

TEACHING THE FUTURE: HANS JONAS'S ETHICS OF RESPONSIBILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Dr. Yufenyuy Berinyuy Frankline (Ph.d)

Catholic University of Cameroon, (CATUC), Bamenda

Abstract

In today's world, where we're grappling with incredible technological advancements and a delicate ecological balance, education has a crucial role in equipping individuals to respond thoughtfully to the future of life on our planet. While traditional teaching methods often emphasize sharing knowledge about environmental issues or encouraging behavioral changes, they often overlook the importance of nurturing moral foresight and ethical imagination needed to tackle long-term ecological challenges. This paper posits that Hans Jonas's ethics of responsibility provides a powerful philosophical basis for environmental education, focusing on care, foresight, and accountability for both current and future life. The discussion starts by delving into Jonas's critique of modern technology and its unprecedented ability to alter nature, pointing out the shortcomings of classical ethical frameworks in dealing with these existential threats. It then lays out Jonas's key principle of responsibility, which is rooted in anticipating potential harm and the moral duty to protect the continuity of life. This ethical perspective broadens the scope of moral consideration to include future generations and the wider natural world. Building on this theoretical groundwork, the paper examines how Jonas's ideas can influence educational theory and practice. It argues that environmental education should nurture students' ethical imagination, emotional involvement, and understanding of interdependence, fostering a profound sense of responsibility for the future. Teaching strategies inspired by Jonas's ethics include reflective inquiry, hands-on learning experiences, and interdisciplinary methods that blend scientific knowledge with moral and existential contemplation.

This paper argues that we need to rethink environmental education through the lens of Jonasian responsibility. It suggests that teaching should go beyond just passing on knowledge; instead, we should aim to cultivate ethical individuals who can nurture both life and our ecological systems. By doing this, it presents a vision of education as a forward-thinking and morally transformative journey, focused on safeguarding and promoting life for future generations.

Keywords: Hans Jonas, ethics of responsibility, environmental education, ecological ethics, future generations, moral imagination, pedagogy, sustainability