

Class Meeting 12

Problématique du changement II: A Better World?

“Humanecological sustainability” -- What would it look like, if we had it? Barriers to attainability (e.g. “human nature”);

Sense of powerlessness, impotency, despair, hopelessness, helplessness. Overcoming despair and exercising personal power.

A path to effective collaboration in these times? Revisiting "the tragedy of the commons" and the issue of externalities. An invitation to consider the possible advantages of a more communitarian alternative, of some sort?

"Sustainability" as a Worldview, Valuesystem, and Lifestyle

What Does It Have to Do with Affect?

WRITE: Reaction Paper #11

Early on in ZAMM, Pirsig has his narrator meditate on "a kind of force that gives rise to technology, something undefined but inhuman, mechanical, lifeless, a blind monster, a death force, something hideous ... ". One implication is that technology has had deleterious effect on our quality of life. Another way of putting it is that technology has played a role in making material conditions of our lives unsustainable.

What is "humanecological sustainability"?

What would such a thing "look like" if we had it?

How are the answers that we give conditioned and constrained by our "images of humanity and nature"?

When the sustainability (resource management) rationale is presented, it appears perfectly logical and rational. And yet it continues to appear controversial and problematical. Why?

What is “quality of life”?

Who decides?

How is the question to be answered?

Quality of life can be perceived in resource context (economy, technology) and social- psychological context. Can you imagine “quality of life” without the existence of social and natural environments conducive to sustainability? What is quality in relationships involving individuals and communities?

What is “systemic ethics” (Orr:17-18); what is the value of a “watershed centered” or “bioregional” perspective?

We’ll have a pertinent exercise and discussion in class.

PREPARATION:

READ: 12-1 Orr, David W., (1992) Ecological Literacy: Education and the Transition to a Postmodern World, SUNY Press, Albany. (excerpt: Chapter 1: The Problem of Sustainability)

READ: 12-2 Sections 1 & 2 from the hardcopy (WORKBOOK) portion of a hybrid (with complementary hard copy and "electronic book" portions) intended to promote "sustainability" in a time of human/ecological crisis. (HomeWork: An Environmental Literacy Primer ©1995 Stephan L. Chorover/MIT), pp. 36-39. Can we gain access for students to Voyager portion?

- READ: 12-3 Bateson, Gregory, (1980) *Mind and Nature: A Necessary Unity*, Bantam, New York. (excerpts)
- READ: 12-4 Worldwatch Institute: "State of the World 2005" (excerpts) The Foreword (Mikhail Gorbachev); Preface (Christopher Flavin); Year In Review (Lori Brown), Chapter 1: Security Redefined (Michael Renner); and Chapter 5: Managing water conflict and cooperation. (Aaron T. Wolf, Annika Kramer, Alexander Carius and Geoffrey D. Dabelko)

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