



# Europäische Akademie

zur Erforschung von Folgen wissenschaftlich-technischer Entwicklungen  
Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler GmbH

Direktor:  
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# Newsletter

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## Editorial

For the nine years of its existence, the Europäische Akademie successfully conducted more than fifteen research projects by means of its unique working method which might be therefore called a "well-established" principle now. Nevertheless, this work did not only consolidate the methodological basis of the academy's work, but established and defined also selected fields of key competences for further in-depth Technology Assessments and policy advice at the same time.

With these still developing competence fields spread throughout the whole interdisciplinary spectrum of the academy's portfolio, the Europäische Akademie is able to offer corresponding expertise to the interested addressees. The case of the concluded project "Climate Prediction and Climate Precautions" might serve here as a paradigmatic one which in the end was also successful with regard to its emerging market potential: Once its results had been presented to the public, the German Federal Environmental Agency (Umweltbundesamt, UBA) became interested as a potential customer of a related follow-on study on the specification of the ultimate goal of the international climate regime. Actually and following a contested procedure, the academy's proposal on "Reasoning Goals of Climate Protection" was selected for funding by the UBA. Meanwhile, the study has been concluded and gained great interest by other political departments such as the Federal Foreign Office.

This example demonstrates the practical relevance of the academy's scientific work which may also realise itself in terms of "science sells", although the latter sometimes proves to be difficult in the case of interdisciplinary research.

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## Focus

### The Indispensability of Quality of Life

Michael Quante

Is a value-judgement of human quality of life permissible, especially in view of the possibility of wishing to intentionally terminate this human life? In German bio-politics, this issue tends to be evaded. Problems that increasingly arise at the end as well as the beginning of a human life, however, render the discussion inevitable. In this context, the assumption that, as a matter of principle, judging the value of quality of life is incompatible with the concept of human dignity plays a central part. This premise would indicate that bio-ethical and bio-political debate threatens to revert to a state of rigid confrontation of factions that are both inflexible and unable to communicate.

In the context of the prohibition to kill (e.g. actively helping someone to die or abortion) or of how one should deal with human life in its very first stages (stem cell research using human embryo stem cells, PGD or therapeutic cloning), the notion that evaluating the quality of human life should be seen as ethically relevant seems reasonable at first glance. However, the attempt to justify the permissibility of these options by citing the affected person's present or future quality of life will be met by fundamental criticism, which we can summarise in the following stereotype:

*Any bio-medical ethic, which attempts to deal with the urgent issues present in bio-medical ethics by citing quality of life as a criteria, is making a distinction between a human life that is worth living and one that is not. Firstly, this distinction is not compatible with the principle of human dignity irrevocably defined in the German constitution. Secondly, it has been discredited historically by the crimes perpetrated by National Socialism; a period of history that is said to illustrate the catastrophic social consequences resulting from the attempt to deal with questions of life and death based on value-judgement of quality of human life.*

If one does not close one's eyes to the fact, that in many areas of bio-medical ethics, value-judgements on the quality of life, are already being made, implicitly as well as explicitly, and if one views this as an ethically indispensable as well as appropriate means of discussing and socially controlling the issues inherent to bio-medical ethics and bio-politics, then one must refute this fundamental objection. From this starting point, my *first thesis* is that judgements in respect of human life based on quality of life are not reprehensible on principle, but on the contrary are ethically indispensable, provided we have an appropriate understanding of what quality of life is. Furthermore, this appropriate understanding of quality of life, and this is my *second thesis*, is compatible with the principle of human dignity. This applies, at least, on the condition, that human dignity is accorded an interpretation that may claim general validity in a secular pluralistic society. My *third thesis* is that an appropriate concept for judging the value of quality of life coupled with a principle of human dignity appropriate for secular societies not only takes into account adequately the plurality of ethical of ideas as a fact, but in itself supplies a foundation for acceptable ethical pluralism.

In order to render these three theses plausible, one has to distinguish between different models for judging the value of quality of life and argue that two of them are indispensable for appropriate bio-medical ethics. Furthermore, one has to suggest an interpretation of the principle of human dignity that is compatible with the two models for judging the value of quality of life which have been defined as ethically appropriate and which can find general acceptance in pluralistic societies. On this basis one can demonstrate in which way a well-understood criterion of quality of life is appropriate for a secular and pluralistic society.

(1.) There are four distinctive models for judging the value of quality of life – characterised by their inherent, respective evaluative standards: the naturalistic standard, the social-objective standard, the inter-subjective-rational standard and the subjective standard. I would define the *naturalistic* standard as a concept for judging the value of quality of life which purports not to require any kind of norms or moral concepts, i.e. can operate, for example, on a basis consisting purely of biological and medical facts. Since quality of life, however, cannot be defined without the application of values, such a reductionist concept of quality of life is quite simply pointless. The spectre of this standard is, however, cited again and again to justify the ethical intuition of non-permissibility for judging the value of quality of life. The *social-objective* standard comprises the dominant moral concepts and norms accepted by a society as fact. No-one will seriously or un-critically apply this standard as a basis for value-judgement. Nevertheless, it too has a decisive role to play in the discussion, because of the ever-present presumption, that choices are inevitably made as a result of social trends and cultural prejudice. The *inter-subjective* standard is a normative criterion. It comprises those elements which rational subjects would rationally choose, based on their inherent typology as human beings, e.g. embodiment, perceptive ability, social needs, the ability to be personally autonomous. Finally, the subjective standard does not describe an inter-subjectively incomprehensible, as it were, private quality of experience. Rather, the subjective standard takes into account the fact that an autonomous person's life is marked by that individual's own constant evaluation of his/her existence by conceiving plans for life, setting objectives and developing interests and moral concepts. The possibility of realising such an individual design for life, belongs to the essential components of human life aimed at achieving personal autonomy. The subjective standard of measuring quality of life articulates this by interpreting the measure of quality of life in terms of the individual's biographical

perception of his own existence. However, this subjective perspective of one's existence is not a private one, but one that is more or less comprehensible in an inter-subjective process of understanding.

(2.) In a secularised, plural society committed to pluralism, an idea of human dignity must be developed, which is consistent with our understanding of our society. The principle of human dignity has three central characteristics: the bearer has a defined ethical status, which, firstly is inalienable and secondly may not be measured against other ethical (or non-ethical) claims in terms of value-judgement. Thirdly, it is inherent to the principle of human dignity, that the bearer must never be instrumentalised completely.

The most promising attempt to furnish the principle of human dignity with a basis of justification consists of pointing to the defined characteristics and abilities that usually qualify human beings as bearers of human dignity. Here, the most plausible candidate is the human ability to lead a life according to moral concepts and objectives. People behave according to their existences; they develop plans for life and formulate evaluative relationships to themselves. It is this ability to lead an autonomous life within one's own ethical orientation, which we define as human dignity. It is from this that the total prohibition of instrumentalisation and inalienability of human dignity result. A society that views itself as pluralistic is wise to protect this ability to develop an individual perspective of values and perceptions by making the principle of human dignity an unchallengeable element of ethical practice.

(3.) So what of the incompatibility of human dignity and judging the value of quality of life? Human dignity, as postulated above, is compatible neither with the naturalistic nor the social-objectivist standard for judging the value of quality of life, because these standards subjugate the evaluative self-image of the human individual to external standards of evaluation. It is, however, also obvious that supposed non-compatibility in a general form cannot be right because developing an evaluative perspective to one's own existence is a constituent characteristic of an individual's personal way of a life. If human dignity is rooted in this fact, then it follows that human dignity and judging the value of quality of life cannot be generally incompatible.

It follows, then, that the subjective standard as a basis for judging the value of quality of life is ethically permissible because the human being's individual, evaluative self-understanding are explicitly contained therein. Since a human being's personality can only constitute itself within the context of social interaction and

processes of recognition and on the basis of shared biological, anthropological and cultural premise, it is possible to refute the objection that quality of life understood in this way can be neither inter-subjectively comprehensible, nor criticised on grounds of inter-subjective standards of rationality and plausibility. Empirical research into quality of life shows that we have effective instruments at our disposal to ascertain what subjective quality of life is. Furthermore, ethical practice shows that, in many contexts, we presume shared value-judgements of quality of life that are also seen as justifiable. The future challenge, therefore, will be to develop a multi-dimensional concept of quality of life and to continue to improve the empirical instruments we use to measure it.

The fact is that our society has an irreducible plurality of perceptions of what is a good and individually successful life. The central value of personal autonomy isn't only the factor that renders judging the value of quality of life and the principle of human dignity compatible. It is personal autonomy that renders the principle of human dignity suitable for a pluralist society. At the same time, quality of life must be measured against a standard that is compatible with human dignity, which takes into account the fact of plurality whilst supplying an acceptable basis for ethical discussion. With the foundation for judging the value of quality of life within the evaluative understanding of self, the first two conditions of adequacy are met. If we add the inter-subjective-rational evaluation standard, which enables the rational evaluation of individual values and objectives, then the standard for judging the value of quality of life gains a dimension rooted in rational examination and scrutiny. As personal values and objectives can only develop within the context of a shared social context and also rely on a shared anthropological basis, which comprises biological, medical and psychological factors, there is no danger that the concept for judging the value of quality of life allows individual preferences or social trends to become prevalent. Rather, it can guarantee individual ways of life in a pluralist society in precisely those contexts where they are most threatened.

Professor Dr. Michael Quante is professor for practical philosophy at the Universität Duisburg-Essen. Furthermore, he is member of the project group "European Social Policy" of the Europäische Akademie.



## Working Groups

### Nanomaterials, Nanodevices, Nanocomputing. Standortbestimmung und Perspektiven

The project group „Nanomaterials, Nanodevices, Nanocomputing. Standortbestimmung und Perspektiven“ held a meeting in Frankfurt am Main on 8 April, where Professor Dr. Harald Brune from the École Polytechnique Fédérale (EPF) de Lausanne presented his project contributions covering physical aspects of Nanotechnology belonging to information storage and retrieval concepts. His texts were thoroughly discussed and will be integrated into the upcoming book as part of the chapter describing some current fields of Nanotechnology.

A further meeting was held in Baden, Switzerland, from 3 to 4 May 2005. On this occasion, the group discussed and modified its summarizing appraisal. Special attention was paid to the question whether Nanotechnology as such can be considered as a paradigm change, a term frequently encountered in public debate. After a detailed discussion the group reached consensus on the view that Nanotechnology does not fulfill the criteria for a paradigm change set up by Thomas Samuel Kuhn.

The last chapter of the book to be published includes recommendations for action to society. They are formulated by the group on the basis of the preceding chapters and will form an important part of the book. In some way, they can be considered as the project's results. Their scope extends from research questions and commercial aspects to Technology Assessment and risk handling strategies.

At this final stage of the project the group consists of the following members:

Professor Dr. Günter Schmid, Universität Duisburg-Essen (Chair); Professor Dr. Holger Ernst, WHU Koblenz; Professor Dr. Armin Grunwald, Forschungszentrum Karlsruhe; Dr. Werner Grünwald, formerly with Bosch GmbH, Gerlingen; Professor Dr. Heinrich Hofmann, EPF Lausanne; Professor Dr. Peter Janich, Universität Marburg; Professor Dr. Harald Krug, Forschungszentrum Karlsruhe; Professor Dr. Marcel Mayor, Universität Basel; Professor Dr. Ulrich Simon, RWTH Aachen; Professor Dr. Viola Vogel, ETH Zürich; Scientific assistant: Dipl.-Chem. Daniel Wyrwa, Universität Duisburg-Essen.

The physical aspects are dealt with by Professor Dr. Harald Brune, EPF Lausanne.

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### European Social Policy

The project group “European Social Policy” had its last meeting at the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften in Berlin on 21 to 22 April 2005. It was the final meeting of the project. The topics of the meeting were the conclusive fine tuning of the chapters in their definitive versions, the fixing of a final structure of the contents, the specification of the editing base lines, the determination of the title of the book, and – most important – the agreement on the conclusions to be drawn from the project work and the thereupon based recommendations for strategies of political action in the social area on the national level of the single member states as well as on the supra-national level of the European Union. The discussion of the recommendations was the main content of the meetings during the last phase of the project. The constructive debate has led to a well-founded consensus between the members of the project group on the final results which will be presented to the public with the publication of the final report in autumn this year.

Members of the project group are:

Professor em. Dr. Bernd Baron von Maydell (Chair), formerly Max-Planck-Institut für ausländisches und internationales Sozialrecht, München; Professor Dr. Klaus-Dirk Henke, Technische Universität Berlin; Professor Dr. Ruud J.A. Muffels, Tilburg University; Professor Dr. Michael Quante, Universität Duisburg-Essen; Professor Pirkko-Liisa Rauhala, PhD University of Helsinki / University of Tartu; Dr. Gert Verschaeagen, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven; Professor Dr. Maciej Zukowski, Akademia Ekonomiczna w Poznaniu / Wyższa Szkoła Bankowa, Poznan.

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### Environmental Noise

The project group met on 28 April to conclude its stocktaking task. Residual papers on specific medical, philosophical, economical and juridical aspects of environmental noise were discussed among the group members. A central discussion point was about the effects of noise and its mitigation to the national economy, which are quite uncertain in the case of noise loads to the society. Nevertheless, these effects might become more evident if adverse external impacts of traffic would be internalised, e.g. by corresponding noise reduction politics. From this perspective, a reduction of individualised traffic in favour of public transportation at those “hot spots”, where environmental problems might culminate, should be consequently

expected. The current debate on critical thresholds of dust fines in urban centres as well the promising experience with alternative mobility concepts in several European cities might pave the way, probably also with respect to the traffic noise issue.

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## Conferences

### Spring Conference 2005: Living with Noise

The annual spring conference of the Europäische Akademie “Living with Noise? An Assessment of the Problems Caused by Traffic Noise” took place from 28 to 30 April 2005 at the Steigenberger Hotel in Bad Neuenahr.

In Germany and in Europe, noise is perceived as a considerable detriment to the quality of the human environment. That this shall not be the inevitable price that has to be paid for technological advance is not least one of the aims of the EU Directive on the assessment and management of environmental noise, which is currently being implemented within the various legal systems at national levels. Against this background, and in view of the current amendment of the German Air Traffic Noise Act, the Europäische Akademie had invited numerous experts from the fields of science, economics, politics and relevant associations to conduct an in-depth discussion on the subject “Living with Noise?”.

The scope of the topics covered a wide spectrum, ranging from the current results of noise effects and noise abatement research to questions of weighing the priorities in regard to regulations concerning noise protection. The conference was opened with an evening lecture on noise abatement as a balancing task by Professor Dr. Michael Kloefer (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin).

Regarding the problems involved in respect of considerations to be taken, Kloefer held the position that the duties of the state to prevent noise as well as to enable mobility involving noise emission could be justified. Professor Dr. Ludwig Krämer, (European Commission, Brussels) countered that it was possible to postulate a preferential “right to silence” when it came to “incursions upon the physical integrity of the human being” caused by noise. In respect of traffic noise, however, there appears to be hardly any evidence that this is the case. Moreover, according to Dr. Barbara Griefahn (Universität Dortmund), disturbing effects and adverse consequences

on performance, as the accompanying consequences of traffic noise, are the predominant factors. Thus, in particular, subjective assessments are coupled with individual perceptions of disturbance caused by noise, which make it difficult to make an "objective assessment" in regulating the problems involved in traffic noise. In the interests of enabling a balanced judgement, in the view of Professor Dr. Andrzej Kaniowski (University of Lodz) it is necessary to sharpen the consciousness of the decision makers as well as of both, those causing noise and those suffering from noise (which may well vary at different times) on the aims and benefits of the activities producing noise, and even, if necessary, to call such activities into question. In the opinion of Professor Dr. Heinrich Weyer (Deutsches Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt e.V., DLR, Köln) und Professor Dr. Gerhard Steinebach (Universität Kaiserslautern) there still remains a considerable need to find solutions to the problems on hand, in spite of the gains made by means of technical noise reduction measures as well as spatial planning provisions and precautions, because these gains, according to the speakers, had so far been cancelled out by the constant increase in mobility.

To conclude the conference, a podium discussion was held on the subject of how to achieve low-noise mobility, at which occasion the State Secretary, Christiane Friedrich (Ministerium für Umwelt und Naturschutz Nordrhein-Westfalen) recommended that noise protection should be considered in conjunction with plans to maintain clean air, in order to avoid the threat of conflicting aims in the field of emission control and to exploit possible synergies.

The results of the conference are to be incorporated in the Europäische Akademie project, "Environmental Noise", a final report on which is planned to be published in the spring of 2006.

Further information can be obtained under: [www.europaeische-akademie-aw.de](http://www.europaeische-akademie-aw.de).

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## News

### Vernissage

Im Rahmen des „Kultursommers Rheinland-Pfalz“ eröffnete der Verein der Förderer der Europäischen Akademie am 12. Mai die Ausstellung „Verborgenes Spiel“ – Bilder von Marliese Wagner. Nach einer Begrüßung durch Professor Dr. Dr. h.c. Carl Friedrich Gethmann, Direktor der Europäischen Akademie, und Angelika Kallenbach, führte die Bonner Kunsthistorikerin Dr. Angelika Storm-Rusche die anwesenden Gäste in die Bilder der Künstlerin ein. Eine musikalische Untermalung der Vernissage erfolgte durch Xu Fenxia und Gu Xeng.

Die promovierte Naturwissenschaftlerin Wagner studierte Biologie und Chemie. Ihre Bilder sind in Themenwahl und Technik eine Symbiose aus Wissenschaft und Kunst. Es geht ihr nicht um die Darstellung von Dingen, sondern von Kräften und Prozessen. Auf der Suche nach einer Ästhetik, die naturwissenschaftliche Erkenntnisse und Kunst direkt verbindet, entwickelte sie ihre einzigartigen Farbpigmente: Farben und Strukturen entstehen durch chemische Reaktionen direkt auf dem Bildträger. Diese Technik wurde von Kunsthistorikern als Malen ohne Pinsel bezeichnet. Die Künstlerin nennt es den 'gelenkten Zufall'.

Die Ausstellung läuft bis zum 31. Oktober 2005 und ist montags bis donnerstags in der Zeit von 9 bis 15 Uhr in den Räumen der Europäischen Akademie zu besichtigen.

## Lectures

Carl Friedrich Gethmann

2.5.05 „Willensfreiheit versus Handlungs-urheberschaft“. Kolloquium „Philosophie heute“, Universität Marburg

Stephan Lingner

30.5.05 „TA und (Klima-)Politik“. ITA Conference „TA '05“, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien

## Personalities



Dirk Hartmann studied philosophy and psychology in Marburg. From 1986/87 until and including winter term 1991/92 Hartmann was again registered at Philipps-Universität Marburg with the subjects philosophy and psychology, where he passed in 1988 the Vordiplom-exams in psychology. In 1989 Hartmann graduated in philosophy with Magister Artium, and in 1992 he received the doctorate in philosophy (the title of the dissertation: „Allgemeine wissenschaftstheoretische Grundlagen naturwissenschaftlicher Psychologie“). In May 2001 Hartmann was granted a „Werner Heisenbergscholarship“ by the „Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft“ (DFG) for five years to do research at the „Kulturwissenschaftliches Institut“ (KWI) at Essen, Germany, which he did not take because of his appointment to full professor. He was scientific assistant for the faculty for humanities and philosophy at the Philipps-Universität Marburg from 1993 to 1999. In 1997 Hartmann was qualified for lecturing in philosophy and at the same time he was appointed private lecturer.

In 2001 the „Alexander von Humboldt-Foundation“ granted Hartmann a one-year „Feodor Lynen-scholarship“ to do research at the department of philosophy of the University of California, Berkeley, which he realised in 2002 as a visiting scholar. Since 2004 Professor Hartmann is full professor for philosophy with main focus on theoretical philosophy at the Universität Duisburg-Essen.

Professor Dr. Dirk Hartmann is member of the project group "Intervening in the Psyche. Novel Possibilities as Social Challenges" of the Europäische Akademie.

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