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## К ПРОБЛЕМЕ ВЫСШЕГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ

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*Образование в вузах не соответствует необходимости как можно раньше реализовать биофильную трансформацию современной культуры, направленной против природы. Студентам не хватает приблизительного представления о Земле как о более широкой гостеприимной системе культуры, о жизни как о планетарном явлении, о функциях, интегрированности и ценности Земли. В средних школах их мало учили тому, что Земля – это креативная система, предшествующая культуре и репродуцирующая не только человека, но и все остальные естественные предпосылки человеческой культуры. Земля не была представлена ученикам как более древняя, широкая и мощная система по сравнению с искусственной и существующей на определенном временном этапе культурой. Выпускники школ не понимают ни эволюционную ценность Земли, ни ее базовое право на существование и собственное развитие.*

*Такое нечеткое понимание культуры является одной из причин усиления современного экологического кризиса. Сегодняшним студентам не хватает знаний о культуре как о созданной людьми системе с собственной внутренней информацией. Они не знают, что если мы хотим изменить систему с внутренней информацией, мы должны изменить ее информацию. В случае культуры речь идет о потребности изменить духовную культуру. В современной хищнической организации культуры продвигаются две агрессивные настройки деятельности человека. Во-первых, это биологическая настройка, которая наряду с покорностью является сущностью человеческой природы, поэтому мы не можем ее не упомянуть. Вторая настройка – социокультурная, мы ее обозначаем как хищническую духовную парадигму. Контуры этой парадигмы наметились уже в виде теоретической абстракции в античной Греции, но ее усиление связано с понятийными идеалами классической науки Нового времени.*

*Отход от хищнической духовной парадигмы и ее замена биофильной парадигмой – это большая интеллектуальная задача, стоящая как перед философией и общественными науками, так и современным высшим образованием. Поэтому в тексте мы напоминаем о значении философского концепта Конституции Земли, опубликованной в Чехии в 2015 году на пяти языках, включая русский.*

**Ключевые слова:** образование, культуры, природа, Конституция Земли, информация, духовная парадигма.

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## ON UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

### Abstract

*University education does not correspond to the need to apply biofile transformation of the current anti-natural Culture as soon as possible. Students have inadequate idea about the Earth as the Culture's wider host system, about life as a planetary phenomenon and about the function, integrity and value of the Earth. Secondary schools have failed to inform them sufficiently that the Earth is a creative system which had preceded the Culture and which has spontaneously reproduced not only humans but also all other natural prerequisites of the human Culture. The Earth has not been introduced to the students as an older, wider and more powerful system than the artificial and temporarily existing Culture. Secondary school leavers do not understand the evolutionary value of the Earth, its basic right to exist and develop independently.*

*Vague definitions of Culture is another reason for the deepening of the current environmental crisis. Contemporary university students are not taught about the Culture as a human-created system with its own internal information. They do not know that if we want to change a system with internal information, we must change information within it. In case of Culture this means a modification of Spiritual Culture. It happens because two aggressive characteristics of human activity assert themselves in the contemporary predatory form of Culture. The first is the biological characteristic, which is, together with humility, the foundation of the human nature and therefore we cannot change it. The second is the sociocultural characteristic, which we call the predatory spiritual paradigm. The outline of this paradigm was shaped by means of theoretical abstraction in the Ancient Greece and it has been further strengthened by the conceptual ideals of the New-Age classic science.*

*Abandonment of the predatory spiritual paradigm and its replacement with a biofile paradigm are great intellectual tasks faced by philosophy, social sciences and also university education. Therefore we draw attention to the significance of the philosophical concept of the Constitution of the Earth, which was published in five languages, including Russian, in the Czech Republic in 2015.*

### Keywords

*Education, culture, nature, constitution, Earth, information, spiritual paradigm.*

### Introduction

Keeping the planet Earth habitable will require adoption of more adequate education of the

university-educated population in the coming decades. University education does not correspond to the objective need to *apply biofile transformation of the currently anti-natural Culture as*

soon as possible. Students have inadequate idea about the Earth as the Culture's wider host system, about life as a planetary phenomenon and about the function, integrity and value of the Earth. Secondary schools have failed to inform them sufficiently that the Earth is a creative self-regulating system, which had preceded the Culture and which has spontaneously reproduced not only humans but also all the other natural prerequisites of the human Culture.

For example, student training at Departments of Economy is still based on two concealed presumptions: *first*, that humanity is the only owner of the Earth and *second*, that humans create all the social riches through their activities. The economists know but do not take really seriously the classic proposition of the English economist William Petty, which was established in the middle of the 17th century and which is rather easy to remember: "Labor is the father and Nature is the mother of all the riches". Yet today this is not only about the Earth as a mother of all the riches. This is about acknowledging the Earth's irreplaceable evolutionary value and subjectivity.

### Aggressive adaptive strategy

The contemporary aggressive adaptive strategy of humans as a species, which is a part of the human nature, was enhanced by the *predatory*

*spiritual paradigm* as early as in the Ancient Greece.<sup>1</sup> This paradigm, which is currently massively supported by the powers of the market, will necessarily result in a catastrophe unless intentionally controlled for the benefit of the integrity and diversity of the biosphere. Even though we refuse to openly admit it, a great proportion of the current economic growth is based on the increasingly sophisticated means of outwitting the Nature and consuming and plundering the Nature by the Culture. As the current world capitalism has gradually been ceasing to exploit the live human labor, which has become protected by laws, it has increasingly turned to exploiting the scientifically and technically controlled natural powers, i.e. it has got used to live off lifeless labor. So, if we preserve the idea that it is the purpose of the economic growth to satisfy the growing personal consumption of humans, then the additional expansion of the anti-natural Culture on the finite Earth will result in a fast *decline of the natural existence and in the destruction of the natural order of the Earth*.<sup>2</sup>

And therefore the extensive economic growth on the limited surface of the Earth turns against its originator, against humans. Since the human body with its highly conservative genome (genetic information) has remained homogeneous with the natural conditions that had once created

<sup>1</sup> It turns out that the artificial system of the contemporary Culture is configured in two ways with regard to the Earth. First biologically, i.e. through predispositions in the human genome, and second through the predatory spiritual paradigm. The first configuration, inscribed in the human genome, is related to the necessity of adaptation for our ancestors from the tree-based life to the life in open savanna. The second configuration is fully sociocultural. It came into existence in the Ancient Greece in the context of theoretical abstractions of geometry, mathematics and philosophy. It had not influenced the Culture for a long time but

during the New Age it has been significantly strengthened by science, which has been quickly objectified in the technics and the Material Culture.

<sup>2</sup> In this question scientists have already achieved a tentative agreement. „Perhaps the best single indicator of the Earth's health is the declining number of species with which we share the planet. The number of plant and animal species has gradually increased throughout most of the evolutionary history of life, giving us the extraordinarily rich diversity of life today. Unfortunately, we are now in the early stages of the greatest decimation of plant and animal life in 65 million years“ BROWN, L. ed. (1999). State of the World 1999. New York: W. W. Norton.

it, humans have become a threatened species in the globalizing Consumer Culture. Independently from the level of the scientific, technological and economic development humans remain existentially dependent on their home planet, on the Earth, on their "natural mother".

### Can natural capitalism be the alternative?

When *Natural Capitalism* was published by the American authors at the beginning of the new millennium, it seemed to bring not only new incentives to all social sciences but that it could become a turning point in the relationship between the Culture and the Nature. The authors of this book claim, for example: "What gets to limit our development is not the oil or copper resources but life itself. Continual progress is not currently limited by the numbers of fishing vessels but by the declining numbers of fish; not by the pump powers but by the depletion of ground water reservoirs; not by the numbers of chainsaws but by the disappearance of rainforests. Even though live systems are the resources of all required materials, such as wood, fish or food, also the "services" offered by these systems are important. These services represent a much more important issue for human prosperity than the non-renewable resources themselves. A forest is not only a wood resource but also a source of services such as a water reservoir and a regulation of water runoff. A healthy environment automatically provides not only clean air and water, rain, sea food, rich soils and watershed resilience but also little-appreciated functions such as processing of both natural and industrial wastes, ability to cope with extreme weather and regeneration of the atmosphere".<sup>3</sup>

The same book also courageously notes that the economic theory calls the irreversible destruction of the natural capital "profit". We better use a quotation once again. "The current form of capitalism is a financially profitable, yet unsustainable deviation of human development. What we would call industrial capitalism isn't really in harmony with its own accounting principles. It destroys its own capital and calls it profit. It refuses to assign any value to the largest capital resources it uses, the natural resources, live systems and both social and cultural systems, which are the bases of human capital".<sup>4</sup>

These noteworthy expressions ultimately fade out, though, in the general concept of this book, which attempts to conciliate the irreconcilable, i.e. the predatory Culture with the biofile Nature. The authors do not dare to question either the currently ruling spiritual paradigm or the paratactic principle of unrestricted entrepreneurship and market regulation.

The seemingly neutral regulator of economic activities – the invisible and blind force of the market – is actually a power anti-natural tool. It doesn't liberate an average man and common human labor from its bond to a location but instead liberates the globally mobile capital. And therefore we witness a situation when at the level of an average individual his/her consumer behavior is regulated by the human conservative nature and at the level of the cultural system it is regulated by the spontaneous market forces of the global economic expansion. It seems that so far we have neither an economic theory which would satisfactorily interpret these processes nor any policy which would rationally control them for the benefit of us all.

<sup>3</sup> Hawken, P., Lovins, A., Lovinsová, L. H.: *Přírodní kapitalismus. Jak se rodí další průmyslová revoluce*. Praha, Mladá fronta 2003, p. 21.

<sup>4</sup> Hawken, P., Lovins, A., Lovinsová, L. H.: *Přírodní kapitalismus. Jak se rodí další průmyslová revoluce*. Praha, Mladá fronta 2003, p. 23.

For the time being we just silently watch the origination of a globalized Culture with a highly developed anti-natural technology, which is both pushed and pulled by two related and for the Earth destructive principles: *the biologic and cultural configuration of humans for the aggressive adaptive strategy in the business sphere and the strong consumer compulsion within the human lifestyles*. The current anti-natural cultural system, which, as a result of the inappropriate education, structure of the school system and orientation of the mass media towards advertising, brief news and entertainment is unable to face the global catastrophe. This is the first time when its swipe reaches the physical boundaries of the planet.

### **What kind of education for the globalized Culture?**

Logically, there arise the following questions: What kind of education do we need in these times? How can we prepare the future generation for the current predatory Culture which collides with the fragility of life and finality of the Earth? Is it our purpose to only support the current economic growth, competitiveness improvements and insatiable economic entrepreneurship? Is it still desirable to support the scornful relationship of students towards Nature and their power business interests? Or do we want to lead the students to be theoretically competent to change this situation in a near future?

The roots of the current problems understandably reach deep into the past. People had fought Nature for a long time; they had been technically unequipped and poor. That may be the reason why Culture is still perceived mostly positively, as a desirable cultivation of both Nature and humans. *Schools and later civil education don't attend to the clarification of the relationship between Nature and Culture*. The school-emphasized physical laws (e.g. the law of the equivalence between mass and energy), legalizing the

process of the technical control over Nature, do not respect the value and the spontaneous ontical creativity of the Nature. They hide the principle of the ontical conflict between the Culture and the Nature. This is because the theoretical contents of the secondary school and university teachings represents human cognition of the world not as a cause and information foundation for the origination of the contemporary Material Culture and technics but only from the positive point of view - as a prerequisite of a sustainable development of the Culture, as a cultivation of human activity.

It is necessary to refuse this simplified idea about the instrumental function of education, though. Education helps establish the form of Culture and the personality of humans; it is an important knowledge and value part of the human ontogenesis formative process. Together with family, Nature and society it is the education that shapes the worldview approaches of humans.

To overcome the current environmental crisis, which is a conflict between the anti-natural Culture and the Earth, we need not only a new *philosophical concept of Nature, Culture and the role of Culture within Nature*. We also need a generally comprehensible description of the ontical conflict between the Culture and the Nature. *We need a reflection, which would for the first time make accessible to the public not only the ontically constitutive process of the Natural Evolution but also the opposite ontically constitutive process of establishing Culture by means of human activities*. Educational institutions and lay public have to be offered not only a credible philosophi-

cal analysis of the global environmental crisis origins but also the available options for its mitigation and resolution.<sup>5</sup>

We know that at a university we can hardly change the influences exerted on humans by their families in the course of their pre-school development and also in the course of the later stages of elementary and secondary school education. Therefore we have to focus on those matters that we can influence. For example, we can hardly teach a young man to behave ethically (because the foundations of moral principles come from a family) but we can show him a way to theoretically consider the problems of moral behavior and means how to behave and argue if necessary. And there is one more circumstance that we have to take into account. Contemporary university students are characterized by highly developed somatic structures and performance components of their personalities (premature physical adulthood) and on the other side by social and especially emotional immaturity. The increasing complexity of life, expanding scientific knowledge and the highly-developed communication technologies result in an ever greater differentiation between intellectual knowledge and personal maturity. A university, working with maturing people in the so-called "late pubescence", then represents the last system element in forming the young person by means of Culture.

It has been a sad discovery though, that excessive use of information technologies by young people has resulted not only in unhealthy addiction to these technologies but also in damage to their ability to correctly think theoretically.<sup>6</sup>

Most of contemporary people, though, do not have sufficient knowledge essential for life due to the inappropriate contents structure of the education. For example, they do not know *what evolution is and what is produced by evolution*. People don't know that both the natural and the cultural *evolutions may produce only shapes, structure, orderliness and memory, i.e. information*. Even university students are not taught that our Universe is spontaneously creative and that it was the Natural Evolution that has created the beautiful terrestrial Nature, including humans, i.e. it has created all the natural systems, structures and shapes, the complete natural information. They do not know that the live terrestrial Nature is an open non-linear system with internal information. It is then difficult for them to understand that the *species extinctions* caused by the Culture represent a barbaric burning of precious original scriptures, an irreversible *destruction of the natural genetic information of the biosphere*.

It is probably only the philosophical view of evolution, which should be included in the curricula of both secondary schools and universities that can restore the value of the Nature, mediate the understanding of the principle and the ontical role of both the natural and the socio-cultural information. Recently we have discovered that the natural biotic information that integrates the biosphere doesn't divide or damage the Earth. Only the *human sociocultural information* is hostile to the Earth: it divides the Earth into the Nature and the Culture and it *turns the expansive cultural system, including the economy, against the Natural Evolution and against life*.

<sup>5</sup> Our five-language book (cz, en, de, ru, sk) *Constitution for the Earth* is a philosophical attempt to acknowledge the rights and subjectivity of the planet Earth. See Šmajš, J. *Ústava Země. Filosofický koncept*. Banská Bystrica: PRO 2015.

<sup>6</sup> A remarkable book dealing with this addiction was published by German neurologist Spitzer, M. *Digitální demence. Jak připravujeme sami sebe a naše děti o rozum*. Brno: Host 2014.

For the first time we now need to educate and qualify students, and not only economic faculty students, to be able to exert an appropriate work performance and also to understand and be able to solve the conflict between the Culture and the Nature. The numbers of ideas and interpretations may keep growing as long as we do not know what the reason for the crisis is, but the Culture keeps developing and globalizing spontaneously and anti-naturally and it keeps destroying irreversibly the system it depends on.

### What education for universities?

We believe that university education should not be based on collecting information, which can be performed so easily using the Internet. This is not about the volume of information but about the education, internalization, understanding and sorting out of information; this is about an adequate understanding of the world as a whole. Education should teach students the skill of independent thinking. And this requires not only a demanding mental work in the silence of a library or a dormitory room, but also a partnership between teachers and students, open disputes and discussions and meetings with important personalities from the studied fields. In this sense a university is not *as much dependent on the numbers of personal computers as on the numbers of personalities*. It is easy to say that we should introduce students into theoretical exploration that we should think aloud in front of them instead of simply presenting finished knowledge sets. It is easy to say that we should teach our own fields and that there are textbooks and handbooks for overview lectures. Yet our students, especially the most talented ones, are worth such an effort: they expect

from us an adequate intellectual performance, frequently comparable with peak sports, and also compassion and human support.

In humanities subjects at the Faculty of Economics and Administration of the Masaryk University we strive to provide human and intellectual support to the students. Especially, we try to fight the spreading alienation of young people from the Nature. We try to compensate the currently single-sided approach to business and show them the path to the pro-natural biofile economy and Culture. This is very difficult because students still don't have an adequate ontological idea about Nature and the analogous idea about Culture. They have not heard an adequate philosophical concept of terrestrial reality at secondary schools. Even the current politics, law and morality do not protect the prerequisites for a sustainable Culture; they rely on traditions, smartness, destiny, supernatural forces or the invisible and blind forces of the market.

Leaving aside the direct environmental impacts of the technics penetration into the final personal consumption, which inadequately increases the uncontrolled socio-cultural burden upon the Earth, we cannot overlook two hidden obstacles that complicate the understanding of the world by contemporary young people: 1. The non-transparent design of the consumer electronics makes it impossible to understand the foundations of the technics and the understanding of the Culture principles and the role of Culture within the Nature;<sup>7</sup> 2. The technical environment in apartments and schools, so attractive for children, continually alienates them from the Nature – it provides only minimum incentives to develop their complex innate skills by staying in the open outdoor environment. Everyday use of computer technology by

<sup>7</sup> See key words of J. Šmajš: *Culture; Nature; Technology*. In: Birx, H., J., ed.: *Encyclopedia of Anthropology*. Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi, Sage

Publications 2006, pp. 636-640; 1700-1702; 2165-2167. See also Šmajš, J.: *Místo a role kultury v přírodě*. In: *Filozofia*, Bratislava, SAV 4/2006.

young people unfortunately results in supporting shallow thinking, easy learning and easy forgetting.

### What education for elementary and secondary schools?

And at the end just a few general notes on the school education itself. The elementary and secondary schooling systems had stimulated neuronal memory and narrow abstract thinking in the contemporary predatory spiritual paradigm and therefore it had been compatible with the need to increase productivity of human labor. Such an orientation of education is no longer suitable for the requirements of the sustainable (biofile) Culture. *First*, we do not need to develop human thinking with the aim of bringing up performance-oriented manufacturers anymore, but we need *environmentally responsible citizens of a planetary Culture, who will be competent to deal with the current crisis*. In the sensitive period of the human ontogenesis we therefore have to develop values and an emotional base for a respectful approach to the Nature, for a lifelong positive attitude of humans towards live systems. *Second*. The question about the origination of things that surround us is a common question asked by children. Therefore it is necessary to *teach and support the evolutionary means of children's* thinking from a very early age. As early as in the elementary school pupils should learn that our Earth has developed through a long and natural evolution. They should know that the natural evolution is spontaneously, ontically creative (i.e. sacred, god-like). That it has created not only the Universe and the planet Earth but also us, the humans, who are able to learn about the creativity of the Nature, admire it and protect it. And probably even a child is able to realize that humans can also make things and that through a common effort of many people – through a socio-cultural evolution – there may originate all other socio-cultural creations.

It is high time to leave behind the arrogant anthropocentrism including its complementary mechanistic interpretation of reality. It seems that education has stopped and fortified itself at this very stage. And therefore the first step towards the rehabilitation of natural values, recognition of the Nature as a carrier of activity and its own rights, will be rather difficult in schools. Nevertheless, if we want to avoid future value schizophrenia - i.e. making the value of the natural and cultural existences equal, *students should imprint life as the ultimate value in their minds at the earliest possible age*.

Considering the new leading idea in education – *a careful lease relationship between the Culture and the Earth* – we don't need more traditional education that would deepen the current crisis. We need a real biofile education and less traditional education. We need education with different contents and focus, though, an education that will respect the *new geocentrism and the subjectivity of Earth as the natural home for all living systems, including humans*. Despite the fact that the Earth is not in the middle of the Universe, galaxy or the Solar system it is the only carrier of life and Culture in the known cosmos. And the understanding of the principle of its devastation by Culture must be included in its schema if we want to stop this process; it must be mediated to pupils and students, to the lay and professional public in an understandable way. Even though this topic will hardly be a pleasant one for a majority of the current population and it may bring about doubts and disappointment, it is high time to start talking about it. Disaster prognoses should not be compiled with the purpose of being fulfilled. They are supposed to prevent the disaster.

Orientation of the current education systems upon hard facts may satisfy our biologically determined curiosity but when thinking about a considerate approach of the Culture towards the

Earth, *we have to find the courage to unequivocally place the Earth above the Culture*. It is impossible to exalt both poles of opposition at the same time: the Nature, whose evolution spontaneously created not only the Earth and humanity but also the Culture, which, even though it is our product, cannot be compatible with the Earth or with the human body as an artificial structure.

If we do not want to become extinct due to our own fault, we have no other option but to study the process of the spontaneous creation of the Culture by human activity and include this knowledge as a new negative feedback also into the education system. Spontaneous economic

principles (markets and profits), which were discovered in the times of the predatory paradigm validity, cannot take over this role: *they lead culture towards expansion and the resulting environmental disaster*.

But even a mere identification of human guilt for the possible premature demise of the Culture requires *different training, education and value orientation of the humans*. It requires not only thinking that would be considerate towards the Nature but also evolutionally-ontological studies of the Culture as an artificial terrestrial existence, which has been dangerously expanding at the expense of the terrestrial natural existence.

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