

European, Mediterranean, Integrative Bioethics - conceptual shades of the same idea?

Muzur, Amir; Rinčić, Iva

Source / Izvornik: **Bioetica e biopolitica nell'orizzonte della complessita', 2022, 243 - 248**

Book chapter / Poglavlje u knjizi

Publication status / Verzija rada: **Published version / Objavljena verzija rada (izdavačev PDF)**

Permanent link / Trajna poveznica: <https://um.nsk.hr/um:nbn:hr:184:650521>

Rights / Prava: [Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International](#)/[Imenovanje-Nekomercijalno-Dijeli pod istim uvjetima 4.0 međunarodna](#)

Download date / Datum preuzimanja: **2024-08-29**



Repository / Repozitorij:

[Repository of the University of Rijeka, Faculty of Medicine - FMRI Repository](#)



European, Mediterranean, Integrative Bioethics - conceptual shades of the same idea?

Amir Muzur^{*}, Iva Rinčić^{**}

Bioethics is a wonderful idea: like any ethic, it draws its strength from the primordial good that is hidden and more or less cultivated in human as the potential of his growth into the Aristotelian ideal of God. Fritz Jahr (1895-1953), a theologian and teacher from Halle, Germany, who first used the term in 1926¹, understood it primarily as an extension of classical ethics and Kant's categorical imperative onto animals and plants and summed it up in his own «Bioethical Imperative»: «Respect every living being as an end in itself, and treat it, if possible, as such». Jahr, however, does not consider himself the originator of the bioethical idea: according to Fritz Jahr, the true ancestors of 'bioethics' are Michel de Montaigne, Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher and Karl Christian Friedrich Krause, but Jahr's thinking is equally shaped by the Bible, pietism, Immanuel Kant, St. Francis of Assisi, Ignaz Bregenzner, Charles Darwin, Richard Wagner, as well as many other philosophers, theologians, naturalists and artists, coming equally from left (Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels) and right (Emil Abderhalden)². The fact that Jahr published only 22 short articles (at least as many as we know today: only four of them mention bioethics), even in some very serious German journals of his time, and that he led a very secluded private life, resulted in the fact that Jahr's teaching remained more

^{*} University of Rijeka, Faculty of Medicine and Faculty of Health Studies, Rijeka, Croatia.

^{**} Istituto Italiano di Bioetica.

¹ F. Jahr, *Wissenschaft vom Leben und Sittenlehre*, in *Mittelschule*, 40, n. 45, 1926, pp. 604-605.

² More on the life and work of F. Jahr see in: Iva Rinčić, Amir Muzur, *Fritz Jahr i radanje europske bioetike*, Pergamena, Zagreb, 2012); Iva Rinčić, Amir Muzur, *Fritz Jahr and the Emergence of European Bioethics*, Lit, Zürich, 2019.

or less unnoticed until 1997, when Berlin professor Rolf Löther, somewhat in defiance of the hitherto generally accepted thesis on the American origins of bioethics, discovered Jahr's most famous article³.

Nearly half a century after Jahr (apparently unaware of him), American biochemist Van Rensselaer Potter (1911-2001) came up with a very similar idea in Madison, Wisconsin. Potter, however, had been developing the idea of bridging the gap between the natural sciences and the humanities for a decade before that, which eventually led him to a new discipline coined by abbreviating 'biological sciences' and 'ethics' into 'Bioethics' (this linguistic inconsistency will result in some misinterpretations and deviations). Contrary to Jahr's case, Potter's 'invention' immediately received great reception in science and the public: institutes were established, projects and courses were launched, papers and books were published... Potter, however, is no longer mentioned as the author of the concept: only the term, bioethics, is taken over, and associated with old medical problems (abortion, euthanasia) and some new ones (organ transplantation, and later cloning, genetic engineering, etc.). In this way, a 'mainstream' bioethics was created, which is promoted by many powerful institutions – the Kennedy Institute of Ethics in Washington, Oxford University Press, and then all those bound and brought up by these institutions. Bioethics was immediately recognised as too lucrative a job to allow its developmental direction and rhythm to be determined by 'marginals', even if they were its legitimate parents. This situation, as expected, threw into a new despair Potter, who in the late 1980s reconfigured the 'bridg bioethics' into 'global bioethics', spreading it thematically and to other continents thanks to a network of direct followers⁴.

After it fell into Sleeping Beauty's dream, with the publication of Jahr's last article mentioning it (1934), bioethics (now Potter's) appeared in Europe in June 1973. It appeared in Italy, in an article by the director of the Milan Aquarium, biologist Menico Torchio (1932-2001). Although Torchio's 1973 article, in the title of which he mentions bioethics (*Man-Nature Relations to Major Eastern Metaphysics*,

³ R. Löther, *Evolution der Biosphäre und Ethik*, in *Ethik der Biowissenschaften: Geschichte und Theorie - Beiträge zur 6. Jahrestagung der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Theorie der Biologie (DGGTB) in Tübingen 1997*, edited by E.-M. Engels, T. Junker, and M. Weingarten, in *Verlag für Wissenschaft und Bildung*, 1998, pp. 61-68.

⁴ More on the life and work of V. Rensselaer Potter see in: A. Muzur, I. Rinčić, *Van Rensselaer Potter i njegovo mjesto u povijesti bioetike*, Pergamena, Zagreb, 2015 (in Croatian); II.dd., *Van Rensselaer Potter and His Place in the History of Bioethics*, Lit, Zürich, 2019.

*Their Bioethical and Ecological Implications*⁵) is undoubtedly driven by Potter's bioethics – in terms of pointing out the dangers of neglect of natural balance in the biosphere. cultural and ethical factors, this article bears even greater similarities to Fritz Jahr's key 1927 article. Of course, Torchio does not mention Jahr in the 1973 article, but neither Potter, nor in the text nor in the bibliography. It is not impossible that Torchio knew about Jahr, and it is quite certain that he quickly learned about Potter: it turned out that Torchio had received Potter's book as a gift in 1972 from the director of his institute (C.F. Sacchi) who had returned from America. In a public lecture in May 1974, Potterianly entitled *Bioethics - a bridge to survival* (later published as an article of the same title, again in the *Natura*), Torchio already mentions Potter, but also quotes Aldo Leopold, Albert Schweitzer, Giorgio Nebbia, Bernhard Häring and other authors, always emphasising the medieval 'preparation' of bioethical ideas. In one paper, Torchio even highlights, as a final message, his contribution to 'naturalistic (and ecological) bioethics' (*bioetica naturalistica ed ecologica*), at least as dignified as 'production bioethics' (*bioetica procreatica*), which is «[...]in trend today, perhaps even too much»⁶.

It seemed that European bioethics would set sail: however, this did not happen. Jahr remained forgotten until 1997; Potter was, at the outset, robbed of his pragmatic bioethics; Torchio was written off as a weird person. The Catholic Church sided with the Catholic Institute of the Catholic Kennedys in the Catholic Georgetown, taking over the spread of this bioethics (in fact, no new medical ethics constructed on the basis of typically Anglo-American values such as individual autonomy, pragmatic principlism and dispersion of responsibilities onto ethics committees) to Italy, Spain, Croatia, Spain, and other parts of the world where it had impact. 'Mainstream' bioethics has been embraced by both physicians who feared philosophy and Eastern European bioethicists who have thought it would reduce the gap with the West by embracing every new fashion that comes from there.

Over time, however, there has been a strong critique of the 'boringness' of such bioethics⁷, in fact, its narrowing down to patterns that do not correspond to

⁵ M. Torchio, *Rapporti uomo-Natura secondo le principali metafisiche orientali, loro implicazioni bioetiche ed ecologiche*, in *Natura*, 64, n. 2, 1973, pp. 101-132.

⁶ For a more detailed analysis of the similarities among Torchio, Jahr, and Potter, see: A. Muzur, I. Rinčić, *Bioetička Europa našeg doba: struje, kormilari, sidrišta* (Pergamena/ZCI za integrativnu bioetiku, Zagreb, 2018; in Croatian), pp. 47-55.

⁷ A.R. Jonsen, *Why has bioethics become so boring?*, in *Journal of Medical Philosophy*, 25, n. 6, 2000, pp. 689-699.

real life and freedom of thought and behaviour. From the very beginning, there has been some resistance in France and Germany to the notion of 'bioethics' as a redundant American import (the first bioethical institutions and bodies in these countries will emerge only in the 1980s)⁸. In the south, on the shores of the Mediterranean, again, as hundreds of times before, a lively spirit fermented, not recognising itself in the 'mainstream'. Thus, Diego Gracia Guillén of the Complutense University in Spain, a pioneer of 'Mediterranean bioethics' – formally educated in both medicine and philosophy – began to 're-philosophise' bioethics, abandoning applied bioethics in favour of the theoretical one. Believing in the differences between the three ethical traditions – Anglo-Saxon, Northern European (or Central European) and Mediterranean – Gracia advocates the values of friendship and compassion, as well as the method of dialogue between Northern European ethics of duty, which provides 'solutions', form, procedures, and principles, with southern European ethics of values, far more based on ancient and Catholic heritage⁹. The Danes Jacob Dahl Rendtorff and Peter Kemp, on the other hand, suggested in the late 1990s the use of a 'package' of principles that would include – instead the Georgetown package (autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice) – autonomy, dignity, integrity, and vulnerability¹⁰. Others advocated the principles of dignity, solidarity, and caution, which allegedly give priority to wisdom over hedonism, togetherness over individualism, and morality over pragmatism¹¹. Success, of course, had to be absent, since in these attempts the American pragmatic logic of reduction to principles was retained, with some of the principles being tried to be replaced by 'European' values. More like Gracia, Ante Čović in Croatia, just a few years later, launched the concept and project of 'Integrative Bioethics', and cried out for the 'philosophisation' and 'Europeanisation' of bioethics¹² (the only one known at the time – the George-

⁸ Cfr. I. Rinčić, *Europska bioetika: ideje i institucije*, Pergamena, Zagreb, 2011.

⁹ Cfr. D. Gracia, *The intellectual basis of bioethics in Southern European countries*, in *Bioethics*, 7, n. 2-3, 1993, pp. 97-107.

¹⁰ J.D. Rendtorff, P. Kemp, *Basic Ethical Principles in European Bioethics and Biolaw*, vol. 1, Centre for Ethics and Law/Borja de Bioètica, Copenhagen/Barcelona, 2000.

¹¹ M. Häyry, *European values in bioethics: why, what, and how to be used?*, in *Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics*, 24, n. 3, 2003, pp. 199-214.

¹² Cfr. A. Čović, *Der Aufbau eines Referenzzentrums für Bioethik in Südosteuropa: ein weiterer Schritt zur Institutionalisierung des bioethischen Pluriperspektivismus*, in *Integrative Bioethik: Beiträge des 1. Südosteuropäischen Bioethik-Forums, Mali Lošinj 2005 / Integrative Bioethics: Proceedings of the 1. Southeast European Bioethics Forum, Mali Lošinj*

town one): Integrative Bioethics opened to all, even cultural, non-scientific perspectives, and as a result of the dialogue promoted orientation knowledge¹³, close to Jürgen Mittelstraß' idea of knowledge based on values, as opposed to informative knowledge based on facts¹⁴.

An interesting attempt to orient bioethics towards the Mediterranean comes from Salvatore Privitera (1945-2004), a Sicilian priest and poet. After the Institute of Social Ethics, which he had founded in 1984, perhaps (but not necessarily and exclusively) on the basis of the ideas of the Scotsman Alasdair MacIntyre (1981)¹⁵ and the Spaniard Diego Gracia Guillén (1989)¹⁶, Privitera founded the Sicilian Institute for Bioethics (ISB) in December 1991, launching a series of annual conferences and proceedings on the topic of Mediterranean bioethics, as well as a Master in Bioethics programme¹⁷. In Italy, Privitera is considered a pioneer of 'narrative ethics': the 'bionarrative' he advocates, relying on both Homer's tradition and early Christian parables, denies the importance of communicative transmission of facts, and exalts the ultimate 'lesson of the story'. As he himself admits, Privitera is dedicated to the semantic analysis that precedes every ethical issue, where he is primarily interested in normative ethics, which seeks to formalise value judgments, rather than descriptive ethics. Not moving away from the fundamental views of the Church, Privitera saw in the Mediterranean idea a broader platform of bioethics, as evidenced by the four main goals of his Sicilian Institute: «[...] for an ethical vision of reality, for a better quality of life, for a society in the service of human, and for the Church in the service of society»¹⁸.

2005, edited by A. Čović e T.S. Hoffmann, Academia Verlag, Sankt Augustin, 2007, pp. 261-274.

¹³ H. Jurić, *Uporišta za integrativnu bioetiku u djelu Van Rensselaera Pottera*, in *Integrativna bioetika i izazovi suvremene civilizacije: zbornik radova Prvog međunarodnog bioetičkog simpozija u Bosni i Hercegovini (Sarajevo, 31. III. - 1. IV. 2006.)*, edited by V. Valjan, Bioetičko društvo u BiH, Sarajevo, 2007, pp. 77-99.

¹⁴ Cf. J. Mittelstraß, *The loss of knowledge in the information age*, in *From Information to Knowledge, from Knowledge to Wisdom: Challenges and Changes Facing Higher Education in the Digital Age*, edited by E. de Corte et al., Portland Press, London, 2010, pp. 19-23.

¹⁵ A. MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, G. Duckworth, London, 1981.

¹⁶ D. Gracia Guillén, *Fundamentos de bioética*, Editorial Eudema, Madrid, 1989.

¹⁷ S. Privitera, *Alle radici della Bioetica... nel Mediterraneo*, in *Bioetica mediterranea e nord-europea*, a cura di S. Privitera, Armando Editore, Roma, 1996, pp. 7-16.

¹⁸ Cf. S. Privitera, *Narrare la vita alla generazione presente per le generazioni future*, Armando Editore, Roma, 1995.

Resisting the simplification and 'castration' of bioethics, Europe has spawned and continues to spawn ideas that draw on the intellectual sources of antiquity, Christianity, and other cultures, primarily related to the Mediterranean basin. The discovery of Jahr's work has certainly encouraged and to some extent directed these initiatives: European values ceased to feel being neglected. The flicker of Potter's doctrine of Global Bioethics has contributed to this thanks to Marcelo Palacios, Marianna Gensabella Furnari, Giovanni Russo, Ivan Šegota, Artur Filipowicz, and other European members of the Global Bioethics Network, and the Spanish school of ecological bioethics of the Salamanca professor José María García Gómez-Heras and his followers – María Carmen Velayos Castelo, Ramón María Nogués i Carulla, and others, the doctrine of 'Green Bioethics' by the Dutch-American bioethicist Cristina Richie, the consistent fight for animal rights by the founder of the Italian Institute of Bioethics, the Genoese professor Luisella Battaglia, the cries in favour of the biocentrism of the Czech Petr Jemelka, and even the curious amalgam of the Moldovan philosopher Teodor Țirdea combining the teaching on the 'noosphere' by the Russian Vladimir Ivanovič Vernadsky with Potter's Global Bioethics, are just some of the confirmations that European bioethics, regardless of the Mediterranean, integrative, or other forms it occasionally takes over, has its future.

Organizzazione liquida, Leadership distribuita e Responsabilità diffusa in Sanità

Salvatore Palazzo *, Gaetano Marchese **

Abitare la Sanità

L'ambiente baumanamente 'liquido' in cui attualmente si svolgono le attività nelle strutture sanitarie si caratterizza per la spiccata turbolenza organizzativa, la variabilità dei vincoli, la vulnerabilità del contesto, le mutevoli condizioni di rischio e per l'incertezza del futuro. Tutte condizioni che pongono agli operatori dei team sanitari sfide lavorative nuove e sempre più impegnative per la contiguità di molteplici figure professionali con ruoli diversi e intersecati, e con obiettivi clinici diversi, a volte confliggenti, pur a dispetto della necessità di una loro coincidenza; per l'esistenza di assetti organizzativi sfumati nonché di problematiche relazionali a volte incerte; per l'ingombro del grosso impianto documentale, a volte incompleto; per la necessità di rispondere a norme e Linee Guida, atte ad influenzare le decisioni.

E lo stesso processo decisionale si caratterizza per *loop* di feedback e per azioni i cui effetti generano imprevedibili necessità di definire meglio ulteriori informazioni, mentre le decisioni finali contengono elementi di pressione temporale e di stress per il personale, laddove risultano carichi di un'alta significatività umana per i diversi attori dei diversi ruoli.

In tale ambiente fluido e incerto, non si può più continuare ad affrontare la *governance* sanitaria attraverso un tradizionale approccio rigidamente burocratico-ingegneristico, con modelli organizzativi meccanicistici e con gerarchie piramidali. Si osserva invece come la gestione della complessità organizzativa sanitaria continua ad essere affrontata ancora troppo spesso secondo modalità adatte a

* Oncologo Azienda Ospedaliera di Cosenza. Università degli Studi di Salerno.

** Dirigente Psicologo Azienda Sanitaria di Cosenza.