

NATURE AS A GOOD MORAL - CONTRIBUTIONS FOR HUMAN ECOLOGY

LA NATURALEZA COMO UN BIEN MORAL - APORTES PARA UNA ECOLOGÍA HUMANA
NATUREZA COMO UM BEM MORAL - CONTRIBUIÇÕES PARA ECOLOGIA HUMANA

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Summary

To think of a relationship in which the harmony between man and the environment prevails, and not a continuous confrontation, is equivalent to think of a human ecology. This relationship will only be possible if individuals and communities reflect on whether interdependence with nature and attribute a moral value to the way in which their actions affect or benefit to the environment and to themselves.

That education and educators enhance the skills with moral which individuals adjust their behaviors, represents an important step for the awareness of the human and natural environments, since the principle of ecological action would not be determined by factors external to the subject, but that would depend on the moral capacity that this has and therefore of your personal will, which makes the action even more significant and full of meaning that when it arises from another social dimension.

Key Words: Human Ecology, education in virtues, environmental education, moral education; environmental pedagogy.

Resumen

Pensar una relación en la que prevalezca la armonía entre el hombre y el medio ambiente, y no una confrontación continúa, equivale a pensar una ecología humana. Esta relación solo será posible, si las personas y las comunidades reflexionan acerca de si interdependencia con la naturaleza y atribuyen un valor moral al modo en que sus acciones afectan o benefician al ambiente y a sí mismos.

Que la educación y los educadores potencien las habilidades morales con las que los individuos ajustan sus conductas, representa un paso importante para el cuidado de los ambientes humanos y naturales, ya que el principio de la acción ecológica no estaría determinado por factores externos al sujeto, sino que dependería de la capacidad moral que este tiene y por tanto de su voluntad personal, lo cual hace que la acción sea aún más significativa y plena de sentido que cuando surge desde otra dimensión social.

Palabras Claves: Ecología Humana, Educación en Virtudes, Educación ambiental, Educación moral; pedagogía ambiental.

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INTRODUCTION

A few days ago I spoke with a friend of mine on the so called ecological question. Issues such as global warming, climate change, the depletion of natural resources etc., paraded by the gateway of our dialog. Its position, something cynical, was that when something is ending and does not give more of it, it is more practical to prepare for this, admit that it is ready. This planet is finished, if by our fault or other, who cares? Enjoy the little or much that remains of it. And he continued his reasoning in this way: "I have left up to 20 years of life, I have no children and even if I did, I refuse to feel responsible for their future, since it is theirs who would live it, enjoy it or suffer in it. I only hope that we preserve the planet for at least the next 20 years, after... how does it affect me?"

Surely you will agree with me that the posture of this friend is deeply selfish, thinks only in him and his welfare, although his welfare is the discomfort of others. One in which also attitude thus well be checked of immoral, in the most profound sense of the term: immoral is any attitude that predisposes to do evil, and doing evil is to degrade the human condition itself; be, so to speak, less human being, impoverishment as a person, move away from the fullness and happiness as the ultimate goal.

In the same way that the good has great implications for the person who works, to those around him, and for "what surrounds him"; to do evil also has consequences. The first is that whoever acts evil makes him bad and necessarily damages and those around him and to "what surrounds him". The case of my cynical friend can be emblematic: his attitude of neglect, use or better yet to abuse of nature, not only damages the nature, the impoverished and the exhausted, but also damages to him, makes him bad in the moral sense.

The efforts of moral order with which you can contribute to the care and protection of the natural environments pose a conception of nature as a ontological and moral good; that is to say, as a reality good in itself that contributes to the perfection of man and therefore

require us to come together to it in a responsible and respectful manner, through the formation of what we could call the virtues; and not with ecological utilitarian purposes and exploiters, or purely contemplative, verging on idolatry.

We will try to develop this idea in three moments: in the first we will deal with the human ecology from a moral perspective, understood as an integral relationship between the person and nature which goes beyond the preservation of the environment. In the second moment we will try to justify the moral perspective of human ecology, since consideration of the relationship man with nature as well, not only is useful but also honest and delightful. Finally, the work concludes with the invitation to the educators to incorporate in the process of training the virtues of a truly human ecology.

Concept and contributions of human ecology, within the general framework of the family, the education and the moral good

As time passes the environmental concerns increase; the fears about the ecological damage is confirmed at every moment in which we see that different natural phenomena cause havoc, where thousands of lives not only perish, but that they are derived as in a sea of calm that imprisons their encouragement, that robbed by a long moment all hope to survive, which casts cruelly to a situation that is arbitrary, chaotic and criticizes. There is only hope. However in the midst of this expected uncomfortable and pain, the countless questions that we encounter, questions that are addressed to understand why this happened, how it could have been prevented or what other things come next, are questions that aim to understand a single actor in the middle of a single stage. That is to say that they are addressed to understand the place of the human being in the midst of these problems, which is its part in what is this living or that their place in the search for an immediate solution.

The answers to questions about the current state of the world, of natural ecosystems and artificial, can no longer be answered from the ecology, since here we will find a comprehensive response and very abstract in where we can only understand the state in which they are the species, as they interact and in what situation this environment its in. Because of this, we must seek specialized research fields that provide an overview that will help to understand the place of the human being in this, and at the same time that makes it possible to think about the way in which he has affected him or it has benefited. In this way if we think the impact that the human being has had on the environment we can accordingly think the impact that being in the middle of the situation is taking on him.

For Bernard Campbell in the twentieth century that the human being is saved of the environmental crisis was the most important task that had to be done, however this task was determined by the knowledge of the causes that have led societies to such a situation. In this way to understand what is this living environmentally depends on an analysis of the role of human beings in this process, but it also depends to think about which has been the role of education, politics, technology and culture, since these areas have contributed to generate greater or lesser impact of man on their environment and in addition are the areas from which one can study the implications of the east on the society.

An area that allows to deal with the knowledge of the environment and of the intrinsic relationship between the human being with this, is the human ecology. According to the perspective of Bernard Campbell, human ecology "refers to the study of all these relations between human beings and their environment.... Trafficking of the human species as a whole and of its extraordinarily complex relations with the other components of the world, organic and inorganic" for this author, there are two factors that affect the relationship of man with his environment, one is the social and other cultural; the social part has to do with the manner in which the shares are determined by the way in which

society is organized or progresses, and the cultural beliefs or the rituals that owns and that allow you to understand and respond to the world.

On the other hand, human ecology from the perspective of Georges Olivier is

The study of the role of man over nature or of nature on man, this last taken in its totality, in his "integrity"... Conceived in this way, human ecology has become a main branch of the biological anthropology, which disregards our origins to go toward our future. It is the more interdisciplinary science possible, which confers individuality and originality.

The human ecology can be seen from two angles, in the short or long term.... *In the short term* is the most important in the immediate practice; in fact, she takes care of our living conditions, our health, our balance of the damage caused by the pollution, and various attacks (stress).... In this meaning of the term, the ecology mobilizes very happily to many people, who defends the man at the same time as to the nature.... *Long-term* This is no longer the immediate impact of the environment on ourselves, but of the more distant action on our descendants.

In general without delving more about the concept or the conceptions say that human ecology studies the relation that is established between the natural areas and societies, how to influence and what changes arise from this relationship. The human ecology when is approached from the areas that will denominate as mixed, i.e. social and natural, allows us to understand the way in which the human groups behave with respect to their environment, how to adapt to and what consequences triggered this adaptation. The human ecology, then allows one to understand the state of the environment, but also allows you to address in a comprehensive manner, the role of the human being in its

preservation, in your care or in its deterioration, and also makes it possible to understand the consequences that these care or these damages may have about the way in which they live.

The human ecology addresses the environmental issue from a broad perspective in which includes the human being, but not only in its biological role but in its role intellectual and spiritual, since it invites you to think about the environment and to think with respect to him. Takes you to reflect on the consequences of their actions on the implications that has been the way in which has been distributed on the world and the way it has exploited the natural resources, but in particular helps you to see that the environmental conditions which is currently experiencing are a consequence of their action on the environment. The human ecology in this measure must be assumed since the commitment of society to itself and to its environmental context. In the short term in order to rethink their harmful behaviors and long-term generate a suitable environment in which there may be an optimal development of the human being and respectful with its natural context.

On 1 May 1991, in the Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus* that wrote the Pope John Paul II to the catholic world, and in which addressed issues concerning the social, the theme of human ecology acquired a new hue, one in which the moral reflection of the human being with regard to their environmental actions was essential within the new era of globalization, since in view of the fact that global problems related to pollution and with the environmental deterioration is reinforced, it was necessary to think these problems from moral categories, which will focus on raising the awareness of the society that their environmental actions should also be prosecuted since the Well And goodness, because these damaging behaviors are not only destroying the natural environment but also the human environment.

To this problem with the encyclical of Pope refers in this manner;

In addition to the irrational destruction of the natural environment we must recall here the more serious of the human environment, which, however, is far from providing the necessary attention. While we care precisely, although much less than what is necessary to preserve the "habitat" of natural several endangered animal species, because we realize that each one of them brings its own contribution to the overall balance of the earth, we strive very little to safeguard the moral conditions of a true "human ecology". Not only the land has been given by God to man, which he must use it while respecting the original intention in that it is a good, according to which it has been given; even the man is for itself a gift of God and must therefore respect the natural and moral structure of which has been endowed. Mention should be made in this context of the serious problems of the modern urbanization, the need of an urbanism concerned for the life of the people, as well as the due attention to a "social ecology" of work.

Several things should be highlighted from this argument: first that the destruction of the natural environment and the human is an action of the irrational, second that concern for the care of the environment should be bipartite; must be focused toward the human being both as to the nature, third that efforts to care for the environment, while positive, prove insufficient when there is no support for this work with a moral condition by means of which we forge a "authentic human ecology", fourth, that the care of the human and natural environments must be determined by the awareness that both man and nature are a good in itself, fifth that the preservation of Nature is in equal measure a preservation of a moral nature, sixth and last that we must have a social development of moral type to worry about the life of the people and therefore with the care of the natural environment.

In the final section of the Encyclical which raises the issue of the implementation of a human ecology of a moral nature, to recognize in nature and man the good in itself, the Pope adds that

The first fundamental structure in favor of the "human ecology" is the family, within which the man gets the first notions about the truth and the good; learn what it means to love and be loved, and therefore what you want to say in particular to be a person. Here is understood the family founded on marriage, in which the mutual gift of self for the part of the man and the woman creates an atmosphere of life in which the child can be born and develop their potential, become aware of their dignity and prepare to face its destination unique and unrepeatable.

Family, education and understanding of the moral good, are factors that contribute to the implementation of a truly human ecology, it is not enough with which this study to man and the environment and their reciprocal relationship, but must strive to build on the human being the consciousness of the way in which their morals, their education and family contributes to environmental and social stability. In this way, thinking within the human ecology aspects such as the family, the education and the well being, is equivalent to devise an integral ecology that humanizes the work of environmental preservation. With this ecology it makes a transition from the biological to the spiritual and the spiritual to its structure in the human being.

To speak of the family, the education and the moral good as fundamental parts of the human ecology is necessary because this area alone cannot generate the changes you are looking for, no matter whether these come from the sociology or anthropology, or is built on biological bases, what it is interesting interest is that their efforts must be accompanied from the very foundations of society, so that each in its own way contribute to consolidate a human environment that is respectful of the nature, which is understood

as the fruit of the same piece, of a same well and therefore is directed toward the same transcendental end.

But assume the understanding of each of these issues in a different way, with the intention of glimpse of particular form the way in which each contributes from its proper place to transform the human ecology in an integral area, immeasurable to other spaces that are making efforts that in essence are similar but that in themselves are looking for a different purpose. This case was initially meant to work the topic of the moral good, approached from the perspective of Thomas Aquinas, in this section the focus will be to expose in a very superficial way issue 5 relating to good in general of his book *The Theological Sum* . At this point, what it is meant to be searched, is how a treaty of good in general is significant for the theme of the human ecology and for the call that is made so that our actions are morally correct and therefore respectful with the environment. The next part corresponds to the subject of education, in this case will be exposed briefly, how education has to be guided by the need to form a righteous subject, able to understand that their actions have a direct impact on the human and natural environments.

On regards to the family, this being the fundamental basis of society and to be the source constitutive of the person, occupies an essential place within the human ecology, but in particular in the education and moral good. However due to the time and the item that is being handled, expose the theme of the relationship between the human ecology and the family would exceed at least the time limits on this occasion. However let us be clear that good and education are articulated by the manner in which the family is carrying out continuous efforts to form in the subject criteria solid, respect and care for the natural environment and human, but above all as stated above; the family prepares the human being to fulfill his destiny that in this case is to take care of it, of society and of the nature, with love and dignity.

The good in general referred to the moral implied within the human ecology

Within the human ecology there is a causal relationship between the effects produced by the impact of the human environment on the nature and the nature of the social environment. But the impacts cannot always be assumed in a negative way in both cases, they could not believe that the facts that were committed against the natural environment cannot be rethought, or it can be assumed that the impacts of natural on the human cannot be controlled or borne. No measure is late and least one in which it is imperative to rethink our moral behavior and rational, nor mecho less those that are aimed at assuring to future people who we are forming, a healthy human and natural environment in which they can develop intellectual, social and spiritually to the fullest. What is there to make clear is that we are in a moment in which to think the ends and the means of the facts that have proved harmful initially to the natural and subsequently to the human being. But especially one must reflect on the moral conduct or irrationality that has prevailed, the purpose of this is to prosecute our behavior toward a good end in itself.

When the human ecology poses a reflection on the impact of the society toward the natural environment and the subsequent impact this has on the social environment, it generates a moral reflection that is born of the need to rethink the actions and principles of these intellectuals, because you can say at the outset that if these actions are intended to cause havoc or to the destruction of the environment, are irrational actions that generate an adverse impact. Secondly, if these actions are irrational is because the people who act do not understand that both the natural environment as the human must be preserved under the main condition that these environments are a good in themselves. Therefore, the virtuous actions that are born from the premise of care and respect of the environments, are rational and morally correct actions that have in the account that these environments are crucial to its social unfolding and for the development of a decent life.

For practical purposes in the first place is to undertake a brief explanation of the subject of good from the point of view of Thomas Aquinas, and secondly they consider the way in which this topic can be referred to the moral implied within the human ecology. Within the overall structure of the book I of *the sum* of theological Thomas Aquinas on the issue 5 works with the concept and the nature of the good. This section discusses how to

From the good in general... have to find out six things: First: If good and to be are really one and the same thing. Second: course that only differ with distinction of reason, which is the first in the order of the understanding, if it is the good or to be. Third: suppose the first thing is to be, if everything to be is good. Fourth: which of the things has reduced the reason for the good. Fifth: if the reason for well consists in the way, in the species and in the order. Sixth: How the good is divided the in honest, useful and enjoyable.

First: For Thomas Aquinas the good and the to be are in reality one and the same thing. This implies that the good thing is what the be "fancy", is what you want and what you want is perfect and good. In this measure the degree of goodness of a desire is equivalent to the goodness of the be that "lust".

Second: the concept of "being" is first to the "good", because according to Thomas Aquinas, the meaning of a name of a thing is that what the understanding conceived on that thing, because the first thing that captures the understanding in the things is to be.

Third: to Thomas Aquinas every being is good to the extent that it is act, and every act is a perfection. In this way the perfect to be good and appetizing, is equivalent to be. Is added however that "everything that exists and is not God is His creatures, and every creature of God is good, as St Paul says, and since God is the supreme good, síguese that every human being is good".

Fourth: it is like, and what you want is due to the reason of an end, therefore the well has a reason of final cause. Thomas Aquinas, in accordance with the above notes the order of this causality according to: "First, the order and the good that moves the efficient cause; second, the agent action that drives to the achievement of the shape; third, the advent of the shape". In this way the well is the principle and the purpose of what exists. The action in this case is not the one that determines the good but good to the action.

Fifth: in both the to be is good and perfect, according to Thomas Aquinas has the qualities of mode, species and order. In this way each thing that is by its *form* ; the mode is the way in which the principles are adapted to the *form* ; the species is the own *way* ; and the order is the way in which the beings tend to what is good according to its *shape* .

Sixth: the human good, as well is divided into useful, honest and delightful. Useful when something is desired as a means to achieve something; honest when something is cherished by himself; and delightful as has already been obtained desired. In this way, Thomas Aquinas said that "it is called as delectable to what has no more reason to be desired that the pleasure, albeit sometimes harmful and dishonest; called useful to which by itself does not have attractive, and you want to only by another thing...; finally, honesty is what has in itself the justification of desire" the well therefore has fairly each one of these categories, but in order of correspondence is the good honest, good delectable and the good tool.

Generalizing we as the actions of a to be tend always toward a well voluntarily, on the other hand these actions we can point to as good actions in themselves are equivalent to be acting, because what the be good and want to do is perfect. In this way an action is good to the extent that the being is good. But if it is said that there are actions that are bad, it can be said of these that are irrational, since the good of the action presupposes its rationality. However the fact that a being wants to do an action that is not good and

therefore not appetizing, this is contrary to his own perfect nature and moral. On the other hand any act morally good or all good action is determined by the rationality of its purpose, which is the same as to say that this determined by the moral good. Once it is understood that the purpose of the action is the same well, seeking ways and for that purpose morally consistent with the reason.

The good that you want is divided into honest, delightful and useful. Is honest when the moral good is desired without other purpose that the need of the good itself. Delightful when the good of the action provides a sense of satisfaction to be performed. The good is useful when it serves as a way to achieve something in this good the actions are not good themselves but what is achieved with this action. The organization of the types of good are due to the fact that the actions must be honest and not be determined by the satisfaction that produces or by what can be achieved with this action.

Now that we have defined the nature and the rational characteristics of the moral good, let us move on to note how the understanding of the impact of human actions on nature and nature on man, which proposes as a field of study the human ecology can be understood as a question to reflect on the moral behavior of the person. Because if the actions depend on the degree of rationality it can then be judge by those that are contrary to the care and preservation of the natural and human environments, as irrational and as morally wrong.

However, if an action is good to the extent that the being is good, then acts as the overuse of natural resources must be rethought, since actions contrary to the natural environment are at the same time bad for human and it is contradictory that you intend to speak of human goodness when the facts that performs are harmful and incorrect for himself. The actions that have a greater negative impact on the environments, are irrational actions that on the one hand deny the own perfect nature and moral integrity of persons, and do not take into account the fact that the very purpose of the action must be

to achieve the morally right thing to do and what is suitable for both if as for the environment.

If we recognize that the human being wishes both for itself and for others and for the correct purposes and virtuous environment, then what we should think in this case is the means by which we seek to achieve the purpose; if the end of a mining operation is getting materials for the manufacture of instruments for hospitals it is morally correct, however if the medium or the way in which they manage these materials is not evaluated morally, the action will be imperfect and therefore irrational and immoral. Let us remember that once it has been thought the end if the means are thoughts by which to achieve and not the contrary. In general if the purpose is to be negative this action is irrational and therefore should not be done; if you think the end and not the means this action will be equally damaging, but if you think about the proper end and seek an equally correct action, the action in general is rational and morally suitable for the human environment and to nature. In this measure the human environment cannot be subject to nature or the nature to humans, both in view of the fact that the middle and the purpose are relevant it should be favored in equal measure.

When it is assumed with moral responsibility and rational care of the human environment and the nature, in this way, it seeks to generate a positive impact, but the positive impact desires must be honest, for it is through the good honest moral actions of environmental type of actions are assumed as good in themselves, which means that if they take care of themselves and protect the environments is because this is the right thing and not by the fact that by this means we can ensure better future consequences or present, or because caring for nature calms within our internal forum the need to feel that we are doing the right thing. However if it is assumed that the care of the environments to be moved by the good delectable, we must bear in mind that in this way even if there is the tendency to protect, this attempt is partial, since the aim of the action is not the care but the feeling that awakens the care in us. Or if it is decided that the good that moves us to act in favor

of the environments, it is neither honest nor delightful, and then it is a good tool, one must think that neither the order nor the middle mattered, but what matters is the consequence that the act should have in the future, in this way the order is not good in an absolute way, since the premise of the action is to seek a consequence utilitarian before an end in itself.

But we cannot say that the moral actions should only be honest, since environmental actions of moral order must be in equal measure actions honest, then beautiful or delightful and finally useful. Honest in both ways are good actions that since our daily actions are moving to a single purpose, which is to respect and value these areas of being; beautiful and delightful because when these areas are valued and respected, the effort that is made is designed to retrieve the sacred image that has been consolidated, that has been forgotten in the hectic desire of our days; in that zeal foolish that we deny the possibility of enjoying everything that there is to our around. And useful to the extent that these efforts to question the responsibility that you have in the impacts on the nature and human environments should not only be devoted toward the solution of a specific problem but also toward the construction of a few environments habitable for any species.

Towards a pedagogy of respect for nature: the ecological virtues

In the teacher praxis there should be strengthened at least four ecological virtues essential to foster habits and skills that will allow students to act based on two fundamental premises; one, love toward nature and human environments, and another, to care respectfully of these and therefore of it self. Which in turn affects the way in which they live or will live and in the way they relate to other people and their natural and social context. These virtues impact on the daily life of the students, to be present in every one of its actions, it ends up becoming significant issues and constitute its identity as a person.

Such virtues as temperance, solidarity, respect and prudence, are essential foundations for a pedagogy that encourages the love and appreciation of nature as well as a irreducible and irreplaceable. The temperance, in this case generates a strong character that makes the students out of their own will, assume human ecological actions that tend to the honest moderation of his material passions; it leads them to direct their actions toward the good and toward the maintenance of the balance of the natural and human environments, which means, it makes a moral domain and rational use of natural assets and human consumption possible. The solidarity, leads them to be aware that their actions have an effect on the lives of other people, the virtue of solidarity builds a social environment in which the commitment with the environment depends on joint efforts, which are directed to vindicate the nature and life as an absolute good.

The virtue of respect lets them know of a voluntary and free manner, that nature is an end in itself which must be cared for with admiration and constant effort. Since the respect consolidates a relationship between the person and the nature determined by the truth and love which both symbolize. Finally prudence, it helps the students in their inner selves understand what or which actions are appropriate for the consolidation of some ecological actions of the human type, that are in solidarity, respect and who possess temperance. Here this virtues as the types of good, are necessary and important and there is not a scale of which are or which is more important than others, what does exists is the haste that is present and prudent in a fair environment in each school and that teachers and their students possess and thus are virtuous people, able to understand and be understood on the basis of the relationship between human beings and nature.

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