The Influence of Berkeley’s Principle “Esse Est Percipi” and Uexküll’s Theory of Umwelt [1] on Zapffe’s Biosophy

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Abstract
Outlining the influence of both Berkeley’s sensationalism and Uexküll’s biosemiotics on Zapffe’s biosophy, I will examine why the latter can be defined as an experiential philosophy, which contributes to avoiding the pitfalls of biological determinism as well as the ones of ungrounded metaphysical spirituality. Furthermore, adopting biosophical method could benefit revealing why biological constitution is a necessary but not sufficient condition for clarifying why humans are such beings that require the embodiment of meaning with their lives. In this context, one of the main objectives of the paper is to analyze why we should examine biosophical and biological methods as ontological synonyms rather than synonyms or two alternatives, which are introduced on the principle ‘either-or’. Justifying such an approach will be an object of special investigation for the purposes of overcoming both moral naturalism and moral relativism.

Key words: biosophy, evolutionary ethics, biosemiotics, Peter Wessel Zapffe, Jakob von Uexküll.

Kvaløy defines Zapffe’s biosophical perspective as partly gaining its empirical validity from Berkeley’s philosophy (Kvaløy, 1992: 12) [2]. Another significant source influencing Zapffe’s theory were the works of the Baltic-German biologist and founder of biosemiotics Jakob von Uexküll. According to Zapffe, Uexküll’s fundamental idea can be seen as philosophically tied with Berkley’s principle “esse est percipi”, and even going back to Protagoras’s conception of ‘homo mensura’ (the understanding that man is a measure of everything) (Zapffe, 1992: 144).

In his essay, Biosophical Perspective (Biosofisk perspektiv) (1961) Zapffe provided a detailed analysis of the way some ideas of Uexküll were incorporated into his own writings. Zapffe argues that the traditional dualism between individual and environment is no longer so
effective since Uexküll has grounded the thesis that environment for a given species, even for
the individual, is co-determined (eventually, completely determined) by the living beings’
perceptive equipment in respect with a possible inner elaboration of impressions (Ibid: 143-
144). These abilities and organs are the only one means, the only one way of arranging
environmental characteristics, or if we adopt the more precise expression, to arrange one X,
which afterwards is called or treated as an environment (Ibid).

In this context, Berkeley’s formula ‘esse est principi’ is interpreted in a broader
context. The durability of his thesis is judged from a point of view of “percipi” (utenfor
“percipi”) from which one can understand “esse” without “percipi” (Ibid: 144). Zapffe
claimed that one has been constantly disproving Berkeley’s thesis indeed before one has
managed to compare (endnu for man rakk å sammenligne) ‘esse’ with the ‘perceptum’ for the
purposes of finding a solution to the question of identity (Ibid). Clarifying Uexküll’s intention,
Zapffe argues that the aforementioned sentence can be reformulated in the following way:
“Biologist cannot work with anything but with perceptum” (Ibid: 144-145). However, in the
process of crossing many perceptions (eventually, in their accumulation), so that one student
of Berkeley or Uexküll to adopt a perception in order to understand animals’ perceptions,
there is (in any case) one first complication, namely, the one of “perceptum est percipi” (Ibid:
145). Zapffe emphasizes that in the practical life, mixing the perception with one supposed
‘esse’ has weighty consequences [3]. If another individual has another perception, it is
nevertheless unimportant from what Zapffe calls a biosophical point of view [4], unless with
this (perception), the thing also gains relevance in terms of interest (Ibid).

Such an interpretation, however, raises the question whether we can have
“disinterested” perception and if so, would not it mean that it is possible only if “esse”
coincides with “percipi”? We should take into account that the latter formula is possible only
if it is examined as substantially grounded which in turn causes its misconceptualization. On
the other hand, determining biosophy in respect with what interested perception is provokes
the following two problems at least. First, what would be the reasons for justifying biosophy
as going beyond the pitfalls of epistemological relativism? Secondly, what would be the exact
projections of the aforementioned unimportant perception, as well as do we have to introduce
some kind of hierarchical classification of the different types of perception talking about more
and less important perceptions respectively? If so, I argue that it would lead to the ambiguous
conclusion one Umwelt to be considered as more important (epistemologically and even axiologically) than another one.

On a macro methodological level, specifying the role of perception and environment is of crucial importance for Zapffe since the way he justifies human ‘over-equipment’ [5] is examined as driven by the biological constitution of man, albeit it is not restricted to it. Extrapolating Uexküll’s thesis, Zapffe claims that man’s biological constitution is not an isolated phenomenon, but it has much to do with the perception of the environment, which in turn makes the representatives of human kind bearers of different complex interests. According to him, there are two conspicuous tendencies, which dominate the description of the interest life of the civilized man in general (Ibid: 158). The first one is that as a rule, man harbors more and stronger interests than a life in a given environment can realize, which might be considered as a point, i.e. that it is the interests in question that raise the need of fixation. The other rich of consequences peculiarity of human, biologically determined constitution lays in the unfixibility (ufikseretheten) in Zapffe’s sense [6] (Ibid: 159). This is also what differs, to a high extent, man from the “highest animals” (Ibid). It is supposed to be a difference in being (i “væsen”) showing one incompatibility (Ibid). According to Zapffe, most of the ‘high’ animals have a “ruling” ability (“herskende evne”), which is concentrated in one specialized organ (Ibid). It dominates and limits their life’s development, together with the perceptive equipment. He refers to Uexküll’s thesis (as displayed in Environment and the Inner Life of Animals) that the ability in question also dominates surrounding world’s picture (omverdensbillede) and possible self-feeling (Ibid).

Judging by the aforementioned investigations, we should specify how to overcome interpreting biological constitution within the framework of natural objectivism. As a possible solution, I suggest defining constitution in question as a matter of biological gradualism, which in turn would explain why organisms’ specification is a necessary but not sufficient condition for defining unfixibility as a capability that is a priority for human kind alone. Otherwise, sentient animals would have also had the capability of looking for fixations. On a macro methodological level, the tension derives from the fact that it is both biological constitution as such and biological constitution as a human constitution that make human interests stronger than particularly biological ones. This thesis can also be illustrated by the
fact that fixation mechanisms depend on the limitation of physical abilities of the organism, albeit they are not restricted to them.

In this context, I will examine how within the theory of biological constitution of mankind are introduced many concepts such as the ones of under and over-equipment in Zapffe’s sense, as well as the role of fixations, which reveal why the constitution in question is only a necessary but not sufficient condition for reconstructing the existential constitution of human beings. It is due to the fact that having existential constitution is closely tied with the role of environment, which is understood as having biological, socio-cultural, autotelic and metaphysical projections [7].

Fixation in Zapffe’s sense is a result of experiencing and/or realizing the limits of perceptive equipment, namely, of the ‘decentralized’ way of human life’s development. It is the reflection on this living development that is not directed by one ruling ability. However, from that it does not follow that human perceptive equipment, which determines the unfixibility can be compared with animals’ equipment even in the cases when they have less specialized organs. That is why I draw the conclusion that the genealogy of the difference can be found in what Zapffe defines as a role of consciousness and fantasy in particular.

According to Zapffe, animals’ choice in a situation is between use and non-use (Ibid). Therefore the less specialized the organs are, the more versatile ways they can be used in [8]. In turn, man has many similar abilities (individualized due to agreement) that are “potentially” available: partly, due to “the primitiveness of limbs” (lemmernes “primitive”), which means that they are “undifferentiated forms”, partly, due to the enormous size of consciousness and fantasy concerning the incomprehensible function of the searching thought (Ibid). Zapffe argues that this specificity is probably again concerned with the big quantities of non-differentiated protoplasm [9] in the main brain whose presence has caused so much trouble to the corresponding parts of the medical brains (medicinernes hjerner) [10] (Ibid).

Going back to the first tendency regarding the genealogy of fixations, we should examine the two options proposed by Zapffe. Partly, one should constantly give up the experience of things, which the day dreams represent in a seductive light, but which are unachievable in fact: e.g. to go to the moon, to win a fortune, to liberate people etc. (Ibid: 158). Partly, one should choose between some achievable things, when one of them eliminates the other one. In turn, the need of choice is accompanied by choice’s pain (pine), which, in
given cases, grows with the number of opportunities (Ibid). In this context, the interest front is
described by Zapffe as resembling a war front: the longer it is stretched out in respect with
certain resources, the more vulnerable it is (Ibid). One vital and all-round developed person
could suffer from realizing that he/she should have had hundred lives instead of one in order
not to take 99% of his/her opportunities with himself/herself in the grave (Ibid).

Furthermore, Zapffe specifies that man (similarly to other living beings) [11] characterizes (in the broadest outline) by the following two factors. One has an equipment (Utrustningen), which due to the made demands, changes from under-equipment (underutrustning) (insufficiency) (utilstraekkelighet, insufficiens) through equivalence (ækvivalens) to over-equipment (overutrustning): one state, where there are abilities and power left after the need is satisfied (Ibid: 160). The second factor is the fixation’s connection (Fiksations-forholdet), which varies from under-fixation (including liability, the loss of conduct, the loss of character when something is unfavorably measured in respect with one given interest: it could be either the bearer’s interest or the interest of others), well-adapted fixation (including the satisfied fixation etc., which shows a favorable degree of elasticity, perfectibility, control of alternatives) to over-fixation (characterizing with stubbornness, ossification (forbenethet) etc.), together with a wrong fixation taking place in different directions [12] (Ibid). Judging by Zapffe’s classification, I argue that the degree of fixation determines how under or over fixation depend on the equipment of the interest bearer, which to provoke a relevant behavior for the purposes of satisfying (partly or fully) a given interest, albeit fixation remains irreducible to the equipment in question. That is why we should talk about interest bearers alone.

Furthermore, I draw the conclusion that analyzing the role of Berkeley’s and Uexküll’s theories on Zapffe’s biosophy contributes not only to outlining the unique aspects of Zapffe’s conception, but also to clarifying how biosophy functions as a type of experiential philosophy. It shows why we should avoid both biological determinism and ungrounded metaphysical spiritualism if we want to reveal the complexity of existential tension regarding the uniqueness of humankind as the only one species able to experience so-called by Zapffe cosmic feeling of panic, i.e. to be aware of its own being in the universe as a process of becoming, which, however, cannot bring complete reconciliation while facing some biologically determined processes such as death and suffering.
1. Zapffe’s Theory of Biosophy

According to Kvaløy, Zapffe’s biosophical perspective has a deeper dimension, namely, that man is such a being that he/she requires a meaning with his/her life, as well as with humankind’s life as a whole: the search for meaning is man’s distinctive characteristic, which makes him/her different from all other living beings. It is a matter of an “over-equipment” (“overutrustning”), but nature cannot fulfill this requirement by itself (Kvaløy, 1992a: 274-275).

In turn, Næss claims that Zapffe’s biosophy is a type of ecosophy [13] saying that Zapffe’s conception justifies an explicit ecosophical value (Naess, 1973: 22). The crossing point is recognized in the understanding of wisdom (sophia) as providing knowledge and cleverness rather than a certain type of impersonal or abstract learning (Ibid). In this context, Zapffe’s biosophy is characterized as giving an insight in life (“innsikt i livet), which in turn improves our anticipation of our human condition (Ibid). On the other hand, Zapffe’s biosophy is a “thinking about life” illustrating why the systems of beliefs, which mankind has been basing its feeling of life on, should be taken into consideration, as well as examining why these systems guarantee the functioning of ultimate and determined values (Gundersen, 1972: 24).

Zapffe himself emphasizes the role of biosophy as regarding the case of dramaturgy [14] (Zapffe, 1992: 142). He specifies that biosophical view of a theme (within dramaturgy) clearly discerns from the metaphysical one (possibly, from spiritual, materialist, vital, finalist, religious etc.), which is understood as a speculative, aesthetical overall view, and which the aforementioned biosophical view stays indifferent, but not necessarily polemically opposite to (Ibid). If these overall pictures (the biosophical and metaphysical ones) are of such a type that the “unknown powers” are adopted in order to make themselves valid by the “natural laws” and “biological life”, then they should have been built on the same material of observation (Ibid). Thus the difference would have been only in the way of interpretation (Ibid). Zapffe continues that the situation could have been different [15] if they have included some impulses, which, from a given theological perspective, were broken, as well as could break in and change the course of events anytime (nårsomhet); a course, which, otherwise, one should have expected due to the common experience (Ibid: 142-143). When the difference lays in the
deeper assumptions and in one missing common platform, it is impossible to reach a compromise (Ibid: 143).

In this context, the main problem is whether referring to what Zapffe calls ‘biological life’ does not increase the risks of falling into the trap of objective naturalism, namely, while striving for overcoming the challenges posed by the metaphysical view on tragic, biosophical to turn into a method of objective naturalism. Another question arises of Zapffe’s definition of metaphysical view as aesthetical one, albeit he makes the relevant specification that biosophical and metaphysical do not necessarily exclude each other. Such an analysis favors only at first sight talking about substantial similarities; one speculation, which is clearly disenchanted by Zapffe. Successfully describing the problem of biosophical and metaphysical overviews, he, however, does not clarify the genealogy of the complex relationships between the views in question, namely, how biosophy can be indifferent, without being necessarily opposed to metaphysical view. Extrapolating his theory of the interest bearer, I suggest the aforementioned difficulty to be examined by investigating to what extent biosophical and metaphysical views are based on different interests, which may overlap when so-called multi-frontal engagements [16] in Zapffe’s sense are initiated.

In his attempts to outline the specificities of biological experience against the background of metaphysical one, Zapffe argues that one belief, which is grounded in the *prolongation* (forlængelsen) of experience, is of curiosity interest alone from a biosophical perspective (Ibid). Furthermore, one belief, which *goes against* (*strider mot*) experience (God provides all human beings’ earthly necessities (fornødenheter) [17], even when they do not need to work), which is defined as being of interest only as a symptom (Ibid). In this context, the differences may be defined as differences in the degree of interest since in the first case, we witness an interest in itself, which concerns the matter, while in the second one, it affects the interest as such.

Zapffe points out that the choice of method which to clarify the role of tragic requires revealing the grounding connection of tragic with organic life’s characteristics, as well as with life’s conditions [18] in the “earthly environment” (Zapffe, 1941: 11). That is why applied biology is introduced as a method (Ibid: 12). Zapffe refers again to Uexküll’s theory, which disregards the philosophical consequences and examines the living cell as something principally different from the earth-bound (Ibid: 15-16). The latter statement is interpreted by
a reference to Uexküll’s chapter *The Problem of Protoplasm (Das Protoplasmaproblem)* (Ibid: 16, Note 1). Among the key features of the living beings are mentioned the ones of shaping (Formbildung), regeneration (Regeneration) and super-mechanical regulation (“übermaschinelle Regulation”), i.e. the reaction, which is changed by repeated stimulus (Ibid).

Exploring Uexküll’s examinations, Zapffé argues that it is important to take into account that the possible difference of degree regarding man and maybe some other sentient beings is so big that it is experienced as a difference of being (“væsensforskjel”) in its everyday meaning (Ibid). In the next sentence, Zapffé claims that we believe that tragic should connect itself with the spontaneous life experience [19] (den umiddelbare livsoplevelse) and not with the things, which they (people and some sentient animals) represent within the scientific approach (problem stating) (Ibid). Thus the object of investigations allows one to refer to the biological ideology alone (Ibid). However, biological itself does not provide an explicit difference between experience and the objects of experience as such. Another problem is that due to the scientific problem solving, we may also treat the objects in the process of experiencing unless it postulates a certain scientific dualism.

### 1.1. Biosophy as a Method

Zapffé also outlines that Uexküll gave an expression to the concerns on side of biologists (who claimed that their science is misused (Ibid: 12) in his book *Bausteine zur einer biologischen Weltanschauung* (*Elements for a Biological Vision of the World*) (1913) (Ibid: 13). The intention was not to idolize developmental biology (en utvidet biologi) in a professional sense of the word, but only to consider the development of organic life under the view of the fight of interests (Ibid). Neither is it intended to burden the poetry theory with the terminology of natural sciences, nor to narrow down the life of fantasy by biological dogma [20] (Ibid). According to Zapffé, the method goes deeper as when one cleans up an attic (Ibid). One puts boxes with “art and poetry” at one place, but, on the other hand, he/she does not take a stance on the contents (Ibid).

Zapffé draws the conclusion that it is the need of specialization that carries such interferences with itself (Ibid). Paraphrasing the aforementioned example, I argue that biology can turn out to be the content of biosophical ‘boxes’ since the latter bring to light human
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existential perspective. This happens against the background of one’s need to throw light to
the only one necessary and always burning question, namely, what does it mean to be a
human being? (Ibid). In this context, Zapffe makes the important conclusion that when none
of the disciplines can give us an answer, then here comes so-called good dilettante (den gode
dilettant) (Ibid).

Applied biology, however, cannot provide us with a detailed answer to the question
What does it mean to be a human being?, which reveals why defining tragic is an existential
problem that illustrates something different that is “more” than individual and species’ death
(Ibid: 18). According to Zapffe, plan (understood in the broadest sense) is the human way of
giving meaning to things, “an arrangement of the coincidences with some structural groups
bounded by a scheme in space or in time” (Ibid). Otherwise, defining the existential
prehistory of justifying the meaning of life in respect with the idea of meaningfulness would
have been reduced from an existential to a purely biological issue. Thus tragic in Zapffe’s
sense would have been simplified to the physical end of being, which would have made tragic
be noncontradictory extrapolated to all forms of life on Earth.

Many of the aforementioned difficulties regarding the specification of the term
biosophy derive from the fact that Zapffe himself defines it in an ambiguous way, as Hessen
points out (Hessen, 2012: 148). He argues that the biosophical perspective or the biological
method is a part of most of Zapffe’s analytical writings (de fleste analytiske arbeider) (Ibid).
In the monograph On the tragic, he gives preference to the term ‘biological’ over
‘biosophical’ (“the thinking of life”) because biosophical “has a mystical connotation, which
does not belong here…” (Ibid). In some “later contexts” (I senere sammenhenger) (Ibid),
Zapffe uses to a bigger extent the concept ‘biosophical’ (Ibid). The difference between the two
terms is not clear apart from the fact that ‘biological’ indicates something more empirical and
less mystical than ‘biosophical’ (Ibid). Hessen emphasizes that Zapffe talks about biological
or biosophical methods, not about biosophy as such (Ibid).

However, biosophical in Zapffe’s sense cannot be understood as mystical. He does not
imply not a certain type of irrationalism to this concept, but rather emphasizes the difficulties
in specifying what particularly biosophical is. What is defined as a more frequent use of
biosophical in his later writings can be explained with the more precise theoretical
specifications regarding the overcoming of the problems of Uexküll’s theory, namely, the

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problems, which should be overcome by relying on Zapffé’s theory of four interest fronts and the status of the interest bearer. On a macro methodological level, we may trace how the aforementioned difficulties in both defining and contextualizing the concept of biosophical derive from Zapffé’s attempts at showing why biosophical is irreducible to biological. Otherwise, human existence would have been simplified to the way of being in the universe.

In this context, Hessen argues that anthropomorphization, which we see especially in the first two chapters of On the tragic, together with the fables about animals, should clarify human conditions by the use of metaphors from the animals’ world (Ibid). He also argues that it is the animals as such that are of interest for Zapffé (Ibid).

Zapffé himself claims that not only due to the accordance between abilities and tasks do animals beneficially affect men (Zapffé, 1941: 48). He specifies that maybe they (animals) make this effect stronger by showing natural peacefulness by which they rest on their determined form (i sin fæstnede form) and by this form they give us the sense of security to feel at home (av at vaere i hus med) with one really solid-cast character (Ibid).

Zapffé, however, does not encourage anthropomorphization. He outlines not only the similarities but also the differences between animals and people in order to clarify the limitations of the over-equipment of the former. Zapffé emphasizes that regardless of the fact that one admires some cats’ possibilities [21] the process of anthropomorphization is a double-bind issue. He explicitly argues that human character’s formation cannot approximately be compared to cat’s one when it is a matter of launching a being, which is no longer disputable by nature with itself (hvor i nature ikke mere er splidagtig med sig selv) (Ibid). In this context, Zapffé draws the conclusion that it is not possible to rely on experience or well-known knowledge alone (Ibid: 48-49) since it is necessary to fit a bridge span (at passé brospænd), which can be solidly built without damages (Ibid: 49). In this context, he clearly states that one obvious objection concerns outstretched anthropomorphization of animals’ conscious and unconscious life (den utstrakte antropomorficering av dyrens bevisste og ubevisste liv) (Ibid). Judging by the aforementioned investigations, Zapffé draws the conclusion that anthropomorphization in question can be done only if a person has merely a biological interest front, which in turn would have made him being “one abstraction” (være en abstraction) (Ibid).
Zapffe begins his explanation with the statement that the examinations regarding the antropomorphization can also be applied to much bigger extent (relevance) to human beings in their pure biological fight of interests alone (Ibid). It is nevertheless with malice aforethought that situations and designations are placed on the simplest (possible) animal level (til det enklest mulig dyretrin) (Ibid): thus the picture would not be polluted (skal bli forurensset) with all associations that inevitably would appear by the transfer to human conditions (Ibid).

Investigating the genealogy of Zapffe’s biosophy, we may trace how the aforementioned interpretations raise more questions than provide answers since Zapffe’s experiential philosophy is irreducible to any forms of both anthropomorphism and ethical anthropocentrism, especially taking into account that giving arguments in favor of nature’s antropomorphization would have meant to reduce biosophy to its ‘biological’ content.

1.1.1. Biosophy as an Existential Philosophy

Regarding the possibilities of interpreting how biology refers to biosophy, G. Fløistad emphasizes the role of biosophy as a method, as represented in the monograph On the Tragic. Fløistad refers to Zapffe’s definition that the chosen method is biological or biosophical (Fløistad, 1989: 18). Thus this method is described as giving Zapffe the opportunity to start with a discussion on the organic life in general (Ibid).

Later on in his investigations on Zapffe’s work Introduction to Dramaturgy (Indledning i dramaturgi) (1961), Fløistad goes back to that idea while commenting on Zapffe’s essay Biosophical perspective. Against the background of the clarifications concerning the biosophical picture of human mind’s conditions in the world, staying as an all-round horizon, he interprets Zapffe’s function of ‘or’ as a matter of choosing between two alternatives, i.e. biosophical is examined as an alternative of biological (Ibid: 40). Such an interpretation, however, requires specifying how to define both the origin and internal connections between these two alternatives. If we presume that biological and biosophical are two, substantially different alternatives, which is indicated by the connector ‘or’ (either biosophical, or biological) rather than as ontological synonyms, then it would mean that we cannot examine biosophy as a certain type of experiential philosophy. I also argue that it is not a sufficient condition to define the aforementioned two concepts as synonyms but as
ontological synonyms because otherwise, the method of biosophy would have been recognized as coinciding with the methods of applied biology, which is against Zapfè’s conception, as well as against what Fløistad claims while specifying that Zapfè uses biological method in a way that goes beyond its traditional use in biology (Ibid: 52).

Furthermore, another problem arises from defining biosophy and biology as alternatives because then we face the inevitable need of constantly discussing why biosophical method is not a purely biological one, but entails the latter to a certain extent. In this context, one of the most apparent difficulties is to specify how from the fact that the method is biological (being at the same ‘neutral’ since it is built on one particular vision of life) (Ibid: 79), it does not follow that when one chooses this method, one ends up with a stance against Zapfè’s complex theory of life, which is irreducible to biological interests. Judging by the aforementioned investigations, I argue that one of the main concerns about such an explanation is that accepting the thesis of the two alternatives would lead to interfering the concept of method with the one of alternative. On the other hand, if we agree with the idea of method as splitting between two (substantial or not) alternatives, then, the next issue is how to refer the idea of experiential philosophy to the existential one in Fløistad’s sense. Fløistad defines existential philosophical perspective as a biosophical perspective applied to people, which should be given preference (skull ligge bedre til rette), albeit we should be careful in providing some direct parallels between them (Ibid: 52). However, from the fact that the argument against talking about environment in itself is one, which is shared by Zapfè and some existentialists (Ibid: 53), it does not follow that biosophy, as an experiential philosophy, provides the interpretation of what Uexküll calls functional circle as a matter of adopting existential philosophy alone.

In this context, I draw the conclusion that the difference between biosophical and biological remains unclear if we neglect the ontological grounding of Zapfè’s experiential philosophy. An important suggestion how to interpret the practical implications of the latter can be seen in what Fløistad defines as an ecological perspective recognized in the broader sense of the word [22] (Ibid: 78).

According to Zapfè, biosophy means a philosophy, one theoretical view upon existence [23], which is oriented towards biology and its annexes (paleontology etc.), and which in line with this, orients itself thorough empirically to all its “problems” [24] (Zapfè,
Furthermore, he points out that biosophy is a way of thinking, which is built on biology in a manner acknowledged by life. In “a fanatical but necessary simplification”, we can think about the first coming biosophical conclusion from the position of observation and introspection, without being accused of adopting free and irresponsible fantasy [25] (Zapffe, 1992a: 269).

Judging by the aforementioned investigations, I draw the conclusion that biosophical is a mode of philosophical thinking that is initially based on the philosophy of nature rather than on nature as such. In turn, philosophy of nature does not have to be interpreted as an ‘artificial thinking mode’, but rather as providing an examination of the internal logic of nature’s complex development, which has its own dialectics. The latter contributes to understanding why biosophical and biological can replace each other if we examine them as ontological synonyms, as I already suggested. It is possible by determining the complexity of the mode of being as irreducible to the sum of its concrete embodiments. Furthermore, I conclude that it is the normative validity of biosophy defined as an experiential philosophy that makes the normative validity of its own judgments both rationally acceptable and deriving from the ‘real’ matter.

Zapffe himself gives some strong arguments against simplifying the existential projections of life to the biological ones criticizing Uexküll of not tracing the philosophical consequences of biosophy (Zapffe, 1941: 15-16) [26]. By environment Uexküll means the unifying environment where the animal receives its impressions from and which, in turn, it looks to act on (Ibid). One can say that on the one hand, through its individual perceptive equipment, the animal can undertake a choice of factors that constitute man’s world, where this world is the more comprehensive one (Ibid). On the other one, there is an open possibility for having an animal with perceptive abilities (ved sensoriske evner), which people miss (Ibid: 26-27). Thus the animal will experience qualities of environment, which are unknown for us (e.g. dog’s world of smells): since we know nothing about how the different animals gain impressions. Otherwise, it requires having the same type of perceptive apparatus: e.g., the sense of depth (dybdesyn) achieved by stereoscopically coordinated lens (Ibid).

Due to the terminology of Uexküll’s Environment and Inner World of Animals (Umwelt und Innenwelt der Tiere), Zapffe adopts the expression “functional circle” (funktionskreds) [27], which displays animals’ total report of reality (dyrets totale
virksomhetsrapport) including animals’ specific world [28] (Ibid). In this context, Zapffe outlines the role of the issue raised by Uexküll’s attempt at defining reaction as an expression of the world’s feeling (verdensfølelsen) (Ibid: 28).

In this context, the two main questions, which he poses are the following ones: Can an animal reply with the same reaction (for the purposes of our same investigation) to some impressions from a different origin? Can an animal answer to the same perception (“fornemmelse”) with qualitatively deferent reactions regardless of the bluntness (sløvhet) or sharpness (skjærpelse) of the reaction, which is driven by a given repeated stimulus? (Ibid). According to him, it is the latter question that raises the issue of unfixibility (Ibid). Such a statement, however, provokes the conclusion whether unfixibility in Zapffe’s sense is not triggered by environmental conditions alone under which the animals react, which in turn would contradict Zapffe’s other definitions of unfixibility regarding individual’s equipment, even if we do not take into consideration his previous definitions of the priority of human kind while shaping fixations. In other words, it would have meant that unfixability would be simplified to a lack of fixations concerning the presence or lack of a given equipment, i.e. unfixibility would be reduced from the level of potentiality to the one of equipment.

Zapffe’s answer is that as long as one should deal with only one simple reaction and only one type of perception (sanseformidling) respectively (which seems to be the most important one) (Ibid), it is not a matter of a real experience of the object (gjenstandsoplevelse), but only of a perception of quality (Ibid). This conclusion, however, could be interpreted as grounded in the presumption that the real experience of the objects entails many perceptions rather than the one that many individuals may anticipate one and the same object in different ways [29].

Zapffe also provides a similar conclusion, taking into account the consequences of defining the concept of individual due to the biological principium individuationis [30] (Ibid: 177) as determining the difference between given bearers of interests. On a macro methodological level, it signifies that recognizing the accomplishment of unity of man and environment can be achieved by revealing the connection between them, which is driven by the fact that the individual makes the latter his/her ‘own’ environment in different ways without possessing it [31]. Last but not least, I argue that the lack of possession mode is a
result of one’s anticipation of the environment as a living environment due to one’s individual capacities to interact with it on all levels.

On the other hand, defining the vital balance in Zapffe’s sense as dependent on the accommodation capacities of the individual, namely, whether the individual has over-biological or under-biological equipment [32] (Ibid: 35) raises the risk of advocating a certain type of biological determinism or metaphysical absolutism, which might be misconceptualized for the purposes of providing a biosophical understanding. In this context, Zapffe argues that the aforementioned two types of equipment are brought to light, when a functional circle should be set in action (skal træde i virksomhet) as demanded (besides ability) also by need and energy (energy), plus the fact that the inhibitions are not present (samt at der ikke er hemningar tilstede) (Ibid). That is why regarding the energies in question, we can talk about over or under-equipment (Ibid).

One of the main methodological concerns, which arises is, however, whether under and over-biological equipment are the only one embodiment of what under and over-equipment are. Zapffe himself provides a detailed examination of the complex reasons for having under and over-fixations as built on the complex investigation of individuals’ under and over-equipment. Probably one of the few cases when under and over-biological coincide with under and over-equipment in his sense is in the process of fixation’s satisfaction, when the capability is neither more, nor less for realizing the fixation in question.

On the other hand, going back to Zapffe’s theory of energy, we may explain why capability is irreducible to the expressibility since energy may be needed only as its necessary condition. Furthermore, it is the idea of energy that provokes the question of life meaning to be interpreted beyond the one of satisfying needs. As one of the illuminative embodiments of how need determines expressibility can be seen in Zapffe’s conception of lower and higher potentials presuming the possibility two opposite energy types to be adopted (Zapffe, 1992: 145). If lower potential strengthens the sense of safety, it would have meant that it decreases the need of imposing fixation mechanisms. However, according to Zapffe’s theory, the energy types include both positive and negative charging (Ibid).

In turn, the question of life’s meaning as such concerns the transformation of the mode of being into the one of becoming i.e. it illustrates how given living environment turns into a meaningful space of existence rather than remaining an arena of being.
The explicit conceptualization of this matter is also outlined by Næss who claims that one is recognized as a fragment of nature. That is why the process of identification [33] is interpreted as a process in which relationships that define the crossing points expand more and more in terms of defining how “the Self grows” (Selvet vokser) (Næss, 1973: 52).

2. Conclusion

Analyzing Zapffe’s theory, I argue that it is the normative validity of what I called horizontal relatedness that makes biosophical an ontological synonym of biological, without leading to the justification of objective naturalism, i.e. the mode of becoming to be reduced to the one of being. If Zapffe has defined biosophy as provoking a certain form of naturalism, which he did not do, it would have meant that the realization of nature would have been a necessary and sufficient condition for the realization of man, but not vice versa. Such a statement would have questioned both the process of man’s self-realization and the horizontal relatedness itself. Furthermore, it would have implied that nature is in a ‘higher’ position in respect with man having ‘bigger’ (in the sense of better) normative validity.

Going back to what Hessen calls anthropomorphization of nature in On the tragic (Hessen, 2012: 148), I argue that it is a misinterpretation of Zapffe’s conception of man’s experiential gestalt determined within the framework of biosophy as an experiential philosophy. It is this dialectical connection of dependence of man’s becoming and nature’s being that makes us concerned about defining the process of interrelatedness as a process of anthropomorphization since man is dependent on nature in a biosophical sense.

By extrapolating Hessen’s conception that the biosophical method is understood as a philosophical method, I draw the conclusion that it is a type of meta-biological method because its noncontradictory, ontological grounding presumes we to talk about the aforementioned mode of being (the one of biology) on a meta-level.

In turn, biosophy understood as an experiential philosophy can be defined as implying a mode of thinking that derives from a corresponding mode of being. Otherwise, the mode of thinking would have been turned into a subject to pure speculations. A proof in favor of this thesis can be found in Zapffe’s statement that one living being is characterized from a biosophical perspective by its interests; in respect with them, the perception equipment is supplied with intellect, memory, fantasy and emotional life, which is recognized as a
secondary one [34] (Zapffe, 1992: 145). Against the background of these examinations, Zapffe argues that since the individual is an interest bearer, he/she should be examined as a biosophical unity (biosofisk enhet) (Ibid). Keeping a distance from this perspective is biosophically relevant (biosofisk relevante) only if the interests get a real meaning for one’s welfare [35] (Ibid). This statement requires to misleadingly oppose the interests concerning welfare to the rest, taking into account that so-called biosophical unity entails interests whose contents may contradict each other. It is the latter that makes the complexity of unity in question.

On the other hand, Zapffe provokes another dilemma with the saying that when man “thinks biosophically”, his/her philosophical formulations are only of a secondary interest (Ibid: 144). Judging by the implications of his theory, I argue that thinking philosophically is of secondary interest only if it is used as a synonym of “thinking theoretically” because otherwise, we should underrate the role of being as a necessary condition for the recognition of the mode of thinking. Zapffe’s solution, which unites these two modes, is the belonging to what he calls destiny (skjæbne) [36] (Ibid: 147).

Zapffe claims that in a biosophical light, living beings, things and conditions are considered as sources of destiny (kilder til skjæbne) (Ibid). He specifies that only the bearer of interests has a destiny because the world deprived of interests does not experience “a difference in well-being” (“forskjel i trivsel”) (Ibid: 148). For example, we can talk about humanly determined units such as “moon”, “ice-block”, “potato” that are “dissolved/merged together or dissolved, crushed and spread, burn or get frozen” (Ibid). Zapffe argues that many of these unities have ascribed more than once “history” in the sense of “identity with variations” [37] (Ibid). On the other hand, the word ‘potential’ (potential) means fellowship, which connects the whole known world (Ibid). Furthermore, he points out that all potentials resemble each other so that if they are not hindered, they will “leak” (“lække”), will be “set off” (“utløses”) etc. until the higher potential becomes such a potential of environment [38] (Ibid). For that reason, nature does not allow one potential to accumulate from itself. Thus the laws say “Yes” to equation (utjevning) and “No” to accumulation (Ibid). If, however, every single position is an accumulation of energy, how can we explain the fact that nature does not allow one point to accumulate?
On the other hand, Zapffe supports the idea of accumulating potentials since he explicitly claims that ‘potential’ means “accumulation of energy” (“ophoping av energy”) (Ibid). Examining the connection between so-called high and low potentials, which are defined in physics as a tension, Zapffe argues that among many other things, values should be constantly supplied with energies from outside (e.g. economic subsidy), while destruction “gets help from nature” (Ibid: 148-149). The study of such a matter is called in biology ecology or bionomy (Ibid: 149). If one leaves the words to cover all the “struggle for interest” with the “survival of the fittest and the luckiest” (Ibid), then, so-called objective dramatic (“obektivt dramatiske”) should be examined as belonging to the ecology of man’s life (Ibid), or to, what Næss calls human ecology [39] (Næss, 1973: 265).

On a macro methodological level, it means that so-called by Zapffe interest fronts illustrate why the interest bearer is affected not by the blind fate, but by a destiny, which has strong regulative functions. Within the framework of destiny, potential in Zapffe’s sense, which is understood as an accumulated energy becomes a part of the biosophical perspective, albeit we may speculate whether the aforementioned uploading with energies from outside is indifferent to what can be described by extrapolating Zapffe’s investigations as a culture of technological optimism [40]. However, I argue that his definition of values due to which the values to be uploaded from ‘within’ can be referred rather to the idea of ontological ethics, i.e. to be examined as deriving from the complexity of nature itself by avoiding the pitfalls of both moral naturalism and moral relativism.

On the other hand, following Zapffe’s interpretation, we face the challenge how to explain the normative validity of the ‘survival of the fittest and luckiest’ as well as how to cultivate the solidarity with others if this dominating form of survival turns into a top norm in Næss’s sense. Zapffe still leaves the question open giving no definite answer how we can keep living when it happens that most mechanisms of compensation, developed within the culture we live in, cannot help us to live.

NOTES

[1] According to Uexküll, the concept of *Umwelt* (surrounding world or environment) is closely tied with animals’ ability to discern some meaning, which goes beyond the purely instictual reactions (Buchanan, 2008: 21). That is why the approaches to environment do not
have to be examined as belonging to the field of ethology alone (Ibid). Referring to Kant’s contribution of “shaking” the position of the universe by exposing it as “being merely a human form of perception” (Ibid), Uexküll argues that we should make a step further in reinstalling “the Umwelt space of the individual human being in its proper position” (Ibid). In this context, it becomes logical to ask how the world appears to the organisms as a subjective experience (Ibid: 22). Another important specification is that since Umwelt is organisms’ perceptive environment, which discerns from the world as an object, we may witness how the Umwelt of different organisms may overlap with each other (Ibid: 25).

[2] Zapffe argues that in the field of dramaturgy, which is one of his main fields of interest, one metaphysical orientation is displayed by authors such as Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Josef Körner, Peter Rokseth. He argues that “biosophically relevant” is an expression, which one finds in the works of H.V. Brønsted (Biology and Human Understanding) (Biologi og menneskeforståelse) and Jakob von Uexküll (Biological Worldview) (Biologische Weltanschaaung) (Zapffe, 1992: 143).

[3] Furthermore, Kvaløy metaphorically argues that at Stedtind’s cliffs existence precedes essence by explicating the slogan “Either Sartre, or Spinoza!” (På Stedtinds vegger “forutgår eksistens essens”. Heller Sartre enn Spinoza!) (Kvaløy, 2002: 119). Thus existence without essence requires justifying nature as embodying a vital energy, i.e. as obtaining a dialectical dynamics, which to guarantee the noncontradictory diversity of living beings.

[4] Such a conception, however, raises the problem whether we can distinguish between perception bringing a relevant interest and one, which brings irrelevant interest. This issue in turn raises the concerns about a relevant interest is, as well as whether there is an ‘interestless’ perception as such.

[5] Zapffe emphasizes that due to the scale of interests, we can lay a scale of abilities (evner) (Zapffe, 1941: 619), which is defined as “a specific group among the one of units” (in this case, among the group of organisms’ qualities) (Ibid). This scale of abilities is especially coupled with a group of interests, which is called a group of development- or realization interests (Ibid). Due to the help of the abilities, the bearer consciously looks for realizing his/her interests (Ibid). These abilities can be “partly enough” (dels strække til) (i.e. be sufficient) (sufficiens), partly insufficient (deficiency) (underskudd), and there partly can be a surplus of ability (et overskudd i evne), together with this, which is required by the task or the
situation (Ibid). Besides, the surplus can give advantages (kan gi fordele), to be irrelevant to the task’s solution or to provoke bad consequences (Ibid).

[6] When an ability can demonstrate itself in few or in only one functional variant, then it is called fixed (fiksert) (Ibid). If the ability is extended with variability, eventually, with an unlimited choice of the way of use, then it is called unfixed (ufiksert) (Ibid: 619-620). Zapffe points out that there is a scale between these two extremes (Ibid: 620). One unsuccessful fixation, compared with another one, which is assumed to be more successful one, is called wrong fixation (feilfiksation): in turn, the variants of this wrong fixation include an over-fixation (overfiksationen), when the ability is too much fixated, and under-fixation (underfiksationen), when the ability is too lose (Ibid). By contrast to them, the ‘normal’ and fully valid satisfaction of interest is indicated as a real solution (realløsning) of the task, which existed (forelaa) before the satisfaction took place (Ibid).

[7] The word ‘interest’ is used by Zapffe as a common name for a set of terms, which are more or less synonymous, namely, ‘need’, ‘drive’, ‘desire’, ‘wish’ etc. (Zapffe, 1992: 145). According to him, there are four interest fronts, namely, biological, social, autotelic and metaphysical ones. While talking about fronts, he also uses the words “plans”, “fragments” or “sectors” (Zapffe, 1941: 50). Zapffe’s definition of front relevantly characterizes the entity of the interaction between species and nature, i.e. it reveals that the front provides a perspective on the interaction in question rather than merely focusing on its concrete projections.

[8] Zapffe gives an example with the bear, which can run, climb, dig, swim and beat (Ibid).

[9] According to Zapffe, it is superfluous to care about species’ existence or due to some other reasons, to participate in the scuffle on Darwin’s grave (i haandgemaenget paa Darwins grav) (Zapffe, 1941: 16). Successive, simultaneous or inexplicable genesis (genese) can be one and the same for us: we are merely allowed to hold the position on common fundamental relationship (om grundforhold), on equality in front of law (om “likhet for loven”) during the whole life, or more relevantly expressed, on the common distinctive feature of protection, experience and reproduction mechanisms’ functional conditions in the peculiar, earthly power field (Ibid). This fellowship can be traced back to life’s protoplasmic basis, as well as to the unity of the histological structure (the functioning of muscles and nerve tissues) (Ibid). Referring to Uexküll’s theory, Zapffe emphasizes two of the many characteristics of protoplasm, namely, access to temporary peculiar characteristics and the one to lasting
differentiation (Ibid: 41). The first sign of changes in original homogeneous matter regarding one individualized zoological unity is the formation of a membrane, one exterior layer (et skikt) of firmer matter, which is called ectoplasm by contrast to the unchanged inner one, or so-called endoplasm (Ibid). According to Zapffe, these two forms of plasm can go over each other (Ibid). In this context, the existence of non-differentiated protoplasm (av udiffierentiert protoplasma) is a condition for the form powers’ activity (Ibid: 44). In turn, plasm is defined as the material in which these powers manifest themselves and reach us so that due to our need of reason, we should end back with “something” (til et “noget”). When the material is exploited by the differentiation, the powers get steadily plainer circumstances until they no longer come into view as changing (Ibid).


[11] This specification brings some contradictions since Zapffe also argues that the ability of producing fixation is a priority to human kind.


[13] According to Næss, ecosophy is “a philosophy of ecological harmony or equilibrium. A philosophy as a kind of sofia (or) wisdom, is openly normative, it contains both norms, rules, postulates, value priority announcements and hypotheses concerning the state of affairs in our universe. Wisdom is policy wisdom, prescription, not only scientific description and prediction” (Drengson and Inoue, 1995: 8).

[14] The question of dramatic impression in Zapffe’s theory is defined as making one necessarily go to the precincts of psychology, while examining how dramatic should take place in the field, where “Life fights for its preservation and its development in one more or less favorable environment” (Ibid: 143). All disciplines, which have the aforementioned fight as an object of investigation should be applied to the examinations of the “biosophically interested researchers” (Ibid). Furthermore, Zapffe defines the biosophical picture of human condition in the world as an overall horizon (rundhorizont) regarding the expanded, concrete courses, where precious interests are “entangled in a fight” (Zapffe, 1992: 167): “so that they to make these courses a dramatic matter” (Ibid).
Here, we can talk about substantial difference.

Zapffe’s conception of multi-frontal engagements is based on the intersection of different interests regarding the the four interest fronts. For example, we may have biological-social, biological–autotelic, biological-metaphysical engagements etc. See Zapffe, 1992: 157.

Zapffe also specifies that a biosophical aspect was already constructed by the “prophet Jesus” (Ibid), who in his *The Parable of the Sower*, showed how the seed corn, which fell on different grounds, being smaller than a nutshell, have given the general form of life and its conditions in a corn-husk (Ibid). In *On the tragic*, Zapffe argues that yet Jesus of Nazareth was aware of so-called law of coincidence (denne tilfaeldighets lov) realizing the lack of a guiding overview, an economic principle, a guarantee of a task and meaning concerning every single germ. In this context, he outlines that Jesus of Nazareth was aware that not only germ’s own quality, but also the most random chance is decisive for its further destiny, namely, that many are called but only few are chosen (Zapffe, 1941: 18).

Zapffe emphasizes that against the use of applied biology some objections can be raised in two directions: first, on side of the biologists who find that their science is misused, and second, from philosophical and aesthetic perspectives since due to the latter one refuses the interference of natural sciences’ thinking mode (Ibid: 12-13).

Judging by these investigations, we may speculate to what extent, such a spontaneous experience may have an unquestionable normative validity as an organic experience.

This conception, however, is not explicitly stated by Uexküll.

He discusses that very often one has been admiring cat’s dazzling safety in the social intercourse; one has been witnessing with envy how the cat has been going through (gjennemfører) its sovereign autonomy (sin suveræne autonomi) without being offended, as well as without losing its dignity in the most ignominious situation (Ibid: 48).

According to him, the concept of method (biosophical and biological) used by Zapffe merely indicates that life should be examined from an ecological perspective (fra “økologisk” synspunkt) understood in the widest sense, i.e. from the perspective of interests, recognized as the fight of the single individuals for self-realization (Ibid). According to Hessen, Zapffe describes biosophical method as a type of ecology for the humankind. In turn, it would explain how we react to this challenge (the fear of fear) (angsten for angsten), which requires one more important, more advanced apparatus to be adopted than the one for the challenges,
which all living beings (from the amoeba to the ape) meet on their life’s way (Hessen, 2012: 148).

[23] An important aspect of Zapffe’s theory is how he examines culture from a biosophical perspective, which is another argument in favor of the thesis that biosophy does not have to be reduced to a method of applied biology, as Zapffe himself argues. Form a biosophical perspective, which, in its capacity for research, looks for a general view and clarity instead of edification of rich of comfort fictions, this part of culture comes out (fremtræder) as “one steady, more elaborated palace” (Zapffe, 1992: 165). The latter is surrounded by the wall of “sweat crystals (sved-krystaller)” that “human soul excretes in its long, feverous fight with itself” (Ibid): “hung, as it is, between the trivialities of self-preservation and the splendid, desperate fall in a deadly expansion “in one togetherness with everything” (i en “forening med altet”) (Ibid). The latter excludes every single opportunity for an appropriate choice of a “margarine-type” (Ibid). Thus the culturally conscious and culturally active part of humankind works on one endless task: to build its own valuable world inside the big value-indifferent environment (Ibid: 167).

[24] Zapffe justifies his understanding of biosophical by referring to the writings of Brøndsted in order to clarify the establishment of so-called interest fronts. H. V. Brøndsted (1893-1977) is a professor in zoology at Copenhagen University (1948-1963). Zapffe refers to his writing *Biology and Human Understanding* (*Biologi og menneskeforståelse*) (1951).

[25] According to Zapffe, in a phase of a million-year development, among the myriads of bigger and smaller differentiations, a cleavage (spaltning) takes place. It divides animals’ kingdom into two groups: on the one hand, we have animals, and on the other one, humankind as such (Zapffe, 1992a: 269). Regardless of some possible parallels, since man knows his/her spiritual and psychological over-equipment and unfixibility, he/she is determined to have one both quantitatively and qualitatively different (in terms of being) living form (Ibid).

[26] Uexküll’s scheme is based on the vision that the living environment of the individuals is dependent on the individual’s receptive and effective equipment (effektorisk utrustning) (Ibid: 26).

[27] Referring again to Uexküll, Zapffe argues that every single functional circle consists of a net of activities (“virkenet”) and a net of signs (“merkenet”); thus in the metaphysical life, (which, in its “fastened” (fæstnede) form. means ‘religious’ by rule), we can also see the
human contribution to the response of world’s subject and God’s one (Ibid: 203). Thus God and world’s plan form together the hypothetical-metaphysical environment (Ibid). In turn, in the prolongation of biological life’s holding lay some religious benefits such as sacrifices with food and drinks (brændoffer og drikoffer) (Ibid).


[29] According to Zapffe, most of the anchoring cases (de forankringstilfælde), which we have been dealing with have an individual nature (var av individual natur) (Ibid: 177), namely, they had their premise in the individual human heritage and experience, its “raison d’être” was in subject’s determined need (Ibid). Furthermore, ideas and values that can profitably be called collective ones (kollektive) are also interpreted as a side of individual life. Thus due to our terminology, they constitute a part of individual’s social life front (Ibid).

[30] It is defined as an indivisible rule in life (udelighetens grundsetning) (in-dividuum) due to organism’s complete functionality (functions’ entity) in contrast to mucus (i motsætning til slimet) and non-organic matter (Ibid). In this context, Zapffe argues that it is the individuals that carry the collective impulses as well as that in given cases, they can fully cut the latter off (Ibid).

[31] Zapffe’s specification concerns the receptive functions of the individuals as organisms rather than their ability to transform the environment due to man’s potential to interfere into the habitat one lives in.

[32] According to Zapffe, over-biological or a-biological development takes place only when existential needs are secured (Ibid: 38). In turn, the distinction between biological and over-biological equipment partly overlaps with the one between fixed and unfixed use of organs (Ibid: 48).

[33] According to Næss, by identification, we should understand a process in which the relationships that define the crossing point are developed for the purposes of “including more and more” (Ibid).

[34] Zapffe discerns between three factors regarding high and low potentials: between charging power, surrounding field and the circumstance, which hinders the charging (utladning) (Ibid: 149). In this context, interests can be considered as higher potentials in respect with one world (where the interest is not automatically fulfilled, as it goes in the absolutist world), but where the interests need a flow of crafts for the purpose of not being
desecrated (possibly, isolated) and still able to realize themselves (Ibid). Therefore, many strong conspicuous interests bring further, without any ceremony, the danger that the development should go in a direction against the interest itself (i interessestrídig retning) (Ibid). According to Zapffe, environment’s “lower potential” (Omgivelsens “lavere potential”), the opposite energy type (including both positive and negative charging) if any works as gravity, as a suction (et sug) (Ibid). In this context, we may argue that its power can be understood in the sense that lower potential strengthens the feeling of safety. Zapffe himself concludes that it is far more troublesome to build values (conditions, which serve the interests) than to completely destroy them (giving the example with the city and the bomb) (Ibid).


[36] According to Zapffe, by destiny, we understand the connection between the interest’s factual, continuous condition and one considered, long-awaited, dreamt, hypothetical, ideal course (Zapffe, 1992: 147).

[37] In this context, it is important to introduce ethical gradualism in order to specify the identity’s variations regarding well-being, when the latter is ascribed to humans and animals respectively.

[38] One of the questions in this context is if they all resemble each other, how can we talk about low and high potential in general since there should be some reasons for one of those to start dominating the rest in the process of intermingling.

[39] According to Næss, ecological treatment of biosphere concerns knowing this inner connection, namely, that we are part of the ecosphere as we are part of society (Ibid).

[40] Zapffe constantly appeals against the overexposed use of technologies in different fields of day-life culture arguing that in many areas, the objects are too much, which makes offers be more than the demands (Zapffe, 1992: 153). This in turn leads to creating, with the help of advertisements, an artificial need (Ibid). Judging by the aforementioned investigations, Zapffe makes the important remark that technology is also on disposal to metaphysics, and this can be traced to devices such as missions-planes, evangelical texts played on a gramophone, as well as to the bean mills working with water power or the ones, which are connected with an electrical engine (Ibid: 155). According to him, technology and growing surplus of free time.
and shopping power made possible for constantly broader groups of people to also maintain an autotelic interest front having a changing cultural value (valør) (Ibid: 152).

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