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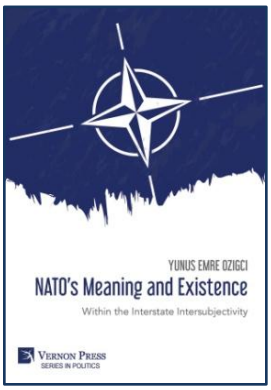
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NATO's Meaning and Existence: Within the Interstate Intersubjectivity

By Yunus Emre Ozigci (Author) (Publisher: Vernon Press 2026)

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Yunus Emre Ozigci is an exceptional researcher, diplomat, and international relations theorist in his own right. He is a skilled negotiator and a prolific writer deeply rooted in the history of diplomacy. His scholarly work demonstrates that the convergence of continental political philosophy and the field of International Relations (IR) has always been his intellectual aspiration, one he seeks to help bring into reality. He remains firmly committed to this objective, even though publishing his ideas carries the considerable risk of jeopardizing his career in an environment that often rewards conformity over originality.

His NATO's Meaning and Existence (2026), like his previous publications, does not follow the standard script of recycled, uninspiring solutions drawn from outdated textbooks to address contemporary problems. Instead, it offers genuine insight into modern foreign policy, informed by decades of diplomatic experience: he currently serves in Turkey's diplomatic corps in one of the most geostrategically significant regions of Africa. This book provides a contemplative critique of NATO's nature, in contrast to conventional political textbooks that often repeat flattering slogans without critical reflection.

Political philosophers and practicing diplomats typically avoid overlapping areas of inquiry of this kind. Ozigci, however, is determined to demonstrate that NATO, in its current form, is not the most competitive strategic or institutional actor. From his perspective, it faces increasingly unpredictable security challenges and a profound existential crisis that cannot be resolved without conceptual rethinking.

Ozigci does not merely write about the challenges NATO faces; he identifies its moment of Heideggerian "thrownness" into the world, that is, its condition of confronting internal unease generated by forces beyond its control. Ultimately, he also exposes its tendency to obscure or downplay these problems.

This distinguished diplomat and accomplished scholar offers a rare analysis of how NATO navigates the shifting dynamics of bipolar, unipolar, and emerging multipolar world

orders. He draws effectively on IR theory, particularly Waltz's structural realism and Hedley Bull's concept of an international society, to engage more deeply with questions surrounding the ontological status of states, polarity, and structure, as well as the evolving realities of global power configurations. In doing so, he moves beyond a purely constructivist critique of fixed or taken-for-granted assumptions.

Ozigci is at his most compelling when he moves beyond IR theory into political philosophy, phenomenology, and ontology. Rather than assuming NATO to be the dominant strategic or institutional actor and reiterating conventional policy assessments, he critically deconstructs its ontological structure, situating it within the intersubjective reality of its material and theoretical foundations. He calls for a redefinition of NATO's role in today's shifting geostrategic landscape through a deeper philosophical inquiry into how its identity and temporality have evolved across bipolar, unipolar, and emerging multipolar orders. NATO's bureaucratic establishment is likely to reject his arguments, as Ozigci demonstrates that it is increasingly unable to articulate a coherent long-term strategic vision in a rapidly changing security environment. He does not merely critique NATO's current modus operandi as shaped by bureaucratic inertia, which may echo Emmanuel Macron's concerns about institutional stagnation. Rather, he also carefully distances himself from foreign policy populism, even when it contains partial truths, and highlights deeper challenges related to future cognitive and strategic disruptions that adversaries may generate, challenges that decision-makers in Brussels and Washington are still struggling to grasp fully.

Ozigci's original approach invites the reader on an intellectual journey toward understanding NATO's nature. Like any serious ontologist and phenomenologist, he begins provocatively by questioning whether NATO actually exists. He examines its substance and assesses whether its supposed properties can be regarded as real in the strict, narrow sense of objectivity. He treats NATO, as well as the broader field of international relations, as a socially constructed concept, an entity in transition from a bipolar to a multipolar order, shaped by unresolved tensions that influence the temporalization of intersubjective identity rather than institutional persistence. His fusion of phenomenology with IR structural analysis encourages readers to reconsider familiar and seemingly self-evident meanings that are often taken for granted in similar debates, and to interrogate the assumed objectivity of institutional presence.

Office buildings, documents, meetings, declarations, rituals, and officials, elements commonly cited as evidence of NATO's ontological reality, along with the meanings and value ascribed to them, are reinterpreted in an intellectually provocative way that assigns a different existential, intersubjective, and transcendental significance to NATO's institutional architecture than that typically assumed by bureaucrats or policymakers, especially those representing parties to the Washington Treaty.

Ozigci does not take anything for granted. He instead engages deeply with a broader intellectual horizon that appears familiar and largely unchanged since the end of the Cold War. His analytical persistence leads him to expose significant fractures in the conventional architecture of appearances, buildings, documents, rituals, and personnel included. NATO in 2026, in his view, is clearly different from its earlier form, increasingly unable to respond effectively to ongoing cognitive and strategic challenges posed by its adversaries. The path forward, therefore, appears to involve a liberation and rearticulation of meaning beyond conventional strategic discourse.

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In this respect, Ozigci evokes Jacques Derrida through his conceptual agility and his willingness to reanimate and destabilize established categories with intellectual precision and interpretive boldness.

His diplomatic experience gives him a strong foundation for addressing these challenges not in a purely metaphysical sense, but through lived, real-world practice. He clearly recognizes that the world has changed in ways that affect all NATO member states. As a result, conventional objective descriptions and narratives of NATO appear increasingly insufficiently formulated. Ozigci's ontological inquiry is practical, grounded, and accessible, rather than something that can be dismissed as abstract speculation. His method refines IR theory by adding a broader intellectual coherence that goes beyond debates over verifiable evidence, while remaining firmly anchored in empirical reality rather than in abstract philosophical constructions. His attempt to interrogate NATO's existence draws inspiration from the classical Socratic method of questioning foundational assumptions, with a clear emphasis on remaining within the actual world, rather than drifting into metaphorical "metaverses" or purely speculative philosophical spaces.

A key contribution of his approach is that it expands the discussion of NATO beyond the internal perspectives of member states to include how the organization is perceived externally by actors outside the alliance, thereby moving beyond NATO's strictly defensive self-definition. In this deep convergence of continental political philosophy and International Relations, Ozigci reflects on NATO's modus operandi not only in terms of immediate policy challenges but from a more contemplative and philosophical standpoint. In his inquiry into NATO's foundational nature, he draws on Husserlian and Heideggerian phenomenology to explore the intersubjective layers of reality, while also engaging Cartesian existential ontology to examine which properties meaningfully constitute NATO's essence.

His approach is further informed by Sartrean existentialism, in which existence precedes essence, by Merleau-Ponty's analysis of familiarity and perception, and by Alfred Schütz's concept of the lifeworld. He also engages Kantian transcendentalism with its emphasis on normativity in international order, and Hegelian dialectics in examining historical transformation. At times, he provocatively introduces Engelsian materialism to contrast NATO's institutional-material foundations with its dialectical temporal evolution. In doing so, Ozigci integrates philosophical insights from figures such as Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Jacques Derrida into the study of International Relations in a way that is both systematic and interpretively ambitious.

While Ozigci is justified in adopting a deeper mode of reflection when analyzing NATO's past, present, and future challenges, particularly in relation to the transition from bipolarity to multipolarity, one limitation of the work is that it is less explicitly critical of NATO's leadership in addressing these issues. That said, this restraint is understandable, as a sharper focus on immediate leadership failures might risk overshadowing the book's broader philosophical contribution and its effort to conceptualize NATO's condition of "thrownness" in a changing world.

This is also a methodological choice that may reflect the influence of Waltz's structural realism and its systemic focus. From a Kissingerian perspective, however, this relative lack of direct critique of leadership could be interpreted as a limitation in an otherwise intellectually robust and conceptually rich work.

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COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

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