities thrive on the lack of awareness of deceptive strategies at play. The specifying definitions, that are necessary in all practice to make general concepts applicable, are presumably the most common type of speech act of all communication. This speech act is so a basal part of communication in practice that most people are unaware that there are plenty of unsocial communicative strategies used by people in important positions to trap people by systematically creating unlikely ambiguities to lead them astray.

6 Conclusions

In Part I, we exposed contemporary crises linked to life-forgetful institutions, advocating for a transformative shift towards life-friendliness. Part II delved into life's nature and the good life, emphasizing friendliness as integral. Despite the prevalence of dystopian practices, life-friendly cooperation emerged as the true key to prosperity. Fragility and self-activity define life, fostering interdependence. Part III explored life-friendliness, urging a return to – and reimagining of – the original intent of philosophia. It highlighted the resilience of life-friendly narratives against dystopian contagion and acknowledged life's challenges while embracing its wonders. Part IV analyzed inclusion dynamics, revealing the flourishing potential in diversity and the threats of dystopian exclusivity. Navigating this dilemma requires the use of non-exclusive disjunction, allowing inclusive defense. Life-friendly societies serve as transition frameworks, nurturing self-activity and learning. The implicit social contract of a life-friendly society centers on cultivating the good life, in contrast to dystopian control. The ethics of the good life is inherently inclusive. The journey through Part IV showcases life-friendliness as affirming differences and the regenerative powers of life. The challenge ahead is to navigate inclusion and exclusion wisely, embracing the non-exclusive disjunction to build a society committed to the richness of diversity and life's regenerative essence.

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