

ARTIFICIAL INFORMATION, NATURAL INFORMATION AND A HEALTHY INNER LIFE CRISES OF PERCEPTION TODAY

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Abstract: *The project aims to make evolutionary ontology a part of environmental studies at schools. One of its starting points is the issue of artificial and natural information. The text addresses artificial and natural information in the context of a healthy inner life. Also discussed are the connections between artificial information, natural information and the crisis of perception that our society is experiencing today. A clear link is identified between overpowering amounts of artificial information and a crisis of perception. Inner life is filled unnecessarily by artificial information and could be reconstituted in a way more conducive to health if the artificial information accumulated could at least in part be cleared away. It is in his/her inner nature that a person's connection to the outside natural world dwells. Once this reconstitution is achieved, humanity might wish to create a different type of culture, which will differ from that of today and will be of a biophile nature. In this way, through the nature inside of each of us, humanity in general could embark on a path to a healthier inner life.*

Keywords: *artificial information, natural information, environmental studies, crises of perception*

Introduction – biophile education, vision

In my study I mainly deal with the transfer of evolutionary ontology to a practical level of ecological education. One of the starting points of my work concerns artificial and natural information¹. In this context I concern myself with the relation between the information and the healthy inner life.

The difficult tasks of education should also encompass work with the term information. If the teachers, pupils and students could reflect on the type of information, for which the human body was constituted, and the type of information obtained in the present world, the ecological education could look for ways of favouring the human ability to perceive natural information as essential, and cultural information as information

¹ Šmajš, J.

necessary to keep culture but still subject to the natural information. Education would also contribute to the ability of the person to select, sort out and process information in a suitable way. Thus, we would step towards biophile culture through biophile education, towards a healthier inner life and therefore a healthier lifestyle that would also be healthier for the environment.

Education would also focus on working with pupils and students in the field of information selectivity. Thus, it would become one of the ways to close ourselves from unnecessary and useless information and open up to natural and important information, not only to keep a healthy inner life but also to renew the balance of our society².

The person should then be able to proceed towards the next and healthier transformation of his/her ecological behaviour. S/he would learn how to distinguish essential information. He would learn how to work with it. S/he would let them infuse its shapes into him/her (in-formed him/her), or as David Aram says, leave an echo inside³. The person could thus come again closer to the status s/he used to be a long time ago – at the time when s/he did not stride with an unbearable burden of artificial information on his/her back – mankind has done.

The quality of inner life could be recovered, the sediments of matters from the outside filling uselessly the inner side would be cleared off. Inside the individual there is not only his/her inner nature, but also his/her spiritual affinity with the surrounding natural world. As soon as s/he approaches it, s/he will want to create a different culture, different from the present⁴, the culture of biophile character. And thus, through the healthy inner life, through the nature inside, we will stride towards a healthier culture and healthier world.⁴

*We have no privileged position from which we could view the world and thus grasp its entire plan as we are a part of it; we are situated inside of it, through being physical beings. We are embedded in the thickness of things. Our life is associated with the life of the world that surrounds us on all sides. And thus to ask people to speak about the world as living means to simply ask them to notice that they are inside of it.*⁵

Crisis of perception, natural and artificial information

In his book *Awakening to Nature*, David Abram speaks also about the fact that the present environmental crisis is a great crisis of perception⁶. It is about the inability of a „too civilised person“ to perceive the nature in a sufficiently clear way. Thus, the reciprocity is disturbed i.e. the two-way floating between the man and nature. This then results in the inability of a person to return what s/he took but often also in the inability to perceive and decode what the nature has to say.

Therefore, there is a loss and misinterpretation and mis-storage of information in the communication between the person and nature, but there is also useless information

2 The term society is used according to David Abram, who considers it as a whole ecosystem, not only a human being.

3 Abram, D. *Procitnutí do živé země*. Nymburk: OPS, 2008.

4 The concept of culture is used in terms of evolutionary ontology.

5 Abram, D. *Strážce hranice - Rozhovor Jeremy Haywarda s Davidem Abramem*. Pražské brány – 3. Ročník multiculturalního festivalu. 2009. www: <http://www.prazskebrany.cz/cz/osobnosti/david-abram-cv-cz/david-abram-rozhovor>.

6 Abram, D. *Procitnutí do živé země*. Nymburk: OPS, 2008. str. 139

buzz. One of the problems entailed by the present crisis of perception is the crisis of information: both the natural information and artificial information (Šmajš).

The person is struggling more and more with his/her inability to decipher correctly the natural information. No only the information stored in the outside world, coming from the outside, but also those coming from the inside. What also greatly contributes to this state of things is the present surplus of artificial cultural information, to the pressure of which the person is exposed.

In this context one should ponder about what is actually understood by the term information. Information is not only the contents of the message related to the natural or cultural world of a person. In line with the evolutionary ontology, information is understood in a broader sense. Information is not only a verbal or visual incentive related to the human culture. The term information is related not only to the human perception and understanding of the world, but also the exchange of messages between structures inside of nature, i.e. inside the natural order.

Here we are drawing upon the concept of information proposed by Josef Šmajš and we consider the natural information as an abiotic and biotic arrangement of reality. It is also important to know that the human nature does not originate from the natural information contained in the structures (memory) of living systems. In order to establish and maintain a culture, a different type of information was needed, i.e. cultural constitutive information (artificial information). When interpreting the term information J. Šmajš describes the so-called „triple reading of the reality by a person“ (living systems): through the first reading the information stored in the genome of the living systems is obtained; in the second reading the sensually neuronal information is obtained and stored by the person in the central nervous system (CNS); the third reading related to the human ability to decode the information by language creates the cultural information (artificial). The cultural information is stored not only in the human CNS, but also in other forms of artificial social memory. And it is this information that is embodied in the present anti-nature culture. The third reading thus „reads“ and „translates“ the natural reality inadequately, with a minimum human sensual and physical involvement.⁷

If the mankind in the interest of preserving its own kind should strive after a healthier biophile culture, one of the ways towards the biophile education could lead through reinforcing the tasks of senses and physical contacts between people and the world. It is therefore a certain „return“ to the „second reading“. If the mankind manages to start understanding the information as something that is not strictly associated with its mental activity and culture, but also as something that is associated with its physical, chemical and biological structures, the physical world of the nature and the people, the meaning of the what the mankind understands as information will shift in a biophile direction, but also the mankind itself will move on its ways to the biophile culture.

Information and in-formation

We are building on the fact that the human capacity is set to process a certain amount of an information and if there is too much information, the person closes himself/

⁷ Šmajš, J. *Filosofie – obrat k Zemi*, Praha: Academia 2008.

herself and simply does not accept any new information for some time. To illustrate the point, let us recall a feeling we had when we are, for example, overworked. We can remember the inability we had at that time to perceive anything „additional“ and deal with anything „additional“. Such a closing away from information is a certain top element of our defence system. Most people probably oscillate somewhere inside a wide spectrum, with the critical points being on the one side freshness and ability to receive new information, and a certain defensive reaction and failure to accept anything on the other side. Thus, people are located in a certain meantime. They are flooded with information, but not fully closed off yet. However, they have to a certain extent lost their ability to recognise, save and associate essential information.

Information forms the person, introduces its shapes, and the person adopts them, as part of himself/herself. Either the information or its echoes. The quality of such information then logically influences what is inside the person.

If we consider as information everything that forms us or in-forms us, and if such information or in-information is what turns us into a society we are now, we must necessarily ask ourselves a question what information a person must resist and what information is needed for the life, what information is vital for the full-value life , what information is useless and what information endangers the person.

Healthier ecological education

... with the establishment of phonetic alphabet the letters started referring exclusively to human sounds, which gradually left behind the more than human origin of their shapes. The rest of nature was not anymore an essentials part of reading and thinking practise as it was before when reading Maya hieroglyphs or Chinese ideographical writing.

This subtle shift has resulted in all these differences – reflexive thinking is now starting to experience itself as an exclusively human ability ... We are just rambling inside a collective nervous system of the mankind.⁸

Ecological education is currently slowly spreading to schools and what is particularly promising from our point of view is the project of ecological coordinators promoting ecological education and its penetration to all subjects and activities of the relevant school. We are not sure whether what we are now about to propose is within the power of a single coordinator. But is such a coordinator was supported by a certain philosophical base, a wider and united active group the coordinator could get support from, then s/he would feel the support of the Ministry of Education , s/he could work on gaining importance for the ecological education, making it a part of all subjects and becoming a notable part of the education.

In this , from our point of view, ideal case, such a coordinator would work on shifting the education in the biophile direction. This means from the present prevalence of artificial information towards natural information. Education would extend the scope of its competence, it would not only deal with the mind, but it would spread to the whole

⁸ Abram, D. *Strážce hranice - Rozhovor Jeremy Haywarda s Davidem Abramem*. Pražské brány – 3. Ročník multiculturalního festivalu. 2009. www: <http://www.prazskebrany.cz/cz/osobnosti/david-abram-cv-cz/david-abram-rozhovor>.

body, and become a part of the upbringing. And the priorities would change, too. They would also leave the prison of the head and take positions throughout the body. Education would thus become more balanced. The intellectual component would not be favoured. It would put it to the same level as the affective and psychometrics components.

We propose three basic steps that could mark the beginning of such a transformation of education:

1. greater emphasis on 3D space, smaller emphasis on 2D space
2. transfer from education focused on the head towards education focused on the body and its unity with the surrounding world; development of the relationships with the local world, the work on the renewal of the oral culture of the place⁹
3. recognising an equal position of the surrounding world to the people, development of respect to the surrounding world

I speak about stories told face to face, not about reading to children from books. To simply tell a story of what happened at full moon on the side of a forest or whose footsteps run across the dried up river bed. What are the stories of your place? Why is there such a high and strangely shaped boulder sticking out from that hill side? Or the story of that street corner with intermittent buzzing of a street lamp – what can be happening there?

Children need stories that take place in the country, stories from the physical world because unlike other forms of our discourse we inhabit stories with our the physical imagination. Before we start conceiving the language as a non-physical sphere of abstractions, we need to experience it physically. We should prefer improvised narrating so that the child grows up in fabulous country and is aware of the language as of something that does not belong only to people but to the world as a whole. A child that is growing up inside the world of stories has a feeling of being, plunged into a meaningful cosmos, a world where meanings penetrate from each and every branch and blades of grass and beak that happens to open.

This is the basis that is vitally needed by a cultivated literary intellect, and perhaps also even computerised mind to be able to accept any type of ethical limitation. And they can only do it if they are rooted in the physical realisation of being plunged into a world inhabited not only by people but also by other beings and other bodies.¹⁰

The current anti-natural culture is unsustainable. It is time the mankind started getting ready for the unavoidable way towards sustainable recess¹¹. It is time to face the division of the reality into a thinking entity and a non-thinking mass. Simply speaking, these two worlds inside the person should be unified again. The point is that the mind should get reconnected with the body, his/her physical senses, which would re-open for the acceptance of natural information.

⁹ Abram, D. *Strážce hranice - Rozhovor Jeremy Haywarda s Davidem Abramem*. Pražské brány – 3. Ročník multiculturalního festivalu. 2009. www: <http://www.prazskebrany.cz/cz/osobnosti/david-abram-cv-cz/david-abram-rozhovor>.

¹⁰ Abram, D. *Strážce hranice - Rozhovor Jeremy Haywarda s Davidem Abramem*. Pražské brány – 3. Ročník multiculturalního festivalu. 2009. www: <http://www.prazskebrany.cz/cz/osobnosti/david-abram-cv-cz/david-abram-rozhovor>.

¹¹ Lovelock, J. *The Revenge of Gaia*.

*What we need to do is to slow down for a while, quiet down the incessant twittering in our brains and give room to our eyes and ears so that they can start perceiving all the other voices that surround us. All these gestures are very important and still they do not suffice as we also need to communicate with each other. It is necessary to return from this silence to the world of expressions, and find such manners of speaking that will be faithful to our immediate sensual experience with the world, our animal kinship with the rest of the living world.*¹²

If everything we meet leaves a certain echo inside it is necessary not only for us but also for the generations to come to make sure that the present ecological education deals with what is in conformity with natural information, but it should also create and revive a feeling in children to be inclined towards the natural information and their natural¹³ creativity and to make sure that the ecological education participates in ensuring that children manage to keep their healthy inner lives, the health of which consists, besides others, in the close and apparent bond with the surrounding natural world.

Conclusion

If the mankind manages to restrict the intake and output of artificial information to an acceptable level, there is a chance that a new and vast scope will open up for it to be able to receive and issue natural information in a better way.

However, the question remains whether the mankind is capable of restricting the amount of its cultural information before managing to reinforce its ability in the field of cultural information. If this is not managed, the man will find himself in a viscous circle from where he can perhaps be only helped out by God, or the power of optimism¹⁴.

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¹³ The term “natural” is used in sense of evolutionary ontology.

¹⁴ Winter, D. D. N. a Koger, S. M. *Psychologie environmentálních problémů*. Praha : Portál, 2009.

UMĚLÁ A PŘIROZENÁ INFORMACE A ZDRAVÝ VNITŘNÍ ŽIVOT ČLOVĚKA ANEB SOUČASNÁ KRIZE VNÍMÁNÍ

Abstrakt: Náš projekt se zabývá převedením problematiky evoluční ontologie na praktickou úroveň ekologické výchovy. Jedním z našich východisek se stává problematika umělé a přirozené informace, jejichž vztahu ke zdravému vnitřnímu životu člověka se také v tomto textu budeme věnovat. Dále se budeme zabývat souvislostmi mezi umělou a přirozenou informací a současnou krizí vnímání, která je spojena právě s přehrší umělé informace, které jsme každodenně, my lidé, vystavováni. Vnitřní život člověka by se mohl obnovit, byl-li by odklizen nános věcí z vnějšku, které jeho nitro zbytečně zaplňují. Uvnitř člověka se totiž skrývá nejen jeho vnitřní příroda, ale i jeho duševní spřízněnost s okolním přirozeným světem. Jakmile se jí člověk přiblíží, bude chtít vytvářet jinou kulturu, odlišnou od té dnešní, kulturu biofilního charakteru. A tak bude skrze zdravý vnitřní život člověka, skrze přírodu v něm, vykročeno směrem ke zdravější kultuře a společnosti, ke zdravější Zemi.

Klíčová slova: umělá a přirozená informace, ekologická výchova, krize vnímání