

ECOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL NICHES IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION. LEGAL CONNOTATIONS

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Annotation. The human being is the only species in the Universe holding two existential niches: a cultural one, and an ecological one. Along the humankind development, the most often objectives were survival, fulfilling one's needs and the quality of life. To achieve these goals, the cooperation between the two niches is mandatory, due to the humankind's double nature, biological and spiritual. In this context, the process of environment education cannot be other than an integrated one, relying on training and self-training, and the environment community law has to enter into the EU efforts of implementing the "European Green Deal" which implies the achievement of the climate neutrality by 2050.

Key words: integrated environment education, sustainable development, cultural niche, European Green Deal

1. Introduction.

The humankind is in the paradox depressing situation of being the only mammal who destroys its own habitat [4]. However, the human being is the only species different from the other living beings by the skill to create culture. Therefore, the human is the only species possessing two existential niches: the ecological one, and the cultural one. Knowledge, science, and culture are characterised nowadays by an extraordinary dynamism, and this represents a real challenge to the environment education and to the contemporary law [1].

2. Material and method.

The material for this paper was the Questionnaires for environment education and for entertainment. Sample groups were formed of students, pupils and teaching staff from the preschool and school education. The questionnaires have been addressed during various actions taken to promote the "Lunca Muresului" Natural Park. An 1-4 assessment scale was applied for each question.

To know the current state of knowledge, we appealed to the method of information, scientific documentation, and the study of the juridical literature.

3. Results and discussion.

The most claimed goals found in the most recent definitions of the sustainable development concept are: survival, requirements compliance, human species welfare. To achieve the three goals, the "ecological niche" is primordial.

Nowadays, most environmentalists rule the "ecological niche" according to three aspects: trophic niche, spatial niche, multidimensional niche [5]. It is obvious that this niche provides for the survival of the humankind, but the human is characterised by its spiritual nature, besides the biological one.

Therefore, next to the “ecological niche”, the cultural niche represents an outstanding doubling of natural information, mostly genetical one, absolutely required for a species characterised by conscience [7].

After millennia of culture, the “cultural niche” comes to us in a complex architecture of unbalanced variety. Examining the development of “mankind’s cultural niche” while, even consider the human environment, we might claim that it possesses four distinct bases interconnected by a secret transfusion even if our statements might be opposed for. Metaphorically speaking, from these bases, four cultural pillars arose and were built in time, pillars that hold a cupola crossed by diverse “spiritual frescas” trying to render us an incomplete and pale image of the Universe.

Of these four pillars, two arose in the early hours of the human kind, even before the genesis and achievement of writing, and the other two came with the logical order of thinking, greatly conditioned by the writing. The “cultural niche” settled down by itself as soon as the strengthening of the pillars growth and development inserted itself in a quasi-infinite continuum. In its general shape, this structure on four pillars embraced by a cupola can be found in all evolved types of culture which we know. The presence of a general layout of structure of the “human kind cultural niche” in all the cultures leads us to think on the need of its existence in similar shapes for all times and areas where human beings lived.

The analogy between the ecological and the cultural niche make clear that we are placed in a multidimensional cultural area. Some thought, mostly in the area of the humanist culture, that arts and religion might oppose to natural sciences and ecology.

We regard each culture as having its significance and that they can be complementary.

Regarding the religious culture, the relation between the human being and God, between the human being and spirituality overall, nowadays the matter of the moral value and belief must be approached according to the huge successes registered by the scientific research in the field of the life sciences.

The philosophical-religious treasure of the first Christianity centuries secured for the setting up of some perennial moral values, but the danger of science without conscience is the great danger of the 3rd Millennium.

The integrated environment education, based on training and self-training, is called to address all these challenges.

The educational curriculum and the contents of the education reconfigured regularly according to the new values arising from culture and other fields of knowledge. [6]

If, in ecology, meta-ecology imposes, we believe that, in education as well, meta-cognition might guide the process of personality modelling into a society with bursting quality and quantity changes.

Essentially, meta-cognition is the return to oneself, being actively involved in learning, questioning concerning our success and in the importance of our deeds [2].

Synergically, etymologically as well, meta-ecology and meta-cognition allow for the structuring of intelligence and may be conjugated into actions of learning the behaviour ecological norms.

Reviewing the results of the Questionnaires for environment education and for entertainment achieved in the “Lunca Muresului” Natural Park, we mention that over 80% of the interviewed pupils assessed with “well” and “very well” that way how they were getting familiar on the ground, in the natural park, by playing games on how the trees participate in the nature great cycles: the water, the oxygen, and carbon dioxide cycles. High percentage, over 90%, were noticed at the entertainment questions on the growth in appetite, intellectual and physical labour productivity in students and professors as result of some workshops and activities in the woods surrounding Arad.

The cultural activities such as open air festivals were well appreciated as well (i.e. Rock Maris, folk festivals at Bata and Pecica, literary workshops in Savarsin, Santana, etc.) which provide for additional environmental education.

Lower percentage, below 50%, was noted in the questions asked to the students on the newly-launched EU concepts due to their efforts of implementing the “European Green Deal”: climate neutrality, environment dumping, environmental revolution.

4. Conclusions.

If the technical sciences illustrate the practical spirit of human thinking, the ecology is the science of global thinking as there is no other science to express itself more clearly in favour of the interdependence and dynamic balance. The efficiency of the worldwide environmental policies relies on the quality of the environment education of the decision-making bodies [3].

For the achievement of the climatic neutrality until 2050 to be a realistic goal, we believe that the efforts of the environment community structures must identify new financial and juridical mechanisms appropriate for the model of sustainable development. It is also required to align the environment legislation from all EU countries as phenomena such as environment dumping of the 90's were caused precisely by the incomplete environment law from some Central and East European countries [1]. This paper was intended to be a justifying plead for a model of integrated environment education, based on training and self-training, with cooperation between the two niches – the ecological and the cultural ones, the culture being defined as a learnt behaviour.

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