



World Scientific News

WSN 72 (2017) 249-261

EISSN 2392-2192

Eco-Philosophy in education for sustainable development

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ABSTRACT

One of the most important problems of the present day is the safety of the existence of a human being and his or her cultural, civilizational and environmental existence. The idea about what should be done in order to guarantee the safe existence of species is the reason for the discussion within the broad circles of those dealing with science and also philosophy, and in particular eco-philosophy. It is eco-philosophy that truly focuses on substantiating the ways of thinking as well as the rules governing the committed and well-thought actions related to the environmental protection. Educational initiatives for sustainable development are open to the influence of eco-philosophy. Therefore, the need to fill educational strategies and programs with the subtle philosophical “matter”, expressed in the form of values and related behavioral norms, opens a significantly large space for eco-philosophers and the eco-philosophy itself. It needs to be emphasized that the relation between the education for sustainable development and the activities aimed at strengthening the structures of the civil society creates additional interest on the part of numerous social entities as regards the philosophical discourse.

Keywords: eco-philosophy, education, sustainable development, ecological sciences, ecological attitude, ecological awareness, ecological education

*„We think like this: How to take care of the Earth, if it is the Earth that takes care of us? Our white brothers and sisters have to familiarize themselves with one of our Earth philosophies: We are a part of the Earth, the Earth is a part of us.”
(quoted from M. Dowd)*

1. INTRODUCTION

It is commonly said that as long as the human kind exists, the history of nature and the history of people determine one another, whereas one of the most significant aspects is human activity, which is directly related to the forming of material conditions governing human existence. One of the most important problems experienced by the modern people is safety of their existence, as well as their cultural and environmental existence. There are more and more discussions held within the scientific circles, including the field of philosophy, as to what should be done in order to guarantee safe existence and the coexistence of species. It has to be emphasized that the „interaction between society and nature has always been an issue considered by the philosophers. To date, many papers have already been published regarding ecological issues. However, presently we have a task ahead of us to investigate those eternal philosophical problems, taking into account the new perspectives regarding human development in the light of the education for sustainable development. Philosophical contemplation cannot remain abstract, detached from real life, or a symbol of all time, on the contrary, it has to relate to the contemporary practice, the implementation of the new ways of thinking reflecting the tendencies and predictions of the future development of the society and nature” (Butryna, 1991). And such a new way of thinking is offered by eco-philosophy. This type of science has some truly eminent precursors, like Alfred North Whitehead who wrote that: “the very purpose of philosophy is to delve below the apparent clarity of common speech” (Whitehead, 1932), or Pierr Teilhard de Chardin according to whom: “Men cannot be understood outside of humanity, humanity cannot be understood outside of life, and life cannot be understood outside of the universe” (Teilhard de Chardin, 1947).

Currently we see that the man is, to a large degree, responsible for the shaping of ecological relations, which determine the rules governing the existence of organisms. Therefore, recently not only the representatives of natural sciences but also humanists have been making some reservations as regards the negative and detrimental consequences of civilizational progress. Thus, the problems related to the degradation of the natural environment gain broader significance and the hitherto prevailing narrow understanding of ecological threats is beginning to concern the civilizational aspect. Those issues fall within the scope of eco-philosophy, also referred to as ecological philosophy. “The individual character of this discipline can be associated with a breakthrough, which, thanks to its help, is defined by the new perspective on the place of men in the world of nature and a new way of thinking about men and nature and the interaction between them” (Tyburski, 2008).

2. ECO-PHILOSOPHY AS THE PHILOSOPHY OF ECOLOGICAL SCIENCES

Ecological threats and disasters have a significant impact on the creation of new scientific disciplines. One of such disciplines is eco-philosophy, which, albeit being a new philosophical science, already has a rich conceptual system. A detailed analysis of given concepts in eco-philosophy shall not be presented here. What shall be presented is only the list of those concepts and their short description.

2.1. Eco-philosophy as the philosophy of ecology – the term „philosophy of ecology” in its fundamental understanding functions in the philosophy of science and it means the theory and methodology of ecology. In the last decades of the 20th century this term encompassed in its

content and scope numerous elements from the broadly understood aspects of philosophy and environmental protection.

2.2. Eco-philosophy as the ecology of man – the term „ecology of man” is used to describe the synthesis of the results of research regarding environmental anthropology, ecology and medical sciences. This concept includes a vast range of anthropological issues and reflections of the philosophical nature.

2.3. Eco-philosophy as the humanistic ecology – it attempts to conduct scientific research regarding the life of man considering specifically its human and personal aspect.

2.4. Eco-philosophy as deep ecology – this concept includes philosophical issues as regards not only its assumptions but also the solutions to the detailed problems related to the ecological crisis and disasters as well as the moral crisis of man.

2.5. Eco-philosophy as the ecological philosophy – in conjunction with such a term as „logical philosophy”, which already functions in the scientific language, it can with time become valid in the philosophical language.

2.6. Eco-philosophy as ecosophy – it is construed on the precepts of the philosophy related to the pantheistic movements, both historical and modern, as well as the assumptions of deep ecology.

2.7. Eco-philosophy as the philosophy of ecological crisis (Philips, 1990; Holse, 1994) – this is oriented mostly towards ethical, legal, political and economic issues related to the ecological crisis as well as the ecology seen as a new political paradigm.

2.8. Eco-philosophy as the system and information conceptualization of eco-development – such conceptualization is justified by the predictions regarding the development of humankind and the precepts of sustainable development.

2.9. Eco-philosophy as the universalist ecology – it is present in the context of universalist philosophy, in other words of the universalism as a metaphilosophy.

2.10. Eco-philosophy as the practical philosophy of nature – it emphasizes practical and bioethical issues related to the ecological crisis.

2.11. Eco-philosophy as a part of the philosophy of nature – this concept is related to the philosophy of nature oriented towards the Aristotelian and Thomist precepts where the emphasis is placed on the philosophy of inanimate nature (cosmophilosophy) and the philosophy of animate nature (biophilosophy) as well as the philosophy of social and natural environment (eco-philosophy).

2.12. Eco-philosophy as the culturalist philosophy of ecology – represented in Poland by Andrzej Papuziński.

2.13. Eco-philosophy as environmentalism – suggested by Wiesław Sztumski.

2.14. Eco-philosophy as an individual philosophical science – with a clearly defined epistemological and methodological status (Dołęga, 2000).

Thus, eco-philosophy emerged as a response to the destruction of the world of nature leading directly to the ecological disaster. It poses a fundamental question about the way in which men should act towards nature, what relations should they establish with nature in

order to build and not lead to certain destruction of natural environment; hence what are the related challenges facing men as well as threats?

Today, when we can observe truly schizophrenic separation between the man and the rest of the animate or inanimate world, eco-philosophy focuses in particular on substantiating the ways of thinking as well as the rules governing the committed and well-thought actions related to the environmental protection in order to keep and preserve the environment in such a state that will be beneficial both for the human world and the world of nature. It also emphasizes the need to define the man's place in the world of nature, the desired interactions between the human world and the world of nature as well as the use of obtained knowledge as regards practical actions and behaviors of men in relation to the environment" (Tyburski, 2008).

3. ECOLOGICAL AWARENESS

The benefits of technological progress (Kauffman, 1994) on the one hand and the curse of environmental degradation on the other hand are so vast that sometimes they are referred to as the nature's holocaust. Zbigniew Hull emphasizes the fact that the modern man is actually caught in a "civilizational trap", as a result of the unlimited technological progress and the implementation of various technogenous activities whose effects had been very difficult to predict (or cannot be predicted) and they turned out to be catastrophic" (Hull, 2001).

It has to be noted that currently not only scientists ask themselves what should be done with the side effects of a technical era and how to live in the face of a fever devouring the Earth, the deficit of drinking water, the ozone layer depletion, acid rains, the contamination of soil and air? Such questions lead the way to the concept of "ecological awareness", that constitutes a part of social awareness which encompasses the relation between men and nature, with such aspects as knowledge, ecological vision and the system of values where "to be" becomes more significant than "to have". Andrzej Papuziński emphasizes that "ecological awareness is not something separate from awareness in general, the former is actually an integral part of the latter. The term „ecological” is used only to delineate the range of those issues that fall within the scope of philosophy of ecology, due to the subject matter of this discipline" (Papuziński, 2007). It is a specific type of social awareness taking form, manifesting itself in the way of thinking and experiencing of individual beings as well as socially functioning norms of understanding, experiencing and valuating the biosphere.

Therefore, the essence of ecological awareness is accepting the fact that both in the Earth's natural environment as well as in all universe everything is interconnected and interdependent. It results that ecological awareness manifests itself in all spiritual trends and, to some extent, it actually unifies them. It is an interdisciplinary and polysemous concept, it applies to various situations and psychological states. It can be considered on several levels. The most common in society is the intuitive conviction about the endangerment of a given element of nature. The next level is the integration of the intuitive conviction with the actual knowledge about threats. The highest degree of social awareness is an emotional reaction that constitutes an obligation to undertake such steps that will lead to the participation in an ecological movement. The pace at which the civilization is developing and the threats that are the inadvertent effect of this development help the society realize how much depends on our awareness and attitude (Sobczyk, 2001).

As already stated, the complexity of ecological problems is of an interdisciplinary nature. However, in order to provide an in-depth presentation of facts, it is essential to employ a humanistic approach to environmental protection and social awareness of associated processes. Primarily, it includes preventive measures, and in particular the ability to manage natural resources, reasonable urban and industrial planning, and above all, shaping the society's ecological awareness. The most important and the biggest obstacle for all ecosystems is society. As the population grows, the scale of commercial production grows with it. Thus, highly efficient and automated farming becomes essential. As the consumption grows, people produce more and more, hence they consume more and more, and in turn they produce more waste. As a result of the increased waste production, the air-, soil-, and water-cleaning processes are impeded, ever so more. The consumption of huge quantities of goods means that many of them become useless and that is how they end up in the ecosystem. The cultural and economic models are strengthened by the political systems, since the increase of production and consumption facilitates the legitimization of the politicians' power and career. Unequal division of goods intensifies political pressure even more because those who like comfortable and luxurious life generally always want to have more. Whereas those whose life is difficult and impoverished want to acquire at least some of that wealth. As a result, there is more pressure to increase mass production in industry and farming which is inevitably accompanied by the increasing contamination and destruction of the natural environment.

4. ECOLOGICAL ATTITUDE

Mutual relations between men, the Earth and the world are not new (Inglehart, 1997). And the idea about the supreme position of the man in nature has been present in almost all humankind cultures since time immemorial (Monod, 1970). However, it is worth it to ask one question: which philosophical ideas could constitute the pillar of an ecological attitude?

Environmental protection, regardless the era, is directly related to the attitude of a man towards himself, the nature and the world. In order to participate in environmental protection, first, one has to define the characteristics of an ecological attitude. The attitude that the man should adopt in order to peacefully coexist with the nature, for the nature and not against the nature. Thus, it is necessary to know and to understand what the world is for a human being, who the human being is for the nature and what values a pro-ecological person should have.

It may seem as though for the modern man it is the esthetic aspect that counts the most. Considering esthetics everyone states in unison that our surroundings should be beautiful, harmonious and "as natural as possible". It is for the esthetic reasons that thousands of people all over the world leave the city for the weekend in order to get closer to the nature. They crave the contact with the nature, they want to be enchanted by natural greenery, the intensity of colors and aromas (especially in the spring and the summer). They want to experience esthetics that is offered by the beauty of nature, the world. The beauty that is, after all, primordial and that shaped the esthetic appreciation in men to begin with. The majority of people perceive the world as a creation, and it does not matter of which creator. It becomes such through its exceptionality, uniqueness, and originality. These characteristics place the man in the role of an observer but also a co-creator, since it is the man who, to a large extent (but not solely), decides about the „look” of this world and it is the man who is responsible for the world's shape, form and state – just like an artist is responsible for their work of art.

However, in order for the man's esthetic appreciation to have a measurable effect as regards the conservation of the ecosystem, the beauty of nature and the world has to be treated as an esthetic value which encompasses such subcategories as sublimity, ugliness, charm or grace, where grace would be an equivalent of classical beauty. If the animate and inanimate nature is treated as a value of modern times, then there is a chance that people will start to esteem and respect it. The contact with nature cannot be limited to passive contemplation. The man has to bring those values to light and reify the elements of the surrounding world as esthetic objects. "Thanks to representing nature in terms of para-artistic structures, it is included in the human world, it becomes humanized. It is transformed from a purely physical object into a phenomenon to which we ascribe values similar to those present in the human world" (Gołaszewska, 1984). Therefore, beauty as an esthetic value is not the most important concept associated with an ecological attitude. It can only support esthetic concepts.

The changes that occurred in natural environment due to the detrimental activity of men allowed us to understand that nature is especially dear to us. We feel solidarity not only with animals and plants but also with rocks, water, or landscape and, as we find out every single day, we cannot interfere with their existence whichever way we want. Regardless of how we name the Earth where we live, the man, considering gravitation only, is one of the Earth's elements. Even though the Earth can exist without people, people cannot exist without the Earth because the Earth is their habitat and the universe "must be considered as the man's home" (Skolimowski, 1993). However, the man is not separated from the environment, the man is one with the environment because „it represents the forms of life, the life of which we are a part" (Skolimowski, 1993). It is an important concept which can constitute the fundament of an ecological attitude. According to this concept people are a part of a bigger whole, that is the universe and, just like in the case of human relationships, they should be guided by the reverence of life because "the ethics of human relationships is not something separate and detached but it constitutes a special aspect of universal relations" (Skolimowski, 1993). Natural environment, thanks to its resources, makes it possible for us to exist, in a sense it "takes care" of us, at the same time being alive itself. Destroying the environment would be tantamount to destroying life, thus destroying the value that the life holds. Adopting such an attitude impels us to protect different forms of life and different environments where life is endangered, since we have to preserve, not only for ourselves but also for the future generations, the heritage of the Earth and all its species.

However, we cannot apply the rule of equality to the world of nature, according to which human life would be of the same importance as, for example, the life of animals. We cannot agree with the pantheistic theory that there are no qualitative differences between various species. Human life has a superior value which is directly or indirectly accepted by all founders of ecological philosophy: "the more accomplished the form of life is and the more accomplished evolutionary creation it represents, the more protection it merits" (Falkowska, Rudzińska, 2000). In a situation when making sacrifices is necessary, only this rule is morally justified. If, however, the fundamental value that the human life constitutes, and with it the associated values, can be threatened by given human actions, such actions have to be considered from a moral perspective. In the light of the aforementioned, it is evident that the moral consideration of actions should encompass human actions towards not only other people but also towards the non-human environment. It is necessary to expand the scope and scale of moral evaluation.

Another concept that stems from the aforementioned and seems to be of great importance is the responsibility for the past, the present and the future. The strategy of the optimization of technical and industrial effects has to be substituted with the minimization of damage. Without the responsibility for the ecosystem today and tomorrow, it will not be possible. People should not adopt their own profit as a criterion regarding nature. People have to recognize the nature's rights and integrate them into their actions. What it means is that the responsibility has to include not only nature as such but also the consequences of our actions, namely the changes that we provoke in nature. Thus, the responsibility is about the man's attitude towards nature as well as its management and development. "It is the expression of deep love and reverence that we bestow upon the Planet and all its creations, and not the desire to conquer and dominate over the others" (Skolimowski, 1993). Business and profits cannot become the justification for the destruction of the environment, since the man, as ascertained by J. Lovelock, is not a principal goal of the universe.

The modern ecological attitude should also be based on the concept of changes encompassing human attitudes and behaviors as well as social and political systems. The new order brought by men, the order that consists in "ruling" the nature has led to excessive simplification. Therefore, in order for our life on Earth and in this world to have meaning, we need to establish a hierarchy of values where the most important one would be the respect for life, unity with the world, responsibility as well as "seeing the nature through art and recognizing that it belongs to our world" (Gołaszewska, 1984). The changes are related to time, they happen gradually and they have to integrate past experiences with the knowledge about the modern environment and the planning of better forms of organization in the future. Considering the purpose of the change of the man's attitude "in separation from the acts of transcendence of the past and without the orientation towards the future would be tantamount to depriving the purpose of its basic essence" (Skolimowski, 1993).

Therefore, the new ecological attitude should be the result of a new imperative, uniting "the Promethean imperative, that is the necessity of transcendence, the Kantian imperative, that is the respect for the greatest evolutionary achievements" and "the ecological imperative, that is the necessity to protect and strengthen the natural environment that surrounds us" (Papuziński, 2007). In order for the world in which we live to be the best one, we need an act of will and awareness, like the one presented by the American Indian chief Seattle, often quoted by the ecologists, who said that "Whatever befalls the Earth, befalls the sons of the Earth."

5. ECOLOGICAL EDUCATION

The fundamental purpose of ecological education is to shape and propagate ecological thinking, which should encompass all groups of people, from grass roots to the ministerial levels. Our society is not adequately prepared to implement the rules of eco-development. Thus, ecological awareness has to be shaped, especially among children and teenagers, since we cannot really hope to easily change the habits of adults (Sobczyk, 2001). Unfortunately, the modern man who has to exist in a complicated and intricate macrosystem is under the influence of its numerous abiotic and biotic factors that are in part formed by human activity, social and cultural conditions. Raising society's ecological awareness should also include the shaping of conscious civic attitude that is environmentally friendly. A pro-ecological attitude

should be shaped within the society as a whole. As previously stated, ecological attitude should encompass knowledge, vision and ecological appreciation. “Ecological appreciation is a creative process that includes elimination of habits and transforming the acquired ecological knowledge into the norms governing everyday life. The habits resulting from a natural relation with surrounding nature constitute a true, deep, pro-ecological attitude” (Sobczyk, 2001). Therefore, one can venture to form a thesis that ecological awareness is mainly a function of the more general social awareness. Social ecological awareness, if formed, would be able to define such models of behavior that would be so fascinating and would have such strong fundamentals that there would be very few enthusiasts to go against those models and then we will have formed a truly ecological society in its entirety.

Yet the most complicated task for ecological education seems to be the shaping of active attitudes towards natural environment. The role of ecological education appears to be all-important. Without proper education we cannot shape proper awareness. An integral part of ecological education should be ecological ethics and ecological philosophy. Without proper understanding there cannot be proper action (Skolomowski, 1993). Hence, behaviors and actions repeated daily should coincide with the beliefs of society, they should give rise to attitudes and habits that will undergo collective critical evaluation. The way to achieve this seems to be ecological education, namely the shaping of ecological appreciation and awareness.

6. EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The discussion regarding education for sustainable development has to be preceded by the delineation of its goals and the values of the sustainable development itself (Gibas, Smith, 1985), which are implemented in four areas: economic, educational, political and legal. Undoubtedly each one of these areas poses a challenge for the philosophy of sustainable development. Politics, law and economy need philosophical legitimization for the programs which refer to the rights of future generations and the rule of intergenerational justice. At the same time they touch upon the issues concerning the distributive and retributive justice, they make use of the quality of life category, and they also refer to the problems related to progress, development and growth. Still, the politicians, lawyers and economists are rarely interested in the philosophers’ opinions regarding those issues, and the needs concerning philosophical advice happen to be significantly greater if compared to the use of the philosophy’s potential. The situation is different in the case of education. Educational initiatives are relatively independent from those three tightly connected areas and by tradition they are open to the influence of philosophy. Hence the need to fill educational strategies and programs with the subtle philosophical “matter”, expressed in the form of values and related behavioral norms, opens a significantly large space for eco-philosophers and the eco-philosophy itself. It needs to be emphasized that the relation between the education for sustainable development and the activities aimed at strengthening the structures of the civil society creates additional interest on the part of numerous social entities as regards the philosophical discourse (Papuziński, 2007).

Thus, if we are to consider what the objectives of education for sustainable development are, let us refer to the way this type of education is understood, according to Zbigniew Kwieciński. Thus, it is understood as “all influences on individuals and groups of people,

influences that facilitate their development and the use of their abilities in such a way so as to help them become mindful and creative members of the social, national, cultural and global community and to encourage their active self-realization, the unique and permanent identity and autonomy, so that they are able to develop their own SELF through undertaking beyond-personal tasks, through maintaining the continuity of the SELF in the course of executing long-term tasks” (Kwieciński, 1989). According to this definition, we conclude that the preliminary phase of the educational process consists in defining the desired characteristics of the subject included in the educational and instructional activity. What is meant by this is what in formal education is referred to as an “alumnus profile”. There it is: The alumnus has the knowledge about the state of the Earth’s ecosystem, global consequences of local decisions, the harm done to the societies and generations that have a very little share or no share at all in the consumption of the natural capital. The alumnus is also somebody who understands the basic relationships between the nature, society and economy and is convinced that they can be controlled in order to achieve the optimum in relations between those areas of life. The alumnus also knows that the optimum makes it possible to increase the competitive power of the economy and the number of places of employment, that it is conducive to the development of small and medium businesses. Apart from that, the alumnus is competent to make decisions and to participate in the process of steering the sustainable development, taking into account the desired sustainable future. The alumnus is creative, can think outside the box and introduces significant innovations. The alumnus knows his or her rights and the institutions through which those rights can be executed. The alumnus communicates and cooperates with other social entities in order to achieve his or her goals. The alumnus knows what compromise is and knows its limits. The alumnus shows active attitude and readiness to cooperate with others (Papuziński, 2007).

Taking into account the aforementioned concept, education for sustainable development should be aimed at propagating knowledge and skills needed to undertake actions leading to sustainable life-style and management. What is essential in this situation is that education for sustainable development is treated as an integral element of civic education that serves as the preparation for the active participation in social life, inclusive of the participation in the social decision-making process. The objective is not about learning certain forms of behavior but to develop autonomy and the ability to act independently. Furthermore, the education for sustainable development itself should enrich the individual’s creative potential, communication competence, ability to cooperate and the proficiency in solving dilemmas. Therefore, one can conclude that education for sustainable development has three leading goals that are tightly connected: the ability to shape the future, social participation and global solidarity (Kwieciński, 1989).

7. ECO-PHILOSOPHY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Eco-philosophy in its search for the philosophical substantiation of the solid sustainable development postulate emphasizes the need to nest the humankind in nature and thus it opposes the idea of the arrogant anthropocentrism. That is why it needs to be emphasized that in the feud between eco-philosophy and the anthropocentric tradition, the leitmotif of philosophizing changes. The new philosophy is no longer looking for the justification of the exploitative power of men over nature but, while recognizing the value of biosphere *per se*, it

contemplates the mechanisms of the harmonious coexistence of *homo sapiens* with all living creatures being a part of the Earth's biosphere. From the eco-philosophy's standpoint, complete independence of the human world (anthroposphere) from the environment turned out to be a myth and the man got dethroned. The man loses the titular status of the nature's ruler who can use it in a completely instrumental way. The conceptual framework of eco-philosophy sees men as a part of nature and they have moral obligations not only to other people but also to other non-human living creatures. It results that consequently laid out critique of the anthropocentrism gives birth to the new metaphysics and the new ethics regarding the relation between men and the environment. However, it does not change the fact that even with the biocentric eco-philosophy the man will remain at the center of the discussion, since the changes that we are talking about concern humankind as the subject of history. The human beings characterized by the fact that they consciously define their symbiotic relation to the environment and search for a new model of civilization capable of solid sustainable development.

The groundbreaking characteristic of eco-philosophy is that within the conceptual framework that it creates the human history is no longer seen as the process of denaturalization of a human being striving to free himself from the limitations imposed by nature but rather as the process of self-discovery of a human being who has become ready to reconcile oneself with the nature. Therefore, from the standpoint of the new philosophy, complete independence of the human world from the limitations imposed by nature turns out to be an illusion and an expression of human arrogance, similar to the demand to develop the culture which through separating itself from the nature detaches itself from everything that is connected with the nature. There are many thinkers who are considered the precursors of the new environmental philosophy. However, new suggestions regarding the relation between men and nature have been treated condescendingly, as harmless and sentimental speculations, at least until the time when the sustainable development program was accepted on an international forum. Then, the associated philosophical concepts could be integrated into the vision of a new social and economic reality. And when the postulate saying that the activity of men encompassing the environment should also include, apart from the economic factors, the environmental factors, meaning the benefits for other living creatures inhabiting natural ecosystems, it became tantamount to the separation from the anthropocentric tradition and the new era began, called the ecological era. Its groundbreaking approach lies in the fact that it is looking for a new model of civilization adjusted to the environment's capability, meaning the one able to ensure solid sustainable development within the evolutionary time frame. It is true that currently there is no satisfactory definition of sustainable development, even though its concept is often used in different contexts. In modern since the concept of sustainable development refers to various dynamic processes. If we are talking about the functioning of complex biological systems, the analysis of the processes related to sustainable development would be covered by ecology. The term *sustainable development* itself is the equivalent of the proper measure of all things, sought by classical philosophers in order to define the man's deeds in the world (Piątek, 2007).

Therefore, eco-philosophy is the legitimization, as it can be treated as the example of the man's becoming of age as regards his relation with nature. Hence, the sustainable development postulate can be understood as an attempt to discern the proper measure of things and to apply it to human activity encompassing nature. Applying the proper measure is understood as the prudent management of natural resources in such a way so as to make it

possible to satisfy the needs of both modern men and also future generations as well as non-human living creatures. Thus, in accordance with the leitmotif of the new philosophy, the unlimited exploitation of nature can be seen as the symptom of human infancy after which a human being achieves maturity associated with the ability to independently use one's own intellect, in other words the ability to reason (Piątek, 2007).

We have to remember that we need the philosophy of sustainable development – as the type of “enlightenment”. What a philosophizing person needs is to be able to take care of themselves in a way that is analytic, interpretative and cognizant. It is when the subject refers and relates to himself or herself that we experience the difference between enlightenment and science. That is why enlightenment is something more than merely receiving and collecting information. The philosophy of sustainable development as enlightenment must recognize, analyze and interpret the ontological, axiological and historiosophic “superstitions”, scientific theses and theories formulated by economists, lawyers, political scientists and educationalists dealing with the problems related to sustainable development. It is there to free them from the naivety concerning hidden assumptions present in their thought and encourage self-determination as regards the issues related to humanity and human society, the place of men in the universe, etc. Such a philosophy of sustainable development is the prerequisite for the implementation of the postulate as regards raising the level of theoretical and methodological self-knowledge of various entities dealing with the problems related to sustainable development. A significant step on the way to achieve this is the typologization of those common-sense philosophies of sustainable development which function in scientific literature (Papuziński, 2007).

8. CONCLUSIONS

If the animate and inanimate nature is treated as a value of modern times, then there is a chance that people will start to esteem and respect it. The contact with nature cannot be limited to passive contemplation. The man has to bring those values to light and reify the elements of the surrounding world as esthetic objects. “Thanks to representing nature in terms of para-artistic structures, it is included in the human world, it becomes humanized. It is transformed from a purely physical object into a phenomenon to which we ascribe values similar to those present in the human world” (Gołaszewska, 1984).

Hence, it is worth it to add that the choice, namely our choice of a proper course of action has more significance than the action itself. Sometimes the resistance to take action is wiser than taking it. Surely Martin Heidegger would agree with that as he was the one who said: “We avoid the term “action” on purpose because it would have to be taken so broadly that ‘activity’ would also embrace the passivity of resistance” (Heidegger, 1929). In modern times this means the resistance to the fever of life, which, truth be told, is sometimes caused by scarcity but frequently also by the consumerist drive to possess, to ostentatiously display and to achieve external success.

We need to remember that the philosophical model of ecological awareness constitutes a desired state of the development of social awareness where a high level of knowledge about the processes occurring in the ecosystem is accompanied by the intellectual ability to perceive and predict the ecological consequences of one's own actions as well as the moral sensitivity regarding the relations between men and nature (Papuziński, 2007). Let us not forget that eco-

philosophy oscillates between the environmental and social knowledge. “The individual character of this discipline can be associated with a breakthrough, which, thanks to its help, is defined by the new perspective on the place of men in the world of nature and a new way of thinking about men and nature and the interaction between them” (Tyburski 2008). Thus, eco-philosophy emerged as a response to the destruction of the world of nature leading directly to the ecological disaster. Today, when we can observe truly schizophrenic separation between the man and the rest of the animate or inanimate world, eco-philosophy focuses in particular on substantiating the ways of thinking as well as the rules governing the committed and well-thought actions related to the environmental protection in order to keep and preserve the environment in such a state that will be beneficial both for the human world and the world of nature (Boyars, 1981). Therefore, eco-philosophy is the beginning of a new era and at the same time it constitutes its philosophical validation. Thus, it should become the basis for the new way of thinking as regards the broad area of the ecology-related problems. And the relation between eco-philosophy and education for sustainable development should be accompanied by the actions aimed at strengthening the civic society’s structures.

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(Received 22 March 2017; accepted 14 April 2017)