



The Importance of Hans Jonas' Work in a Post-Pandemic World of COVID-19

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Abstract

The main objective of this thesis is to promote a discussion between Hans Jonas ethical thinking, which do not concern the possibility of an ethics of environmental care. Philosopher Hans Jonas maintains that human survival depends on our efforts to care for our planet and its future. This is the new optical responsibility that must also guide the way we view the environment, which recognize or ignore the effect that today's technologies tomorrow, associated or legacy of Hans Jonas, with a new environmental perspective, knowing new realities and discussing Subjectivity today is important for the development of sustainable equilibrium strategies on the planet. This paper reflects on Hans Jonas' main concepts for prevention, risk anticipation, and the possibility of technological effects that could cause damage to the planet or unpredictable consequences. It is an immanent work through the works of Hans Jonas, discussing his concept of subjectivity new theoretical perspectives for the understanding of environmental problems.

Keywords: Hans Jonas; Sustainable Balance; Ethics of Environmental Care

The Main Concepts in the Legacy of Hans Jonas

In this work we will highlight a very important philosopher in the 20th century, Hans Jonas, a prominent thinker, who not only managed to fill a gap in science and philosophy, but also took him, especially biology, to the domain of philosophy. He built "Philosophical Biology". He is also known for his ethics of responsibility, a topic that will be discussed in this work. Jonas, was born in Monchengladbach, Germany, on May 10, 1903, the son of Jewish immigrants, his family roots provided him with contact with the Jewish religion with which he maintained close relations. In 1921, he decided to study in Freiburg, attracted by Husserl's fame. There he meets Martin Heidegger and starts attending the seminars

offered by him and immediately admire the philosophy of the young professor, absorbing his philosophy [1]. Despite the direct contact with great philosophers, Jonas directed his initial studies to themes related to religion, it is worth highlighting even a great influence of him, for studies in Psychology of Religion. In 1921, he decided to go to Berlin and simultaneously enrolled at Friedrich-Wilhelms University [1].

Jonas' Main Works

- The life principle: foundations for a philosophical biology [2].
- The principle of responsibility: an ethics test for technological civilization [3].

- Ethics, medicine and technique [4].

In addition to these works, there are hundreds of essays, conferences and published articles. He received several decorations, awards and honorary titles. However, it was in Germany that his thinking gained the deserved attention. He died on February 5, 1993, aged 89, in New York, leaving a very important legacy for the present day [1]. He is part of a group of philosophers whose personal life trajectory has been deeply linked to his philosophy, making any attempt to understand his thinking in isolation impossible. In addition, his intellectual trajectory was deeply marked by critical historical studies on the gnosis of ancient Christianity, by Heidegger's philosophy and by biological studies, through the philosophy of biology [1].

In order to understand Jonas' thinking and his ethical theory, it is important to know the main influences he received during his intellectual training. Bearing in mind the phases of his thought, it is not possible to understand ethics without first going through his historical studies of gnosis and studies about biological and existential phenomena; however, no less important in the genesis of his thinking, was the influence of Heideggerian thinking, with emphasis on the categories of existence and the issue of modern technique. From this union between theoretical development and the capacity for transformation, human power of action went beyond all natural limits, however insistent human interventions might have been, nature remained unchanged. But now, with the new capacity for action coupled with cumulative effects, it can effectively be in danger of all life on the planet. If, before, concerns remained within the sphere of close human actions, now it is necessary to take into account the future of generations [5,6].

Do traditional ethics prove to be insufficient to respond to contemporary appeals? What are the new imperatives proposed by Jonas as an antidote against modern nihilism? Do these imperatives have contradictions, like the old imperatives of religions? In your constitutions, do the new imperatives have a universal, collective and long-term character? He proposes to argue that traditional anthropocentric ethics is outdated and no longer meets the needs of this new technological society. The technique modified human action and this change brought new situations that traditional ethics, according to Jonas, are not capable of solving [7-10]. Jonas believed that he should follow certain risks for the establishment of a new ethics, in which values were more than a matter of subjective choice, the risk of deriving certain obligations from existing. The fact that this issue has assumed global and planetary dimensions is a result of the expansion of our power. The human being in Jonas assumes a responsibility for extremely wide-ranging decisions, with unpredictable consequences. This era of

technology, which faces the challenges of modernity?

Through his book "The Principle of Responsibility", he discusses a greater concern with a set of behaviors, ways of acting for an ethics focused on the future, which is intended to guide the new dimensions of human action. The discussions about the contemporary phenomena of the different spaces in which man is placed places this being as responsible for interfering and altering nature, according to Jonas, it becomes necessary for man to become responsible for the present and future generations [8]. For this reason, life, and especially its preservation, is the main objective of the principle of responsibility. Hans Jonas' theory of life and how it has become essential for the elaboration of the new ethics of the future, proposed in the "Responsibility Principle", as well as the elements that are necessary for this ethics based on responsibility to be make it possible. For this, it is essential to discuss Jonas' theoretical assumptions.

He states that the value of something is only perceived when it is threatened with extinction, motivates him to use threats (the heuristic of fear), a kind of catastrophe of modernity. He considers that we must modify men's behavior before it is too late. If not, the potential disappearance of the human species will become a real and irreversible destruction [8]. Several areas of knowledge, such as Philosophy and Ecology, have adopted Jonas' concepts to adapt them to the object of his study, for possible diagnoses and solutions regarding the environmental problem.

Hans Jonas and COVID-19

Now that we know that it is our duty to resolve the dilemma between economic and social values, we must recognize, that they must be completely separated or trying to realign themselves, inventing new economic systems. The question is: is it worth rebuilding our social values to rebuild better economic values? Can we change the way we live to ensure that others can live after us? These forest fires, together with the growing natural disasters in recent years and especially the current health crisis, from COVID-19, have raised these issues in the most desperate way. The Covid-19 that we are currently facing, which includes infection and potential hospitalization, serious economic losses, widespread adverse impacts on mental health and indefinable deadlines for the complete restoration of conventional services.

We can highlight three interactions, person-environment that were violently interrupted by Covid-19 and we consider their likely impact on the experience of the purpose: how we get involved with work, how we get involved in education and how we deal with physical problems. Notably, these domains of interaction have been central to the environmental and ecological perspectives of psychology, as well as for the

study of the goal in life. As the uncertainties surrounding this biological risk continue to proliferate, we briefly highlight how Covid-19 can impact each person-environment interaction in ways that are detrimental to the maintenance, development or enactment of goals [11-14].

There are long-standing studies of Environmental Psychology, which discussed disasters of this proportion, [12,15], predicting how people will interact in these new environmental challenges, even in the midst of a disaster. It is important to recognize that, unlike other calamities, no damage to the built environment was suffered. In fact, the schools, neighborhoods and workplaces where individuals cultivated their sense of purpose remain intact. The challenge, then, is to tackle that moment with a rigorous research agenda designed to inform how people can feel intentional when opportunities to get meaningfully involved in their daily activities change. Finally, just as the fight against this pandemic is likely to change societies in profound and permanent ways, we call for an openness to change for issues that will need to incorporate more discussions about the environment. As a resource for engagement in life, we look forward to paying attention to these person-environment interactions and discovering lasting ways to help people maintain a greater sense of responsibility and environmental care.

Conclusion

Studying the biological philosophy of Hans Jonas is extremely important, in order to better preserve the environment, and we believe that Jonasian concepts within a context for psychology will have an important role to play, by providing conceptual guidelines on how to analyze a given configuration as a reference to its contextual structure. Just as Jonas argued the relationship between environments and people needs to be incorporated into our analytical framework. Yes, there is every reason to argue that this should be the new impetus for a more ecologically responsible society, because the implications in these relationships between man, his freedom and the environment, will require the incorporation of a new analysis if we want to find solutions for the challenges they represent today.

We need to believe that current normality is a “failed” process, there are no other options for human societies, there is a need for a philosophical, psychological and educational shock, in order to develop new criteria, for technological development, we need a process to re-signify the reality for the establishment of new subjectivities in the modern world. The central intention of this work, in addition to providing theoretical material and rethinking Hans Jonas’ concepts, and psychology, is to call attention to the fact that this, perhaps, is the last opportunity, to rethink our way of life, established by

current economic and value standards.

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