



Hans Jonas's Ethic of Responsibility: From Ontology to Ecology (SUNY series in Environmental Philosophy and Ethics)

Theresa Morris

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Articulates the fundamental importance of ontology to Hans Jonas's environmental ethics.

Despite his tremendous impact on the German Green Party and the influence of his work on contemporary debates about stem cell research in the United States, Hans Jonas's (1903–1993) philosophical contributions have remained partially obscured. In particular, the ontological grounding he gives his ethics, based on a phenomenological engagement with biology to bridge the “is-ought” gap, has not been fully appreciated. Theresa Morris provides a comprehensive overview and analysis of Jonas's philosophy that reveals the thread that runs through all of his thought, including his work on the philosophy of biology, ethics, the philosophy of technology, and bioethics. She places Jonas's philosophy in context, comparing his ideas to those of other ethical and environmental philosophers and demonstrating the relevance of his thought for our current ethical and environmental problems. Crafting strong supporting arguments for Jonas's insightful view of ethics as a matter of both reason and emotion, Morris convincingly lays out his account of the basis of our responsibilities not only to the biosphere but also to current and future generations of beings.

“Theresa Morris is making Hans Jonas's ethics and philosophy of life easier to digest by analyzing his main ideas that seemed lost in the darkness, inaccessible due to the language barrier or because he did not publish much of his work in his lifetime or maybe just because we are too focused on our transitory interests to realize the importance of metaphysics when it comes to nature, which is the only key when it comes to providing a solid ontological foundation for ethics.” — META

Theresa Morris is a Visiting Faculty Member in Philosophy at Bennington College.

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