

## Some Observations on Ethics and Environmental Education

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### Abstract

When we see from a critical point of view the social attitude in the context that is signed by the continual degradation of the environment and, consequently, of our ecosystem, this is urgent a proposal for a new mentality and a new same paradigm as a reference for the environment education. In this article, searching for present ideas and proposes to educational issues, especially in dynamic relationship between teachers and students; Autonomy often conditioned teacher whatever socio-environmental news and proposes that its same function as mediator of social and environmental education; and even the socio-environmentally seen by the focus of common sense in a postmodern society and technocratic ; sustainable environment question established in capitalist needs of people rather than nature needs. These are some questions gathered to mark on Freire of Education and the book “Pedagogy of the Land” written by Gadotti.

**Keywords:** Ethics, Environmental Education, Alterity

### Introduction

When observed under an optical critical social practices, in our context which is marked by the continual degradation of our environment and consequently of our ecosystem, we urge the proposal for a new mentality and new paradigm as a reference to environmental education. In this article we will seek to present ideas and proposals within the educational issues, mainly related to teacher-student dynamic; autonomy often subject teacher as the new environmental proposal and what his notion as a mediator of environmental education; and still socio-environment seen by the focus of common sense in a postmodern society technocrat; the issue of sustainable development based on capitalist needs of man and not the environment. These are some questions raised from Freire's perspective and Earth Pedagogy Gadotti

### Empathy, alterity as social and environmental dimension

The environmental dimension sets up increasingly as a matter of greater need for understanding and empathy of our relationship with each other, the environment and animals and without specie-ism, increasing the involvement of different knowledge systems.

The great challenge that lies before us is to formulate ecologically democratic knowledge for environmental education that is critical and innovative on two levels, formal and non-formal. Thus, it must be above all a political act aimed at social change for ecological practice or a “sociology of nature” facing the transformation and improvement of policies in their various areas of expertise to the conscious preservation of the environment without centralizing the subject in taking on the environment. For building upon the speech of Paulo Freire:

The social and political solidarity that we need to build a society less ugly and less edging, where we can be ourselves, have the democratic formation and practice of real importance. The learning of the subject's assumption is incompatible with the pragmatic training or with the authoritarian elitism of those who think owners of the truth and knowledge articles.

This approach should seek a holistic action perspective that correlates mankind, nature, the universe, with reference to that natural resources are running out and that the primary responsibility for their degradation is man, that even one time has not learned to reciprocate , in the ethical sense and human love and, because of that, we do not know evaluate the size of the damage on the ecosystem globally - as we use ourselves as a reference point for such assessment and not nature itself - to this call homocentrism, *problem* which for centuries has guided the practice of exploitation of the environment.

Our proposal is a Eco-philosophy or even a Homo-ecology as science that has urgency to address the issue of environmental complexity and the perception of the incipient process of reflection on the existing practices and the multiple possibilities, thinking reality in a complex way, set it as a new rationality and a space to articulate nature, art and culture without homo-centrism.

It is therefore necessary efforts that may present a new theoretical framework that can guide the practice of Environmental Education. But what the theoretical framework? Now, the very environment which man is part. The process of environmental education should provide, among other things, the construction of values and the acquisition of knowledge, attitudes and skills geared for responsible participation in

environmental management and that it seeks public involvement through action programs that teach learners to be active citizens in a democracy or eco-environmental democracy so we can actually plant the first seed on earth as minimum compensation and recognition to what subtract it, since so far:

The destructive potential generated by capitalist development has placed a negative position against the nature. Capitalism increased the destructiveness of humanity than their well-being and prosperity. The concrete achievements of socialism followed the same destructive wake endangering not only the lives of human beings but of all existing forms of life on Earth. So that today, the ecological issue has become eminently social. (Gadotti, p. 82).

Today the evidence often disappointing adoption we did the lazy Eletrodoméstica and Ford paralysis of the American way of life that took place in post-war as the main exploiter of the environment and fatal mistake, here is the notion that evil model

Given this situation, the authors outline the role of education in the Environmental Management process: on the challenge of creating conditions for the political participation of different social groups both in the formulation of public policies and in their implementation, “the educator must be qualified also application, “the educator must also be qualified to act together with organized civil society, especially with social movements, in view of environmental education as a process of instituting new relationships with each other and with their environment.

In other words, it sets the stage as the decanted formula of citizenship, instrumental-doing civil society to participate in political life, far cry from the conformist tendency of cultural consumerism industry condemning people to a change of behavior easy, stagnant, canned and cold. So we must now rethink our attitudes and being open to new proposals for personal transformation and social and environmental as:

Women and men, we are the only beings that socially and historically, we are able to learn. So are the only ones in that learning is a creative adventure, something, therefore, much richer than merely repeat the given lesson. Learning to us is to build, rebuild, find to change, which is not without openness to risk and adventure of the spirit. (Freire. p. 41).

Gadotti further clarifies that in many relevant international documents it is emphasized the importance of environmental education, among other things, in connection with the exercise of eco-citizenship, which shows its original commitment to the training of environmental education culture.

And yet reflect on the environmental complexity opens an exciting opportunity to understand the gestation of new social actors who mobilize to rethink their relationship with the environment, for an articulated and committed educational process to sustainability and participation, supported by a logic that favors dialogue and interdependence of different areas of knowledge. But also questions values and premises that guide the prevailing social practices, implying change in thinking and transformation in knowledge and educational practices already in face becoming obsolete. For autonomy, empowerment, participation, citizenship and social justice are not goals to be achieved, but means should be built in our daily lives to promote eco-citizenship.

Currently the challenge of strengthening a converged environmental education and diversity benchmarks priority is to make possible an educational practice that articulates incisively the need to face simultaneously the environmental degradation and social problems. Thus, the understanding of environmental problems is through an environmental vision as a field of knowledge and socially constructed meanings, traversed by cultural and ideological diversity and conflict of interest.

In this universe of complexities need to be located the student, whose teaching repertoires should be broad and interdependent, as the environmental issue is a hybrid problem, associated with several human dimensions.

Because in these times where information plays an increasingly important role, cyberspace, multimedia, internet, education for eco-citizenship represent the possibility of motivating and sensitizing people to transform the various forms of participation in the defense of “quality of lives. “ In this sense it is worth noting that environmental education is increasingly a transformative function, in which the co-responsibility of individuals becomes an essential objective to promote two new types of development - sustainable development of economies and the eco-cultural development mentalities.

As for sustainable development, Gadotti says this:

[...] more than a scientific concept is an idea-force, a mobilizing idea, in this millennium crossing. The local level must be compatible with a planetary scale. Hence the importance of coordination with the government. People, civil society, in partnership with the state, need to take their share of contribution to create cities and healthy, sustainable fields, ie, with quality of life. (p. 5).

But as quality of life, we know that eco-cultural development is the first step in the revision of the concept of human culture as separate from nature, for man insists on the prejudice that civilization interact with

nature would be a return to the jungle. But now, before the picture that is presented to us more and more we realize that man, society and nature are interrelated in mutual interdependence, even though it is the farthest that immediate reality. That would be “A vision that opposes the imperialist Western culture, we impacts, the peculiar way that relates to nature.”

It is understood, therefore, that environmental education is a necessary condition to modify a growing environmental degradation of picture, but it is still not enough, which becomes “more a necessary mediation tool between cultures, different behaviors and interest groups social for the construction of the desired changes, “Without taking into account the” wishes “of the ecosystem. So to understand the:

Promotion of life to develop the meaning of existence. We must start from a worldview that sees the Earth as a “single living organism.” Understand in depth the planet from this perspective entails a review of our own Western culture, fragmentary and reductionist, which considers the earth a being inanimate being “conquered” by man. (Gadotti. P. 83).

In the minds of many educators, there is a conceptual confusion and lack of common sense among the field of conservation education and environmental education. So when we think of the environmental impacts of human activities, are used to develop educational activities that deal with issues related to the effects of erosion, associated, for example, the exploitation of natural resources or else to urban sprawl, is climbing the slopes the city's hills, or invading the riverbanks. Thus, we are giving more attention to the consequences than the causes of the phenomenon. However: “surveillance of my sense is of great importance in the assessment that all the time, I do my practice. Before, for example, any more detailed and rigorous reflection is my common sense (...) from the point of view of my teaching job”. (Freire. P. 61).

We propose that the teacher has a conscious and conscientizing mediator in building environmental benchmarks should know and use them as instruments for the development of a socio-environmental practice centered on the concept of nature is at the service of man, but in order to show respect a holistic. This is called an ecopedagogy:

To understand what is ecopedagogy we must begin by explaining what is pedagogy and what is sustainability. In the books of Daniel and Francisco Gutiérrez Prieto on “pedagogical mediation” (1994 and 1994 [a], the authors define as the pedagogy of learning promotion work through funds necessary for the educational process in daily life. For them, life everyday is the place of pedagogy sense because the human condition passes inexorably through it. (Gadotti. P. 83).

Or comparing Ecopedagogy the other settings:

Traditional pedagogy focused on the spirituality, pedagogy of the new school in democracy and the technicalities of scientific neutrality. Eco-pedagogy focuses on the relationship between the subjects who learn together “in communion” (Paulo Freire). It is mostly an ethical pedagogy, a “universal ethics of the human being” (Freire 1997: 19), not the “ethical market” (idem) underlying the marketschool. (Gadotti, p.10).

It is true that environmental education should be seen as a process of lifelong learning that values the diverse forms of knowledge and seek to educate citizens with a local and planetary consciousness that are developed by critical reflection, environmental conservation habits from the company.

We have to face at the same time the problem of life on planet Earth, the problem of modern society and the problem of human destiny. This requires us to call into question the very orientation of Western civilization. “In the dawn of the third millennium, we must understand that revolutionize develop, invent, survive, live, die, come all inseparably connected” (Gadotti, p.09 Cf. Lago and Padua 1984: 6).

Finally, education for eco-citizenship is the ability to motivate and sensitize people first from the school to transform the various forms of participation in potential promotion of ways of environmental education and the implementation of a proposal of sociability based on the interrelationship of man with nature, because that depends on it as his life's environment and which draws its sustenance.

## Conclusion

Education for environmental mindset for today must remember that “dominion” of man over nature, never gave in its entirety and according to the concept of dominance in our civilization often colonialist and degrading, but that man was mistaken in meanings ideological inserted at the end exploitation. This historical review should be done in the classroom and throughout society so that we can be open to a new mentality or eco-minded. For the great potential of man is not the strength to assert to set up nature through civilizing references. The demonstration of man's potential lies in being able to serve it with what it has to offer: the respect and acceptance of its holistic maternity remembering the sap as a “mother's milk” given the abundant and eternal way in its

history and doing a reading of this language and not by imposing its signs and concepts to nature.

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