

## Approaches to vulnerability as an ontological category: a critic to antiaging transhumanism

Samuel Ricardo Espinoza Venzor

sricardoespinoza@outlook.com

*Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez*

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**Abstract:** The article examines vulnerability as an ontological category, critiquing anti-aging transhumanism from philosophical and ethical perspectives. It posits that vulnerability, inherent to all organisms, is a defining trait of the human condition, particularly evident in aging. Employing an interdisciplinary approach, spanning philosophy, biology, and social sciences, the paper analyzes how the transhumanist paradigm seeks to eradicate vulnerability, promoting a narrative of perfection and control. Through the analysis of theories such as Martha Nussbaum and Hans Jonas's philosophy, the text argues that fragility and mortality are not obstacles but critical conditions that imbue existence with meaning. Within this framework, the ethical and political implications of embracing, rather than eradicating, human vulnerability are explored. The article concludes that a deeper understanding of human fragility can foster more empathetic societies, challenging technological narratives that prioritize immortality over human diversity and interconnectedness.

**Keywords:** Vulnerability, Ontology, Transhumanism, Fragility, Aging, Mortality

**Resumen:** El artículo aborda la vulnerabilidad como categoría ontológica, cuestionando el transhumanismo anti-envejecimiento desde una perspectiva filosófica y ética. Propone que la vulnerabilidad, inherente a todos los organismos, es un rasgo definitorio de la condición humana, especialmente evidente en el envejecimiento. Utilizando un enfoque interdisciplinario, que abarca la filosofía, la biología y las ciencias sociales, se analiza cómo el paradigma transhumanista busca erradicar esta vulnerabilidad, promoviendo una narrativa de perfección y control. A través de análisis de teorías como la filosofía de Martha Nussbaum y Hans Jonas, el texto argumenta que la fragilidad y la mortalidad no son impedimentos, sino condiciones esenciales que dan sentido a la existencia. En este contexto, se exploran las implicaciones éticas y políticas de aceptar, en lugar de eliminar, nuestra vulnerabilidad. Concluye que una comprensión más profunda de la fragilidad humana puede fomentar sociedades más empáticas, desafiando las narrativas tecnológicas que priorizan la inmortalidad sobre la diversidad y la interconexión humanas.

**Palabras clave:** Vulnerabilidad, Ontología, Transhumanismo, Fragilidad, Envejecimiento, Mortalidad

The question of Human Nature inevitably points to a deeper ontological inquiry. Within the discipline of philosophy, no conclusive definition has emerged regarding what constitutes the ontology of the human being or what fundamentally makes us human. This question is particularly significant in the context of transhumanism<sup>1</sup>, a movement that seeks to transcend human limitations. To propose such a transcendence, one must first grasp the nature of what is being transcended. Yet, defining human nature is far from straightforward. Rather, it has been the subject of a multitude of philosophical propositions, so varied that they cannot all be thoroughly addressed here. From ancient times, philosophers like Plato and Aristotle have put forward differing views on the essence of

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<sup>1</sup> For a deeper exploration of the definition of technoscientific transhumanism, as well as its differentiation from critical transhumanism, posthumanism, and all their variations, see: (El movimiento transhumanista anti-envejecimiento: fundamentaciones para un ecocidio 2025)

humanity. Plato introduced a dualistic framework, distinguishing between the body and the soul, positing that true human nature is found in the immortal, rational soul. In contrast, Aristotle emphasized the human capacity for reason and political engagement, positioning humans at the apex of the natural order due to their ability to engage in deliberate thought and lead an ethical life.

In the modern era, Descartes introduced Cartesian dualism, which sharply divides mind and body, a view that echoes certain Platonic ideas. Meanwhile, philosophers like Hobbes and Locke developed materialist and empiricist theories, emphasizing sensory experience and environmental interaction as key to understanding human nature. Kant further expanded this discourse, highlighting autonomy and moral rationality, and asserting that human dignity resides in the capacity to act in accordance with universal moral principles. In contemporary thought, posthumanist philosophy and transhumanism have reignited and transformed these debates. These movements explore the possibility of transcending human biological and cognitive limits through technology, prompting a reevaluation of what constitutes essential human traits and what might be mutable or contingent. Advances in biotechnology, artificial intelligence, and other technological innovations introduce significant ethical and ontological dilemmas: If we can radically alter our biological nature, does a fixed human essence still exist, or is it our inherent capacity for transformation that defines us?

Equally important is the socio-cultural dimension of this discussion. Human nature cannot be understood solely through biological or metaphysical frameworks; it must also be seen as a social and cultural construct. Theories of social identity and subjectivity indicate that our understanding of "humanity" is continually evolving, shaped by historical, social, and cultural contexts. Thus, any attempt to define human nature must incorporate this fluid and contextual perspective. This overview underscores the complexity of defining what it means to be human, as the task involves navigating the intersection of multiple dimensions—biological, psychological, social, cultural, and ethical. Furthermore, feminist theories, such as intersectionality and new materialisms, particularly through thinkers like Nancy Fraser, challenge traditional dichotomies and emphasize how intersecting factors shape our understanding of human nature.

(...) the possible new paradigm in feminist theories now seeks to explore new approaches and possibilities in relation to modern theories and what is today referred to as post-identity politics. Among the most compelling theories is, for example, feminist theory on intersectionality. This theory challenges the notion of a singular, stable identity while allowing for the mapping of intersections of various identities—such as class, race, ethnicity, and gender—that converge at specific moments (...)² (Lara 2014, 125-126)

In her critical analysis, Siobhan Guerrero challenges the traditional dichotomous structures that shape human thought, expanding her critique to encompass the dichotomies that pervade all of reality, which she views as a complex, dynamic network. Guerrero asserts that there is no single, unified dichotomy to be definitively overcome; rather, we are confronted with a multiplicity of interrelated dichotomies that can only be addressed through a profound reconfiguration of our ontological and epistemological frameworks. Within this context, Guerrero engages with contemporary theories that seek to transcend dualism, highlighting Bruno Latour's flat ontology as a notable example. Latour's approach, which proposes equal ontological status for all actors within a network, challenges modern dualist thought. However, Guerrero critiques this model, contending that ontological equality risks oversimplifying the intricate and varied relationships that constitute reality. Instead of advocating for uniform leveling, Guerrero proposes a porous ontology, one that acknowledges the interconnection and interdependence of entities while maintaining their distinctiveness. Her porous ontology does not seek to erase distinctions but to transform them into a framework that allows for the exploration of the relationships and mutual influences between human and non-human, material and immaterial. This perspective aligns with new materialism and posthumanist thought by emphasizing the importance of recognizing distributed agencies and the complex networks that shape the world. By proposing a porous ontology, Guerrero not only critiques

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<sup>2</sup> *Own translation:* (...)el posible nuevo paradigma de las teorías feministas intenta ahora hallar nuevos enfoques y posibilidades en relación con las teorías modernas y con lo que hoy se denomina como post-identity politics. De entre las teorías más interesantes se hallan, por ejemplo, la teoría feminista sobre la interseccionalidad. Esta cuestiona la identidad singular y estable, al mismo tiempo que permite trazar —mediante el concepto de la intersección de diversas identidades: de clase, raza, origen étnico y género, las cuales convergen en un momento determinado (...)

the limitations of dualism but also opens a broader horizon for understanding how diversity can coexist and collaboratively shape reality without succumbing to reductive homogenization. Furthermore, Guerrero encourages reflection on the ethical and political ramifications of adopting this ontological view. She argues that it calls for a reevaluation of the hierarchies and exclusions inherent in Western epistemologies. (Guerrero Mc Manus 2021) In this light, Guerrero offers the possibility of a more inclusive and dynamic mode of thought, one that addresses contemporary challenges from a relational, interconnected perspective.

Each of these dimensions provides a distinct, often complementary lens through which to examine what it means to be human. Nonetheless, it is possible to argue that certain fundamental traits, which we might refer to as ontological categories, are fundamental when discussing human nature. One such category, central to the analysis of the anti-aging movement<sup>3</sup>, is the aging process itself. This raises a critical intersection between the questions of human nature, aging, and biology. In contemporary discourse, scientific knowledge often holds an epistemic advantage over other forms of understanding; when science affirms something, it tends to be regarded as truth. Within this framework, biology emerges as one of the preeminent science in providing answers about the nature of humanity.

In modernity, the life sciences hold the authority to define "human nature" (although within this universality, biology has a long and regrettable history of inscribing hierarchical differences in the body and the brain). Since Darwin, science as a culture has attempted to explain our sense of identity. Time and again, the molecular biologists leading the sequencing of the human genome assured that the complete genome would constitute human identity.<sup>4</sup> (Rose y Rose 2019, 41)

The preponderance of biology and the sciences as a whole warrants scrutiny, as an unquestioning adherence to this perspective risks devolving into scientism and reductionism. Scientism, the belief that science is the ultimate authority on all forms of knowledge, and reductionism, which reduces complex phenomena to the simplest possible explanation, both present limitations when applied to understanding the human experience. While science undoubtedly provides valuable insights into the structure and function of the human body—offering empirical data on genetic, physiological, and neurological processes—it may overlook the richness of human existence that cannot be fully captured by biological or quantitative measures alone. Furthermore, the emphasis on scientific explanations risks sidelining other ways of knowing and understanding, particularly those rooted in philosophy, the humanities, and social sciences. These disciplines approach human existence with a focus on meaning, ethics, culture, and subjectivity—domains that cannot be reduced to mere biological processes. For instance, questions about consciousness, free will, and the nature of personhood demand more than biological explanations. As such, while we can concede that science provides important answers regarding the dynamics of human structure—such as understanding the brain's neurobiology or the genetic underpinnings of disease—it must be recognized as one component within a broader, more holistic framework of human inquiry.

Indeed, we can acknowledge that biology offers us valuable insights into human existence, particularly in its revelation of mortality as an inherent condition of all living organisms. Mortality, and crucially the awareness of it, are not merely biological facts but foundational elements of human experience. This recognition of our finite nature compels us to search for meaning, to create beliefs, cultures, and societies that help us navigate the existential challenges posed by our impermanence. Our vulnerability to death shapes human existence, fostering mutual dependence and the formation of bonds rooted in solidarity, empathy, and compassion. The acceptance of mortality, far from being

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<sup>3</sup> For a deeper exploration of the anti-aging transhumanist movement, as well as its scope and limitations, see: (El movimiento transhumanista anti envejecimiento: fundamentaciones para un ecocidio 2025) (El transhumanismo- la transformación del cuerpo y la lucha contra el envejecimiento. 2024) (Las dominaciones actuales a través de la eliminación de los cuerpos longevos y la oposición desde la filosofía de Robert Redeker 2023)

<sup>4</sup> *Own translation*: En la modernidad, las ciencias de la vida son las que detentan la autoridad para definir la "naturaleza humana" (si bien dentro de esta universalidad, la biología tiene una historia larga y deplorable de inscribir diferencias jerárquicas en el cuerpo y el cerebro). Desde Darwin, la ciencia como cultura ha intentado explicar nuestro sentido de identidad. Una y otra vez, los biólogos moleculares que dirigían la secuenciación del genoma humano aseguraron que el genoma completo constituiría la identidad humana.

a source of despair, has been a wellspring of wisdom in numerous philosophical and spiritual traditions.

In the Stoic tradition, for example, the contemplation of death is not seen as morbid, but rather to live a life of virtue and purpose. (Menziez y Whittle 2022) Marcus Aurelius and Seneca both advocated for a mindful awareness of death, seeing it as an impetus to prioritize what truly matters—moral integrity, inner peace, and a life aligned with nature. The Stoic approach emphasizes that by contemplating death, we can better appreciate the present moment, cultivate gratitude, and avoid distractions that detract from a meaningful existence. In existentialist thought, death occupies a similarly crucial role, though the approach is more focused on individual freedom and the burden of responsibility. Thinkers like Jean-Paul Sartre and Martin Heidegger argue that the awareness of death—what Heidegger terms "being-toward-death"—serves as a defining aspect of human existence. Death, in this context, is not just an end, but a horizon that gives shape and urgency to our lives. Confronting our mortality forces us to acknowledge our freedom to choose and the responsibility that comes with it, urging us to live authentically and embrace the uncertainty of life. Death, thus, becomes the very condition that allows life to have meaning and significance. Furthermore, in various spiritual traditions, the awareness of mortality is not only an existential realization but also a spiritual teaching. Buddhism, for instance, presents the contemplation of death to cultivate impermanence and detachment, fostering a deeper understanding of the transient nature of all phenomena. This understanding is said to lead to wisdom and compassion, as individuals recognize the shared fate of all beings and are motivated to act with kindness and mindfulness.

Hans Jonas proposes an ontology that goes beyond death, not only for human beings but for all organisms, in which their existence depends on the actions that sustain it. The German philosopher states that organisms are beings whose existence relies on their own actions. This means that their being is not something they possess in a stable way but is in constant becoming, generated by what they do. The being of an organism is, therefore, a continuous extension of its actions, and it only exists if these actions are carried out. In this way, ceasing to act also implies ceasing to be. Furthermore, the ability to act does not depend solely on the organisms but also on the environment, which can either support or hinder them. Thus, life is intrinsically linked to death, as the possibility of ceasing to act is present from the very beginning of life. (Jonas 2012, 65)

In the previous lines, we encounter an ontological understanding of the human being that is both insightful and pragmatically significant. A key ontological feature of any organism is its drive to maintain life, as its very survival is contingent upon this act. If we were to extend this ontological concept into the biological domain, we would be referring to metabolism, the fundamental set of processes by which an organism converts energy to sustain its vital functions. Metabolism is essential for life, as it governs growth, reproduction, and the maintenance of homeostasis, thereby ensuring the organism's continued existence. The human being, as an organism, depends on actions such as feeding and regulation to stay alive, which implies its ontological fragility: if it stops performing these actions, it loses its being. According to Jonas, this dependency not only falls on the organism but also on the environment, which determines whether it can continue to exist. Thus, fragility and vulnerability are inherent to organisms, evident in their dependence on external resources like food, water, and air. The lack of these resources can lead to illness or death, highlighting the precariousness of our biological existence.

All organisms are in continuous interaction with their environment, a relationship essential for their survival as it provides vital resources such as food, water, and shelter. However, this environment also presents potential threats—predators, harsh weather conditions, diseases—that can undermine the organism's survival and well-being, exposing its inherent fragility and vulnerability. Furthermore, the environment is dynamic and constantly evolving, requiring organisms to adapt to survive. Yet, adaptation is not instantaneous; it demands both time and resources, and when environmental changes surpass an organism's ability to adapt, its vulnerability increases, potentially jeopardizing its existence. Biological complexity increases the ontological vulnerability of organisms, including human beings, as any disturbance in their interconnected systems can affect their integrity. Moreover, human vulnerability extends to social and economic structures, which, while critical for well-being, are fragile and can be impacted by external factors such as wars or crises. Thus, human well-being is closely linked to the stability of social institutions.

These are traits that affect the fragility of the flesh; the body, particularly the aging body, makes this ontological characteristic of all living beings, including humans, evident. This ontological fragility can be overwhelming; it can generate fear at the possibility that our existence may end at any

moment due to the vulnerability it entails. We could say that the stigma toward aging arises precisely because it makes this fragility and mortality visible. "At its core, stigma is related to our materiality and our mortality, which is why, ultimately, we will need to change our attitude toward the body in order to effectively counteract the stigma."<sup>5</sup> (Nussbaum, *Nuestros cuerpos, nuestras vidas. Vejez, estigma y repugnancia*. 2018, 147) These aspects of human fragility are often rejected in various contemporary discourses, such as the anti-aging movement, which seeks to eradicate any sign of vulnerability.

This obsession with suppressing fragility is not limited to anti-aging but also extends to scientific research and technological developments aiming to eliminate the "bodily event" and the dissonances of life experience. The urgency to free ourselves from fragility and death has fostered the notion that these characteristics are obstacles to be overcome. However, this approach contrasts with human biology, as the diversity of life experiences—with their vulnerabilities and finitude—is key to the human condition. Rather than striving for unattainable perfection, it is more enriching to embrace the complexity of our existence, acknowledging that fragility and mortality are fundamental aspects of our humanity. Resisting their acceptance could lead us to lose the richness offered by life's diversity and unpredictability.

Organisms undergo a life cycle characterized by stages of growth, maturity, and aging, during which fragility and vulnerability fluctuate, becoming more pronounced in infancy and old age. Jürgen Habermas, in alignment with Hans Jonas, highlights this human fragility, particularly during these stages and in times of illness. According to Habermas, interpersonal relationships serve as a safeguard against this inherent fragility, providing a constructive response to the dependencies and needs arising from our organic vulnerability. These relationships, normatively regulated, form a "porous protective envelope" that mitigates the contingencies affecting both the vulnerable body and the embodied person. (Habermas 2002, 51) Returning to the ontological category of fragility, as highlighted by Habermas, it is evident that human vulnerability is a defining aspect of existence, particularly during infancy and old age. In infancy, human beings are inherently fragile and completely dependent on adult care for survival and development. In contrast, old age is marked by physiological changes that further expose human vulnerability. These changes include declines in muscle strength, bone density, and sensory acuity, all of which increase susceptibility to injuries and illnesses. Moreover, aging brings the inevitability of death into sharper focus, confronting individuals with the finite nature of human life and underscoring the fragility that defines the human condition throughout its lifecycle.

The anti-aging paradigm, with its aspiration to eradicate death and attain amortality<sup>6</sup>, appears to neglect a fundamental existential truth: the intrinsic interdependence of life and death. Hans Jonas emphasizes that death is not the antithesis of life but a fundamental condition that imparts meaning to it. The dynamic interplay between life and death enriches our understanding of existence and demands a conscious affirmation of life itself. Jonas suggests that the affirmation of life, the "yes," attains its full significance only when juxtaposed with the potential for "no." The ever-present possibility of death acts as a profound reminder of life's finitude, reinforcing the will to live. In this way, human vulnerability becomes a generative force, accentuating the value and urgency of existence while fostering a deeper appreciation of life's transient yet precious nature. (Jonas 2012, 68) The constant struggle for existence, confronting the possibility of non-existence, gives life its meaning. This dynamic process between "yes" and "no" reveals the value of life, which is affirmed through the transcendence of finitude. Without the possibility of death, our existence would lack purpose and motivation, much like inorganic matter, which does not need to reaffirm its being. The impossibility of immortality reinforces the inevitability of death, which, far from being an obstacle, adds value to life by reminding us of our fragility and temporality, urging us to live with greater intensity.

With the previous discussion, we have established that human vulnerability, and fragility can be understood as ontological categories, generally associated with old age. In this sense, we can

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<sup>5</sup> *Own translation*: En su núcleo esencial, el estigma tiene que ver con nuestra materialidad y nuestra mortalidad, por lo que en última instancia tendremos que cambiar de actitud hacia el cuerpo a fin de contrarrestar eficazmente el estigma.

<sup>6</sup> For a deeper view of this concept see: (El transhumanismo- la transformación del cuerpo y la lucha contra el envejecimiento. 2024)

consider that old age represents an insurmountable stage of human existence, as argued by Martha Nussbaum and Saul Levmore: "If we accept that old age is a stage of life, it follows that it is a reality we all share."<sup>7</sup> (Nussbaum y Levmore, *Envejecer con sentido*. 2018, 10) Martha Nussbaum's interpretation of old age, as explored through *King Lear*, provides a compelling critique of the desire to evade the inherent vulnerability associated with aging. Lear's journey exemplifies how power and autonomy, especially when tied to dominance over others, amplify the fear of fragility that comes with aging. This fear of dependency extends beyond the personal realm and becomes a societal issue, particularly for those in positions of power—political and economic elites—who are often driven by an impulse to maintain control and autonomy at all costs. The transhumanist movement, with its focus on using biotechnology to overcome the limitations of aging, parallels this desire to escape the fragility of old age.

The pursuit of immortality or perpetual youth represents, in part, an attempt to bypass the vulnerability that is an unavoidable aspect of human existence. Yet, as Nussbaum's analysis of *King Lear* underscores, this desire to avoid dependence may be rooted in a fundamental misunderstanding of human life itself. The tragedy of Lear is not merely the loss of his power but his failure to confront his own vulnerability, which ultimately leads to his tragic end. In this light, the fear of aging and the pursuit of its eradication through biotechnology may reflect an ongoing struggle to come to terms with human fragility—one that overlooks the wisdom to be gained from embracing our dependence on others. By accepting vulnerability rather than attempting to eliminate it, we may uncover a deeper connection to our humanity, much like Nussbaum suggests Lear must achieve in order to truly understand the nature of his existence. (Nussbaum, *Vejez y control en el Rey Lear, y el peligro de la generalización*. 2018, 22)

Nussbaum, in her reflection on *King Lear*, draws attention to the king's failure to understand himself, highlighting how his illusion of omnipotence, derived from his political power, disconnects him from the inherent fragility of the human condition. This denial of vulnerability directly confronts the reality of old age, which relentlessly reveals the need for dependence and care. Lear's tragic fate emphasizes how a position of authority can obscure one's perception of their own vulnerability, creating a gap between authentic identity and the projected image of power. For Nussbaum, accepting fragility, dependence, and limitation is crucial to a true understanding of human nature. The parallel with contemporary elites seeking anti-aging solutions is both pertinent and revealing. Just like Lear, those who desire to evade the ravages of time not only fear the loss of vitality but also the potential loss of power and control over others. The pursuit of immortality, or more specifically, the battle against aging, reflects these elites' anxiety over losing their influence and dominance in their respective fields. The transhumanist obsession with perpetuating youth can thus be understood as an attempt to preserve not just the body in its optimal state, but also the image of invulnerability and authority that youth symbolize. In this light, the tragedy of Lear, whose loss of power and control leads him to confront his own fragility, becomes a metaphor for elites who seek to avoid the realities of aging and vulnerability.

This analogy reveals the deep-rooted desire in certain societal sectors to resist the inevitability of human frailty. The struggle against aging and the quest for longevity or immortality reflect a broader cultural anxiety about the loss of authority and self-determination. Just as Lear's recognition of his own mortality marks the turning point in his tragic arc, the denial of aging in contemporary discourse highlights a persistent refusal to confront the complexities of human vulnerability, dependence, and eventual decline. Thus, the analysis of Lear's character serves as a timely reminder that acknowledging our limitations and fragility is essential to achieving a more profound understanding of the self and our shared humanity. Shakespeare's *King Lear* offers a profound meditation on the inevitability of human fragility and the loss of power that accompanies aging. Lear's realization that his power is not absolute becomes a sobering lesson about the limitations of the human condition. In a similar vein, those in positions of power, particularly elites seeking anti-aging solutions—appear to be attempting to avoid confronting the same vulnerability that Lear could not escape. By trying to control the uncontrollable, such as the aging process, these individuals are confronted with the paradox of attempting to subvert a natural law that, in its very inevitability, underscores the fragile nature of human existence.

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<sup>7</sup> *Own translation*: Si aceptamos que la vejez es una época de la vida, de ahí se deriva que es una realidad que todos tenemos en común.

Central to this analysis is the relationship between control, power, and the construction of identity. If human identity is largely constructed through the ability to control one's environment and, in many instances, others, it is understandable why the desire to eliminate aging arises. Aging symbolizes the erosion of control and power, making it not only a biological process but also a threat to the constructed image of invulnerability that many strive to uphold. However, this fear of aging is not confined solely to the elites; it reflects a broader human anxiety that seeks to avoid confronting the inherent fragility of the human condition. The desire to escape aging, as a manifestation of the fear of fragility and loss of power, resonates across diverse social strata, suggesting that vulnerability is not merely a concern of the powerful but a universal human anxiety. The pursuit of immortality or strategies to mitigate human frailty represents a widespread resistance to accepting our biological limitations. Ironically, this resistance may strip us of the very essence of what it means to be human—vulnerable, finite, and deeply interconnected with the world around us. The fear of aging and the loss of power is particularly acute for those whose identity is tied to their ability to exert control over others. As they age and face physical and cognitive decline, they experience an existential threat, as the transition to dependence can be perceived as a humiliation. This fear of impotence drives the pursuit of anti-aging, seen as an attempt to avoid the vulnerability that comes with aging. However, in trying to suppress this fragility, a deeper existential crisis is concealed, linked to the loss of control over the body and life.

Nussbaum examines the relationship between the stigma associated with aging and the fear of death, emphasizing how both reflect a perception of vulnerability inherent to the human condition, as Jonas argued. She identifies two types of stigmas that, while distinct, share similarities: the rejection of people with physical and mental disabilities, which evokes fear of weakness and dependence, and the rejection of aging bodies, which reflects a fear of decay and the proximity of death, rather than envy or fear of superior power or intellect. Both stigmas are linked to an aversion to human vulnerability. (Nussbaum, *Nuestros cuerpos, nuestras vidas. Vejez, estigma y repugnancia*. 2018, 136) By equating physical and cognitive disabilities with aging bodies, Nussbaum sheds light on the anxiety that arises when confronting the fragility inherent to biological existence. This fragility becomes a source of discomfort for many, as evidenced by the relentless pursuit of the anti-aging movement to eradicate it. In this sense, the stigma surrounding aging becomes a symbol of our collective struggle against the inevitability of physical decline and, by extension, against our own mortality. Nussbaum also emphasizes that aging is an unavoidable phenomenon for humans. In this context, the stigma and fear of aging stem precisely from its inevitability.

“In individuals without disabilities, there is also a sense of relief, though an uneasy one, when observing the bodies of those with disabilities: they are different, and I am not like that. With elderly bodies, however, there is no such relief: no matter how much a younger person tries to confine the elderly to ‘otherness,’ on some level, they know they will become like that in the future—unless their fate is, even worse, a premature death.<sup>8</sup>” (Nussbaum, *Nuestros cuerpos, nuestras vidas. Vejez, estigma y repugnancia*. 2018, 136)

Aging, unlike disability, is an inevitable destiny for everyone. This is why the anti-aging movement is so appealing, as it offers the possibility of avoiding that perceived fateful outcome and eliminating the fragility inherent to the human condition. The resistance to accepting our fragility and vulnerability reflects a deep fear of losing control and autonomy. However, as we stated before, philosophies such as Stoicism and Buddhism teach us that much of our existence lies beyond our control and that wisdom lies in embracing this reality. Rather than fearing aging or attempting to avoid it, we could learn to experience it fully, prioritizing a good quality of life that values physical, emotional, and social well-being, while fostering participation and a sense of purpose during this stage. Accepting our inherent vulnerability can strengthen our connection to humanity and foster a more serene perspective on existence. Acknowledging this reality can also encourage intergenerational solidarity, understanding that aging is a shared destiny. By adopting this perspective, we can promote policies and practices that value and celebrate the contributions of older adults, enhancing their quality of life and enriching society. Embracing vulnerability as an essential

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<sup>8</sup> *Own translation*: En las personas «sin discapacidad» también hay alivio, aunque un alivio intranquilo, al observar los cuerpos de los discapacitados: son diferentes, y yo no soy así. Con los cuerpos ancianos no existe ese alivio: por mucho que una persona más joven intente confinar a los ancianos en la «otredad», en cierto nivel sabe que será así en el futuro, a menos que su destino sea, aún peor, una muerte prematura

trait of the human condition can lead to more empathetic and inclusive communities, capable of appreciating each stage of life with its unique virtues and challenges.

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