THE SEARCH FOR A NEW ETHICS OF LIFE AND DEATH IN THE TECHNOLOGICAL AGE: A DIALOGUE BETWEEN PETER SINGER AND HANS JONAS

By

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Abstract

In the prologue to his book, *Rethinking Life and Death: The Collapse of Our Traditional Ethics* Peter Singer makes the following revolutionary claims; "after ruling our thoughts and our decisions about life and death for nearly two thousand years, the traditional western ethic has collapsed" (Singer, 1994). This is because as he argues the development in medical technologies has expanded our moral and intellectual horizons, forcing humans to think and ask questions about issues they previously had no need to consider, or rethinking issues they had previously accepted without further reflections, like issues about life and death. Unfortunately, and according to Singer, the traditional ethics which humans often rely on to address issues about life and death stands on shaky foundations and needs a total replacement. Singer is not the first whistle blower on the impact of technological advancement on traditional western ethics. Hans Jonas in *The Imperative of Responsibility: In Search of an Ethics for the Technological Age* advocates for a new ethical framework that addresses the challenges posed by modern technology. While Singer and Jonas agree that there is something wrong with the traditional western ethics they disagree on the way out. Singer believes that traditional Western ethics has become obsolete and should be replaced, while Hans Jonas rather challenges the anthropocentric nature of this ethics, suggesting the need for it to be upgraded and made more inclusive to better address the moral dilemmas of the technological age. This paper is a dialogue between Peter Singer and Hans Jonas on the search for a new ethics in the

technological age. The paper shall adopt philosophical conceptual and contextual analysis and clarifications.

Keywords: Peter Singer, Hans Jonas, New Ethics, Life and Death, Technological Age

Brief Academic Profile

Dr. Laiven Kizitor Mbuwir Holds a PhD in peace and conflict studies from the University of Buea, Cameroon. He is currently an MBA program coordinator and lecturer in the University Institute of the Tropics, IUGET-Douala, Cameroon. He is a Peacebuilding specialist, Peace and Conflict Consultant, a Gender Activist and a trainer in the Human Person Oriented Approaches HPOA in dealing with conflicts.