1. Information

'Let me be quite clear about what I mean here by matter. I mean an item that is not in itself a something and is also not a quantity nor said to be any of the other things by which that which is is defined.'

<div align="right">

Aristotle

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Synopsis: *Everything is information (1); Datasets (2); Each dataset to be considered a closed system (3); The analogue and the digital worlds (4); Information can be processed (5); Processing on datasets (6); New information (7); Related datasets (8); Life, birth, death (9); The analogue world. Nature (10); The digital world: a simulacrum gone rogue (11); Sometimes the analogue and the digital worlds may appear blended, but they are never the same (12); The individual is torn in the digital world (13); Access to and use of the digital world belong to moral philosophy (14); 'All that is solid melts into air' (15); Information in the analogue world is finite, but infinite in the digital world (16); Total control is impossible in the analogue world, but possible in the digital one (17).*

1. Everything is information*

Everything is information. The analogue and the digital worlds are, material, systems of information.

Life is information processing; to be living is to be processing information.

All that humans think and feel and everything around them is information.

Information is either material or immaterial.

2. Datasets*

Every Being[4] and every Thing[5] is a dataset, meaning a collection of information.

Datasets are material, they exist in the analogue and/or the digital world. The nature of a dataset is set by its form in the analogue and/or the digital world and its purpose (if any). Each carries a name (individualised or not) and is set, finite in this manner; should it substantially change, a new name is given to it—it then becomes a different dataset than that which it originally was.

The difference between 'information' and 'datasets' is that information can also be immaterial.

3. Each dataset to be considered a closed system*

Of course, everything is, informationally, interconnected, in the sense that everything is made of bits of information that can be broken down into further bits of information, *ad infinitum*. However, in order to make sense when examining the relationships among them, each Being and Thing that carries a name[6] is considered a separate entity (a closed system) that interacts with all others.[7]

4. *

The analogue and the digital worlds are two different material systems (each in the sense of a complex, coherent whole) of information, meaning of datasets (of Beings and Things) interacting.

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4 See Chap. 2.
5 See Chap. 3.
6 See Chap. 8.1.
7 See also Chap. 3, par. 5.

5. Information can be processed

It is only Beings that can, and will, process information, because of need.[8] They will process information on other Beings or on Things.

A Thing cannot process information, unless it has become an artificial Being.[9]

6. Processing on datasets*

Processing[10] takes place on[11] a dataset, which is perceived as a whole, a closed system,[12] unless otherwise clarified (in which case processing on part of it takes place[13]).

Therefore, whenever the 'processing of information' is referred to, what is actually meant is both:

– the material processing on a dataset by a Being in the analogue or the digital world,

and

– the immaterial processing of information (a thought, a feeling, a wish) by a Being, that nevertheless needs to be externalised and thus also becomes material processing.[14]

7. New information*

The processing of information leads to the creation of new information, either material or immaterial.[15]

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8 See Chap. 5.

9 See Chap. 2, par. 10.

10 See Chap. 4, par. 1.

11 Processing 'for' a dataset would imply a purpose and thus is connected to morality (see also note 5/2/2), and processing 'by' a dataset would imply the Being that is doing the processing (see Chap. 2).

12 See par. 3.

13 See, for example, note 1/8/1.

14 See Chap. 4, par. 4.

15 See also Chap. 4, par. 2.

8. *

A dataset can relate to another dataset or not; the existence of a relationship meaning that both datasets contain common information.

9. Life, birth, death*

Because life is information processing, any and all Beings that can process information are alive.[16]

Each, however, comes into existence differently. Biological Beings (animals, including humans) come into existence in the analogue world (i.e. they are born) biologically, outside of (human, at least) design, that is, their nature is given to them in the analogue world by Nature,[17] they are not designed by other Beings. By contrast, non-biological Beings (organisations and artificial Beings) come into existence in the analogue or the digital world (i.e. they materialise) by (human) design, that is, their nature is given to them.[18] They are designed, and created, by other Beings.

Therefore, birth (materialisation, the coming into existence in the analogue and/or the digital world) is the point in time from which a Being is able to process information. Death is the point in time when a Being is unable to continue doing so (at which point it becomes a Thing[19]). By contrast, Things exist (in the analogue and/or the digital world) for as long as information on them can be processed by Beings; Things are destroyed, deleted or consumed if no processing on them is possible any longer.

10. The analogue world. Nature*

The analogue world (our natural environment, Nature) is natural to biological Beings, because it is necessary for them to live in.[20]

Nature comprises Things, but is basically itself a Being (it can and will process information, as is dictated by the laws of Nature[21]). In essence, it

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16 See Chap. 3, par. 2.
17 Or, (depending on religion, see Chap. 23, par. 5) by a higher power.
18 By humans, see Chap. 2, par. 11.
19 See Chap. 3, pars. 2 and 3.
20 On whatever is necessary considered natural, see Chap. 5, par. 5.
21 See Chap. 20.

is in order to be able to process the information of Nature that humans became individuals in the first place.[22]

11. The digital world: a simulacrum gone rogue*

The digital world is a new system that is made up of digital information.[23] It was created by humans; it is the result of their processing of information. In contrast to the analogue world, it is not natural to humans (or animals) because they do not need to live in it.[24]

Because the digital world was created by humans, it unavoidably resembles what humans already know, meaning the analogue world. Even the anarchic, unplanned development of the digital world that is taking place today resembles the point in humanity's history when the analogue world was still largely unknown and seemed immense and endless, and which became interconnected only gradually.[25] In other words, the digital world can be likened to the open sea—one, however, that is not localised and knows no human-made borders, but rather is created out of the interconnection of countless artificial Beings that communicate with each other to offer their creators, meaning humans, countless starting points to reach no known or pre-determined end.

From this point of view, the digital world is a simulation of an original that does not necessarily exist as imagined by the simulators; it is a copy of a non-existent original, a simulacrum that has cut loose from its original form—to become, as Ecclesiastes would have it, true.[26]

12. Sometimes blended, but never the same*

Although the analogue and the digital worlds may sometimes appear to be merging, for example, when digital information relates to Things in the analogue world, they are separate, because the digital world is not natural to humans, it has been created by them (and thus, humans will always be able to tell the difference).

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22 See Chap. 20, par. 3.
23 On digital information, see Chap. 1.1, par. 13.
24 See, however, Chap. 5, par. 6 (and Chap. 17, par. 8).
25 See also Chap. 7.1, par. 5.
26 'True' in the meaning of material, on which (material) processing is possible.

13. The individual is torn in the digital world

States turn humans into individuals in order for them (humans) to live a meaningful life[27]. However, this is only the case in the analogue world. In the digital world, the single, unitary nature of the individual is gone. It is irrevocably lost, at least as perceived until now in the analogue world.

In the analogue world a separation between the individual's personal and public lives, the private and public self, is assumed, at least in Western philosophy.[28] But this separation is an internal, imagined one: in terms of the processing of information, which is external and material,[29] each individual is perceived as a single unit, a single actor (who becomes identifiable and unique through his or her state), notwithstanding the many aspects of character or the interesting (or uninteresting) life led by this individual. Anonymous communication or pseudonyms may break down an individual's single, unitary nature, but only temporarily and within a closed environment, for instance, among an author's readers or a singer's listeners in the analogue world. Outside of these occasions, that same individual remains a single unit.

However, in the digital world that same individual, still perceived as a single unit in the analogue world, may split into multiple units.

Consequently, the focus needs to change. It is not only the actual existence of the digital world which is examined in this political philosophy of information (which is, expressly, not a moral philosophy[30]), but also the access to and use of the digital world by individuals,[31] who have become users.[32] This must be examined separately, within the context of a moral (political) philosophy, which will have to follow this book.

This is also the case for other Beings and Things, too: they may exist in either or both worlds (meaning, they may be able to process information or have information on them processed in either of or both the analogue and the digital worlds) but their single, unitary nature is broken down.

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27 See Chap. 7, par. 3.
28 See Chap. 26, par. 4.
29 See Chap. 4, par. 4.
30 See note 0/1/7.
31 On their processing, see also Chap. 4, par. 1.
32 See Chap. 17, par. 11.

14. *

The issues of access to and use of[33] the digital world belong to moral philosophy.

15. 'All that is solid melts into air'[34]

There are two fundamental and groundbreaking differences between the analogue world and the digital world. The first is that information in the analogue world is finite, whereas it is infinite in the digital world. The second is that total control is impossible in the analogue world, but possible in the digital world.

These realisations are of paramount importance; they are factors that will forever change the path of human history and culture. In essence, two of the fundamental assumptions with which humanity has lived during its entire recorded history in the analogue world do not apply in the digital world.

16. Information in the analogue world is finite, but infinite in the digital world*

In the analogue world the scarcity or uniqueness of the resources found in Nature is the drive behind human culture and history. Because humans have a need to augment their information processing,[35] all of their history so far can be read as a long march to exhaust to the greatest extent possible the processing opportunities offered to them in the analogue world (meaning in Nature). These are, nevertheless, finite. While immaterial information processing (i.e. of thoughts, feelings, wishes) in the analogue world may be infinite, its execution (materialisation) is still restrained by finite resources.

The 'nature of man', and much of political philosophy, is based on this assumption: that information (or whatever it is that anyone is in pursuit of, whatever the objective of any human) is finite, exhaustible and can be enjoyed by one human being only at the expense of another.

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33 Through computer programs, see Chap. 2, par. 18.
34 As prematurely (and thus unsuccessfully) prophesised by Marx.
35 See Chap. 5.1.

This idea is no longer valid in the digital world. Digital information[36] is infinite.[37] Therefore, human processing can go on forever without threatening, reducing or affecting the processing of others. In other words, in the digital world immaterial information processing is infinite, and its materialisation (unlike in the analogue world) can oblige (i.e. it knows no limits).

There is no field of human activity (in peace or war) or thought (in business, science, art or religion) that is not affected by this fundamental change. Humans accustomed to living in a finite, closed system now also live in what promises to be an infinite one. After the digital world is fully developed (it is currently only a few decades old), nothing in human life will be ever the same.

17. Total control is impossible in the analogue world, but possible in the digital one

Total control is impossible in the analogue world. Although the state is the information platform that turns humans into individuals and makes a meaningful life possible, and thus knows all of its citizens processing because it is a necessary part of each single one of their actions, it has no consciousness, purpose or will of its own—it is omnipresent but not omnipotent. The government, on its part, aims to be omnipotent through control of the state; however this will always be an elusive and unattainable objective for it. In other words, in the analogue world anyone can act and (at most) that action can be, in principle, prohibited or assessed after the fact—but there is no way to control its occurrence in the first place.

Total control is impossible in the analogue world because the analogue world (Nature) was discovered by humans, it was not made by them. It is possible for myriad processing operations to be taking place on it at any given moment, and there is simply no way for humanity to effectively control them all, that is, to consciously allow or prohibit each and every one of them.

Exactly the opposite is the case in the digital world. The digital world is artificial, created by humans. It may be developing in unforeseen and unforeseeable ways, but it remains artificial, human-made. It is built on the basis of pre-determined specifications. Any action becomes possible or impossible within it according to a pre-known, preset design. In other

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36 See Chap. 1.1, par. 13.
37 On why that is, see Chap. 1.1, par. 16.

words, the possibility for anybody, any Being, to do anything in the digital world must have been planned for and built in in advance—otherwise it simply cannot happen, there is no option for it to take place.

Unlike in the analogue world, total control (or, in any event, a new kind of control that defies anything we thought we previously knew) is, for the first time ever, available to humanity, which is experiencing, in this regard, a God-like creation moment.