Hans Jonas – Werk, Rezeption, Aktualität

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**Bild/Image**

Roberto Franzini Tibaldeo[[1]](#footnote-1)

Abstract

Among the questions I shall address are the following: What role does the notion of «image» play in Jonas’ ontological and anthropological reflection? How is the «image» related to bodily experience? Why and how does the «image» gain ethical relevance? How should we understand Jonas’ reference to the «image of man» and the «ontological idea of man» as something which has to be preserved?

Jonas utilises the expression the «image of man» in order to highlight the human being’s distinctiveness: it is indeed thanks to the mediation of the «image» that the human being acquires a unique (= eidetic) degree of distance and freedom from the world, which then develops into reflective self-awareness and reflection. However, thanks to these features, the human being achieves the unprecedented capacity of stretching to the limit the dialectical dynamic of freedom and necessity, autonomy and dependence, self and world, transcendence and immanence, immutability and change, viz. the very dynamic of life on which humans after all rely. In other words, human freedom cherishes the thought of disposing of this dynamic basis, regardless of the fact that this would result in self-negation. It is in order to avert this menace that the image’s second attribute has to be put forward – an attribute which is indeed endowed with normative relevance: the human being – states Jonas – lives and performs his or her «outward conduct after the image of what is man’s». Thus, apart from distantiating and separating, the image is also capable of connecting. It is thanks to this feature that human freedom recovers its relationship with total reality and with responsibility. Indeed, Jonas’ ethics stems from a bio-anthropological enquiry pivoted on the image-experience, whose core features and ethical relevance I wish to clarify.

1. F.R.S.-FNRS Chargé de recherches, Université catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve (Belgium). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)