



Werner Busch / Gabriele Münnix / Bernd Rolf (eds.)
im Auftrag der Association Internationale
des Professeurs de Philosophie

PHILOSOPHIE UND UMWELTBILDUNG

PHILOSOPHY AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Druck:
Verlag Traugott Bautz Nordhausen
Deutschland

ISBN 978-3-95948-592-0

***I went into the woods because I wished to live
deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life,
and see if I could not learn what it had to teach,
and not, if I came to die, discover that I had not lived.***

(Henry David Thoreau)

***Philosophie ist die sokratische Rückfrage:
Habe ich verstanden, was ich eben gesagt habe?
Philosophie ist in diesem Sinne wesentlich nachträglich.
Sie fragt nach dem schon Gesagten.
Sie ist aber eben damit wesentlich vorbereitend.
Ihre Antwort kann uns weiterführen.***

(Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker)

Inhalt / Contents

Lutz Möller: Foreword / Zum Geleit.....	5
Riccardo Pozzo: Preface / Vorwort	8
1. Einleitung / Introduction	12
Gabriele Münnix: Nature as a Resource? On the Significance of Philosophical Reflection in Times of Climate Crisis / Natur als Ressource? Zur Bedeutung philosophischer Reflexion in Zeiten der Klimakrise	12
2. Länderbeiträge / Country Reports	27
Michelle Wüthrich / Juliette Gloor: Bildung für nachhaltige Entwicklung (BNE) in der Schweiz.....	27
Andrzej Maciej Kaniowski / Łukasz Konecki: Formung von Einstellungen zur Natur und Umwelterziehung in der Schulbildung in Polen	45
Barbora Baďurova: Environmental Philosophy and Ethics Education in Slovakia.....	62
Gabriele Münnix / Rolf Siermann: Warum die Natur schutzen? Naturethik als Teil des Philosophieunterrichts in den Sekundarstufen I und II in NRW / Deutschland.....	71
Petra Šebešova: Teaching Philosophy and Environmental Education in the Czech Republic.....	93
Hans Bringeland / Tomas Stolen: Okologisches Denken in der norwegischen Lehrkrafteausbildung	110
Griet Galle: Philosophizing about Nature in Primary and Secondary Education in Flanders	124
Riccardo Sirello: Umweltbildung und Verantwortungsethik in Italien	142
Lina Vidauskyte / Tomas Sodeika: The Upbringing of Ecological Self- awareness in the Ethics Classroom – The Case of Lithuania	148
Nikoleta Nikolova / Aneta Karageorgieva: Studying and Developing Ecophilosophy in Bulgaria.....	156
Evrim Kutlu: Umwelt- und Klimaethik im Philosophieunterricht in der Turkei.....	165
Thomas Mohrs: Gastrosophie: Ein Beitrag der Philosophie zur Mitweltbildung in der osterreichischen Lehrkraftebildung.....	180
Agnes B. Curry: Sitting with Despair and Allowing the Forest Teach Us – Aspects of Philosophy Teaching in American Colleges.....	192
Mohamed Turki: Der Klimawandel, eine Herausforderung an den Philosophieunterricht in Tunesien.....	205

Laurentine Liliane Awono: Das Naturverständnis des Afrikaners – Ein Beitrag zur Umweltethik	213
Heinrich Geiger / Xiuwei Zhou-Geiger: Natur und Naturverständnis in China. Ihre Prägung durch Erzählungen in der schulischen und außerschulischen Praxis	224
Chrisia Laura Pinto: Environment Education in Indian Schools and Colleges: A Philosophical Perspective	235
3. Fazit / Conclusion	253
Werner Busch: Mut zur philosophischen Umwelterziehung / Courage for Philosophical Environmental Education	253
4. Anhang / Appendix	263
Declaration on the Importance of Teaching Philosophy for Environmental Education / Deklaration zur Bedeutung des Faches Philosophie für die Umweltbildung	263
The Authors / Zu den Autorinnen und Autoren.....	268

Foreword / Zum Geleit

Lutz Möller

(German UNESCO-Commission)

In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, all United Nations Member States have committed to ensuring by 2030 that “all learners acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to promote sustainable development, including through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles...”. Why is a global development goal dedicated to the content of education for the first time? Why did UNESCO negotiate, in 2023, a text of international law on the content of education with its updated “Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development”?

Our world is developing in an unsustainable way - this is true for almost all countries. Many indicators of the physical state of the world show that we live through a whirlwind of ecological crises that is spinning faster every year. Humanity has failed to act as guardian of nature for its own sake. Today's question is: Can humans stop the increasing impairment of their own livelihoods in a timely manner so that they can better ensure the humane survival of their own species?

To do this, we need sustainable development and this in turn requires a variety of strategies for transformation and innovation, from regulation to making harmful behavior more expensive, government incentives, science - all the way to education for sustainable development. Education is needed to change behavior and consumption, even if it would be wrong to place the burden of transformation on the individual consumer. Education for sustainable development is needed so that state actions are always understood and democratically legitimized.

The concept of sustainable development is based normatively on human dignity and empirically on the recognition of the physical scarcity of resources and sinks worldwide. The concept, however, does not necessarily need a “thick concept” of the “relationship of man to nature” - which is helpful for transcultural understanding and liberal democracies. You can intend to act sustainably regardless of whether you think that nature has value in itself - or not; whether nature is spiritual - or not; or whether nature is considered useful, frightening or admirable.

Sustainable development means ongoing, never-finishable processes in which challenges, conflicting goals and unintended side effects are identified, understood, negotiated and minimized/resolved. Sustainable development is therefore necessarily based on knowledge and science; it requires ongoing and lifelong (re-)learning about alternatives, possibilities, appropriate compromises and negotiation of conflicting legitimate interests or justifiable values.

This requires not only factual knowledge, but also skills that philosophy can impart in an outstanding way. I hope you enjoy reading this volume and thank the AIPPh for its initiative! For almost 50 years, the AIPPh has shown across countries that philosophy can and must be lived practically.

In der Agenda 2030 für nachhaltige Entwicklung haben sich alle Mitgliedsstaaten der Vereinten Nationen verpflichtet, bis 2030 sicherzustellen, dass „alle Lernenden die notwendigen Kenntnisse und Qualifikationen zur Förderung nachhaltiger Entwicklung erwerben, unter anderem durch Bildung für nachhaltige Entwicklung und nachhaltige Lebensweisen“. Warum widmet sich erstmals ein globales Entwicklungsziel dem Inhalt von Bildung? Warum hat die UNESCO 2023 mit ihrer aktualisierten „Empfehlung über Bildung für Frieden, Menschenrechte und nachhaltige Entwicklung“ ein integratives Völkerrecht über den Inhalt von Bildung geschaffen?

Unsere Welt entwickelt sich in nicht-nachhaltiger Weise – das gilt für fast alle Staaten. Viele Indikatoren über den physischen Zustand der Welt deuten auf ein steigendes Ungleichgewicht hin, auf einen Strudel ökologischer Krisen, der sich von Jahr zu Jahr schneller dreht. Die Menschheit hat dabei versagt, als Wächter über die Natur um ihrer selbst willen zu wirken. Die heutige Frage lautet: Kann der Mensch der steigenden Beeinträchtigung seiner eigenen Lebensgrundlagen so rechtzeitig Einhalt gebieten, dass er das Überleben, besser das menschenwürdige Überleben seiner eigenen Art sichern kann?

Dazu brauchen wir nachhaltige Entwicklung und diese wiederum braucht vielfältige Strategien der Transformation und Innovation, von Regulierung über Verteuerung von schädlichem Verhalten, staatliche Anreize, Förderung von Wissenschaft – bis hin zu Bildung für nachhaltige Entwicklung. Bildung braucht es für Verhaltens- und Konsumänderungen, auch wenn es völlig falsch wäre, der einzelnen Konsumentin die Last der Transformation aufzubürden. Bildung für nachhaltige Entwicklung braucht es, damit staatliches Handeln immer verstanden und demokratisch legitimiert bleibt.

Das Konzept nachhaltige Entwicklung basiert normativ auf der Menschenwürde und empirisch auf der Erkenntnis der physischen Knappheit von Ressourcen und Senken weltweit. Das Konzept braucht hingegen nicht zwingend einen "dichten Begriff" der "Beziehung des Menschen zur Natur" - was für die transkulturelle Verständigung und liberale Demokratien hilfreich ist. Man kann nachhaltiges Handeln intendieren unabhängig davon, ob man meint, dass die Natur einen Wert an sich hat - oder nicht, ob Natur spirituell ist - oder nicht, oder ob Natur für nützlich, beängstigend oder bewundernswert gehalten wird.

Nachhaltige Entwicklung meint fortdauernde, nie abschließbare Prozesse, in denen Herausforderungen, Zielkonflikte und nicht-intendierte Nebenwirkungen identifiziert, verstanden, ausgehandelt und minimiert/aufgelöst werden. Damit ist nachhaltige Entwicklung ganz notwendig wissens- und wissenschaftsbasiert; es erfordert fortlaufendes und lebenslanges (Neu-)Lernen über Alterna-

tiven, Möglichkeitsräume, angemessene Kompromisse und Aushandlung widersprüchlicher legitimer Interessen bzw. vertretbarer Werte.

Es braucht dafür nicht nur Faktenwissen, sondern Kompetenzen, die gerade die Philosophie in herausragender Weise vermitteln kann. Ich wünsche Ihnen eine ertragreiche Lektüre dieses Bandes und danke der AIPPh für ihre Initiative! Die AIPPh zeigt seit fast 50 Jahren länderübergreifend, dass Philosophie praktisch gelebt werden kann und muss.



Die Arche Noah

Vorwort / Preface

Riccardo Pozzo (Rom)

- Präsident der AIPPh -

Mit einer Erklärung zur Bedeutung weltweiter philosophischer Bildung hat es am Rande einer UNESCO-Tagung in Paris 1996 eine Deklaration gegeben, die sich die Association Internationale des Professeurs de Philosophie (AIPPh) auf ihre Fahnen geschrieben bzw. später in ihre Satzung übernommen hat.

Nun hat die UNESCO nach dem Weltklimagipfel in Glasgow weltweit „Climate Education“ in jedem Fach gefordert. Dieses Anliegen nehmen wir nicht nur mit diesem Buch auf. Das Fach Philosophie ist für die Behandlung des Themenkomplexes „Natur und Ethik“ besonders geeignet, hat man doch in der Philosophie seit der Antike über naturgemäßes gutes Leben in verschiedenen Kulturen nachgedacht. Daher haben wir eine unserer Jahrestagungen zu dem erwähnten Thema eines verantwortbaren Handelns in einer bedrohten Natur im Schweizer Kanton Wallis veranstaltet. Einer der Vorträge fand neben einem massiv schmelzenden Gletscher statt, sodass man sich auch ganz unmittelbar von den ökologischen Zusammenhängen (Wasserversorgung, Erdbeben etc.) ein Bild machen konnte. Zwecks Vorbereitung der Tagung über Naturphilosophie und Ethik in Brig haben wir eine internationale ZOOM-Konferenz veranstaltet, an der Lehrende der Philosophie an Schulen und Hochschulen aus 17 Ländern teilgenommen haben, um zu einer Art Bestandsaufnahme zu kommen, was in der philosophischen Lehre im Hinblick auf einen verantworteten Umgang mit der Natur bereits geschieht und wo noch wie nachgebessert werden kann. Dabei ist die Idee zu diesem Buch entstanden. Man kann sich durchaus durch Impulse aus anderen Ländern anregen lassen, was die AIPPh in ihrer fast 50-jährigen Geschichte immer als ihren Auftrag begriffen hat. Denn unsere Natur und damit auch unser Menschsein ist in „höchster Gefahr“, wie es schon Heidegger lange vor der Klimakrise formuliert hatte. Auf der erwähnten Tagung in Brig wurde auch eine Deklaration zur Umweltethik unterzeichnet, die vorher von AIPPh-Mitgliedern aus drei Kontinenten erarbeitet wurde und die an die UN weitergeleitet wurde. Sie ist am Ende des Buches abgedruckt.

Seit der Antike ist das Nachdenken über den Menschen in der ihn umgebenden Welt zum Thema gemacht worden, und in vielen Ländern hat es einen angestammten Platz in einem Fach Philosophie, in anderen Ländern sind es philosophische Gehalte anderer Fächer. Das Buch gestattet einen Einblick, wie mit dem Thema Umweltethik in den verschiedenen Ländern umgegangen wird, und erlaubt es, die Pariser Erklärung an einem wichtigen und aktuellen Thema zu exemplifizieren und die Bedeutung von philosophischer Bildung auch in diesem Punkt herauszuheben. Wie wir zeigen wollen, kann dem Fach Philosophie/Ethik in diesem Zusammenhang eine besondere Bedeutung zukommen, schafft es doch einen Reflexionsraum, mit dem man verantwortbare Entschei-

dungen für mehr Lebensqualität auf unserem Planeten vorbereiten kann. Unsere Ehrenpräsidenten haben die internationalen Kontakte der AIPPh genutzt, um in verschiedenen Ländern interessante Einblicke in die jeweiligen philosophischen Traditionen zu ermöglichen. Die AutorInnen geben aber auch Informationen zu den curricularen Rahmenbedingungen der jeweiligen Länder, um dann Ideen aufzuzeigen, wie man sinnvoll zum Thema Umweltethik arbeiten kann. Von Nordamerika bis Indien, von Norwegen bis Kamerun führen uns Autoren und Autorinnen in das philosophische Denken und die unterrichtlichen Rahmenbedingungen ihrer Länder ein und zeigen dann inspirierende Ideen auf, die anregen und weiterführen sollen. Zugleich zeigt sich aber auch, welchen Schwierigkeiten eine internationale Umweltpolitik begegnet, die zu oft gleichartige Naturbegriffe und Denktraditionen als gegeben voraussetzt, und dann feststellen muss, dass eigene Denkansätze – wie man in der interkulturellen Philosophie oft feststellt – unzulässig verallgemeinert werden. Daher verfolgt dieses Buch auch aufklärende Absichten. Doch natürlich ist von Jahr zu Jahr der Handlungsdruck durch die hausgemachte Klimakrise enorm, sodass die internationale Politik Lösungen finden muss, auch wenn Schwellenländer einen Nachholbedarf an Industrialisierung und Emissionsrechten anmelden.

Dem diesem Buch vorangestellten Motto Carl Friedrich von Weizsäckers folgend können wir festhalten, dass die Philosophie zwar nach dem schon Gesagten fragt, aber „eben damit wesentlich vorbereitend“ ist. Aus den jeweiligen Kulturen heraus müssen Denkansätze entstehen, und an Schulen und Universitäten vermittelt werden, die uns dann in ihrer Vielfalt inspirieren und weiterführen können. Und dazu wollen wir als PhilosophInnen einen Beitrag leisten.

Wir danken den Autorinnen und Autoren und auch den beiden Karikaturisten Horst Haitzinger und Dr. Jan Tomaschoff, die sich zur Mitarbeit bereit erklärt haben und – wie die Philosophie – zum kritischen Denken anregen wollen. Wir danken auch Stefan Düfel für das deutsche Korrekturlesen sowie Christa Zens und Charlie McCartan für englisches Korrekturlesen.

Hoffen wir, dass wir damit auch helfen können, verantwortbares und sinnvolles Handeln im Sinne der UNESCO im Hinblick auf eine bessere Zukunft vorzubereiten!

A declaration at the fringes of the 1996 Paris UNESCO conference pointing out the importance of worldwide education in philosophy was taken up by the Association Internationale des Professeurs de Philosophy (AIPPh) as its own cause and later integrated into its statutes.

Now, after the World Climate Summit in Glasgow, UNESCO has called for “Climate Education” in every subject worldwide. We do not take up this concern merely with this book. The subject of philosophy is especially suited for the treatment of the various themes of “nature and ethics”. Since antiquity philosophy has been pondering aspects of a good life in accordance with nature in var-

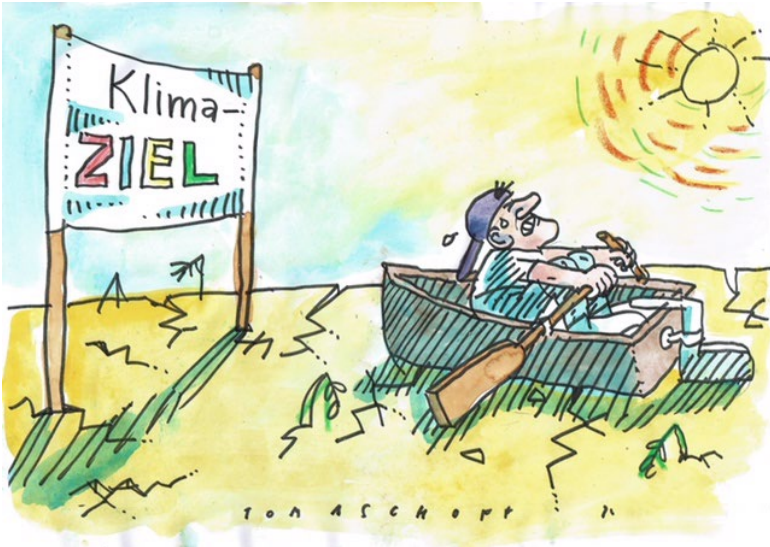
ious cultures. Hence, we chose to organize one of our annual conferences on the topic of responsible action in a threatened nature in the city of Brig in the Swiss canton of Valais. One of the lectures took place next to a massively melting glacier, so that the participants had a very direct idea of the ecological interrelations (water supply, landslides etc.). In order to take stock of what is already happening in philosophical teaching with regard to a responsible approach to nature, and where improvements can still be made, in preparation for the conference on philosophy of nature and ethics in Brig, we organized an international zoom conference, in which philosophy teachers from schools and universities from 17 countries participated. This is how the idea for this book came about. One can certainly be inspired by impulses from other countries, which the AIPPh has always understood as its mission in its almost 50-year history. Our nature and with it our humanity is in "highest danger", as Heidegger had already made clear long before the climate crisis. At the meeting in Brig, a declaration on environmental ethics was also signed, which had previously been drawn up by AIPPh members from three continents and which was forwarded to the UN. It is printed at the end of this book.

Since ancient times, thinking about human beings in the world around them has been the subject for discussion for philosophers. In many countries it occupies a traditional place as a discipline of philosophy, in other countries it provides philosophical content to other disciplines. The book allows an insight into how the subject of environmental ethics is dealt with in different countries and allows us to exemplify the Paris Declaration on an important and topical subject and to highlight the importance of philosophical education in this point, too. As we will show, the subject of philosophy/ethics can have a special importance in this context, as it creates a space for reflection with which to prepare responsible decisions for a better quality of life on our planet. Our honorary presidents have taken advantage of the international contacts of the AIPPh to provide insights into the respective philosophical traditions in different countries. However, the authors also provide information on the curricular frameworks of the respective countries in order to then point out ideas on how to work meaningfully on the topic of environmental ethics. From Northamerica to India, from Norway to Cameroon, authors introduce us to the philosophical thinking and teaching frameworks of their countries and then present inspiring ideas to stimulate and guide us further. At the same time, however, it also shows the difficulties encountered by an international environmental policy that too often takes similar concepts of nature and traditions of thought for granted, and then finds that its own approaches to thinking – as is often seen in intercultural philosophy – are inadmissibly generalized. Therefore, this book also pursues enlightening intentions. But of course, from year to year, the pressure to act is enormous due to the home-made climate crisis, so that international politics must find solutions, even if emerging countries declare a need to catch up in terms of industrialization and emission rights.

Inspired by the motto of Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker, which precedes this book, we can state that philosophy asks for what has already been said, but that “precisely with this it is essentially preparatory”. Approaches to thinking must emerge from the respective cultures and be conveyed to schools and universities, which can then inspire us in their diversity and lead us further. And we as philosophers want to make a contribution to this.

We would like to thank the authors and also the two cartoonists Horst Haitzinger and Dr. Jan Tomaschoff, who have agreed to collaborate and – like philosophy – want to stimulate critical thinking. We are especially grateful to Stefan Düfel for German proofreading and to Christa Zens and Charlie McCartan for English proofreading.

Let us hope that we can thereby also help to prepare responsible and meaningful action in the sense of UNESCO with a view to a better future!



1. Einleitung / Introduction

Nature as a Resource? On the Significance of Philosophical Reflection in Times of Climate Crisis

Gabriele Münnix (Düsseldorf)

As we have come to discover, plastic waste floats with a “northern drift” from our river mouths as far as to the uninhabited Arctis. It is also found in our food, in microparticles through the seafood we ingest, where it can cause hormonal disturbances – and not only in humans¹. The deforestation of the last rainforests is reaping profits for agribusiness through intensive exploitation, whether on palm oil plantations or for grazing, thereby affecting massively the absorption of climate-harming CO₂ in the atmosphere. CO₂ is not only produced through automobile emissions and the firing of fossil fuels (even the internet plays a role in emissions). CO₂ is also hugely a byproduct of industrial exploitation of resources which up to now have been assumed to be rather harmless and at our disposal in an unlimited and inexpensive way, Air travel also contributes to global warming, and CO₂ emissions at these altitudes are even more difficult to disperse. (And until planes and cars can be refueled with green hydrogen, emitting only steam, it may be too late). Thus, black deposits have already been discovered on the last glaciers (which were formerly a gleaming white), even in nearly uninhabited regions – if, indeed, they have not already melted away entirely. Water supplies are endangered, eroded or imperiled terrain can no longer absorb heavy rains, resulting in increased flooding, and many coastal areas are threatened by rising sea levels. Every inroad into the jungle forces the habitats of humans and animals closer together, which encourages the spread of zoonotic diseases; the transmission of viruses like Ebola from wildlife to humans will become ever more frequent. Intensive factory farming has meant to feed prophylactic antibiotics on a massive scale, which raises corresponding concerns for resistances in humans. Factory farming alone produces far too much slurry and methane gas, but it supplies us with leather, gelatine, medical substances such as heparin, and so on, which appear to be necessary. Economically oriented thinking falls short unless it is embedded in ecological contexts. Hence insecticides and pesticides used in order to achieve a rise in

¹ See for instance Health News 2021: <https://healthnewsnet.de/news-2/mikroplastik-kann-menschliche-zellen-schaedigen-24657/> and NABU: Plastikmüll und seine Folgen, <https://www.nabu.de/natur-und-landschaft/meere/muellkippe-meer/muellkippe-meer.html>, s. auch <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2024/feb/27/microplastics-found-in-every-human-placenta-tested-study-health-impact>

profits, have not only contributed to a loss of 80% of our insect population and other types of deaths, for example in the avian world, as the biologist Rachel Carson predicted already 60 years ago (!)²: Now more and always “more efficient” farmland is put to use which does not serve in any way to make our food healthier. There can be no healthy people without a healthy, sound state of nature which includes species diversity, and sustainable management.³ Yet instead of this, we have a multitude of cycles which create harmful effects on organisms.

How can we stop all this madness? Long before anyone spoke of “climate crisis”, Heidegger had suggested the need for a “turn”, a U-turn away from a dangerous development in which an increasingly technologized living world considered nature simply as a resource, merely to be exploited and put to use. (He spoke of erosion, resulting from a ruthless sort of use, increasingly destructive to the natural basics of life.) “We are in the gravest danger if we do not now begin “to recollect the vastness of the original realm of our being”⁴. Already at the beginning of the 19th century, 150 years before Heidegger, Schelling, influenced by Spinoza’s pantheism (“*deus sive natura*”), gave a similar warning, that Nature should be seen as “vivid in itself”, and not, as Fichte does, as a dead object, but it rather should be regarded as a whole comprising ourselves:

“We must be clear that it is a vain illusion when he” (Fichte) “claims to understand the vitality of being: idle words, indeed when they lead to the destruction of nature. Only he would not have it as alive, but as dead, as something which can be affected, manipulated, and trodden underfoot. The essence of this entire concept of “nature” is that nature is at hand, should be used, and that it exists for no other reason than to be used, his principle of seeing nature is a mere economic-teleological principle. [...] Insofar as nature only serves human ends, it will be put to death.”⁵

Increasingly, therefore, Nature is no longer relevant as an aesthetic resource for human recreation, it is also no longer truly “natural”; rather, it can be replaced by artificial nature⁶, which may fulfil our aesthetic needs even better, in that it neither stinks, bites, stings or scratches. In the end, every park is a matter of artificially re-formed nature, each new breed of plant or animal is created through human intervention for a specific human aim. And while one is about it: if it *can* be done, why *shouldn't* we - if we can achieve pest resistant plants through genetical engineering - use biotechnological methods for human ends, with increasing infertility, through artificial insemination and pre-implantation diagnostics in order to prevent disabled life?

² Rachel Carson, *Der stumme Frühling* („*Silent Spring*“) published already in 1962!

³ So Prof. Hans-Otto Pörtner, board member of the World Climate Council, in an interview. („It is already after 12“ , in: Münnix, Rolf, Bringeland (Hg.), *Forum Philosophie International 71* („*Natur*“), Zürich 2022, p.1 -14, here: p. 13

⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Die Technik und die Kehre*, Pfullingen 1976, p.19f

⁵ Schelling, *Schriften von 1806-1813*, p. 17ff

⁶ vgl Böhme, Gernot, *Natürlich Natur!* Frankfurt 1992, p. 9ff

And this brings us to the fundamental question of philosophy: *ti esti?* What is actually natural? What is nature? And which nature do we want? (So much will depend on our relationship with nature.) Here, indeed, we come to a problem that participants in global climate conferences have not always succeeded in clarifying, especially as one has to fall back on translations: different cultures have completely different traditions in terms of how they think about nature. (In Inuit languages for instance there is no term for “forest fire”.) And in African thinking one often encounters animistic concepts of nature⁷, while Asian maxims about life often prescribe harmony with nature, which can be brought into truer balance through human intervention⁸. Most often we tend to generalize our own concepts which we take to be self-evident, in our ignorance of other world views.

But even in our own European traditions of thought there have been different ideas than those already mentioned above: praiseworthy, Descartes set up his program of rationalism in opposition to contemporary views about witchcraft and belief in spirits⁹. But he has left us the legacy of a mechanistic view of human beings whose effects can still be felt in European medicine, and promoted a powerful technique: one should no longer feel that one has to submit blindly to (natural) powers and forces, but rather, armed with an understanding of the principles of nature, one can put them to use, a maxim which has not lost its meaning yet even in the present day, for example, in the science of bionics. Humans should become “*Maître et possesseur de la nature*”, masters and proprietors (!) of nature, and should therefore rule over it, rather than be ruled by it¹⁰. And today we must say that we have to master self-inflicted damages. (Solar panels in space where the sun is shining constantly? Compostable plastic? Vegan leather and clothing without polyester? CO₂-absorbing sea grass plantations at the coast lines, when the rain forests have gone? Seawater desalination, when the last glaciers have melted away and vast tracts of land are without spring water? This technology is already widely practiced, for instance in the very dry Canary Islands, but the rests of concentrated salt go back to the sea and disturb the ecological balance. Increasingly we will have wars over scarce resources and climate refugees.

Occidental dualistic thought is frequently quite characteristic of European traditions, and it has been very influential, even up to Fichte¹¹, particularly since

⁷ Chibueze Udeani, Afrikanische Wertetraditionen im 21. Jahrhundert. Werteverlust oder Wertewandel? In: Gabriele Münnix (Hg.), Wertetraditionen und Wertekonflikte, Nordhausen 2013, p. 209-218

⁸ Heinrich Geiger, One-ness. On the Chinese Understanding of Nature, in: Forum Philosophie 71, Zürich 2022, p.117-128.

⁹ See Gabriele Münnix, Mit Rationalismus gegen Hexen- und Teufelswahn. Descartes Begründung der modernen Vernunft. In: Alena Sobotka (Hg.), Filosofické dílo René Descartesa, Karlsuniversität Prag 1998, p. 53-75. Short version in Ethik und Unterricht (EU) 2(97).

¹⁰ René Descartes, Discours de la méthode pour bien conduire sa raison, part 6, Paris 1966, p.168

¹¹ Gottlieb Fichte, Die Bestimmung des Menschen, in: J.G. Fichte, Werke, Vol. 3, Leipzig o.J., p.267ff.

Descartes radically simplified the cosmos of the Middle Ages, that of substances and their primary qualities: for Descartes, there are only two substances, *res cogitans* and *res extensa*. Other dualisms have been superimposed: material and spiritual; human and natural; subject and object (later added by Kant), even man and woman (“mater”/matter as the one which endures); (male) spirit as the principle which gives form to matter.

The so-called “Cartesian split” between materiality and spirituality (already prepared in the Aristotelian distinction of *hyle* and *nous*) has had an enormous impact on European thinking. It had its effect even on Fichte, though even during Descartes’ lifetime Spinoza was already talking about there being only *one* living substance: *natura naturans*. And this Cartesian split was criticized already by Leibniz with his notion of power (today we would perhaps use the term energy) which exists in both human and nature: they are not separate and opposed to one another but rather intertwined with one another, since energy flows through them both.

These various concepts of nature are decisive when it comes to thinking about responsible action. Do we see ourselves as fellow creatures, to use a term with rather religious connotations, as Albert Schweitzer expressed it in his ethics of an awe of life¹², or Francis of Assisi’s “Song of the Sun”, which makes no distinction, with regard to our brother- and sisterhood, between animate and inanimate nature. Or, to speak in a more modern fashion, do we feel that by virtue of our capacity for suffering, which we share with all other living creatures, are we intrinsically interconnected with the natural world? Finally our existence is inconceivable without an evolutionary background, and we may thus discover - genetic - relatedness as well.

In contrast to a general anthropocentrism, which eventuates in a utilitarian ethic by which everything should be made to serve human goals, Meyer-Abich suggested a conception of pathocentrism and later, even biocentrism¹³ using the term of ‘co-world’ which he had found already in Goethe, rather than of man being centre of the world. Might it be that a utilitarian ethic (as Jeremy Bentham would have it, “the greatest happiness for the greatest number”), might be replaced with an ethic of compassion, as Schopenhauer suggested? Concern for animal welfare and animal rights (since for Descartes animals were simply machines with no souls) could also be inspired in this way. Or might it be that in the final analysis this is still a matter of human utility – that the animals which we consume should have been happy and healthy? At the opposite end of the spectrum are cultural concerns for animal welfare, for those who believe in reincarnation in other life-forms. According to that perspective, “Western” behaviour towards animals is barbaric. Here again one can presume that the Western perspective is driven by ultimately egoistic motives. On the other hand, from a

¹² Albert Schweitzer, *Kultur und Ethik*, München 1972, p. 330 ff, 340 ff.

¹³ Klaus-Michael Meyer-Abich, *Praktische Naturphilosophie für die Umweltpolitik*, München 1987, and *ibid.*, *Aufstand für die Natur. Von der Umwelt zur Mitwelt*, München 1990

western perspective, one could also assume purposeful thinking for selfish motives in believers in reincarnation.

In any case, the concept of responsibility must be made clear. For whom or what are we responsible? Only for ourselves? For other humans, to whom we are answerable, e.g., to whom an account can or must be rendered? For the intended or also the unintended consequences of our actions? Can we take responsibility for nature? Hans Jonas took on this question, recommending a “heuristics of fear” according to which one should assume a “worst case scenario” in order to be able to act responsibly “in regard” to nature. His so-called “ecological imperative” warns in the style of Kant: “Act in such a way that the effects of your action are compatible with the permanence of genuine human life on Earth.”¹⁴

But this is where the difficulties for global ethics only begin, as desirable as such ethics might be in the light of the climate crisis and other crises. For there are cultures with fundamentally fatalistic principles, as for instance promulgated in some parts of Islam¹⁵ (“When men make plans, Allah laughs”): Cultures which believe that only God’s will is always carried out. Or the will of an omnipotent powerful or authoritarian person which one neither can nor should contradict so that personal initiative is not desirable. In consequence the individuals’ sense of responsibility can be reduced.

It was Kant who first designated humans as being “ends in themselves”¹⁶, thanks to our dignity as rational beings. According to Kant, one cannot simply use others as instruments for one’s own ends which certainly is not prevalent in all cultures. This is especially the case in communitarian African and Asian cultures, where the value of the community is prioritized over the value of any one individual, whose worth is attributable in the first place to the community in which and through which it can flourish. According to an African critic (Western) human rights are individual rights, which preferably should also be rights accorded to groups, for example, minorities.¹⁷ But we may suppose that flourishing communities only exist if they are embedded in a healthy nature?¹⁸

Can we not see nature as an end unto (and in) itself? As we might put it today, has nature an intrinsic value in itself? Can it even have rights, or be considered a legal subject? This is one of the starting points for Max Scheler’s critique of Kant.¹⁹

¹⁴ Hans Jonas, *Das Prinzip Verantwortung, Versuch einer Ethik für die technologische Zivilisation*, Frankfurt 1979, p. 36

¹⁵ See for instance Catarina Belo, *Chance and Determinism in Avicenna and Averroes*, Amsterdam 2007

¹⁶ Kant, *Foundations for a Metaphysics of Morals*, BA 76f

¹⁷ Kwasi Wiredu, *Demokratie und Konsensus in traditioneller afrikanischer Politik*, In: *Polylog* 2(2000), p. 12-21, sowie Johan Galtung, *Menschenrechte – anders gesehen*, Frankfurt 1997, p. 32

¹⁸ See Achille Mbembe. *La communauté terrestre*, Paris 2023, 76f.

¹⁹ See Evrim Kutlu, *Max Schelers Wertetheorie und die Anforderungen einer veränderten ökologischen Ethik* in: *Forum Philosophie International* 71, Zürich 2022, p. 76-86

Intercultural philosophy can help make us aware of decisive differences, and prevent us from levelling out too quickly foreign concepts by projecting ideas and values that are self-evident in our own culture, a tendency which is often perceived as an example of hegemonic thinking by the other side.

While, in the face of a threatened planet, dialogue aimed at the better understanding of traditions of thought is important - such as the members of the *Association Internationale des Professeurs de Philosophie* have been seeking across national borders for decades - there also exists massive pressure for action in the face of scientific findings about self-induced climate change. Such urgently necessary and meaningful conceptions of action should not merely be dictated from above, they must also be developed "from below". Therefore it makes sense that UNESCO has requested that "climate education" be included globally in every subject, and that young people be guided towards conscious and responsible action. Within different philosophical approaches this can be done in several ways:

If one is pursuing the path of virtue ethics, as not only Aristotle but also several contemporary Anglo-American authors have suggested, one might ask: which virtues can contribute to environmental education? This is a question of which attitudes can be put into play - temperance, anti-consumerism, a just distribution of life-opportunities for future generations, long-term sensible behaviour which does not only serve individual interests?

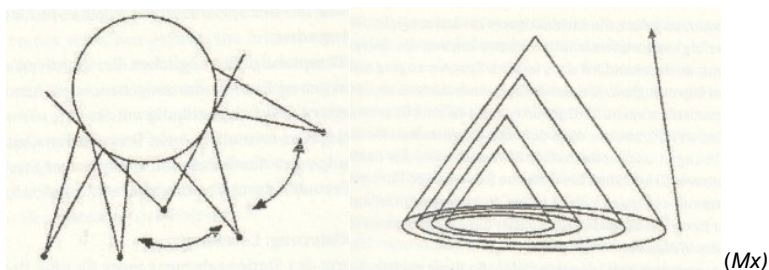
Deontological and utilitarian ethics, popular since the Enlightenment, had refrained from recommending such attitudes, instead recommending objective self-imposed duties including a rational proof-principle (for example, Kant's categorical imperative), with the help of which each ethical subject should decide rationally on their own intentions. Waste prevention? Economical use of energy? Reuse of clothing? In the metaphysics-free fundamental utilitarian outlook there is, however, a basic rational calculation to be made between the maximization of usefulness and minimization of damage, which in the case of act-utilitarianism – different from rule-utilitarianism – must be carried out in every case anew by the rational subject.

If, on the other hand, one seeks to promote a material value-ethics, then the question becomes: which values are most centrally important to us, for example: sustainability, the preservation of natural livelihoods: clean air, which has recently been established as a human right, clean drinking water and usable water and food supplies, and as a basis a healthy condition for nature, just to give a few examples.

If one is pursuing a consequentialist ethics, individual actions ought to be oriented to those consequences, which should be either avoided or promoted. What damage should be avoided? (Already today we can produce burgers by tissue growing, taking only one muscle cell from grazing cattle without killing animals.) According to the aforementioned utilitarian ethic, one must, in one's actions, undertake to uphold the fundamental aims of realizing the survival and

enhanced quality of life not only for a privileged few on this planet but rather the greatest possible benefit for the greatest number. But the very pragmatic utilitarian ethic has an inherent justice problem²⁰, since optimal benefit for the greatest number must always accept collateral damage. Some will always have bad luck, which although it is morally unacceptable, nevertheless generally strikes the poorest amongst us; which brings us back to the starting point.

In order to take into account the post-modern concept of plurality which led me to intercultural thinking, I once developed a concept of multi-perspectivity, with three interdependent levels of shifts in perspective, which might lead us to improved and enhanced horizons of awareness.



The essays in this book from different countries demonstrate a great many thought traditions and perspectives and offer what I – on the second level – called “cognition as a joint-venture”, where dead angles can be illuminated, in the hope that we may be able to rise to a panoramic perspective with a greater consciousness of the problems before us²¹, out of which perhaps more and better options for action may emerge. Not only for sustainable action in an imperiled environment, but also for the important consciousness-raising of pupils and students. If we want to alter the future decisively, an environmental policy focused on damage control will not suffice; here, too, we have to make efforts in environmental education and the forming of conscience. The following essays will show how this might be accomplished.

²⁰ Otfried Höffe, Einführung in die utilitaristische Ethik, Tübingen 1992, p. 44ff

²¹ Gabriele Münnix, Zum Ethos der Pluralität. Postmoderne und Multiperspektivität als Programm, 3. Aufl. Münster 2020, p.182-187