6. Control

ATHENIAN: *Now then, this shows that there is one specific desire common to all mankind. Isn't this the upshot of our discussion?*
MEGILLUS: *What desire?*
ATHENIAN: *That events should obey whatever orders one feels like giving – invariably, if possible, but failing that, at least where human affairs are concerned.*
MEGILLUS: *Very true.*

Plato

Synopsis: *Control decides whether the information processing on a specific Being or Thing will or will not take place (1); Total control is impossible (2); There is no dataset without any control exercised over it (3); Control over new or first-processed information (4); Attributes of a dataset (5); Access (6); Control can be delegated (7); Control is not pursued for its own sake (8); Power (9).*

1. Control*

What finally decides if a processing operation will actually take place in the analogue or the digital world? If will and opportunity coincide, does this mean that a Being will actually carry out the processing? The answer is negative: A processing operation also has to pass the threshold of (other Beings') control.

A processing by a Being will or will not happen depending on the control of (an)other Being(s) over a dataset. If a Being is able to allow or prohibit a processing operation by another, then that Being controls that processing. Control is exercised in the analogue and the digital worlds, it is external[250] and material (not imaginative or speculative) in the same way that any processing is material.[251] It either exists or does not exist with regard to a specific processing operation. It may not be exercised or it can

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250 Internal control, meaning self-restraint (ultimately, choice) by humans falls under the domain of morality.
251 See Chap. 4, par. 4.

be delegated,[252] but it is not immaterial information (a thought, a feeling or a wish): it is the concrete ability by a specific Being to allow or prohibit a specific processing operation by another.[253]

Although in practice countless variations are possible, for example a processing operation may only be allowed by certain Beings or under certain conditions or may be prohibited unless a particular event occurs,[254] it is the fact of the control itself that is important here: ultimately, it is control that decides whether the information processing on a specific Being or Thing will or will not take place.

Obviously, control is exercised (a) with regard to a Being, over processing operations by other Beings on it, but also over processing operations carried out by it (on other Beings and Things), and (b) with regard to a Thing, over processing operations carried out by other Beings on it (a Thing cannot process information itself).

2. Total control is impossible*

Control is relevant to a processing (a processing operation that takes place results in control[255]), not to a dataset. A Being cannot exercise control over a dataset (a Thing or another Being), but only over certain processing operations on it (by other Beings). In other words, total control is impossible:[256] myriad processing operations are possible on any dataset, and any attempt to control them all is inconceivable (precisely because they are possible, meaning unforeseeable, as the analogue world was not designed by humans[257]).

However, for the sake of brevity, whenever control over a Thing or a Being is claimed in this analysis, it denotes control over a certain processing operation on it—in fact, on the majority of its attributes.[258]

Although total control is impossible, Beings strive towards it: they strive to control all processing possible by and on a Thing or another Being, to

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252 See par. 7.
253 See also Chap. 16, par. 2.
254 Ultimately, the question of which controls apply each time is political, i.e. it is an issue decided and applied by the government.
255 See par. 4.
256 Except for by the state, see Chap. 16, pars. 2 and 3.
257 On the digital world, which is designed by humans and thus could theoretically enable total control, see Chap. 16, par. 6.
258 See par. 5, and also Chap. 4, par. 7.

become sovereign[259] over them[260]. This is not a matter of seeking control for its own sake but the result of information processing in the analogue world.[261]

3. There is no dataset without any control exercised over it

Similarly inconceivable is a dataset over which no Being has control. There can be no dataset (Being or Thing) in the analogue or the digital world over which no control is exercised (meaning that there is no Being that is able to allow or prohibit processing on it by others) whatsoever.

This is easier to explain for humans or Things within a state, because they are controlled by that state.[262] The same is true for organisations and artificial Beings—they are controlled by the humans who created them (and, in turn, by these humans' state).

What happens, however, with Things that are outside a state (for example, in unexplored parts of the universe, or are new and as yet undiscovered particles or, in the past, were unexplored parts of the planet or uncatalogued animals)? Although conceivably they may exist, waiting to be discovered[263] and are as yet uncontrolled by any human, in practice, immediately when they become perceivable, and thus processable (materially) by humans, they are controlled by them—by the first human to ever process their information (who, in turn, belongs to a state etc.). Therefore, even if conceivably there are still Things and perhaps also Beings over which no control is exercised, from the Unique Human Observer Perspective[264] they are controlled as soon as they become known to humanity, that is, information about them becomes processable by humans.

Of course, the above points address only the question of why control exists over any dataset, that is, why there exists no dataset over which no control is exercised; the question of why a specific Being controls a specific

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259 See Chaps. 16, par. 5, and 24, par. 7.

260 In the same way as a Being strives to execute an already started processing operation; see Chap. 23, par. 4, on why should we keep promises.

261 See par. 8.

262 See Chap. 16, par. 2.

263 Therefore, when it is claimed above that there can be no dataset in the analogue or the digital world over which no control is exercised, this refers to datasets that have already been discovered by humans—undiscovered Nature (which is, however, also a Being) is exempted, as it is as yet unknown to humans.

264 See note 1/1/1.

Being or a Thing (or whether this control is justified or not) is a matter of politics (i.e. decided by the government).

4. Control over new or first-processed information*

Because the processing of already existing information leads to the creation of new information,[265] whenever the Being with control permits another Being to process information on a dataset, new information is created as a result.[266] Of course, this new information may remain immaterial (i.e. a thought, a feeling etc.). If, however, this new information materialises in the analogue or the digital world (e.g. if someone is allowed to read a book or process a material and, as a result, produces a new book or a new artefact), then its creator exercises control over it—notwithstanding the issue of whether this control constitutes property[267] or whether other Beings, most notably the Being that allowed the previous processing, and, of course, the state, also exercise control over this new information.

The same is true of new, previously unprocessed information (which exists in Nature); the first Being to process it exercises control over it—again, notwithstanding whether other Beings at the very same moment are acquiring control over that same information too. For example, in the case of a scientist discovering a new particle or a new planet, that scientist acquires control over it, that is, he or she is able to allow or prohibit certain processing operations on it by other Beings (for example, as regards its naming, the circle of people this discovery is announced to or even the announcement of the discovery at all). At the same time, however, that scientist's state, and the rest of humanity, also acquire some control over it—for example, they are able to discuss the discovery.

Control acquired in this manner is not necessarily a deliberate act; it is the natural result of information processing regardless of whether a Being consciously intended or did not intend at all to acquire control of this new or first-processed information for itself.

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265 See Chap. 1, par. 7.

266 Of course, from a different viewpoint, as Beings start processing as soon as they come into existence and stop only when they are no longer able to do so (thus becoming Things), they acquire control over information throughout their lifetimes.

267 See Chaps. 24 and 24.1.

5. Attributes of a dataset

The controls,[268] the list of the processing operations that can or cannot happen over a dataset, form its attributes. The attributes of a dataset can be the result of anything from its nature (i.e. the way it was created) to temporal and spatial (i.e. the time and state in which it exists).

All datasets have attributes (the controls both exercised and possible over them, i.e. the processing operations that can or cannot happen to them) regardless of whether they are Things or Beings (also, with regard to Beings, regardless of whether they are aware of the fact or not).

Again, in the same way that total control is impossible,[269] construction of a complete list of all controls over a dataset is similarly impossible (as is total awareness of such list's true extent to Beings, even with regard to themselves as a dataset). It is only in theory that such a list exists. However, a Being becomes aware of another dataset's attributes that concern it as soon as it attempts to process it, that is, as soon as it starts a specific processing operation on a Thing or another Being.

6. Access*

Control also settles the matter of access to a dataset—it decides whether access exists (and to what extent) from the non-controlling Being's perspective.

The way control is exercised, meaning whether a Being will decide to allow or prohibit processing for whatever reason, although at all times subject to need and opportunity, refers to choice, and thus morality, and is therefore beyond the scope of this analysis.

7. Control can be delegated*

It is practically impossible for any Being to directly exercise control over the myriad of information processing operations that take place each second and which lie under its control. Beings can therefore delegate control to other Beings, in a hierarchical system.

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268 Control, like processing, is material, it exists in the analogue and the digital worlds.
269 See par. 2.

Evidently, if we wish to examine who actually controls a processing operation, we would have to move up the ladder; at the top is invariably a state.[270]

8. Control is not pursued for its own sake*

Control (whether a certain processing will happen or not) is not pursued for its own sake. No Being needs control.

Control is a result of information processing, because a Being can and will process information and any such new processing will invariably produce some type of control by that Being over the information processed.[271] Control, therefore, is not a need or a purpose as such, in and of itself. The ability to control a Being or a Thing is the result of processing undertaken by Beings to serve their (other) needs.[272]

However, in practice control is sometimes considered a pursuit for its own sake: some individuals seek control over as many datasets as possible, or sovereignty[273] over the ones they control already. Why is that? It is because datasets in the analogue world are finite. Control over one of them, therefore, is exercised by an individual or another Being to the exclusion of others.

When it comes to humans, control allows to those exercising it to augment their information processing compared to others. When it comes to other Beings, it either serves their purpose better (for non-biological ones) or helps them to survive (animals). Because information in the analogue world is finite, control is finite too; one has it to the exclusion of others.

However, in the digital world information is infinite.[274] Therefore, any control by a single individual over a dataset is not an obstacle to the processing of others—an individual can carry out as much new processing as he or she likes, foregoing, of course, information already controlled by others (i.e. that specific dataset). Individuals do not need to fall under the decision-making power of those in control. Perhaps, then, control will

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270 This is because it is states that create the information processing environments in which humans (and other Beings) live (see Chap. 11, par. 3), taking into account, of course, at all times that states do not have a will themselves, but rather their governments do (see Chap. 11, par. 8).

271 See par. 2.

272 And thus it is itself an ability, the result of need (see Chap. 5, par. 8).

273 See par. 2.

274 See Chap. 1, par. 16.

cease to be visualised in the shape of a pyramid, as is the case today, and take the shape of a square, where individuals will race one another[275] to create (instead of acquire, as is the case in the analogue world) as much information as possible.

9. Power*

Control is not necessarily effective. The fact that control over a processing operation is exercised by a Being, which may prevent another Being from carrying out that operation, does not necessarily mean that that particular processing will not happen after all. The other Being may be able to ignore the prohibition and carry out the processing operation anyway. This is the meaning of power: it is the ability to ignore controls.[276]

Of course, power is exceptional (and, hence, coveted): if many Beings acquire power, then this becomes the new control (or lack thereof). In other words, if an initially prohibited processing operation is in practice carried out by many, in spite of the prohibition, then control changes accordingly (in regulation), from prohibited to allowed.[277]

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275 Comparison being natural to them, see Chap. 5.1, par. 9.
276 In practice, prohibitions. The reverse, to impose processing on an unwilling Being, is a matter ultimately connected with morality.
277 See also note 0/1/13.