

**INSTITUTE APPLIED RESEARCH IN SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC
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**ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND THE WAY OF THINKING IN THE 21ST
CENTURY**

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The formation of a sustainable society must be the focus of the environmental education

Before the Greek philosophers reality was sacred and no one dared to break away the veils of its mysteries. It was with them that our way of thinking and acting if established. The priest and poet Orpheus and, later, Pythagoras, Heraclitus, and especially Plato broke with the traditional mythical vision and introduced the anthropocentric worldview (from Greek antropos = human being), in which the priority becomes the human species, and no longer to the gods of the past.

From this new vision, the human being with an immortal soul separated from the body, considered mortal and bottom. The human rationality is taken as a reflection of divinity and has as mission to unlock the secrets of nature. This philosophy is marked by a profound duality antagonistic: divine and human; sacred and profane; spirit and body; sociopolitical and religious, and so on. During the Middle Ages this anthropocentric viewpoint is deepened with the backing of the Church, merging it with the Christian principles. The definitive consecration that perspective comes with the emergence of modern science from the 16th century.

The idolatry of human reason starts by rejecting strongly the role Church castrating. Galileo Galilei preferred to be rejected to abandon your knowledge based on science. All of nature and all the cosmos, he says, obey the laws of mathematics. To meet the reality, argued Francis Bacon, there's no need to ask the Pope; simply use the appropriate method, the empirical-inductive. On the basis of science is the experiment. Try repeatedly observe and conclude. To René Descartes is the analytical method-deductive. In it, the whole is the

sum of its parts. When would you like to meet any part of nature, divides it into parts and analyzes them rationally and then join those parts. Isaac Newton, then said: *"using scientific methods, discover that the laws of nature are universal laws"*. Systemizing the entire science of his day, Newton leaves in the shade the role of gods. He himself will be a new god, and their statues will be inaugurated with unrestrained emotion in all European universities. On the basis of their "mechanics" is unleashed an immense technological process. *"The progress is unlimited, modernity has come definitely,"* said Augusto Comte. Agricultural production and craft began to take advantage of new technologies and established himself as a modus operandi with the Industrial Revolution. This worldview was introjetando in individuals and in society.

Until the 16th century the existing market economy in Europe was of small proportion, since the products consumed by people were fruits of his own work. Most of the goods at that time had value in use and only the few surpluses had trading or market value. Even with the expansion of agricultural production that came next, the impacts were restricted to certain areas and proportions pretty slim when compared to current reality. With the large discoveries this scenario was changing because of the expansion of market-based economies and consolidating with the Industrial Revolution and Economic Liberalism. In the 21st century, the globalization of markets and also of information make the anthropocentric vision is dominant and expose its antagonism with the ecological footprint, i.e. the amount of biologically productive land and water required to supply a population with renewable resources that it uses, and to absorb or eliminate the waste from the use of such resources.

The need arises for paradigm shift, the **Anthropocentric** for **Ecocentric**. A new look of reality imposes itself, different from fragmented vision conceived in the 16th to 18th. From the second half of the 20th century begins to establish a systemic or holistic vision that is putting the foundation of an entirely new conception of the world and the nature of the human being and of life, with the support of the science of our time, particularly of modern Physics, Biology and Neurophysiology. This new design has become gradually idea common in colleges; she passes into our schools and, finally comes to echo in the minds and hearts of the people. Is environmental education occupying its place in design of a new type of society, we must act locally but think globally!

As stated by Morin (2000), *"the great hope for the 21st century is the Earth Citizenship, whose embryos can be sprouted through education by enabling the transmission of old and open your mind to the new"*.

The process of awareness of society has intensified worldwide. Constitutes the concrete resolution to approach environmental problems through interdisciplinary

approaches and active and responsible participation of each individual and the collective, as strengthening agent of social transformation. Environmental Education underwent a substantial modification, in the decade of 1990, by virtue of the incorporation of the concept of sustainable development and the definition of its mission of forming a sustainable society. Based on national and international public policies, environmental education has a naturalistic connotation, to have a social and environmental mission, exerted through citizenship practices and social and environmental responsibility.

The objective becomes the instrumentalization of adopting responsible of new values, habits, behaviors and personal relationships, interpersonal, and with all things around them, reflecting the consumption and the exploitation of natural resources and generation of waste. This is because if you look at the place where we concluded that everything is obtained through the natural resources existing on planet Earth. Such resources are finite and have a high risk of degradation that represents life threatening. Therefore, it is likely to end. The awareness that everything that exists of concrete around us is, directly or indirectly, a natural resource, increases our responsibility to react, to allow change in order that the future prospects of children and young people do not end up.

If Environmental Education cannot change the attitude of the new generations in the face of life and nature, probably there will be no future, nor life, nor nature. The 21ST century will tell us if will or not, we hope and we must work for it.

To initiate immediately such changes, Environmental Education has to take advantage of the circumstances that present themselves in social practice, identify what is favorable and what is unfavorable and build the opportunity for change. Thus, it may help to change the way of thinking and acting in the relation between man and nature, in this 21st century.

Environmental Education has objectives and guiding principles for its development and strategies in formal and non-formal education activities, including the anthropic environment, beyond the natural, from 1^a Intergovernmental Conference on Environmental Education or Conference in Tbilisi, 1977. In Brazil, in 1994 was instituted the National Programme of Environmental Education (Pronea), and in 1999 the national environmental education Policy, through the law n° 9,795, establishing lines of formal and non-formal activities, to promote actions that stimulate critical and proactive stance on the part of all sectors of society.

REFERENCE

MORIN, E. **Os setes saberes necessários à educação do futuro**. São Paulo: Cortez, 2000. 2ª edição.