



Human-Earth Relationship

The ecology issue emerges out of the fact that humans have been constructing a government for humans, by humans and with its destiny in developing the human – but that won't work because if the human is looking for its own benefit rather than the benefit of the larger community, if we become predators on the natural community, then we lose in every way.

The American constitution is a disaster for everything that is not human. It may be wonderful for humans to have all these rights, including rights of property without restriction on the part of government, as to what they own or what they do with it, but if there are no rights and no protections for anything that is not human, then we establish a predator relationship.

And so, humans, in this country, are just devouring everything – because that's what this constitution stands for – for humans to devour, to manipulate, to use. So, the whole idea of humans being human is gone.

We've been caught up in a mechanistic world, because what we make, makes us. We make the automobile, the automobile makes us. We make an industrial economy, the industrial economy makes us. We are now in a weird dream world of industrial technological imagination. Who would be so destructive to the very basis out of which we exist, that we spoil our water and our air? For what? To invent an industrial economy. We are so brilliant scientifically and so absurd in any other way. We are into a deep cultural pathology – in ordinary language, we are crazy. To think that we can have a viable human economy by destroying the Earth is absurd.

We have all grown up with the indoctrination of industrial processes and we don't know anything else; we are captured by this pathology. We present our whole industrial process as benign, as a benefit, as the only way to go, when it is obviously so inhuman. It distorts education, political life, economics and all aspects of the community's existence.

What I am proposing is the development of an integral human order within the order of the planet Earth: that we begin to think of an integral relationship of every aspect of existence with all other aspects, because, in the design of Nature, things are inherently supportive of other things.

It's a question of developing a qualitative relationship instead of a quantitative one. We are so quantitatively oriented that we see the planet Earth as a natural resource to be used. That's the basic distortion of modern times that comes from Descartes, who said there is only 'mind' and 'matter' – with humans being the only ones with 'mind'.

So, the idea arose that there is no living principle in living organisms: it's just a mechanistic process that biologists would say is an 'emergent property' of matter. And if there is nothing 'there' then obviously it is something to be used. But as soon as the person begins to think of living beings as ensouled beings and thinks of the planet as a qualitative presence, to be communed with primarily, not simply as a natural resource to be used, then we can restore the key element in human-earth relationships that has been distorted in the West ever since the 16th and 17th centuries.

We can't survive without using what's around us, but we have to do it in such a way that we recognize this mystique of the community of the Earth, respecting the planet and the time it takes to regenerate. It is time to step back and find the human place in the natural world and not think that we can make the human world primary and the natural world secondary.

We have got to say to ourselves, 'Let's begin to try to understand the natural world and find a way of prospering the natural world first.' Then, find our survival within that context. Because if we think we can put ourselves first and then fit the natural world into our programme, it's not going to work. We have got to fit the human project into the Earth project.

By contemplating the mountains, the birds and the sea, we feel inspired, we access our interiority, and we experience transcendence. Even though we have worked out a mechanics that is fairly helpful, it doesn't give us an interior world. The natural world gives us an interior world. It gives us a healing presence, a fulfilling presence.

In the presence of the sun, the moon, the stars, the mountains, the seas of Earth, the dawn and sunset, the forests, the meadows and wildlife, we are immersed in an ever-renewing wonder-world that evokes our music and dance, our poetry and literature as well as our philosophical reflection and our scientific inquiry. None of our industrial productions brings such inspiration as we obtain from these sources. So, even if we use solar energy, without some mystique of the Sun and the Earth, it won't work.

We should do away with the light pollution in cities so that children and all of us can see the stars. Our children don't have the experience of seeing the stars, and they are crippled, emotionally and in other ways. And that's the danger of putting children into this context of computers and machines, because what we make, makes us. Children don't have contact with anything natural, they don't wander through the meadows and see butterflies, fireflies, lizards and frogs, and so they do not have contact with reality – they are living in an artificial world.

The greater difficulty is not the physical damage to our lungs from industrial pollution; it is what is happening to our souls, our minds and our emotions.

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