


## COMMENT ON “THE ACTUALIZATION OF LONELINESS IN MODERN PHILOSOPHY”

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Commented Article: BALAPASHEV, Beken, TURSUNBAYEVA, Aigul and ZHANGALIYEVA, Ainur. The actualization of loneliness in modern philosophy. **Trans/Form/Ação**: Unesp Journal of Philosophy, v. 46, n. 4, p. 25-42, 2023.

According to Balapashev et al.'s (2023) study, the problem of loneliness has always been on the agenda, but it is modern philosophy that has turned it into a separate category that can be analyzed in detail by a wide range of philosophers. The authors provide an in-depth historical overview, tracing the topic of loneliness through various eras, including Antiquity, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and the Modern Age, before diving into a detailed study of loneliness in the modern world. Continuing the contextual analysis of loneliness, it is worth noting that this state can also be a reflection of the dynamics of social isolation and the feeling of not belonging to a team. So, a person can feel lonely even in a team, if feels a lack of emotional connection with other members of the group. At its most basic level, loneliness symbolizes the absence of romantic or deep personal connections. However, the term is often used in a broader context, covering a diverse range of life experiences and expectations. Although loneliness is often associated with negative emotional states, it can also serve as a mechanism for self-esteem and self-development.

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It opens up a new dimension of loneliness that sees it as an opportunity for introspection and personal growth. On the other hand, contextual factors, such as cultural norms, socioeconomic status, gender and age, may influence how loneliness is perceived and affects an individual. It is important to consider that the study of loneliness is necessary in the context of the entire breadth of its manifestations. This will not only help to better understand this complex phenomenon but may also provide important guidance for the development of support strategies and interventions aimed at improving the people's quality of life experiencing loneliness.

Quite appropriately, the authors of the study emphasize the need to consider loneliness in a broader historical context. They argue that limiting the analysis of this phenomenon to only the second and third decades of the 21st century may not reflect the full depth of its manifestations. The article emphasizes that the formation of modern philosophy stretched over a considerable period from the beginning of the 20th century, and this was the period when the topic of loneliness first became the subject of active scientific research. The impact of scientific discourse on the understanding of loneliness has been critical, as the philosophers' and other researchers' different views have helped frame the phenomenon as a serious social and individual issue. By analyzing a wider time, the researchers were able to more fully assess how the dynamics of social, cultural and technological change affected the perception and impact of loneliness.

In the days of Antiquity, various concepts regarding loneliness were formed, which were mainly related to the trends of social life and the desire for self-improvement. The first approach to loneliness, which was developed in ancient Greece, considered it a negative phenomenon that leads to a loss of contact with society and neglect of social duties. However, there was an alternative approach, characteristic of Roman philosophy, particularly Stoicism, in which solitude was seen as an opportunity to rest and analyze one's actions and thoughts. In the Middle Ages, under the influence of the spread and establishment of Christianity, the view of loneliness changed significantly. The concept lost its meaning in the context of the two ancient approaches and began to be considered as a way to achieve transcendence and knowledge of God. The Renaissance led to a revival of ancient ideals, including views on solitude. In the 18-19th century, in particular, in the context of such thinkers' philosophy, as Nietzsche, Kierkegaard and Schopenhauer, loneliness began to be defined as a new social category of existence. Schopenhauer claimed that

solitude is a gift for outstanding intellectuals. On the other hand, psychologists of the time, such as Freud, viewed loneliness as a negative phenomenon that needed treatment. Although many historical periods highlighted loneliness in a negative context, there were also those where it was not given importance. If we talk about modern philosophy, it is important to remember that many of its schools were founded not in the 21st, but in the 20th century. And they are characterized by different views on loneliness. Common strands, explored in this context, are anthropocentrism, irrationalism and ambivalence toward science, including philosophical doctrines such as scientism. This reflects the complexity and multifacetedness of the problem of loneliness in the context of different philosophical traditions and periods.

In the first half of the 20th century, the American philosopher J. Powys (1933) approached the problem of loneliness with a new philosophical perspective, formulating his philosophical ideas based on personal experience and logical arguments, rather than on religious beliefs. His main goal was to find the meaning of life, refusing to depend on any institutions, whether religious or secular. Powys saw loneliness as a peculiar condition that is every individual's characteristic, especially the thinker who seeks to find the truth. The importance of the individual's role in the search for truth became a key point in the context of his philosophical thought. In the 21st century, knowledge about loneliness is beginning to be systematized. Scientists have discovered that loneliness can have different forms of manifestation: forced, caused by alienation from society, and voluntary. Modern philosophy also emphasizes the impact of digital technologies on human life, analyzing a difficult question: is a person considered lonely if he communicates with the world exclusively through information technology? The authors' retrospective analysis of the considered theories shows the importance of the problem of loneliness as an object of study in modern philosophy. Loneliness not only encourages philosophical reflection and the search for truth, but also causes many social problems, including depression and suicide.

Scientists emphasize that loneliness attracts the attention not only from philosophers, but also from psychologists, medical professionals and public health care. Their interest is because loneliness affects people in different demographic and geographical contexts and causes challenges in different philosophical directions, in particular in phenomenology, existentialism and philosophy of consciousness. Given its impact on health, defining loneliness as a social determinant of health becomes critically important. Researchers

note that the unique conditions of the 21st century, such as globalization, the digital information revolution, as well as the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, have contributed to the aggravation of the feeling of loneliness among the population. Existing research shows that it is not the events themselves that are important, but the reactions to them that are of particular importance. Thus, the pandemic itself is not a decisive factor in the context of the prevalence of depression due to loneliness; however, individual perception of this event is important. It is noted that one of the possible ways to solve the problem of reducing the impact of forced loneliness is the wide distribution of philosophical articles, in particular in the mass media, which are aimed at raising awareness and understanding of personal development. Access to online learning is also a significant factor, enabling people to learn how to adapt to situations where they find themselves alone. An additional measure that may be effective in reducing the impact of enforced loneliness is the creation of a supportive social environment that provides support and interaction between people. At the same time, it is important to pay attention to individual needs and develop programs that contribute to the formation of social ties and support psychological well-being.

Modern scientists analyze loneliness not as an isolated phenomenon, but as a potentially effective tool for regulating an individual's mental state, especially in situations where a person freely chooses to be alone for a short period for his development. At the same time, a new perspective on loneliness provides a new conceptual analysis, emphasizing the serious health consequences of this condition, such as increased morbidity and premature mortality. That is, loneliness is more associated with a state of self-alienation, which is exacerbated by the influence of modernization and various social forces, than with scarcity.

In the 21st century, a classification of loneliness was created, which contributes to a deeper understanding of this phenomenon in the modern world. Research in this area has identified three key types of loneliness. The first type is forced loneliness, which arises as a result of the influence of external circumstances and conditions. The individual is forced to be alone due to the impossibility of involvement in the social environment or connection with other people. The second type is alienation from society when an individual feels isolated from social interaction. The lack of deep connections and feelings of separation can lead to feelings of alienation and non-belonging, which can negatively affect an individual's emotional state and mental well-being. The

third type of loneliness is voluntary loneliness when a person consciously chooses to live alone. This type of loneliness can be the result of personal development, the search for self-identification and independence, or it can arise from the rejection of social interaction due to negative experiences of interaction with other people.

This classification of loneliness not only helped in understanding various aspects of this phenomenon, but also defined a new direction of research aimed at establishing the conditions under which loneliness can act as a cause of depression or, on the contrary, as a positive factor. For example, it was found that only voluntary solitude can contribute to positive personality development, which indicates the possibility of independent growth and self-improvement. In addition, research has shown that a transition from forced loneliness and alienation to voluntary loneliness is possible, which indicates the potential for positive changes and strengthening of the individual's psychological state.

The study carefully analyzed the role of the theme of loneliness in different historical periods, including antiquity, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and modern times. This scientific work made it possible to reveal how the understanding of loneliness has changed over time, which is of great importance for modern dialogue. Focusing attention on the objective factors, contributing to the spread of loneliness in the modern world. can be useful for developing strategies to respond to this problem at the social, cultural and political levels. The introduction of a new view of loneliness in modern philosophy, as well as the demonstration of the relationship between different forms of loneliness and a person's spiritual state, opens wide opportunities for theoretical and practical research of this phenomenon.

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