

## PROBLEMI E PROSPETTIVE

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### A GLIMPSE OF THE AUREL KOLNAI *NACHLASS*

1. When Aurel Kolnai's wife died in 1982, she bequeathed all her husband's papers and books to David Wiggins, who, consecutively, asked Francis Dunlop, one of Kolnai's last graduate students, to sort what remained. For several years, Dunlop has been editing and translating works of Kolnai resulting in several posthumous publications and a biography, which are all of undeniable value to anyone interested in Kolnai's work. Very recently, in 2011, the Aurel Kolnai *Nachlaß* was transferred from the *University of East Anglia*, where it had previously been held, to the *Centre for Ethics, Philosophy and Public Affairs* at the *University of St. Andrews*. The collection is now under the auspices of the centre's director John Haldane, who aspires to make the collection more accessible for scholars and to encourage interest in Kolnai's writings.<sup>1</sup>

Kolnai was born in a liberal Jewish family in Budapest in 1900 and went to study philosophy in Vienna. When he obtained his doctoral degree in 1926, he also converted to Catholicism. Kolnai was mainly influenced by

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<sup>1</sup> References to the collection as: Kolnai archives, CEPPA (St. Andrews) [further details on boxes, folders, which notebook, etc. are provided when possible]. John Haldane has also been transferred the literary executorship from David Wiggins, meaning that to John Haldane has to be addressed all copyright matters. The use of archive material for this essay was also kindly permitted by John Haldane.

realist phenomenology (Brentano, Husserl, Meinong, Scheler, Hartmann and von Hildebrand) and later also by commonsense philosophy and intuitionism (Moore, Prichard, Ross and, the British moralists of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century in general). In addition, Kolnai appreciated the works of Chesterton very much. Although his early and later academic writings were mostly ethical, he dedicated most of his time in the 1930s and '40s to political-philosophical writings. However, because of the upheaval in the twentieth century, Kolnai had to flee throughout Europe, arrived at the United States in 1940 and, thereafter, became a lecturer at the *Université Laval* (Canada, 1944-1955). But because of the Thomistic atmosphere and, thus, being amidst dissenting colleagues, Kolnai left for the British continent in 1955 to work on his anti-utopian project, which remained unfinished. From 1959 onwards he was lecturer at *Bedford College, University of London*, where two of his colleagues were Bernard Williams and David Wiggins. He occupied this position to the time of his death in 1973.

In spite of the publication of Kolnai's dissertation in 1927, his book on sexual ethics (1930) and his work on disgust (1929), which were all well received, Kolnai remained relatively unknown to this day. It seems that for a long time, Kolnai was best known for his extensive description of National-Socialist ideology: a voluminous book, titled *The War against the West*<sup>2</sup> and already published by Victor Gollanz Ltd. in 1938. Not very well known, however, is that it was preceded by a series of writings on the same topic in the German and Austrian press as early as 1926. In addition to this theme, Kolnai warned in several articles against the dangers of appeasement; a concern developed in his unpublished book *The fallacies of Pacifism*<sup>3</sup>.

Kolnai's travelling and 'exile' existence, his complex personal and historical background, together with his perfectionism, eclecticism and a density of style in his work contribute to Kolnai's work remaining mainly unknown to contemporary analytical ethicists and political philosophers.

2. Kolnai's political philosophy, greatly appreciated by Pierre Manent and Daniel J. Mahoney, is essentially characterized by a 'conservative attitude', though not conservatism as such since this would misrepresent the subtleties of Kolnai's position. Kolnai refuted both modern democracy as well as totalitarianism because of their creed to identity and their missing out on appropriating the Good or the 'values' of the world in a proper way, that is, by acknowledging the human condition and the importance of participation and 'privilege'. Put in a different way, Kolnai rejected the

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<sup>2</sup> A. KOLNAI, *The War against the West*, Victor Gollancz Ltd., London, 1938, 711 pp.

<sup>3</sup> Kolnai archives, CEPPA (St. Andrews), box 3, *The fallacies of Pacifism*.

delusion of strict egalitarianism and harmonious identity. Of course, while totalitarianism is not conducive to ordinary human life as we know and appreciate it, modern liberal democracy shares the ideas of identity and self-affirmation of man which, according to Kolnai, inevitably results in man's self-enslavement and, at the least, a distortion of the human condition. For the problem is its disrespect of the plurality or the fact that true political liberty must be grounded in an understanding of participating to a world that is already given and, thus, of which man is not the absolute master.<sup>4</sup> Although Kolnai was certainly not antidemocratic, he suspected modern democracy to be prone to identitarian egalitarianism and thereby liable to breeding the utopian belief in overall identity and the overcoming of tension, heterogeneity and plurality. This obscuring of the 'human world' was the feature to be deplored of many, not to say most, philosophical theories of the time. Hence, Kolnai's emphasis, in his political as well as in his moral philosophy, lies at the restoration of common sense evaluation and thinking. There is, however, one remark to be made: although Kolnai's political-philosophical views are interesting and can be put to use in developing contemporary accounts of democracy and conservatism, Kolnai's thoughts and reflections were strongly characterized by the time and context he was living in.

The intimate link between Kolnai's political-philosophical and his ethical writings is<sup>5</sup> Kolnai's concern to recover the ordinary, human world and common sense and to restore it to its proper place in philosophical reflection. It is undeniable that Kolnai's political philosophy is inspired by and builds on that recovery, and thus, on his ethical views. This already indicates why Kolnai often understood or framed politics and political philosophy also in moral terms.

This concern is characteristically present in Kolnai's anti-utopian writings, which, for that reason might be suggested as the best entrance in understanding the link between Kolnai's political and ethical writings. While utopianism springs from a distorted belief in all-pervading perfection and the delusive idea that the human condition can be cleansed from its manifold instances of conflict, tension and imperfections, it has its origin in a permanent human temptation: the natural tendency or desire to try to avoid and eradicate tension in ordinary, practical life and improve on what we consider to be important or in need of perfection. This tendency is liable to the utopian attitude because it may easily lead to the idea that we must overcome our human condition which is essentially characterized by

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<sup>4</sup> Cf.: A. KOLNAI, *Privilege and Liberty and Other Essays in Political Philosophy*, ed. by D. Mahoney, Lexington Books, Maryland 1999, p. 14. Further references: P&L.

<sup>5</sup> Also Daniel J. Mahoney rightly insists upon this in his introduction: P&L, pp. 3-4.

tension and conflict. In Kolnai's account, it becomes clear that the problem is the utopian mentality or 'the utopian mind': a certain idea, conception or attitude which we are all susceptible to but which we cannot think out fully or coherently. This incoherence stems from the impossibility for the utopian to conceive of or really attain the identity between Value and Reality he proclaims to strive for; it is impossible to overcome our condition and to install a new mode of reality. Hence, the utopian has only the utopian will as a manifestation of being on route to the ideal good, which means that all imperfections, tensions and thus heterogeneity must be cleansed away. Terror and the infliction of great evil is therefore *the* sign of the utopian craving. Herein lies the utopian contradiction: the attainment of the ideal *non-alienating* state of being necessitates a revolutionary, *total alienation* and disruption. Kolnai presented his scrutiny as a conceptual and phenomenological study of the utopian mentality, which therefore was without the need for historical exposition and locally embedded meanings. His anti-utopianism is at the same time a kind of moral anthropology, disclosing the roots of distortive and self-destructive human temptations led by a delusive belief in overcoming alienation and attaining all-round perfection and identity, and a warning to and brilliantly insightful description of the mechanisms which lie at the root of totalitarianism. All too briefly stated, Kolnai identified utopianism as a delusive belief in the possibility of overcoming the conflicting and troublesome human condition, of attaining an identity between Value and Reality, while this belief is taken to be the sole guidance for action, leading up to grave distortions and inflictions which would never be accepted by common sense but are now promulgated as transitional measures in order to obtain the 'ideal good'.

But with regard to his methodology and basic convictions about the status and goals of philosophical reflection, Kolnai might be said to play an even more important role for contemporary ethical thought which is all too often disregarding the relevance of moral experience and phenomenology. Though not largely known, Kolnai, for instance, considerably influenced both David Wiggins, who more explicitly acknowledged this in his own work, and Bernard Williams in their ethical thought. Kolnai combined his interest in realist phenomenology and common sense philosophy or intuitionism into a view which was mainly concerned about arguing for the philosophical relevance and importance of ordinary moral experience and the phenomenological description of and reflection about ethically relevant phenomena. Additionally, Kolnai took bits of Aristotle and Aquinas whenever he thought their views useful. In this way, he offered a distinctive view and, for instance, a good basis for setting up a particular kind of moral cognitivism and contextualism with important implications for moral realism and the objectivity and universalizability of moral judgements,

as I have argued elsewhere.<sup>6</sup> Kolnai rejected all rationalist or reductionist tendencies in ethical theory and put forward the idea that, instead of trying to explain away the moral phenomena, ethicists should try to adequately account for them. For that reason, Kolnai was convinced that ethical theory had to start from the moral already in reality and, thus, that phenomenology was the only justifiable method to engage in ethical theory. Moreover, reflection about ordinary morality led him to the conviction that ‘value’ was the currency unit of ethics. For, according to Kolnai, ethical phenomenology revealed that we have a ‘value consciousness’ or a ‘value awareness’, meaning that we are susceptible to what is of value in a pre-moral sense and implying that we are endowed with a moral awareness or sensibility. Morality relates to this pre-moral value-awareness and forms in its emphatic mode a protection against the disruption of value and good, thus against evil, although it is based on primordial positive values. This ‘moral awareness’ is what Kolnai referred to by the ‘moral emphasis’: it is because we are receptive to and conscious of what is valuable to us in the practice of life, that we are *also* receptive of the moral emphasis. The moral emphasis is thus a general term to grasp whatever appears to us as morally relevant or significant. It is neither a simple psychic epiphenomenon, nor a simple feature of some object. Rather, the moral emphasis attaches to an object (or state of fact or *Sachverhalt*) and expresses a relation between a state of affairs (object) and a subject. The subject is *conscious of* the moral relevance of what is the case and what is entailed by his actions or conduct, that is, what can or will be the case. This awareness is induced by one or more values (or, in general, what the agent thinks to be of importance) which come to the agent, either as present in the situation at hand, either related to the possible courses of conduct and their consequences. Again, it is clear that Kolnai took the acknowledgement of what is already given to us and what we can come to understand by ordinary thinking as *the* source of truth. Summarily, Kolnai developed an “analytical ethic based on the phenomenology of value consciousness”<sup>7</sup>.

It seems that interest in Kolnai’s writings is increasing. At least, this is indicated by the recently posthumous publications and translations of his work. *Ethics, Value and Reality* (1977) was followed by *The Utopian Mind and other papers*<sup>8</sup> (1995) which was edited by Francis Dunlop

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<sup>6</sup> C. BESSEMANS, *A short introduction to Aurel Kolnais moral philosophy*, “Journal of Philosophical Research”, [forthcoming 2013]; ID., *Moral conflicts and moral awareness*, “Philosophy”, 86 (2011), 4, pp. 563-587.

<sup>7</sup> B. Williams - D. Wiggins in: A. KOLNAI, *Ethics, Value and Reality*, ed. by F. Dunlop and K. Francis, Athlone, London 1977, p. xxii. Further references: EVR.

<sup>8</sup> A. KOLNAI, *The Utopian Mind and Other Papers. A Critical Study in Moral and Politi-*

and concerned Kolnai's anti-utopian writings. *Privilege and liberty and other essays in political philosophy*<sup>9</sup> (1999) concerns Kolnai's political writings. *Political Memoirs*<sup>10</sup> (1999), edited by Francesca Murphy, and *The life and thought of Aurel Kolnai*<sup>11</sup> (2002), edited by Francis Dunlop, introduce the reader to Kolnai's life and clarify Kolnai's main influences. Again Francis Dunlop, to whom every Kolnaian is greatly indebted for his editorial work and translations, translated Kolnai's dissertation – to be found in the *Early ethical writings of Aurel Kolnai*<sup>12</sup> (2002) – and Kolnai's work on *Sexual Ethics*<sup>13</sup> (2005). The original works, *Der ethische Wert und die Wirklichkeit*<sup>14</sup> and *Sexualethik*<sup>15</sup> stem, respectively, from 1927 and 1930. In 2000, a conference in Budapest was held for the 100<sup>th</sup> celebration of Kolnai's birth. A couple of years later, the papers read on this conference appeared in a collection together with some essays of Kolnai. This collection, *Exploring the world of human practice: readings in and about the work of Aurel Kolnai*<sup>16</sup>, was again edited by Francis Dunlop and Zoltán Balázs. However, most of those who know Kolnai's work on the present day, know it because of either his book on Nazist ideology, *The War against the West*<sup>17</sup>, or his work on forgiveness<sup>18</sup> or dignity<sup>19</sup> or moral emotions, namely hate, fear and disgust, which Kolnai wrote an essay (*Der Eckel*<sup>20</sup>) about and which appeared in the *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung* already in 1929. This work, being one of the first phenomenological works on 'moral emotions', was translated

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*cal Philosophy*, ed. by F. Dunlop and K. Francis, Athlone, London 1995, 217 pp.

<sup>9</sup> P&L.

<sup>10</sup> A. KOLNAI, *Political Memoirs*, ed. by F. Murphy, Lexington Books, Lanham 1999, 249 pp.

<sup>11</sup> F. DUNLOP, *The Life and Thought of Aurel Kolnai*, Ashgate, Hampshire 2002, 351 pp.

<sup>12</sup> A. KOLNAI, *Early Ethical Writings of Aurel Kolnai*, ed. by F. Dunlop, Ashgate, Aldershot 2002, 199 pp. Further references: EEW.

<sup>13</sup> ID., Aurel, *Sexual Ethics. The Meaning and Foundations of Sexual Morality*, ed. by F. Dunlop, Ashgate, Aldershot 2005, 316 pp.

<sup>14</sup> ID., *Der ethische Wert und die Wirklichkeit*, Herder & Co., Freiburg 1927, 171 pp.

<sup>15</sup> ID., *Sexualethik. Sinn und Grundlagen der Geschlechtsmoral*. Schöningh, Paderborn 1930, 447 pp.

<sup>16</sup> F. DUNLOP - B.Z. FRANCIS (eds.), *Exploring the world of human practice: readings in and about the philosophy of Aurel Kolnai*, CEU press, Budapest 2004, 343 pp. Further referred to as: EWHP.

<sup>17</sup> KOLNAI, *The War against the West*.

<sup>18</sup> A. KOLNAI, *Forgiveness*, in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 1973-1974, pp. 91-106. Reprinted in: EVR, pp. 211-224.

<sup>19</sup> ID., *Dignity*, "Philosophy", 51 (1976), 197, pp. 251-271.

<sup>20</sup> ID., *Der Eckel*, in *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung*, 1929, 10.

by Barry Smith and Carolyn Korsmeyer<sup>21</sup>, who also wrote a marvellous introduction to it, in 2004. Additionally, reprints are recently made of the volume of 1977 and of Kolnai's *Psychoanalysis and sociology*<sup>22</sup> and Francis Dunlop and Graham McAleer are currently editing a book with writings of Kolnai on Social-Nationalist ideology and totalitarianism.<sup>23</sup>

In order to promote the study and appreciation of Kolnai as a distinctive philosopher and to make him and the collection more widely known, it seemed useful<sup>24</sup> to provide a brief overview of the collection's content and its relevance for contemporary philosophy. I believe it is highly important to augment the scale of knowledge of the collection's existence since this might arouse further interest which, then again, might make Kolnai more widely known. Therefore, I am grateful to the editor to be offered this opportunity.

3. The *Nachlaß* consists of twenty-two boxes of papers, typescripts, notebooks, fragments of notebooks, sheets with notes and small notes, and two unpublished books, of which one remained unfinished. Additionally, there are four other boxes containing books from Kolnai's personal library with often many and interesting annotations.

In addition to the published works by Kolnai in English, German, French, Spanish and Hungarian, contained in boxes 12 to 17, the philosophically most interesting unpublished documents are in box 1 to 4. These boxes contain respectively Kolnai's unpublished papers (and related notes), the utopia project (including several notebooks with substantial passages about moral theory and utopian thought), the typescript of the unpublished book *The fallacies of Pacifism* and the typescript of the unpublished and unfinished book *Liberty at the heart of Europe*. Given their importance, I shall, in a moment, mainly concentrate on these boxes and provide an idea of what some of the papers are about as well as suggest their contemporary relevance.

Kolnai's *Twentieth century memoirs* are in box 5 and his early notebooks and teaching notebooks in box 6. Additionally, boxes 7 to 9 contain letters from Kolnai and his wife, box 10 consists of personal documents such as passports of Kolnai, some photographs, *curricula vitae*, birth and other certificates, etc. and box 11 has the (many) poems, rhymes and some drawings by Kolnai.

<sup>21</sup> ID., *On disgust*, ed. by B. Smith and C. Korsmeyer, Open Court, Chicago 2004, 120 pp.

<sup>22</sup> ID., *Psychoanalyse und Soziologie: zur Psychologie von Masse und Gesellschaft*, Leipzig Internationaler psychoanalytische Verl., Leipzig 1920, 152 pp., en. transl.ed. by P.C. Eden, *Psychoanalysis and Sociology*, George Allan & Unwin, London 1921, 179 pp.

<sup>23</sup> Personal communication with Graham McAleer and John Haldane. The book is under contract with *Transaction*.

<sup>24</sup> The suggestion was made to me by Andrea Robiglio, to whom I am most thankful.

The remaining boxes are of a different nature: some unpublished translations of Kolnai's work are in box 18 and articles about Kolnai and brief references to him are in box 19; box 20 contains miscellaneous material (such as a list of the books in Kolnai's library and an account of how this was dealt with after his death, an edited copy of *The Utopian Mind* and an original, unshortened version of *The life and thought of Aurel Kolnai*, the biography written by Francis Dunlop). The remaining boxes 21 and 22 contain spare copies.

Given the digression above about Kolnai's moral and political philosophy, I shall start with saying something about the two unpublished books (box 3 and 4) and dedicate most of the remaining of this essay to the unpublished ethical writings (in box 1 and 2).

4. Kolnai's unpublished *The fallacies of Pacifism*<sup>25</sup> had 'The case against False Pacifism' as its original title and counts 315 pages (typescript A4) with some important, though very general, editorial notes about the different chapters and the changes or improvements that had to be made. The book was written for an American audience and concerns, as the title suggests, the pacifist illusion. Kolnai argues here against 'false' or 'absolute pacifism' or, in other words, a certain form of internationalism and advocates, what he calls, a 'true and realistic pacifism' which is fundamentally opposed to Pacifism as such. The theme reappears in the third chapter, 'The inadequacy of Internationalism and the Pacifist peril', of his unfinished and unpublished book *Liberty and the heart of Europe*<sup>26</sup>, which was written after the Second World War. The latter book attempted to understand and describe the historical-conceptual characteristics of post-World War I's ideologies and the failures of the League of Nations. The book is a study of the intermingling of historical factors and ideologies, enriched with description and the search for conceptual clarification and understanding. Kolnai engages in explaining the West's plea for Liberty and the challenges to it in Central Europe and, especially, 'Germanism' and Nazism. It criticizes nationalism and self-determination, the inadequacy of the international community to set up a true collective because of its delusive beliefs in certain ideologies (among which Pacifism), and the modern liberal democracies their ambiguities, defects and failures. Then, after more than 300 pages (typescript A4), Kolnai presents us in the fifth chapter with the 'personalist and pluralist conception of liberty', though only after 26 more pages, the book abruptly breaks of.

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<sup>25</sup> Kolnai archives, CEPPA (St. Andrews), box 3, *The fallacies of Pacifism*.

<sup>26</sup> Kolnai archives, CEPPA (St. Andrews), box 4, *Liberty and the heart of Europe*.

In *The pivotal principles of National Socialist ideology*<sup>27</sup>, which was probably written in 1939, Kolnai identified the National Socialist ideology as the background or the soil of the official party program. In this essay, Kolnai argues against the idea that Nazism would not have any philosophy since this particular ideology carries a feature of (moral) nihilism with it: the Nazi ideology repudiates all moral standards and replaces them with a dynamism build upon a racial stratification of the human society. It offers an anthropology fraught with the idea of value while it is indifferent to the true standards of ethics, namely objective, universalizable judgements of actions, behaviour and policy. The appeal to objective validity in the community of mankind is replaced by what is valid or true according to the particular community and, thus, 'ours' and, therefore 'better'. But essential to this development is the rule of total power: it supplies certainty and guidance when any other validity is denied and offers an identity, though a fictional one, warranted by the absolute ruler and his will which embody the soul of the community. But, by which the relation to utopia becomes even more clear, the goal of a 'new humanity and civilization' cannot be attained, implying that the striving for political hegemony and power, the dynamism or mobilization, are the best attainable. The evil inflicted is presented as a transitional measure and, worse, as for instance, so Kolnai writes, "by one-sided determination to wage war, Nazi power proves that a higher sacredness, a supra-moral justification [...] are on its side"<sup>28</sup>. The contradiction inherent in this total creed for Progress is, as Kolnai summarizes in his *Progress and reaction*<sup>29</sup>, the impossible aim or rather, the intrinsically unrealizable concept of Man setting himself up as his own principle of being, immediately and absolutely *per se* good, with no higher measure beyond his will.<sup>30</sup>

In other words, the essential problem of this creed is the discontinuity between what we are and long for and the totally different constellation we are to bring about. Again, there is no possibility for us to condition this future state of being in which we are no longer present; there is no "point in preparing a future in discontinuity with the present"<sup>31</sup>. Additionally, there is no way to measure whether there is any progress.

In the same essay, Kolnai sketches why the Right or conservatism has an initial advantage over the Left. While the Left is in need for some

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<sup>27</sup> Kolnai archives, CEPPA (St. Andrews), box 1, folder 'Political thought'.

<sup>28</sup> Kolnai archives, CEPPA (St. Andrews), box 1, folder 'Political thought', *The pivotal principles of National Socialist ideology*, p. 9

<sup>29</sup> Kolnai archives, CEPPA (St. Andrews), box 1, folder 'Political thought'.

<sup>30</sup> Kolnai archives, CEPPA (St. Andrews), box 1, folder 'Political thought', *Progress and reaction*, p. 4-5

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*.

kind of ‘natural law’ or ‘history’ in which ‘continuity’ and ‘change’ play an important role, the conservative is much more concerned about what is of value and primarily focuses on the possible threats or disturbances. Progressivism tends to be much more monist and totalitarian because of its appeal to a unitary consciousness which has to be awakened in order to strive for the total identity and unity of men. Of course, the Right is inferior in some other respects: it may result in traditionalism or acquiescence towards the corrigible and may be susceptible to arbitrarily favouring a particular group, community, time or culture. According to Kolnai, the only solution exists in acknowledging the plurality and the primacy of objective values and to strive for piecemeal improvements. Note, however, that Kolnai himself sees a value in progressivism and, even, revolution or the revolutionary creed.<sup>32</sup>

Again, in *Democracy and Value*<sup>33</sup> Kolnai describes some problems of democracy as well as the spiritual origins of democracy and the role of Christianity with regard to the formation of the democratic consciousness and in *Idearium, en torno de libertad, liberalismo, tradicionalismo, restauracion, la necesidad de instituciones nuevas, etc.*<sup>34</sup> – in contrast to its title, the essay is written in English – Kolnai presents a detailed proposal for organizing representative democracy, though with an emphasis on the role of the crown or the monarchy. He calls it his conception of ‘conservative democracy or true constitutional monarchy’.

More interesting, with regard to his political philosophy, is the *Waste-book. Political philosophy*<sup>35</sup>, written in 1957. The paper, with some preceding notes, starts with the reasons for being a conservative. From the start, it is clear that Kolnai’s conservatism stands in close relation with his aversion to utopianism and excessive progressivism. It is only from an acceptance and preservation of reality that we can judge progress and improvement. Additionally, the conservative attitude stands for an affirmation of the pre-political basis of the political being of man and the non-identification of Practice and Morality. The latter distinction, i.e. between Practice and Morality, is utterly important. It is precisely this distinction the utopian wants to overcome by aiming for a state of being in which Practice and Morality are one. Although Practice and Morality are not the same, in ordinary life, they stand in a relation of consonance or conver-

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<sup>32</sup> Kolnai mentions it in his dissertation (EEW, p. 54-55) but he elaborated on it in his 1972 essay ‘Conservative and Revolutionary Ethos’, in: P&L, p. 135-166

<sup>33</sup> Kolnai archives, CEPPA (St. Andrews), box 1, folder ‘Political thought’.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem.*

gence while, at the same time, morality seems to intrude on, but cannot be without the practice of life, and seems to regulate the whole of practice. This brings us to box 2, the Utopia project.

5. Box 2<sup>36</sup> entails a lot of schemes or ‘plans’, tables of content, etc. for Kolnai’s *The Utopian Mind*<sup>37</sup>, which remained unfinished, and the paper *Utopia and alienation*, which is (probably) the same as the version in the posthumous publication of 1995. But, additionally, the box contains five notebooks. In one<sup>38</sup> of these notebooks, there are mostly notes and summaries on books read, often with marginal comments only which implies it is less interesting.

A second notebook<sup>39</sup> is mainly related to Kolnai’s readings on and thoughts about intuitionists such as Ross, Moore (and his naturalistic fallacy) and contains some criticisms against hedonistic utilitarianism as well as annotations on different subjects. For instance, it seemed that Kolnai, though highly appreciative of Ross, thought that Ross overstated the distinction between Right and Good, that he insufficiently considered the primacy of the negative and that Ross should have put much less emphasis on his table of right-making characteristics (the *prima facie* duties) because every judgement is also based upon the circumstances relating to the particular state of affairs and decision. These last two remarks relate to Kolnai’s ‘thematic primacy of moral evil’ and his particular contextualism.

Another notebook<sup>40</sup> has some notes but also a substantial section, in the form of a paper, with the title *Deliberation is of ends*. A paper with the same title was published in the *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society 1961-1962*<sup>41</sup> and reprinted in the volume of 1977<sup>42</sup>. But the paper in the notebook is in many respects different from the published paper: it seems that the notebook version is a longer draft of the paper which was eventually published. In both papers, Kolnai claims that the Aristotelian picture, delibera-

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<sup>36</sup> Kolnai archives, CEPPA (St. Andrews), box 2 – ‘the Utopia project’.

<sup>37</sup> KOLNAI, *The Utopian Mind*.

<sup>38</sup> Kolnai archives, CEPPA (St. Andrews), box 2 – ‘the Utopia project’, notebook [red-brownish with a red margin on its flap and starting with “Utopia and Morality & Practice notes” and mentioning “F.A. Hayek (summary)”]

<sup>39</sup> Kolnai archives, CEPPA (St. Andrews), box 2 – ‘the Utopia project’, notebook [red-brown; starting with “To look upon our subject...” & on flap inside written in pencil about Katkov’s book (a summary)]

<sup>40</sup> Kolnai archives, CEPPA (St. Andrews), box 2 – ‘the Utopia project’, notebook [green, on cover: “Aurel Kolnai. Diverse notes”, on first page on top: “U bibliography”], pp. 37-77

<sup>41</sup> A. KOLNAI, *Deliberation is of ends*, “Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society”, 62 (1961-1962), pp. 195-218.

<sup>42</sup> EVR, p. 44-62.

tion being about means, is a distorted conception of either ‘deliberation’ or ‘ends and means’ or, rather, both. But Kolnai’s grounding concern seems to be the fact that in this distortion the distinction between and the consonance of Morality and Practice is likewise corrupted. Thus, although both papers have the same upset, in the unpublished version – though, often, sections are crossed out – there is additional material which is fruitful for our understanding of Kolnai’s views on these matters. Note that Kolnai’s ethics can be fruitful for developing a view arguing for the adequacy of ordinary moral reasoning and deliberation to decision making and action-guidance.<sup>43</sup>

But the two remaining notebooks seem to be the most interesting. The first notebook<sup>44</sup> can be seen as one text since the themes are mostly connected. The themes, which cover 111 (hand-written) pages, are: ‘Morality and Practice’, ‘Utopia’, ‘the conservative attitude’, ‘the thematic primacy’, ‘morality and universality’, ‘morality and personality’, ‘the tragedy of moral existence’, ‘sanction’, ‘the moral status’, ‘forgiveness’, ‘consensus’ and ‘imperatives’. While the relation between the first four themes has already been indicated, the others might ask for some clarification. Kolnai emphasized the objectivity of moral judgements, namely that they are essentially judgements in which we aspire to be right or correct independently, i.e. not from any particular point of view or ‘this person’, but necessarily from the point of view of a person whose peculiarities are merely objectivized elements of the situation – as if they were attachable to anybody else, just as anybody may, for instance, find himself in a hot or a cold room, going hungry, etc.<sup>45</sup>

If we would not take this claim for universality and objectivity as our aim in moral judgements, we would make nonsense of ourselves as moral judges. It is precisely this ‘indeterminate’ yet highly circumstantially informed or relevantly situated point of view which is essential to judge morally right and, thus, which allows us to aspire and make claims on truth. But, as the themes suggest, to Kolnai this ‘contextualist objectivity’ is closely related to the objectively relevant personal features: “The universality-aspect of morality not only needs to be ‘supplemented’ with a personality-aspect, but the two are also closely interconnected”.<sup>46</sup>

Hence, in the spirit of Kolnai, it is possible to argue for a particular form of cognitivism or objectivism *cum* personalism. The main idea is that the

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<sup>43</sup> Cf. note 6.

<sup>44</sup> Kolnai archives, CEPPA (St. Andrews), box 2 – ‘the Utopia project’, notebook [*red flap with black margin, starts with “Morality and Practice ... Utopia”*], 111 p.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibi*, pp 68-69

<sup>46</sup> Kolnai archives, CEPPA (St. Andrews), box 2 – ‘the Utopia project’, notebook [*red flap with black margin, starts with “Morality and Practice ... Utopia”*], p. 72

neo-Kolnaian can make claims about the universalizability and objectivity of moral judgements while acknowledging the importance of relevant circumstantial and personal features belonging to the particular situation. For instance, this view might offer a response to the sceptical conclusion Peter Winch made in *The universalizability of moral judgements* without denying some important observations made by Winch.<sup>47</sup> Or, again, by relying upon Kolnai's ethics, one can show that David Wiggins's denial of the possibility of principled convergence is ambiguous or, at the least, all too pessimistic with regard to the status of moral judgements and ordinary moral reasoning.<sup>48</sup>

But, this does not mean that 'being moral' is not a difficult task and very often implies conflict, opacity, insecurity, and responsibility. In other words, the demands of morality or the fair degree of moral expertise is considerably high, or, as Kolnai wrote:

"[T]he one thing we are not free to do is to lead an extra-moral life outside moral accents, morality and immorality; although all our life is also relevantly extra-moral (one 'purely moral' is a mere phantom, not unattainable but a priori inconceivable, and contrary to the idea and content of morals (which presuppose the extra-moral)). A 'hurting conscience' attacks, not [...] 'amoral self' or, inversely, as it is. What has done evil is not my 'empirical' in revolt against my 'intelligible' self, nor my 'reason' through error and ineffectiveness, but *myself* – not a moral nor an amoral entity, but a morally sentient and morally obliged practical entity".<sup>49</sup>

Hereby Kolnai also revokes the idea that there would be something like a 'moral will' as opposed to the 'empirical will' or 'reason'. Hence, there is the link between the foregoing themes and the importance of and Kolnai's insistence on responsibility, freedom and, consequently, sanction, 'the moral status' and forgiveness.

The remaining notebook<sup>50</sup> has passages, though not always close to an essay, on the conservative position, utopia (in particular, on subversion as

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<sup>47</sup> This point is the theme of the paper: C. BESSEMAN, *The universalizability of moral judgements: Winch's ambiguity*, "International Philosophical Quarterly", [forthcoming 2012].

<sup>48</sup> The point with regard to David Wiggins's 'pessimism' is made in: C. BESSEMAN, *A short introduction to Aurel Kolnai's moral philosophy*, "Journal of Philosophical Research", [forthcoming 2013].

<sup>49</sup> Kolnai archives, CEPPA (St. Andrews), box 2 – 'the Utopia project', notebook [*red flap with black margin, starts with "Morality and Practice ... Utopia"*], p. 84

<sup>50</sup> Kolnai archives, CEPPA (St. Andrews), box 2 – 'the Utopia project', notebook [*greenish with red margin and red corners – starts with p. 33 "the subversive utopia and the principles of conservatism"*, some drawings also]

the root of totalitarianism), ‘existentialism and phenomenology’ and communism. A lot of these writings, as said, seem sometimes much more rough drafts than texts (which makes it more difficult to deal with them here in more detail). But from page 146 onwards this changes and the reader comes across several texts that are well written and thoughtful. Consecutively, we have, though sometimes brief, essays on the aspects of the naturalistic fallacy (p. 153-174), direction (to right and wrong in morality and moral experience, in relation to the intuitionist or intrinsic view) and (moral) transcendence (p. 185-191), prudence and conscience (p. 191-201), the moral and practical (p. 202-274) and with the title ‘Do we judge moral value?’ (p. 275-288). Some of these essays even deemed to me to be publishable with some minor editing (or sometimes almost no editing at all). It is, however, not possible to go into all these papers here.

6. Another publishable essay, titled *Two opposite ways of using descriptive-evaluative terms and Apparent Good or Extra-moral Good? Draft* is in the folder ‘Moral Philosophy’ (box 1). While the title is obviously unclear or not very well chosen and while the paper is according to its title a draft, the paper has certainly reached a seemingly finished status. In brief, the essay deals with the difference between the meaning of an evaluation either being focal to the description of its object (the state of affairs) or being only secondary and non-definitive. Again, Kolnai’s concern is the difference between saying that, for instance, (a) an act appears to be but is not lying and that (b) this act of lying, in virtue of its modifying aspects, is *not* condemnable (but, rather, commendable). In this essay, Kolnai, in line with his objectivism and contextualism, explains why (b) is the ‘morally correct’ judgement since (a) “tends to postulate a smooth and harmonious world rather than to present the world as it is”, whereas (b) “prefers to [...] ‘a thing is what it is’ and then proceed to give reasons why”<sup>51</sup>. Again, the general concern for restoring the importance of ‘the common world’ in philosophical reflection is clearly present. The essay is, in my opinion, also to be appreciated because of Kolnai’s neat description of both stances or ‘outlooks’ and their subtle but meaningful differences.

In the same folder<sup>52</sup>, there are four other (brief) essays and some notes. One of these notes concerns Kolnai’s criticism to Iris Murdoch’s equation of liberalism and existentialism, which Kolnai also attacks more generally, and a summation of the points he appreciated in Murdoch’s *Metaphysics and ethics*. Another note is related to Kolnai’s essay *Erroneous con-*

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<sup>51</sup> Kolnai archives, CEPPA (St. Andrews), box 1, folder ‘Moral philosophy’, *Two opposite ways of using descriptive-evaluative terms and Apparent Good or Extra-moral Good? Draft*, p. 5

<sup>52</sup> Kolnai archives, CEPPA (St. Andrews), box 1, folder ‘Moral philosophy’.

*science*<sup>53</sup>, which was published in the 1977 volume. These related notes do not seem to contain much that was not in some form taken up in the published paper. *The contrast between 'universalizability' and 'totality' types of ethics* is a longer note exemplifying Kolnai's aversion to doctrines expressing or implying the possibility of a scientific or mystical insight into the totality of the universe. Such a belief sharply contrasts with the commonsensical conception which entirely dismisses the postulate of a 'total insight' into the nature and destiny of the world. It is clear that this note relates to Kolnai's anti-utopian writings and his insistence on the non-identification of Morality and Practice.

Two of the papers in the folder 'Moral philosophy' might be said to be 'outdated' because of their format. The first, *The moral 'dilemma' of patriotism*, is a paper which was submitted and later revised for *Mind*. However, according to Kolnai<sup>54</sup>, the original manuscript was much better than the revised and shortened version, *The universality of 'loyalty' rules*. Both papers remained unpublished. But since the paper is a reaction to Gellner and Hare their articles in the *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society 1955*<sup>55</sup>, the format of Kolnai's paper does not lend itself anymore for publication. The paper does, however, add to an understanding of the degree of particularism (particular attachments) which Kolnai allows for in his objectivism *cum* contextualism and the universalizability of moral rules and judgements. Kolnai also mentions the possibility of overemphasis of loyalty rules *versus* the objectivity of general moral rules and neatly describes the difference in the object of loyalty and other moral rules: while the former's object is the beloved object, the latter concern the value underlying the rule. The second essay which format suffers from a similar problem is *Religious naturalism re-furbished*, which was a reply to a paper of Patterson Brown in *Mind*<sup>56</sup>. Since Kolnai's paper does seem to be a draft in some respects, it seems less interesting for an understanding of Kolnai's views, although some interesting references to his general moral claims are made: he mentions what the religious attitude is, explicitly says that a pre-religious meaning of good and a conception of intrinsic good and evil is presupposed and that human beings appeal to an independent standard of the good which they also possess, at the least implicitly.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>53</sup> A. KOLNAI, *Erroneous conscience*, pp. 1-22. In: EVR.

<sup>54</sup> Kolnai wrote it in pencil on the essays.

<sup>55</sup> "Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society", 1955, pp. 157-178; pp. 295-312.

<sup>56</sup> P. BROWN, *Religious morality*, "Mind", lxxii (April 1963). Additionally, there is a sheet of Kolnai's hand titled 'Why Patterson Brown is an ass of the first water'.

<sup>57</sup> Kolnai archives, CEPPA (St. Andrews), box 1, folder 'Moral philosophy', *Religious naturalism re-furbished*, p. 2-3.

The two remaining papers of this folder, *The point of morality* and *'Moral truth'. Inchoate sketch of a Theory of Morality*, concern respectively the criteria for distinguishing moral from non-moral evaluations of, and demands on, human conduct *and* the self-transcendence in morality since morality is consciously accepted and exercised self-distance and submission. While the former paper relates to the intelligibility of moral concepts and moral consensus, the latter paper relates to Kolnai's non-reductionism and non-naturalism which thus indicate the relevance of these papers to round out one's understanding of Kolnai's (meta-)ethical stance.

The most important paper, in my opinion, of the folder 'Practical Philosophy' (box 1) is *Voluntas per se est liberum arbitrium*.<sup>58</sup> (The remaining papers in this folder might be said not to contribute that much to developing a general view on Kolnai's ethics, which is the reason I will not go into them here.) The paper, written in English, provides us with Kolnai's views on free will and its relation to choice and action and, thus, morality. Kolnai argues that since we experience free will and since free will is necessary to explain the phenomenon of willing and action proper, not the existence of free will but its precise meaning is his concern.<sup>59</sup> It seems that Kolnai refuted the philosophical discussion about a minimalist conception of freedom and determinism as philosophically uninteresting in many respects.<sup>60</sup> Decision and choice characterize actions (*actus humanus* instead of *actus hominis*) and freedom is related to and presupposed for action: without this 'hypothesis', we cannot account for the phenomenon of willing, choice and action.<sup>61</sup> Freedom's peculiar aspect to action is that determination runs by *deciding*. The decision (the 'will') alone can bring an agent to action. Mostly, decisions are taken after some deliberation: what follows the deliberation and precedes the action is the will (or decision) informed by the prevailing reasons. The agent aims to ensure action and to do so by enlightened decision: "practical decision never in any sense 'defines the truth'; it is only expected to embody a response to truths proper, as adequate as possible"<sup>62</sup>.

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<sup>58</sup> Kolnai archives, CEPPA (St. Andrews), box 1, folder 'Practical philosophy', *Voluntas per se est liberum arbitrium*

<sup>59</sup> This particular paper can thus be seen as the additional argument, which he did not make, in his 'Agency and Freedom'. In: EWHP, especially p. 123-124. Kolnai there mentioned that discussions about determinism are not the primal object of concern, since "the incontestable fact that we act by choice may itself furnish the key to our focal experience of free-will – an experience that perhaps has something illusory about it but cannot, in common sense, repose on mere illusion or misinterpretation".

<sup>60</sup> Cf. also EWHP, p. 130

<sup>61</sup> Kolnai archives, CEPPA (St. Andrews), box 1, folder 'Practical philosophy', *Voluntas per se est liberum arbitrium*, p. 2-3

<sup>62</sup> *Ibi.*, p. 5

Additionally, the agent's awareness of possibly acting otherwise implies his awareness of his power to act as he chooses. Thus, firstly, to face the facts of a situation in a detached, objective way (or to refuse this) is itself an action, i.e. it involves a decision.<sup>63</sup> Secondly, there is a discontinuity between the prevailing reasons before the agent and his deliberation about them *and* the decision, the point at which he turns to action. Kolnai further insists on the importance of describing the experience of freedom, which implies "the basic fact that men in general crave for an objective and even moral justification of their own and their associates' actions"<sup>64</sup>. While the agent is free to decide, decision itself is utterly unfree as it is demanded and since it relates to a multitude of potentially relevant aspects to the choice in point, it excludes justifiably free (or unbound) choice. It is precisely when "weighty competitive motives on either side" obtain that "free-will is most evidently experienced"<sup>65</sup>. The agent *has to* act in a particular way but *can still act differently*. But, at the same time, if he wants to sustain his status as an agent whom is respected or whom does not deserve blame, he wants to make a 'wise' (right, correct) and justified choice. As his reasons are universalizable, he wants his decision to be testable, for the primary object of moral appraisal is intention or act-of-will. The importance of the agent's moral awareness, and its role in the bystander's ascription of blame for not choosing wisely or praise when the agent was aware and decided wisely, is a related issue.<sup>66</sup> It might be that Kolnai's view on free will is in itself not very distinctive, but it is important for the general picture about Kolnai's ethics and the realist stance it seems to imply.

7. The remaining folders in box 1 can be summarised here. Most papers in the folder 'Quebec papers' are about Kolnai's aversion against communism and Marxism or related issues *or* concern specific themes relating to his position at the *Université Laval*, where Kolnai resided in a strong Thomistic atmosphere.<sup>67</sup>

More interesting is the folder 'Phenomenological Ethics'. This folder contains Kolnai's preparations for his intercollegiate course (1970-1972) given

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<sup>63</sup> Cf. *Ibi*, p. 6

<sup>64</sup> *Ibi*, p. 7

<sup>65</sup> *Ibi*, p. 11

<sup>66</sup> This was elaborated on in: C. BESSEMANS, *Moral conflicts and moral awareness*, "Philosophy", 86 (2011), 4, pp. 563-587

<sup>67</sup> Papers such as: *Sur la coupabilité du cardinal Mindszenty; an untitled paper concerning questions about Thomism*; Kolnai's notes on his colleague Charles De Konick's look on the Aristotelian-Thomist teaching on Sobriety and related problems; *Politische Aspekte der Sexualität*.

at London. Since Kolnai was clearly influenced by Brentano and since this folder is mainly about Brentano, a brief digression on the latter seems appropriate. Brentano reflected about the intentional character of consciousness and all mental phenomena, implying his view rested upon his idea of intentionality. Intentionality concerns the mental ‘directedness to’, ‘focus on’ or ‘involvement with’ an object which does not belong to the self, while, at the same time, the subject maintains an underlying orientation or relation to itself (or its self). The latter means that intentionality has not only its outward direction but also its own directness which is directly experienced, or, in other words (and as Findlay wrote), it means that we cannot know what we are minding or intending “without knowing what we are minding [...] the intention towards X is also subsidiarily an intention to this intention”<sup>68</sup>. The relevance of Brentano’s philosophical psychology, a kind of philosophy of mind, for value-theory (and for Kolnai) lies in his classification of mental phenomena. The first form, the *Vorstellung*, refers to the presentation or presence of something in the mind. The belief or judgement which is based upon this (re)presentation is the second form and entails that an object does not merely presents itself before us, but that something is the case. When something is then seen as positive or negative, we have reached the third level, namely Love or Hate, which is in fact a special instance of the foregoing judgement. What form of approbation (acceptance or rejection) occurs, is dependent on our judgement. But the latter should not be understood as some kind of personal judgement or attitude, but has to be seen as reality disclosing or presenting itself before us. It concerns thus a revealing truth which Brentano relates to our stance or judgement about this truth and, thus, to valuation. Objectivity, in Brentano’s account, refers to the rightness or correctness of our reactions and attitudes in response to what is given to us. Hence, knowledge cannot exist unless we know it from experience. A similar reference (and claim) to appropriateness or rightness is present in the writings of Kolnai and, for instance, David Wiggins. This does not mean that these latter authors would fully agree on or explain Brentano’s thoughts but it does seem to be the same idea of appropriateness and correctness which pertains with these contemporary (analytic) philosophers and which seems to relate to their notion of objectivity and truth. Since Kolnai read Brentano a lot during his studies at Vienna, the influence of Brentano to the early development of Kolnai’s value-ethics is undeniable. Kolnai, for instance, also said that Brentano was Moore’s spiritual kinsman because they both rejected the reductionist and idealist trends of late modern philosophy.<sup>69</sup> Moore himself

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<sup>68</sup> J.N. FINDLAY, *Axiological Ethics*, Macmillan & Co., London 1970, p. 18.

<sup>69</sup> Kolnai archives, CEPPA (St. Andrews), box 1, folder ‘Phenomenological Ethics’, clip 1, p. 2

wrote in 1902 that it would be very difficult to exaggerate the importance of Brentano's *The origins of our knowledge of right and wrong*.<sup>70</sup> At the same time, it must be mentioned that Kolnai's understanding of Brentano is sometimes limited or peculiar (or even questionable with regard to the correctness of his interpretation).

Furthermore, the notes of Kolnai's intercollegiate course are important as an addition to his dissertation in order to understand his phenomenological method and conviction. For instance, in both works, Kolnai insisted upon ordinary experience and common sense and the reflective search for understanding which is precisely what the phenomenological attitude means:

"The Phenomenological attitude (as attested not only, with special emphasis, by Scheler, but in Husserl's posthumous *Erfahrung und Urteil*) is that of a fundamental trustful belief in our capacity to 'grasp' objects intuitively and evidently given to our minds. [...]

According to Phenomenology, our cognition of singulars inalienably connotes a categorical, essential or 'eidetic' aspect; it implies a 'perspective' or 'horizon' of objects we have already somehow known (been familiar with) [...]. That is what Phenomenology means by *a priori* insights (though in my view, not perhaps very different from Hildebrand's, in a broad and non-reductionist sense of the term the origin of all such insights too is 'empirical', i.e. experiential: [...] the idea of justice or fairness wouldn't flash up in our mind unless we had come across, or been told about, at least one exemplary model of fair conduct or flagrant case of injustice). [...]

Applied to ethics: Once I have understood that justice is good I know this with evidence and need neither verify that in a vast majority of cases the exercise of justice pleases onlookers or produces effects in keeping with most people's desires nor first form a maximally general and contentless concept of 'good' or even 'morally right' and then derive from it the goodness of justice[.]"<sup>71</sup>

This basic belief in our ordinary experiences and our ability to understand them, as well as the adoption of the phenomenological attitude are crucial to the study of morality and, thus, crucial to the study of Kolnai. In general, Kolnai dealt in his course with Brentano's ethics and – similar to his dissertation – argued for values as the currency unit of ethics, as a necessary compliment to the phenomenological method.

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<sup>70</sup> Depending on Kolnai: Kolnai archives, CEPPA (St. Andrews), box 1, folder 'Phenomenological Ethics', clip 2, p. 1

<sup>71</sup> Kolnai archives, CEPPA (St. Andrews), box 1, folder 'Phenomenological Ethics', clip 3, p. 2-3

In the folder 'Miscellaneous', there is a small notebook which compares intuitionism and deontology and which has a fairly large section on Scheler and relativity, though it mostly concerns only notes among which a summary and some comments on Westermarck's *Ethical relativity* (1932). (Kolnai was, in addition to Brentano and Husserl, very much influenced by the work of Scheler and Hartmann.) This folder further contains a brief German paper on Nazism and Prussian Germany in which Kolnai wants to show that in the Nazi ideology the people were made into slaves *because* this was their 'natural end' in order to attain the 'new society', which would overthrow the degenerated Western World. Relatedly, there is a paper in French about alienation. Kolnai's goal here is to show that alienation is not something exclusively bad, but rather an inestimable good. Kolnai's adherence to the human condition is again present when he argues that human life is characterized by a friction and tension between what we are and what we want to be and desire. In this same folder there are, among others, some notes on truth and error, humanism and dehumanization, and on the status of dreams<sup>72</sup>.

The title of the last folder already discloses its content. In the folder 'Notes on books read', we find mainly Kolnai's summaries of books he read. There are, however, some papers of particular interest. In 1965, Kolnai wrote a review of Oakeshott's *Rationalism in politics*, which he in general very much appreciated. In this folder, Kolnai's notes in preparation for the review are present. Kolnai's notes on Feinberg's *Action and responsibility* (1965), especially with regard pages 135 to 160 are relatively critical. This also holds for Kolnai's notes on Nagel's *The possibility of altruism* (1970) concerning especially chapter eight 'The interpretation of prudential reasons: identity over time'. The claims made in these papers as well as in those about Kemp's *Reason, action and morality*, are not really elaborated but may modestly contribute to interpreting Kolnai's oeuvre.

8. Anyone interested in but unfamiliar with Kolnai faces a considerable difficulty because Kolnai's work and position are not easily accessible. As mentioned at the beginning of this essay, Kolnai's complex personal and contextual history, his exile existence, his eclecticism and his style, make him difficult to understand. Although Francis Dunlop<sup>73</sup> and John

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<sup>72</sup> By the end of his life, Kolnai even published a paper on the status of dreams: A. KOLNAI, *The dream as artist*, "British Journal of Aesthetics", 12 (1972), 2, pp. 158-162. The notes, however, do deliver some additional material.

<sup>73</sup> F. DUNLOP, *Kolnai's dissertation Der Ethische Wert und die Wirklichkeit: A 'Completion' of Scheler's value-ethics*, pp. 267-280. In: EWHP. See also Dunlop's introduction to the volume EWHP (pp. 1-14) and his introduction to the translation of Kolnai's dissertation: EEW, vii-xxviii.

Beach<sup>74</sup> provided a brief overview of Kolnai's ethical theories, an extensive *strictly philosophical* study of and general introduction to his work is long overdue. Thus, those unfamiliar with Kolnai might first turn to his published writings and the – hopefully – forthcoming works *about* Kolnai.

For those to some extent familiar with Kolnai or wanting to learn about and understand this author, the collection is an ideal opportunity for further research. The collection and, thus, Kolnai's work (his unpublished and published writings taken together) even allow for research and interest from different angles: political and moral philosophy, history of philosophy, political theory and maybe even history and theology (or philosophers of religion).

Because interest in Kolnai is increasing and because Kolnai's background and work allow for these different approaches to his writings, the *Centre for Ethics, Policy and Public Affairs (University of St. Andrews)* and its director John Haldane, who is now responsible for the collection, aspire to make the collection accessible and wish to support research proposals and visits from scholars.

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<sup>74</sup> J.D. BEACH, *The ethical theories of Aurel Kolnai*, pp. 167-176, in: EWHP.