

## The Ontological Value of Good and Evil in the Metaverse

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### Abstract

The metaverse is a world created using virtual reality technologies, offering an unlimited space of freedom where people can perform any actions they can imagine. In our study, we attempted to explain this scientifically within the framework of the working method of the human brain. Considering that the human brain perceives both virtual and real-world experiences and emotions, it is emphasized that there will not be a sharp distinction between the virtual and real worlds in the metaverse. In addition, the disappearance of the boundary between the virtual and real world shows that human actions and behaviours have an ontological value in terms of human nature. Our study also pointed out that the metaverse plays an important role in terms of religion, morality, and humanity. With the impact of advancing technological development, it has been pointed out that the metaverse will play an even more effective and dynamic role in human life. Therefore, emphasis has been placed on establishing a moral and meaningful structure in the metaverse. It was emphasized that religion should play an important role in this field, and it was claimed that a virtual world free from religion and moral rules could become a chaotic place full of pain for people.

**Keywords:** Kalām, Metaverse, Goodness, Evil, Morality.

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## Metaverse'de İyilik ve Kötülüğün Ontolojik Değeri

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### Öz

Metaverse, sanal gerçeklik teknolojileriyle oluşturulan bir dünyadır ve insanların hayal edebilecekleri tüm eylemleri gerçekleştirebilecekleri sınırsız bir özgürlük alanı sunmaktadır. Çalışmamızda metaverse, insan beyninin çalışma yöntemi çerçevesinde bilimsel bir şekilde açıklanmaya çalışılmaktadır. İnsan beyninin hem sanal hem de gerçek dünya deneyimlerini ve duygularını algıladığı düşünüldüğünde, metaverse'de sanal ve gerçek dünya arasında keskin bir ayrımın olmayacağı vurgulanmaktadır. Ayrıca, sanal dünya ile gerçek dünya arasındaki sınırın kaybolması, insan eylemlerinin ve davranışlarının insan doğası açısından ontolojik bir değer taşıdığını göstermektedir. Çalışmamızda aynı zamanda metaverse'in din, ahlak ve insanlık açısından önemli bir rol oynayacağına dikkat çekilmektedir. İlerleyen teknolojik gelişmelerin de etkisiyle, metaverse'in insan hayatında daha da etkili ve dinamik bir şekilde yer alacağına temas edilmiştir. Bu nedenle, metaverse'de ahlaki ve anlamlı bir yapı kurmanın önemine vurgu yapılmıştır. Bu alanda dinin önemli bir rol oynaması gerektiği üzerinde durulmuş, dinden ve ahlaki kurallardan arınmış bir sanal dünyanın insanlar için acılarla dolu kaotik bir yer haline gelebileceği iddia edilmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kalam, Metaverse, İyilik, Kötülük, Ahlak.

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## **Introduction**

Metaverse has undoubtedly become one of the most popular topics in recent times. It is now frequently featured in news bulletins, magazines, and on the front pages of newspapers, and is one of the most researched topics on the Internet. This virtual space, developed in parallel with science and technology, is expected to become an alternative to the real world. Scientists predict that, with the full and realistic experience of human senses, the meta-universe could dominate the real world. The fact that it offers its users an unlimited space of freedom will make it a place where people who want to escape the hegemony of daily life can take shelter.

Metaverse offers many possibilities, such as enabling people to experience real emotions, creating the environments they desire, and communicating with their loved ones. However, many psychologists, sociologists, and clerics state that they can have negative effects as well as benefits. Some experts suggest that a lack of moral constraints in Metaverse could have negative effects on individuals' personalities.

The metaverse, which will have profound effects on every aspect of our lives in the future, has begun to be discussed in terms of sociological and psychological aspects. Considering people's religious attitudes, worship, and relations with religious prohibitions in the real world, it is necessary to consider and discuss the issue in a theological context at the same time. To establish a theological proposition, it is necessary to first determine whether human actions in the Metaverse are equivalent to those in the real world. Should there be any religious or legal sanctions at the moment when an act that is considered forbidden, sinful, or bad in the real world is committed in this world? However, this

is a fundamental problem. To answer this question, the concepts of good and evil in the Metaverse must be examined in the context of human biology and psychology. In this study, we aimed to reveal the ontological value of human actions in terms of goodness and evil in the metaverse and to open up a discussion on whether these actions require ethereal and worldly sanctions. In our study, we have attempted to look for ways in which theology should be positioned in a metaverse future by addressing the possible problems that the concept of the metaverse may pose theologically. We investigated the ontological value of good and evil using human sensory mechanisms. We believe that this subject will contribute to future studies in terms of the value aspect of actions.

Before discussing the ontological value of good and evil in the Metaverse, we think that it would be useful to determine the field of meaning of the relevant concepts in the study.

### **1. Metaverse Concept and Semantic Context**

This concept, which is a combination of the words "meta" and "verse" meaning beyond, can be translated as “beyond the universe.” This concept was first used in 1992 in the science fiction novel *Snow Crash*, written by Neal Stephenson. In this novel, the concept is portrayed as people being online through virtual reality using an avatar. Although Stephenson's book doesn't provide a complete definition, it can be said that it portrays a persistent virtual world where humans interact and are affected by it in all dimensions.<sup>1</sup> If a general definition is made by adhering to the meaning of the concept Metaverse, created with special software and hardware, where the real, virtual, or fictional world

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew Ball, *The Metaverse: And How It Will Revolutionize Everything* (New York, NY: Liveright Publishing Corporation, a division of W.W. Norton & Company, 2022), 14.

is combined with science fiction, all the facts that exist in real life are copied, providing experience with visual elements, sounds, and other emotional inputs, giving pleasure, and living situations in real life feel physically and mentally. This can be defined as a limitless, digital world.<sup>2</sup>

Although the metaverse presents a transitive structure between the virtual and real world, it blurs the border between the real experience it gives to people and the worldly realm. Therefore, although it is a virtual or fictional structure, it can be considered an alternative to the physical world.<sup>3</sup> We believe that focusing on virtual reality models that can be experienced in the virtual world would be useful for a better understanding of the concept of the metaverse.

## 2. Virtual Reality Experiences

Before moving on to Virtual Reality experiences, it would be appropriate to explain the concepts of "Virtual," "Reality" and "Virtual Reality" for a better understanding of the subject. Virtual reality is a copy of reality. Reality is that which continues to exist independent of us externally, even when our sensory receptors are turned off.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, virtual reality; is considered a simulated space where our senses are experi-

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<sup>2</sup> H. Hale Künüçen - Serpil Samur, "Dijital Çağın Gerçeklikleri Sanal, Artırılmış, Karma ve Genişletilmiş Gerçeklikler Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme", *Yeni Medya* 2021/11 (30 Aralık 2021), 41; Savaş Ferhat, "Dijital Dünyanın Gerçekliği, Gerçek Dünyanın Sanallığı Bir Dijital Medya Ürünü Olarak Sanal Gerçeklik", *TRT Akademi* 1/2 (15 Temmuz 2016), 39; Emrah Kaya, *Metaverse* (İstanbul: Nemesis Kitap, 2022), 28; İsmail Hakkı Aydın, *Beyin Siziniz 2.0 Metaverse Beyinler Arası İnternet Dünya Beyin Ağı, Wbw* (İstanbul: Girdap Yayınları, 2021), 31; Zeliha Tekin, *Metaverse 101* (İstanbul: Scala Yayıncılık, 2022), 16.

<sup>3</sup> İsmail Hakkı Aydın, *Beyin Siziniz 5.0 Metaverse Holistik Çağ* (İstanbul: Girdap Yayınları, 2022), 16.

<sup>4</sup> Şevki Işıklı- Zeynep Uylaş Aksu, "Teknolojik Zehirlenme, Semptomları ve Teknolojik Düzen", *ISophos: Uluslararası Bilişim, Teknoloji ve Felsefe Dergisi* 2/2 (2019), 70.

enced as real.<sup>5</sup> Although the concepts of virtual and reality seem to be in opposition to each other, the concepts of "real" and "virtual" have been brought together thanks to the use of the internet network, software, and hardware together.<sup>6</sup>

Virtual reality can be differentiated in several ways. Therefore, there can also be a replica of the world in which we live, or fantasy spaces that can be optionally constructed.<sup>7</sup> In this context, along with "virtual," the concepts of "augmented," "mixed" and "extended" reality constitute the scope of the virtual world.<sup>8</sup> The virtual reality experience can also be planned beyond reality with desired people and elements, making it augmented reality. More precisely, it allows the user to view the real world with virtual objects superimposed on or merged with the real world.<sup>9</sup> Owing to these enriched current environments, substances and objects that cannot be physiologically experienced in real life will be virtually experienced in augmented reality.<sup>10</sup> The main goal here is to strengthen user perception by adding numerical data to the data obtained with the perception of biological reality and to make it possible to access more data

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<sup>5</sup> "What is Transhumanism", <https://whatistranshumanism.org/> (Erişim 16 Mart 2022).

<sup>6</sup> Natasha Vita-More, "Aesthetics Bringing the Arts & Design into the Discussion of Transhumanism", *The Transhumanist Reader: Classical and Contemporary Essays on the Science, Technology and Philosophy of the Human Future*, ed. Max More - Natasha Vita-More (West Sussex UK: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing, 2013), 20.

<sup>7</sup> Ray Kurzweil, *İnsanlık 2.0 Tekilliğe Doğru Biyolojisini Aşan İnsan*, çev. Mine Şengel (İstanbul: Alfa Bilim, 2019), 470.

<sup>8</sup> Derya Aydoğan vd., "Sanatın Hibrit Gerçeklik Alanı: 'Metaverse'", *Yedi* 28 (28 Temmuz 2022), 54.

<sup>9</sup> Ronald T. Azuma, "A Survey of Augmented Reality", *Presence: Teleoperators and Virtual Environments* 6/4 (1997), 2.

<sup>10</sup> Kurzweil, *İnsanlık 2.0*, 476; Matjaž Mihelj vd., *Virtual Reality Technology and Applications* (Dordrecht [Netherlands]: Springer, 2014), 9; Bülent Bingöl, "Yeni Bir Yaşam Biçimi: Artırılmış Gerçeklik (AG)", *Etkileşim* 1 (2018), 46; Alper Raif İpek, "Artırılmış Gerçeklik, Sanal Gerçeklik ve Karma Gerçeklik Kavramlarında İsimlendirme ve Tanımlandırma Sorunları", *İdil* 71 (2020), 1062.

about places, structures, or objects.<sup>11</sup>

Mixed reality (MR) is the creation of a new environment by combining real and virtual worlds, where physical and virtual objects coexist in the same environment and communicate with each other simultaneously.<sup>12</sup> The most important aspect that distinguishes augmented reality from mixed reality is that in mixed-reality technology, users can interact with the created virtual objects and data simultaneously.<sup>13</sup> Extended reality, on the other hand, refers to a meaning that encompasses all the technologies of Virtual Reality, mixed reality, and Augmented Reality. As can be understood from these explanations, it can be said that it is possible to experience different virtual-reality experiences in the Metaverse.

### **3. Life and Human Activity in the Metaverse**

Metaverse offers a living space in which individuals can experience a wide range of emotions.<sup>14</sup> Users can communicate and interact as if they are in the physical world, entertainment, commerce, games, and education. They have the opportunity to experience a virtual world in which they can engage in various activities. Although there is a resemblance to the real world in terms of experience, the most attractive aspect of the virtual world is that it allows users complete freedom to behave as they choose.<sup>15</sup> In other words, it is the imagination of a world in which individuals can freely do everything they imagine—good or bad—and rule

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<sup>11</sup> Cumhuri Coşkun, “Bir Sergileme Yöntemi Olarak Artırılmış Gerçeklik”, *Sanat ve Tasarım Dergisi*, (25 Aralık 2017), 3.

<sup>12</sup> Petri Selonen vd., “Mixed Reality Web Service Platform”, *Multimedia Systems* 18/3 (Haziran 2012), 215; Kaya, *Metaverse*, 69.

<sup>13</sup> Ferhat, “Dijital Dünyanın Gerçekliği”, 50.

<sup>14</sup> Mihelj vd., *Virtual Reality Technology and Applications*, 5.

<sup>15</sup> Ümit Aydoğan, *Ağ ve Enformasyon Teknolojileri* (Ankara: İKSAD, 2021), 156.

everything as they wish.<sup>16</sup> In this context, the metaverse will enable people who live their lives restricted by physical, cultural, and religious factors to express their feelings and thoughts they want to experience as full and free individuals. It can be used as a shared living space in which many people can participate online as well as a world where only the individual himself/herself exists.<sup>17</sup>

Avatars are used to represent everything in Metaverse, including people's appearances and behaviors. As people explore simulated worlds through their avatar, they will be able to make physical changes to their avatar, including hair color, clothing style, and body type, as well as completely change their entire body to have the appearance of someone else's body.<sup>18</sup> They will also be able to control the behavior of their avatars through verbal and nonverbal communication.<sup>19</sup> We are not restricted to a single personality, as we can change our appearance and become someone else.<sup>20</sup> By creating different profiles, we will be able to present ourselves differently and choose different bodies for different people simultaneously.<sup>21</sup> Thus, we can present ourselves differently to different people, such as by appearing as one person to our parents and another to our girlfriend.<sup>22</sup> However, in virtual reality, the body does not necessari-

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<sup>16</sup> Dawn Owens, vd., “Real-World Opportunities for Virtual- World Project Management”, *Virtual Worlds*, (2009), 34-35; Tekin, *Metaverse 101*, 93.

<sup>17</sup> Kurzweil, *İnsanlık 2.0*, 470.

<sup>18</sup> Seyithan Can, *Transhümanizm ve İnancın Geleceği* (İstanbul: Tezkire Yayınları, 2022), 37-40.

<sup>19</sup> Alanah Davis, vd., “Avatars, People, and Virtual Worlds: Foundations for Research in Metaverses”, *Journal of the Association for Information Systems* 10/2 (2009), 93.

<sup>20</sup> Serhat Arvas, *Dijital İşgal ve Transhümanizm* (İstanbul: Kudema, 2022), 159.

<sup>21</sup> Gül Dilek Türk vd., “Metaverse ve Benlik Sunumu”, *Turkish Online Journal of Design Art and Communication* 12/2 (01 Nisan 2022), 325.

<sup>22</sup> William Sims Bainbridge, “Transavatars”, *The Transhumanist Reader: Classical and Contemporary Essays on the Science, Technology and Philosophy of the Human Future*, ed. Max More - Natasha Vita-More (West Sussex UK: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing,

ly have to be of the same gender as the physical body in real life. All individuals can acquire different identities and change their gender.<sup>23</sup> People can chat using nonverbal expressions, including body language, gestures, and touch, in addition to tools such as text, audio, and video. Thus, they have the freedom to interact with each other.<sup>24</sup> We will be able to interact with the virtual simulations of celebrities, historical figures, and loved ones.<sup>25</sup> In Metaverse, thanks to avatars, there will be no difference in physical strength between the young and the old. As there is no need for physical activity to move, people with physical disabilities will be able to move as they wish in the metaverse.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, the metaverse will provide us with a virtual reality space where we can do many things that we cannot do in real life.

To understand the virtual reality experience of humans in the metaverse world, we believe that it will be useful to briefly discuss the process of the occurrence of human sensation in terms of the ontological context of the subject.

#### **4. Formation of Human Sensation**

Without understanding how we perceive and evaluate the real world, it is impossible to explain the real dimensions of sensations in virtual environments. Therefore, to talk about good and evil in Metaverse, it is necessary to know in detail the ontological basis of these

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2013), 91; Kurzweil, *İnsanlık 2.0*, 470-471.

<sup>23</sup> Kurzweil, *İnsanlık 2.0*, 476.

<sup>24</sup> Owens, vd., “Real-World Opportunities for Virtual- World Project Management”, 36.

<sup>25</sup> Mike Treder, “Emancipation from Death”, *The Scientific Conquest of Death Essays on Infinite Lifespans* (USA: librosenred, 2004), 195; Kurzweil, *İnsanlık 2.0*, 470-471.

<sup>26</sup> Owens, vd., “Real-World Opportunities for Virtual- World Project Management”, 36.

two concepts, namely, the organism's sensory system.

Our perceptual system works when the nervous system surrounding our body stimulates neurons in our minds through electrical networks, activating our senses. When we want to move any of our organs in our body, our brain, which activates neurons, generates electrical stimuli and directs them to target organs. The electrical signals that occur allow us to perform all types of mechanistic movements, such as moving our eyes, hands, fingers, or walking.<sup>27</sup> When all our sensory receptors encounter phenomena such as light, sound waves, and chemicals, they transform this change into an electrical wave that the brain can understand and function to send to the nerves and then to the brain.<sup>28</sup> Sight does not happen in our eyes, hearing in our ears, tasting on our tongue, smelling in our nose, and feeling on our skin.<sup>29</sup> It is our brain that perceives changes and, as a result, sensations are realized.<sup>30</sup> For example, light waves coming toward our eyes, reflected from objects, are converted into electrical signals as image data because of the optical structure of our eyes and are transferred to the brain from there. The brain, which senses these signals, analyzes these data and enables us to sense the image. Additionally, the sound waves coming to our ears, the smells coming to our nose, and the tactile sensations on our skin are also sent to our brain through electrical networks and are analyzed to be perceived as relevant senses.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, if our brain perceives the same signals from

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<sup>27</sup> Ferhat, “Dijital Dünyanın Gerçekliği”, 725-726.

<sup>28</sup> Sinan Canan, *Değişen Be(y)nim* (İstanbul: Tuti Kitap, 2015), 200-201.

<sup>29</sup> David Eagleman, *Beyin: Senin Hikayen*, çev. Zeynep Arık Tozar (İstanbul: Domingo Yayınevi, 2019), 48-49; Ferhat, “Dijital Dünyanın Gerçekliği”, 725-726.

<sup>30</sup> Norman Doidge, *Kendini Değiştiren Beyin*, çev. İbrahim Şener (Pegasus Yayıncılık, 2019), 16.

<sup>31</sup> Sinan Canan- Mustafa Acungil, *Dijital Gelecekte İnsan Kalmak* (İstanbul: Tutukitap, 2021), 23; Doidge, *Kendini Değiştiren Beyin*, 196-198.

a digital touch as from a physical touch, there will be no discernible difference between real and digital perceptions.<sup>32</sup> As we perceive, the external world is constructed within our minds based on these perceptions. Everything that we perceive, experience, and encounter is nothing but a representation within our minds, from the smallest details to galaxy systems in the universe.<sup>33</sup> In conclusion, the brain is the main mechanism that plays a role in the formation and development of human sensations.

## 5. The Nature and Biological Basis of Good and Evil

For centuries, moral philosophers have tried to find different ways of defining good and evil. However, they have not been able to propose a definition that everyone can accept.<sup>34</sup> To make a real definition of good and evil, it is necessary to outline in general what these two concepts correspond to in terms of human nature.

When we consider this in terms of human nature, the ontological equivalent of evil is pain. Therefore, being subjected to painful acts is always bad for a person.<sup>35</sup> From this perspective, we can say that for an action to be good, it should also provide some benefit.<sup>36</sup> The equivalent benefit in terms of human nature is pleasure. When we look at the historical process, it is seen that many scholars accept the equivalence of good and evil in human nature as pain and pleasure. For example, Epicurus sees pleasure as the beginning and end of a happy life. He emphasizes that every pleasure is good and that every pain is bad.<sup>37</sup> Descartes states

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<sup>32</sup> Kurzweil, *İnsanlık 2.0*, 292-293.

<sup>33</sup> Canan, *Değişen Be(y)nim*, 138.

<sup>34</sup> Daniel Gilbert, *Mutluluk Beyinde Başlar*, çev. Filiz Polat - Asiye Gül Hekimoğlu (İstanbul: Ketebe Yayınları, 2018), 103.

<sup>35</sup> Mustafa Çakmak, *Ahlâk Tanrı ve Yasa* (İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 2019), 194.

<sup>36</sup> Gilbert, *Mutluluk Beyinde Başlar*, 103.

<sup>37</sup> Hümeyra Özturan, *Ahlak Felsefesinin Temel Problemleri* (Ankara: İlem, 2022), 199.

that what we call good and evil are the things that our inner feelings and mind subjugate us to, following or in opposition to our nature.<sup>38</sup> Leibniz suggests that physical good or evil can be understood through the things that intelligent beings experience as pleasure or pain, that make them happy or unhappy.<sup>39</sup> Hutcheson sees the things that give us pleasure from nature as inherently good and beneficial, and the things that cause us pain as inherently bad and harmful.<sup>40</sup> David Hume expresses that moral good or evil is nothing more than feelings of pleasure or pain.<sup>41</sup> According to Bentham, pleasure and pain lie based on fictional concepts such as desires, aversions, wishes, hopes, and fears. According to him, pleasure itself is good and the only evil without exception is suffering. In addition, the words good and evil have no meaning.<sup>42</sup>

By accepting the equivalents of good and bad in human nature as pleasure and pain, it can be thought that we are approaching a hedonist and utilitarian understanding of morality that is based solely on pleasure and utility. In this context, it is necessary to clarify the particularly important and subtle points. It should not be understood that we adopt a hedonist understanding of pleasure, based on the theory that we put forward as pleasure and pain of good and bad. The main point we try to express here is to demonstrate that the concepts of good and evil correspond to pleasure and pain in human nature in terms of value.

Considering the explanations made, if the thing that gives pleasure leads people to determine what is good or bad, then the source of the

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<sup>38</sup> Emrullah Kiliç, *Metafiziksel İyi'den Değer'e Ahlak'ın Yolculuğu* (Ankara: İlem Yayınları, 2022), 123-124.

<sup>39</sup> Kiliç, *Metafiziksel İyi'den Değer'e Ahlak'ın Yolculuğu*, 156.

<sup>40</sup> Metin Aydın, *Faydacılık Tarihi* (Ankara: Eskiyeeni Yayınları, 2022), 231.

<sup>41</sup> Özturan, *Ahlak Felsefesinin Temel Problemleri*, 152.

<sup>42</sup> Jeremy Bentham, *Ahlak ve Yasama İlkeleri*, çev. Ömer Saruhanlıoğlu- Uğur Kâşif Boyacı (İstanbul: Litera Yayıncılık, 2021), 101.

good and bad must be the impulse that determines pleasure or utility. In other words, pleasure and utility are criteria, rather than resources.<sup>43</sup> In the previous section, we emphasized that the main mechanism that plays a role in the formation and development of human sensations is the brain. Based on this knowledge, we can say that the organ in human nature where pleasure and pain occur is the human brain. Therefore, the human brain is the biological basis for good and evil.

## **6. Goodness and Evil in the Context of the Reality Experience of the Senses**

To understand good and evil in Metaverse, it is necessary to determine whether human emotions are experienced in the virtual world. We will attempt to demonstrate this observation by starting from the working mechanism of the brain, which is the location where human perception occurs. According to the current scientific acceptance, our perception of reality is related to what is happening inside the brain.<sup>44</sup> Everything we experience is the result of the electrical activity in the brain. If hardware and software can transform computer-generated representations of the virtual world into signals that can be recognized by human senses, it may be possible to create a virtual world that is experiential and indistinguishable from the real world.<sup>45</sup> Thus, the purpose of virtual reality is to realize sensations felt in the real world with artificial sensations.<sup>46</sup> The brain perceives the experience of the digital organism

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<sup>43</sup> Ömer Türker, “Var Olma Çabası Olarak Ahlak”, *Ahlakın Temeli*, ed. Ömer Türker (Ankara: İlem, 2022), 123-124.

<sup>44</sup> Eagleman, *Beyin: Senin Hikayen*, 47.

<sup>45</sup> Yuval Noah Harari, *Homo Deus* (İstanbul: Kolektif, 2016), 130; Mihelj vd., *Virtual Reality Technology and Applications*, 13.

<sup>46</sup> Mihelj vd., *Virtual Reality Technology and Applications*, 195.

as real.<sup>47</sup> Our brain is essentially a structure that receives and sends signals. It does not care much about how signals are generated. If it is artificially stimulated, it feels like things that do not normally exist, as if they exist and are real. Therefore, the brain perceives the arrival of a signal and does not create any perception when no signal arrives.<sup>48</sup> Thanks to data such as sound, smell, image, touch, warmth, and coldness created by unnatural and artificial means, hearing, smelling, seeing, and touching things that are not made possible for the brain to feel as if they are real. If the artificial data we are discussing are as detailed as the sensing capacity of our sense organs, these perceptions are perceived more realistically. Theoretically, a human brain can be connected to a digital machine. An individual whose brain is connected to a digital machine can experience artificial perceptions, sensations, emotions, and fabricated unrealistic memories. However, a person would not be able to distinguish whether this was an artificial life simulation or a real experience.<sup>49</sup> Because the brain does not make a distinction between what is existence, virtual, or real. It just receives and sends signals. If a signal exists, it accepts it as an input and acts accordingly.<sup>50</sup>

Modern and powerful digital reality systems can stimulate and stimulate the user's various emotions such as smell, sight, hearing, temperature, touch, and movement.<sup>51</sup> For instance, when a predatory animal is seen in the metaverse, fear is triggered and it can be felt through the

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<sup>47</sup> Ferhat, "Dijital Dünyanın Gerçekliği", 42.

<sup>48</sup> Canan - Acungil, *Dijital Gelecekte İnsan Kalmak*, 78-79.

<sup>49</sup> Ferhat, "Dijital Dünyanın Gerçekliği", 726-727.

<sup>50</sup> Canan- Acungil, *Dijital Gelecekte İnsan Kalmak*, 78.

<sup>51</sup> Dadan Sumardani vd., "Virtual Reality Media: The Simulation of Relativity Theory on Smartphone", *Formatif: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan MIPA* 10/1 (23 Mart 2020), 14; Mihelj vd., *Virtual Reality Technology and Applications*, 177.

signals sent by the brain.<sup>52</sup> We have the opportunity to experience the same pleasure digitally as we do from the things we eat in real life. To put it more clearly, impressions, perceptions, and experiences of the eating process can become digital. When these experiences are digitized, more effective and pleasing digitalization can be achieved than the real taste and pleasure of a physical eating activity.<sup>53</sup> To achieve these feelings, it is sufficient to use specially created clothing and equipment with stimuli that distinguish between the movements of the user and the system.<sup>54</sup> For example, when we touch a sensor glove, the touch signal is transmitted to the brain through the sensors, and we can experience a real feeling as if we are holding it.<sup>55</sup> It is predicted that nanobot technology will play an active role in the future, where the boundaries between virtual reality disappear. However, individuals will be able to directly enter the created digital worlds through nanobots without the need for tools such as virtual reality glasses, and experience them in a way that is indistinguishable from physical life. In this way, individuals can have experiences that are completely different from the real world but still feel just as real. Nanobot technology will provide us with a believable three-dimensional virtual reality environment in which we will be located. This is because signals can be sent directly to the perceptual centers of the brain, allowing users to perceive objects and events in the virtual world as if they were real. In this way, individuals can explore different worlds outside of reality and have unique experiences. Nanobots will be positioned very close to every neuron connection that comes from our

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<sup>52</sup> Aydın, *Beyin Sizsiniz 5.0 Metaverse Holistik Çağ*, 249.

<sup>53</sup> Canan- Acungil, *Dijital Gelecekte İnsan Kalmak*, 70.

<sup>54</sup> Ferhat, “Dijital Dünyanın Gerçekliği”, 730; Künüçen- Samur, “Dijital Çağın Gerçeklikleri”, 42.

<sup>55</sup> Aydın, *Beyin Sizsiniz 5.0 Metaverse Holistik Çağ*, 238.

senses and will be immediately activated when we want to enter the virtual world. They act as a gateway to the virtual world and allow us to transition seamlessly from the physical world to the virtual world. If a person wants to enter the digital world at any time, they can transform their surroundings into any world they desire within seconds by sending a signal to the nanobots. In this way, individuals can create their desired world by simply commanding nanobots and transforming their surroundings into a completely different environment in a matter of seconds.<sup>56</sup> There is virtually no difference between the experience of living in a sophisticated simulation and our daily life experiences today.<sup>57</sup> Over time, many differences between real life and virtual reality will disappear as technology advances, and simulations become increasingly advanced.

It is predicted that in Metaverse, human emotions will be experienced through virtual reality. The current technologies cannot fully generate virtual reality. However, scientists have stated that this is possible in the future. Although some tools (such as goggles) currently allow some aspects of the virtual experience to be live, it is not possible to say that they fully provide the whole experience. It is foreseen that a virtual environment will soon be built where reality can be experienced in its entirety. This will take time, as it will require recording all the parameters of human behavior down to the finest detail.<sup>58</sup> Scientists say that by the end of the decade in which we live, computers will cease to be independent physical objects and phenomena. Screens embedded in our glasses and electronics woven into our clothes will allow us to fully see ourselves in digital reality. Consequently, we will be able to visit a web-

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<sup>56</sup> Kurzweil, *İnsanlık 2.0*, 469-470; Kaya, *Metaverse*, 87-88.

<sup>57</sup> Treder, “Emancipation from Death”, 193.

<sup>58</sup> Can, *Transhümanizm ve İnancın Geleceği*, 41.

site and interact directly with both real and simulated objects and people, at least visually and audibly, in a digital environment.<sup>59</sup> What we have described so far shows that the sensory experience in the metaverse is not far from the real experience in real life. We have already mentioned that in the working system of the human brain, the emotions felt do not distinguish between the virtual and real.

In this context, the fact that experience in virtual reality will provide the same sensations as experience in real life suggests that there may be an ontological counterpart of the concepts of good and bad in the metaverse. Because, as we stated before since the brain is the main determining mechanism in the development of human sensations, it is obvious that all actions and behaviors in the metaverse will have a counterpart in humans. Therefore, in this context, it should be emphasized that in the metaverse, actions that bring pleasure and pain to human beings can have a value equivalent in the form of good or bad. The virtual world should not be evaluated as a place where people can perform every action. Since people's interactions with each other will create a sense of reality in their nature, we can say that the concept of good and evil corresponds to reality in the metaverse. Therefore, actions in this world must be based on moral rules. Thus, the concepts of good and evil should not be built only on relationships that exist in real life. Because virtual reality can find a response in the real world, which has an impact on human personality, identity, and character.

## **7. The Value of Good and Evil in the Context of Its Impact on Human Personality**

It is a fact that when people start living in the virtual world, dif-

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<sup>59</sup> Tekin, *Metaverse 101*, 37.

ferent problems will arise in many respects. The most significant problem is the possibility of the simulated world dominating the real world. The fact that people enter the metaverse in every problem they encounter in real life brings about perplexity about what reality is and what virtuality is.<sup>60</sup> Currently, the virtual world created by people will suppress the real world.<sup>61</sup> Deceiving an organism's brain with the pleasures of a digital world that does not exist will change our perception of reality. After a while, the brain will no longer be able to distinguish between the real and the virtual.<sup>62</sup> It can also be said that the excessive preoccupation of individuals with virtual environments and filling their time with them can lead to moral crises.<sup>63</sup>

Since behaving more eccentric differently in the virtual world than in real life can cause behavioral disorders in individuals Because, after a while, the difference between a person's real self and the digital self will gradually begin to fade away close.

Metaverse: This process can help a person's digital identity develop a behavioral model that is closer to their real identity, but it can also create a reverse situation that becomes dominant, leading to negative consequences.<sup>64</sup> Therefore, all the experiences of a person in the virtual world will also impact their personality, feelings, and thoughts in real life. The fact that all emotions are felt in the virtual world indicates that human personality cannot be independent of the virtual world.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Can, *Transhümanizm ve İnancın Geleceği*, 100.

<sup>61</sup> Mihelj vd., *Virtual Reality Technology and Applications*, 4.

<sup>62</sup> Aydın, *Beyin Sizensiz 5.0 Metaverse Holistik Çağ*, 138-139.

<sup>63</sup> Hasan Kafalı, “Toplum ve Din Bağlamında Yapay Zekâ”, *Yapay Zekâ Transhümanizm ve Din*, ed. Kızılgöçer Muhammed vd. (Ankara: Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Yayınları, 2022), 91.

<sup>64</sup> Kaya, *Metaverse*, 148.

<sup>65</sup> Can, *Transhümanizm ve İnancın Geleceği*, 41.

In the virtual reality world, individuals can perform all types of actions without limitations. The fact that people reveal the emotions that they subconsciously suppress due to different factors in real life will affect their real personalities.<sup>66</sup> Individuals who commit crimes will be able to take actions, such as fighting, resorting to violence, and murdering calmly, as they do in the real world. As naturally as possible in the world, they are immersed in and will be able to alienate themselves from their emotional responsibilities and conscientious moral values by supporting violence.<sup>67</sup> For example, someone who constantly plays a massacre game in the virtual world may kill someone calmly and become capable of murder in the real world. This is because such a game can act as a simulator and normalize everything in a weak person's brain. Metaverse, on the other hand, has the power to do much more with the virtual reality it offers. Metaverse applications provide a permanent experience and learning opportunity by making the user feel as if they are there with the multidimensional experience they provide.<sup>68</sup> In a virtual environment, it is not difficult to predict the psychological development and negative effects of an individual who kills everyone and remains alone.<sup>69</sup> Alternatively, a drinker's feeling of intoxication in the virtual world directly affects his/her personality in real life.<sup>70</sup>

Another problem that individuals encounter in the metaverse is that the individuals with whom they communicate and interact are not virtual., relationships that develop with them will have a direct impact on real-life relationships. Even though the relationship is virtual, there is

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<sup>66</sup> Doidge, *Kendini Değiştiren Beyin*, 116.

<sup>67</sup> Tekin, *Metaverse 101*, 112-113.

<sup>68</sup> Tekin, *Metaverse 101*, 93.

<sup>69</sup> Aydın, *Beyin Sizsiniz 5.0 Metaverse Holistik Çağ*, 222.

<sup>70</sup> Can, *Transhümanizm ve İnancın Geleceği*, 41.

a real person in front. Therefore, the virtual world should not be considered only as a way of spending time fantastically using a simple computer program. Some perceptions that develop in the uncertainty of the virtual environment may subsequently lead to new problems among these individuals.<sup>71</sup> Prioritizing the unreal in human relations, emotions, and pleasures will pave the way for people to assume different identities and create false ones. Therefore, people's trust in one another decreases. In addition, metaverse may weaken motor and cognitive skills, such as problem-solving, development, establishing cause-effect relationships, and strategy development.<sup>72</sup>

Although Metaverse is seen as a virtual realm, it is undeniable that it will have a great impact on human emotions, thoughts, actions, and behaviors. Because everything that a person experiences in the virtual world will change and transform, people will want to experience the emotions and feelings they experience in the metaverse in real life. Based on this, we can say that Metaverse plays a significant role in the evolution of human personality and the self. The negative impact that the Metaverse will have on human personality reveals that the actions performed there can correspond to the ontological value of good or evil. Therefore, a regulatory mechanism that can ensure the morality of human actions and behaviors in Metaverse is essential.

## **Conclusion**

With developments in science and technology, one of the most discussed topics is the metaverse. Metaverse, a world where people can perform all the actions they imagine, is attractive to all people because it

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<sup>71</sup> Canan - Acungil, *Dijital Gelecekte İnsan Kalmak*, 135-136.

<sup>72</sup> Tekin, *Metaverse 101*, 110-111.

offers an unlimited space of freedom. In this study, we attempted to explain the metaverse world scientifically within the framework of the working method of the human brain. In this context, since the experiences and feelings of both virtual reality and the real world are perceived in the human brain, we can say that there will be no sharp boundary between the virtual and the real in Metaverse. As we have emphasized in the title of virtual reality, we should not overlook the prediction that the world we currently accept as virtual will replace the real world in time and will be a world where people can experience and feel all emotions in their lives. The disappearance of the boundary between the real and virtual worlds shows that human actions and behaviors in the virtual world correspond to ontological values in terms of human nature. The pleasure and pain generated by human actions in the metaverse also demonstrate that these actions may have moral value as good or bad. According to human nature, actions that bring pleasure and happiness are considered good, whereas those that cause pain and suffering are considered bad. If we consider that human actions and behaviors can correspond to good and bad in the metaverse, we can say that there should be some moral rules in the virtual realm as well. Furthermore, non-ethical attitudes that may arise from the negative effects of the metaverse on human personality should also be addressed in this context.

Today, issues such as metaverse, which have emerged with scientific and technological developments, should be addressed by experts in the field of theology. In an environment in which God can be completely disqualified, it will not be possible to determine the boundaries of human action. However, it should not be forgotten that, despite technological developments, humanity will suffer the greatest damage if religion loses its effectiveness.

The metaverse, which has become a part of our lives, will increase its presence in the future more effectively and dynamically. The idea that morality and meaningfulness must inevitably be constructed in Metaverse reveals the great role religion plays in this field. Otherwise, it is inevitable for the metaverse realm to become a chaotic place full of pain for human beings.

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