

Ecohumanism

*An Ethical Stance for enhancing the flourishing
of Nature and Humanity*

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What the known demands of us...

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ECOHUMANISM NOW SO THERE WILL BE A TOMORROW

Integrative Paradigm for Value Education
and Teacher Training for the 21st century

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INTRODUCTION

- **The youth of today are at risk. It is a generation that is threatened by manyfold global threats: environmental, social, political, health, and cultural.**

- **As a countermovement to these trends and the global risks emerging from them, we are witnessing all over the world initiatives to form holistic and integrative paradigms to challenge these risks and bring humanity to a more harmonic, peaceful and sustainable ways of life.**

INTRODUCTION

Different titles to one and the same philosophical worldview and practical paradigm:

- **Eco-Pedagogy (developed from critical pedagogy)**
- **Bio-Cultural Conservation in Social-Ecological Systems (environmental scientists and activists)**
- **Planetary-Social Education for Sustainable Futures (Nordic)**

Eco-humanism is here introduced as a paradigm for holistic values education and teacher training. Seeking to promote the flourishing of both humankind and mother nature.

My Vantage Point – Methodological

My Methodological vantage point is Normative and Pragmatic: namely beginning with problems, predicaments and challenges and seeking solutions that are expected to work well and lead to improvement and betterment in the relevant aspects at stake.

Nietzsche: genuine philosophers serve not as industrious scholars but rather as ethical and creative legislators – what is valuable, important and urgent.

Bertrand Russell: Dealing reasonably or rationally with our predicaments and challenges and distinguishing between ideas that helped mankind and others that harmed mankind. – VALUES THAT PROVED VALUABLE

EMPAHSIS ON THE LIVED REALITY

John Dewey in his *Democracy and Education*:

- “Philosophy is thinking about what the known demands of us...”
- “Education is the process of forming fundamental dispositions, intellectual and emotional, towards nature and fellow men”.
- “Since growth is the characteristic of life, education is all one with growing” – towards flourishing life of the natural environment, democratic polity, culture, and the self-actualizing individual.
- “Education is the reconstruction of experience ... that increases ability to direct the course of subsequent experience”.

Maxine Greene who expected educators to commit themselves to “doing philosophy and building a world”.

My Vantage Point - Content

Addressing the risks in 5 categories:

1st category is Environmental risks: including devastation of the natural environment and global warming [hunger, floods, pollution, desertification— from Vancouver (49 degrees), to Teheran (drinking water) via Australia and Brazil...]

2nd - Social risks: including growing socio-economic gaps and marginalization of impoverished and displaced people (180 billion dollars for one person vs s/justice)

3rd – Political risks: the degradation of liberal democracy in favor of populist and authoritarian regimes – Trumpism... Illiberal democracies.

4th – Health risks: we see an increase in physical and mental ills, related to alienation from natural and communal activities.

5th – Cultural risks: Colonization of the minds by commercialization, consumerism, entertainment industry, and digital technology. [NO LANGUAGE FOR DIALOGUE] shallow culture limited vocabulary.

Wishing to counter these dangerous and harmful trends, let me share with you some inspiration from great thinkers regarding naturalistic and harmonious visions of being in the world: - Ethical stance -

Confucius in the 6th century B.C.: He stated that: "The humane individual is one who, desiring to sustain himself, sustains others; and desiring to develop oneself, develops others".

Spinoza in the 17th century: He argued that: "the good which every man who follows after virtue desires for himself, he will also desire for other men".

Rousseau in the 18th century complaining about modern man who “wants nothing as Nature made it”: For him, “man must be trained like a school horse; man must be fashioned in keeping with his fancy like a tree in his garden”.

Finally, Present-day psychologist and ecologist Peter Kahn from University of Washington:

- If we continue to destroy the natural world, become docile servants of digital technology, and alienate ourselves from the natural environment and fellow humans – we are bound to be drained from humanity as we know it.
- We are already living in huge urban-technological prisons, and if we don't wake up and change direction, our existence will be “like biological meat, like cattle in the feedlot”.

I believe that “the known demands of educators” today to commit themselves to Activist Ecohumanistic Values Education – So There will be a Tomorrow:

Empowering **moral and political agency** for repairing the world – activist social engagement.

An educational paradigm which seeks to cultivate sensitivities, sensibilities, capacities, and dispositions that will enable future generations to enjoy a quality of life: environmental sustainability, humanistic democracy, social justice, physical and mental health, a sense of belonging, and cultural-educational affluence.

Ecohumanism denotes: Merging the humanist dialogical interrelations with the ecological consideration of nature not as a conown but as a community to join – not to dominate but to participate

It means **seeking peace** within us, within our fellowman, within in the original Biblical sense as “blessedness and harmony in the aspect of life – bodily and spiritually”

It calls for an **ethical transformation**: learning to live with others the expanse of others.

It means **maturing in the formative process of Bildung**: “development of attitude of mind” – through meaningful experiences in Nature and that flows harmoniously into sensibility and character”.

It specifically calls for exercising the **competencies and dispositions** **empathetic imagination**, **caring generosity**, **reflective thinking**, and **senses of justice, responsibility, and harmony** to enable others and non-humans alike – **to reach their best in accord with their nature and in harmony with others.**

A Pro-Life Policy: The highest good is flourishing life in the various forms of humanity and the natural environment – what adds vitality, joy, creativity, well-being and harmony vs. what kills, destroys, oppresses and hinders.

Finally, it demands of us **not to be bystanders**. As Henry Giroux writes, "seeking seriously to repair the lived reality demands of us to insist on activist and transformative education in which 'pedagogy becomes political and the political becomes more pedagogical'".