THE DEATH OF PSYCHOLOGY: THE INTERFERENCE OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN SUBJECTIVITY AND INTER-HUMAN

A MORTE DA PSICOLOGIA: A INTERFERÊNCIA DAS NOVAS TECNOLOGIAS NA SUBJETIVIDADE E NAS RELAÇÕES INTER-HUMANAS

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ABSTRACT

Hans Jonas, Harari, and Han address the impact of technology on human life. While Jonas lacks experience in algorithms and AIs, he predicted rapid technical-scientific evolution. He also knew that new technologies would affect human relationships, and between the lines, he subtly left the idea that psychology would face some challenges. Through a bibliographical review, concepts such as transparency in society and the infosphere will be analyzed, revealing the increasing digitalization. Consequently, the emphasis on digital information compromises subjectivity and introspection, as warned by Harari. Furthermore, with massive data collection, algorithms and AIs can manipulate and describe individuals in detail, requiring a review of contemporary ethical values.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence; Psychology; Intersubjectivity; Algorithms; Challenges.

RESUMO

Hans Jonas, Harari e Han abordam o impacto da tecnologia na vida humana. Enquanto Jonas carece de experiência em algoritmos e IAs, previu a rápida evolução técnico-científica. Ele também sabia que as novas tecnologias afetariam relações humanas e nas entrelinhas deixa sutilmente a ideia de que a psicologia enfrentaria alguns desafios. Por meio de uma revisão bibliográfica, serão analisados conceitos como sociedade da transparência e infoesfera, revelando a digitalização crescente. Consequentemente, a ênfase na informação digital compromete a subjetividade e a introspecção, como alertado por Harari. Além disso, com a coleta massiva de dados, algoritmos e IAs podem manipular e descrever indivíduos detalhadamente, exigindo uma revisão dos valores éticos contemporâneos.

Palavras-chaves: Inteligência Artificial**;** Psicologia; Intersubjetividade; Algoritmos; Desafios.

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1 INTRODUCTION

It has not been long since psychology began to gain notoriety within academic spaces. Wilhelm Wundt, who is recognized as the father of academic psychology, died in 1920; that is, it has been just over 100 years since this field of study entered the rigorous scientific world. Despite its young age, psychology has already developed a lot. This is so true that, currently, the most correct term is psychologies (Bock, 2008). Another interesting fact is that over the decades, psychology has had to face several setbacks. One of the major problems faced by this area of knowledge was the lack of practical applicability of many of its studies. Wundt, for example, was heavily criticized by some academics for the fact that his studies had no applicability.

Furthermore, this problem regarding its applicability was just one of the challenges faced by psychology in the search for its subsistence. The most interesting fact that should be noted here is that the very search for subsistence coerces the various fields of science, including psychology, to transform and adapt to the limitations and needs of the historical context in which they are inserted. In this quest to adapt and develop science, they often seek to maintain a constant dialogue with technology, which in turn also develops when it is combined with science (JONAS, 2017). This almost mutualistic relationship between science and technology is the great driver of the development of academic and social realities. Therefore, the most important fact to be reported at this moment is that, in contemporary times, any science that wants to develop and stay alive must dialogue with technology, including psychology.

In recent decades, several revolutionary research projects have been developed, mainly in the fields of biotechnology and computer science. Artificial intelligence (AI) is one of the fruits of these new technological advances. In addition to AI, other products of these new times can also be mentioned here, such as genetic manipulation. In this sense, based on the analysis of this scenario, Harari (2016) reports that the human being as we know it may cease to exist to make room for what this author calls Homo Deus, men with the characteristics of gods.

Another fact that deserves to be highlighted, and which is linked to the development of AI, is the increasing digitalization of the world, or, in other words, the increasing immersion of people in the digital world. From this perspective, according to Harari (2016), the valorization of subjectivity and introspection is being left aside nowadays, as what starts to be valued and what appears to give meaning is the constant feeding of the flow of information in the digital world. Therefore, in this realm where the flow of information is the holder of the power of meaning, all people are impelled to hand over the data of their existence to it, such as ideas and experiences. With so much information about each person,

algorithmic analysis and artificial intelligence can manipulate and describe any human being in an incredibly detailed and precise way.

In this sense, the big question that must be raised here is: how to talk about psychology in the realm of information (Han, 2022a) and Homo Deus (Harari, 2016)? In other words, how can we talk about the practice, theory, and ethics of psychology in the face of so many technological advances that are directly interfering with the way people relate to others and to themselves? In short, the aim of these questions is to show that psychology, as we know it, may not be prepared for the changes that follow. In any case, it is a fact that psychology developed in recent decades appears to be in a state of existence analogous to that of a terminal patient. This is not necessarily bad, but it poses a question to science and demands a choice: adapt or die?

For the research, the following method was used: a bibliographic review. It is also important to immediately delineate that this is a qualitative study that aims to describe and explore current inter- and intra-human relationships to understand how they are being affected by technological advances and how this directly or indirectly affects psychology. To this end, articles were searched in the following databases: Google Scholar and Scielo, considering the last 5 years (2019–2023). The descriptors used were information and communication technology, psychology in postmodernity, dataism, and artificial intelligence. Qualitatively analyzed articles that mentioned psychology in the digital era and its adaptation to this new environment were included. Files that did not address psychology in the context of information technologies were excluded.

Furthermore, this research is also based on some books by the following authors: Harari, Byung-Chu Han, Jonas and Floridi. From these authors, the following books were mainly used: No Swarm: Perspectives of the Digital (Han, 2018); Palliative Society: Pain Today (Han, 2021b); Infocracy: Digitalization and the Crisis of Democracy (Han, 2022a); Transparency Society (Han, 2017); Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow (Harari, 2016); The Responsibility Principle: Essay on an Ethics for Technological Civilization (Jonas, 2006); and The Cambridge Handbook of Information and Computer Ethics (Floridi, 2010). Such texts were fundamental to the development of this study, as they clearly and succinctly present the reality of contemporary society and the way in which human relationships are changing because of new information technologies. It is worth highlighting here that we sought to bring books with the most up-to-date editions possible, and, as you can see, we aimed to bring some literary foundations in English.

The research will be carried out in two stages. In the first stage, a historical and sociological contextualization of current affairs will be carried out with the aim of understanding how inter-human relations and subjectivity have been affected by technological advances. Secondly, we will seek to

understand the impacts of this scenario on the world of psychology. It is worth highlighting, from the outset, that the effects of the action of technique and science on inter-human relations and subjectivity place psychology in a hostile and challenging environment, which coerces it to innovate. Furthermore, the intention here is not to dictate ways for psychology to face such difficulties; the main intention is simply to demonstrate how current affairs bring with them very important questions for the future of psychology.

2 FROM THEORETICAL REFLECTION TO DATA FLOW: IMPACTS ON HUMAN LIFE

We intend to work here on the main concepts that will be essential to understanding how current society is being impacted by technological advances and how subjectivity suffers from coercion by maintaining an endless flow of information. In this sense, the concepts of transparency society, intimacy society (Han, 2017), infosphere, re-ontologization, and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) (Floridi, 2010) will be presented. Such concepts will be essential to understanding how social structures are being destabilized, thus showing how necessary it is to review current ethical values.

2.1   THE PROBLEMATICS OF THE 21ST CENTURY

Humanity's history is marked by periods, some of which are natural and circular, depending on the seasons, climate, and planetary movements. Some are social, political, and linear, being determined, for example, by the succession of the Olympic Games or by the accession of a king. Still others are marked for religious reasons and are counted in years before and after a specific event, such as the birth of Christ. According to Floridi (2010, p. 3),

> What all of these and many other metrics (divisions) have in common is that they are all historical, in the strict sense that they all depend on the development of systems to record events and therefore accumulate and transmit information about the past. It is concluded that history is, in fact, synonymous with the information age, since prehistory is the age of human development that precedes the availability of recording systems (our translation).

In other words, humanity has been living in an information society for a long time. In fact, Harari (2016) reports that the condition of possibility for homo sapiens to stand out over other living beings is precisely its ability to transmit information. However, "only very recently have human progress and well-

being begun to depend primarily on the successful and efficient management of the information life cycle" (Floride, 2010, p. 3 – our translation).

The information society is expanding in contemporary times and covers the entire globe; however, no one can deceive themselves and think that this happened suddenly. The truth is that it took millennia of relatively silent gestation to be able to generate this new digital world, which brought with it new challenges that at first glance seem disturbing and that were unpredictable just a few decades ago. About this Floride (2010, p. 4, our translation) reports that:

> Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have been changing the world in a profound, irreversible, and problematic way since the 1950s, at a breathtaking pace and with unprecedented reach, making the creation, management and use of information, communication, and computing resources vital issues (our translation).

It is true that ICTs are transforming the world. For example, they are making communication and collaboration easier and more efficient. They are also democratizing access to information and education. However, many people feel under pressure in this scenario; such feelings are justified, as there is no way to hide some of the harms of these new technologies.

In any case, the development of ICT has brought enormous benefits and opportunities, but it has also far exceeded our understanding of its conceptual nature and implications. The complexity and global dimensions of ICTs mean that their benefits and harms are intertwined. In the words of Han (2022b, p. 20):

> In the algorithmically controlled world, people increasingly lose their power of action, their autonomy. They are confronted with a world that escapes their understanding. They follow algorithmic decisions but cannot understand them. Algorithms become black boxes. The world is lost in the deep layers of neural networks that humans do not have access to (our translation).

Another major problem that is somehow intertwined with this is the fact that ethical discourses cannot keep up with technological advances (Jonas, 2006). Regarding this, a simple analogy can help to understand the current situation: comparing the current globalized society with a tree, it can be said that technologies would be the branches and the roots would be the ethical framework. From this perspective, it is plausible to say that they already have a long reach and develop much more broadly, quickly, and chaotically than the conceptual, ethical, and cultural roots. The lack of balance is obvious, and this tree is in great danger of falling (Floridi, 2010).

Continuing this process of comparison, Floride (2010) uses the term "infosphere," a kind of neologism created based on the term biosphere, a word "that refers to this limited region of our planet

that sustains life. [In this sense, infosphere] denotes the entire informational environment constituted by all informational entities [...], their properties, interactions, processes, and mutual relationships" (Floride, 2010, p. 4—our translation). The infosphere also encompasses all offline and analog spaces where information circulates. Another neologism, created by this same author, is the word "re-ontologization," which designates the changes that occur because of technological advances and that have drastically transformed the infosphere, to the point that its very nature and essence have changed (Floride, 2010).

The digital world nowadays is so intertwined with the physical world that it would not be wrong to consider the immersion of the analog in the digital as a form of re-ontologization of the world. Furthermore, with these changes, the sphere of concepts and nature itself gain new perspectives with the advancement of ICTs. In addition, it can be said that even new realities are created, as

> the threshold between here (analog, carbon-based, offline) and there (digital, silicon-based, online) is quickly becoming blurred. The digital is spilling over into the analog and merging with it. This recent phenomenon is known as ubiquitous computing, environmental intelligence, internet of things or things augmented by the Web" (Floridi, 2010, p. 8 – our translation).

In short, the fact is that digital is everywhere today, and no one can deny that it is needed for many things, such as studying, working, communicating with other people, and so on.

Returning to work on the possible problems that new ICTs can bring, it is worth presenting Floridi's speech (2010, p. 8) when he states that there is a process of deofficialization and typification of individuals, and this ends up starting to "erode our sense of personal identity as well. We have become mass-produced anonymous entities among other anonymous entities, exposed to billions of other similar pieces of information online."

In other words, the search to meet the demand for a constant flow of information to keep the digital world alive ends up showing itself as a process of emptying identity, of what is unique to each person, that is, people then losing their authenticity. Because of this, Han (2017) presents the term "transparency society." According to him, the digital world coerces people to lose their distinctive characteristics so that information processing can be enhanced. Now, it is easier and faster to process the same information than different ones.

Having said these things, it is worth reaffirming, in case it was not already clear, that all beings, whether natural or artificial, enjoy, to a certain extent, the infosphere; therefore, the best way to face the new ethical challenges posed by ICTs must start from an approach taking into account the whole. Such an approach cannot privilege the natural but must treat all forms of existence and behavior as authentic and genuine, even those accessed by synthetic artifacts. This type of holistic or inclusive

environmentalism will require a change in how one perceives reality itself. Furthermore, this approach must be able to review the alliance between the natural and the artificial. Regarding this, Floride (2010, p. 19, our translation) adds that:

> The task is to formulate an ethical framework that can treat the infosphere as a new environment worthy of moral attention and care for the human information that inhabits it. This ethical framework must be able to address and resolve the unprecedented challenges arising in the new environment. It must be an e-environmental ethics for the infosphere. [...] unfortunately, I suspect that it will take some time and a whole new type of education and sensitivity to realize that the infosphere is a common space, which needs to be preserved for the benefit of all (our translation).

It is true that ethical reflections are time-consuming, as the variables that need to be analyzed in each situation, even in the apparently simplest contexts, are always very numerous. However, in past centuries, scientific advances and social transformations were not yet as accelerated as they are today, and ethical reflection was able, to a certain extent, to accompany each social and intrahuman transformation. When man decided to abandon his nomadic way of existing and began to lead a life based on agriculture, he had several centuries to ponder this change. When machines began to gain space in society, he had a few decades to analyze the impacts of this. However, currently, the changes caused by new technologies occur every second, and it is almost impossible to reflect on everything that occurs.

2.2   THE FLOW OF INFORMATION AND THE VITAL CONTEXT

Advances in science and information technologies in contemporary times have created a system of techniques with a power of articulation unprecedented in history (Lima, 2013). Digital media, for example, is a form of communication characterized by the simultaneous presence of the sender and receiver and the absence of intermediaries. The information is produced, transmitted, and received directly by the communication participants without the intervention of third parties, as it, when it exists, ends up being considered a lack of transparency, that is, it is inefficient. On this topic, it is worth bringing here the reflections of Han (2018), who states that contemporary society is marked by human beings' self-coercion for transparency, which is camouflaged in the discourse of freedom of information (Han, 2017).

It is important to make it clear from the beginning what transparency in society really is. In succinct words, transparent here designates the lack or elimination of negativity; it is the lack of differences. In the words of Han (2017, p. 10):

> Things become transparent when [...] they become shallow and flat when they fit without any resistance to the shallow course of capital, communication, and information. Things become transparent when they become operational, when they are subordinated to a process that can be calculated, governed, and controlled. [...] Therefore, the society of transparency is an infernal abyss (Hölle) of the same (our translation).

Today, we are active receivers and communicators of information, not passive ones. We are less satisfied with passively consuming data and more interested in creating and sharing information. We are both distributors and consumers at the same time. The amount of news and information increases significantly. Media offers more than just a passive viewing window; it also provides portals through which we can produce information ourselves (Han, 2018).

This new active role of people as information propagating agents and the lack of intermediaries between receiver and communicator allow the transparency society to have an increasingly intense flow of information, as it removes the distance between the sender and the receiver. This, in turn, "kills" the private sphere, since taking distance is essential for this space. This lack of distance publicly exposes intimacy and makes the private public uncomfortable. Still on this, it is important to highlight the following: without separation between these spheres, no good behavior is possible. (Han, 2018).

Furthermore, in the digital age, we deceptively imagine vast freedom of choice to the detriment of the diverse information available. We are constantly faced with the neoliberal information regime, where "felt" freedom guarantees the functioning of power (Han, 2017). We live in a contemporary world marked by complexity and confusion. The process of globalization has produced significant effects on social organization, including the rapid evolution of new technologies. These technologies open unimaginable possibilities, but their effects are interpreted differently by different people and social groups. Many, for example, think that technological advances have brought more harm than benefit, while others still prefer to believe that we currently live in a much calmer society due to the services offered by technological advances and their constant optimization (Lima, 2013).

However, very few people realize that institutions, values, politics, social relations, and the subjective world of each person need to be reanalyzed, considering that everything has been affected by contemporary technology (Jonas, 2006). As an example, there is no longer any way to think about public and political life without taking artificial intelligence (AI) into consideration. Now, how can you think about freedom to choose your candidate in a world where an AI can manipulate or condition a voter's political choice? How to talk about subjectivity and interiority when an A.I. Are you able to accurately describe the tastes, intentions, feelings, and neuroses of each person? (Harari, 2016)

Regarding the relationship between politics and new technologies, it is interesting to say that the digitalization of society is radically transforming our way of perceiving the world, of relating to it, and of

living with each other. Excess communication and information, which can be compared to a tsunami, is unleashing destructive forces, leading to massive fractures and dysfunctions in the democratic political process. Ultimately, democracy can degenerate into an infocracy, in which power is exercised through the manipulation of information (Han, 2018). Today, true power lies in the hands of those who can orchestrate the flow of information. Regarding this subject, it is interesting to include here Cosenza's speech (2023, p. 132):

> Today, companies like Google, Facebook, Apple or Amazon know more about us, our affective processes and our conduct than we do – and to an extent that we could not imagine in the recent past. Furthermore, there are entities and people with political or economic motivation who actively act to direct our decisions using instant means of communication, such as the internet and its virtual groups (our translation).

Regarding the difference between the infocratic and democratic systems, it is necessary to say that democracy is a slow, complex process based on arguments. Infocracy, on the other hand, is a quick, simple, emotion-based process. Furthermore, it cannot be forgotten that this information empire is based on transparency or uniformity, as this is what stabilizes and accelerates the system. To be able to sustain such a government, the information society presents a totalitarian power when it coerces all people to eliminate differences. and be transparent; in other words, infocracy has as a condition for the possibility of its existence the transformation of all people into machines, as only machines are fully quantifiable, analyzable, operational, and without ambivalence (Han, 2017).

This difference in logic and temporality makes democratic participation difficult, as false information spreads faster or as quickly as true information (Han, 2018). Worse than that is that, often, the intensity of the flow of information and information manipulation by some institutions causes truths and lies to intertwine to the point that one camouflages itself in the other and generates the famous fake news (D'ia-Logos na Web, 2021). In this regard, democracy as we know it:

> "It's in danger wherever citizens interact with opinion robots, allowing themselves to be manipulated by them, wherever operators, whose origins and motives are completely concealed, interfere and meddle in political debates." (Han, 2018, p.46)

Leaving political waiting and its problems aside, it is interesting now to turn to a brief analysis of the technological implications in the subjective world, in the private sphere. In this regard, it is plausible to bring here Han's (2017, p. 80) idea of intimacy society, according to this author:

> Today, the world is not a theater in which actions and feelings are represented and read, but a market where intimacies are exposed, sold, and consumed. The theater is a place of

> representation, while the market is a place of exhibition. Thus, nowadays theatrical representation is giving way to pornographic exhibition (our translation).

To say that society has become pornographic is to say that things have lost depth and that inter-human (I-you) and intra-human (I-I) relationships have become empty. All private experiences are exposed; emotions and feelings are exposed and put under the spotlight. The most interesting thing here is the fact that the search for transparency generates an existential void that society tries to fill with information; in other words, society is trapped in the consequences of its actions, as the problems caused by the effects of its actions only get worse when she tries to resolve them.

It must once again be made clear that the following points do not intend to offer answers to all possible questions that may have arisen or will arise, but rather intend to encourage a discussion that promotes and contributes to a better understanding of the current scenario. Furthermore, the aim here is to present the new challenges that the different areas of knowledge will and, to some extent, are already facing. A brief analysis of the new challenges that psychology faces and will face in the future will be presented.

2.3 CURRENT HISTORICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL CONTEXTUALIZATION: HOW INTRA AND INTER-HUMAN RELATIONS ARE AND HOW THEY COULD BE IN THE FUTURE?

In an increasingly complex and confusing global context, organizations have undergone changes throughout history. One of the main milestones of this evolution was the emergence of new technologies, such as the internet, which opened possibilities unimaginable a few decades ago. These technological advances have different meanings and directions for each social group today. In any case, it is a fact that nowadays, with technological advances in information technology, there has been a development in communication, which has ended up immensely changing the way people relate to each other (Lima, 2013).

The advent of new communication technologies has always been directly linked to an expression of control and dominance over a group (Antunes, 2017). In the digital age, unrestricted freedom of choice was mistakenly imagined to the detriment of the vast scope of information. However, people are often faced with some form of restriction, where this "freedom" appears to be ephemeral. For a better understanding of this scenario, it is worth bringing here the words of Han (2022a, p. 13):

> The digital technique of information turns communication into surveillance. The more we generate data, the more intensively we communicate, the more efficient surveillance becomes. The mobile phone as a surveillance and submission device explores freedom and communication. In information regimes, people do not feel monitored, but free. Paradoxically, it is the feeling of freedom that ensures domination. [...] Domination occurs now when freedom and surveillance coincide (our translation).

In this sense, this author's words find resonance in the writings of Zuboff (2021), who states that the economy and politics are remodeled because of ICTs. According to this author, new technologies have enabled an enormous accumulation of information that is nowadays negotiated without anyone's consent. Therefore, the great empire that dominates today is not as vain as the different forms of government of the past. In democracy, for example, it is known who is governing and what their main interests are; in totalitarian regimes, such as Nazism, it is known who the face at the head of the government is. However, the new digital architecture presents a veiled dominance with a single guiding interest: profitability.

Returning to the debate about the influence of new ICTs on inter- and intra-human relationships, it is interesting to report that human development accompanies the technical and scientific development of individuals within them (Antunes, 2017). The digitalization of society is drastically changing the way individuals perceive the world, establish relationships with it, and live socially. With this abundance of information, the rejection and loss of beliefs and truths previously established within these societies emerged, leading to questioning what was previously an absolute and unshakable fact (Han, 2017).

Currently, what is clear is that there is a search to escape physical reality; perhaps what most encourages this escape is the fact that it is extremely easy to enter the digital world. This vastness of virtual environments can affect subjectivity, the way people relate to society, and even cause the concept of value to be reanalyzed, as many physical objects lose their value in the digital environment. In addition, many people enter the digital environment not only as an escape from the physical world but also as a means of authenticating their existence. In this sense, it is interesting to present here a speech that Father Fabio de Melo (2017) said before he sang the song Paciência:

> Have you noticed that today we are victims of rush? [...] It's just that we've unlearned to wait for things to end. We have an urge to tell what is happening that is impressive. We need to communicate everything that happens to us in real time. Personally, I keep thinking that our rush is to announce that we are living. We are afraid that what we are experiencing now is not enough for us, so we need to divide it into a thousand times, to see if we believe that we are living, and what is interesting is that while we are warning that we are living we don't live. The person will photograph a landscape that they found beautiful, then they take a picture and soon they see that a message has arrived for them, they no longer remember the landscape. And we are constantly demanding this rush from others too. I send a message on my cell phone, confirm that I received it, and a minute later, if the person doesn't respond to me, I'm already dealing

with the possibility of a massive heart attack for them. [...] We are victims of rush, and we are unlearning great virtues, savoring life, for example (our translation).

It is interesting to dialogue with this priest's speech, as it makes it clear that many contemporary neuroses only germinated because they found fertile soil in this digital world. Now, wouldn't anxiety (so present these days) also be a result of this demand for feeding and following this perennial flow of information? The human brain cannot process so much information at the same time, as it is unable to keep up with the processing of information in the digital world, and people may be becoming neurotic. This also occurs because

> The human brain has not undergone significant modifications since the emergence of early humans. It evolved over time to ensure survival in the relatively simple environments that most of our ancestors inhabited across generations. (Cosenza, 2023, p. 132)

Furthermore, anxiety is not the only problem caused by this new social rearrangement. It is becoming increasingly common to find new cases of depression and burnout, mainly because the current subject no longer knows how to stop; he is always impelled to present himself as the subject of performance, as someone who no longer knows how to complete or close cycles in his life. Even rest appears to this subject as a time for performance, a moment to recover energy to return to work (Han, 2021a). In this sense, the subject of the performance often presents himself as a new Prometheus, who lives an infinite cycle of suction of his vital forces.

In the future, we can see a worsening of the distance between individuals within the collective, the intensification of which is the result of the convenience provided by digital communication. Progressively, direct, and real contact with people is avoided. This form of communication becomes increasingly devoid of form and body. A quick analogy made by Han (2018, p. 49) to exemplify such a scenario can help to better understand how much relationships with others are degenerating:

> Swiping your finger across the touchscreen is a movement that has consequences in relation to others. It eliminates that distance that constitutes the other in its otherness. You can run your finger over the image, touch it directly, because it has already lost its look, its face. By pinching [the image], I dispose of the other. We discard the other with the swipe of our finger, [...] (our translation).

In this emerging scenario, virtual interactions outline a new social dynamic where human connections are filtered through digital interfaces, contributing to a distancing that transcends physical space. The balance between technological convenience and the fundamental need for personal interaction becomes a crucial point in discussions about the future of human relationships (Han, 2018).

2.4   HOSTILITY TOWARDS PSYCHOLOGY

How can we talk about psychology in a world where subjectivity is subjugated, and the value lies in external information? How can we talk about psychology in a world where genetic remodeling will create gods—completely new human beings with a brain structure completely different from that of typical human beings? And, finally, how can we talk about psychology where artificial intelligences are able to make very detailed assessments about each individual human being, saying what their tastes, their ambitions, their neuroses, their aptitudes, and so on are? Trying to answer these and countless other questions that arise due to contemporary technological advances is a challenge for psychology, philosophy, anthropology, and countless other areas of knowledge.

Algorithms have shown that humans do not have as much freedom as they seem. People are easily manipulated by artificial intelligence, which is why the following question also gains plausibility in contemporary times: Can humans make truly rational decisions (Cosenza, 2023)? The truth is that the title of rational animal given to homo sapiens since the first systematizers of knowledge, such as Aristotle (1987), perhaps no longer fits today. Therefore, it makes sense to bring here the words of Cosenza (2023, p. 1):

> [...] today we know that our reasoning capacity is limited. Although we can examine multiple alternatives and reaching important conclusions for our daily lives, this process is deficient and contaminated by many limitations, ultimately resulting from the way our brain works. The advancement of knowledge in neurosciences, cognitive sciences and even economic sciences has made this evident. In turn, the technological world in which we live has challenged the functioning of the human brain, making its flaws and limitations increasingly visible (our translation).

Another author who works on this topic is Harari (2016), who states that over millennia, humans have stood out among animals, mainly due to their ability to communicate and retain impressive information. However, it seems that the brain of Homo sapiens has not developed at all in practically 10 thousand years of history; on the other hand, technologies have developed exponentially. It is true that technological advances have enabled a longer life span for many individuals and have also brought with them the possibility of accelerating food production and combating hunger, but even so, the following question remains valid: Has man become a happier being with technological advances? In other words, does the question about the meaning of human life find an answer in contemporary times?

Talking about the meaning of life and happiness is also talking about pain and suffering, as these are inherent realities of human existence. However, in a society where the flow of information presents itself as an insatiable animal, pain and suffering have no place.

> We live in a positive society, which seeks to free itself from all forms of negativity. Pain is negativity pure and simple. Psychology also follows this paradigm shift and moves from negative psychology as the "psychology of suffering" to "positive psychology", which deals with well-being, happiness, and optimism. Negative thoughts must be avoided. They must be immediately replaced with positive thoughts. Positive psychology subjects pain itself to a logic of performance (Han, 2021b, p. 11 – our translation).

Therefore, it is justified why the consumption of medicines that were previously used only as palliatives for sick people is growing so much. All this in search of endless performance. In this sense, another problem found in contemporary society is the lack of closure of the cycle, as stated by Han (2021a). Now, being impelled to tirelessly feed a flow of meaningless information, people are no longer able to rest or enter the reality of leisure. Leisure has become almost a crime. Han (2021a, p. 30) warns that:

> The Subject of the performance is unable to reach a conclusion. He crumbles under the duress of always having to produce more performance. [...] And, in a world in which completion and closure give way to an endless and directionless advancement, it is not possible to die, as dying also presupposes the ability to end life. whoever cannot die at the right time has to end [...] at an inopportune time [...] (our translation).

Perhaps this is why contemporary science also aims to develop homo deus (Harari, 2016), a being so genetically altered that it is capable of living and producing more than its predecessors. In any case, what must be highlighted here is that when you try to deny pain and suffering in search of performance, you will be creating a fertile field for the germination of more pain and suffering. Frankl (2019) already warned about this when he talked about Sunday neurosis, a type of anxiety that generally appears on Sundays when you don't have many things to do; in other words, this is a psychological problem that arises precisely because people are losing the ability to stop and rest.

This entire scenario appears, in many parts, to be foreign to traditional psychology, which is why there is an urgent need to develop an entire field of studies that can cover such themes. However, psychology as a theoretical science must be concerned with something else: the end of all theory.

> Some time ago, Chris Anderson, editor-in-chief of Wired, published, under the title "The End of Theory", a very noteworthy article. He claims that the unimaginably large amount of information would make theoretical models completely superficial. [...] Big Data analysis reveals behavior models that also make prognoses possible. In place of hypothetical theoretical models,

a direct comparison of data comes in. Correlation replaces causality, the question of why it is so [Wieso] becomes superfluous in view of why it is so [Es-ist-so] (Han, 2018, p. 131-132 – our translation).

In a world where transparency and speed of data flow are priorities, there is no longer a place for relatively slow and paused reflection on theoretical systems. Both philosophy and psychology are put aside so that only algorithmic analyses are prioritized. In short, man is dissected and transformed into data that can be measured, compared, and tracked in an increasingly precise way.

3   FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Technological changes and scientific advances are incredibly rapid; it is difficult for philosophical considerations to keep up with such developments. Without a good philosophical basis, many sciences, particularly psychology, experience real difficulty in adapting to the needs of the world technology brings with it (Jonas, 2017). Given this, rather than simply adapting to the scientific world, it is important for the human sciences to critically examine the rapid advancement of certain technologies. It is true that nowadays, thanks to some techniques, many people can live longer; there is undoubtedly an improvement in people's quality of life when compared to the lifestyle of some people a few centuries ago (Harari, 2016). For the academic world, contemporary technique is an unparalleled wealth. Scientific articles, for example, published in a small town in the interior of Brazil, can be read by anyone in the world after their publication.

Psychology has always been very adept at positioning itself, adapting, and developing in the face of many Sitz im Leben (a German exegetical term that refers to the vital context of a given society delimited in time and space); however, it seems that current social changes Driven by new ICTs, genetic engineering, artificial intelligence, and countless other techniques that have found the light of day in the 21st century, they are putting traditional psychology at risk. It is not firmly believed here that psychology will truly cease to exist, but that psychology as it is known will necessarily need an aggiornamento (an Italian term that can be translated as renewal), as its basic concepts can no longer encompass the complexity of the current technological world. Inter-human relationships (I-you) are no longer the same as they were in the last century; changes are occurring so quickly that it is possible to say that current social life is no longer the same as last year.

If this is true for inter-human relationships, imagine it for the world of each person's subjectivity. Psychology always knew that each person was a microcosm (Aristotle, 1987); it was a unique and unrepeatable world; however, perhaps it was not prepared to realize that this microcosm is emptying, and

each person is being impelled to become transparent (Han, 2017). If this is already worrying, then it may be completely unimaginable that thanks to genetic engineering the world may be about to see human beings comparable to Greek gods, with a completely unknown mind, with cognitive structures never observed (Harari, 2016). These are just some of the challenges that psychology faces in the days ahead. To overcome these problems, it may have to join forces with those who caused them.

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