

Walks on the Trails: A Reflective Thought Towards Environmental Consciousness in the Context of Children and Childhood

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Abstract

This reflective paper elucidates the thought-making process of the author in understanding and putting into context the environmental consciousness of childhood and the self-concept. The axiom that can be yielded in the paper is the quiet role of childhood in facing the environmental challenges the world faces for the longest time.

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Truth, at times, elucidates multiple forms — the version of the one who sees from the outside, and the version of the one who dares to search on its inner. Nonetheless, the ears hear what the eyes only see. It's not always what it seems. Sometimes the more you look, the less you see. I thought the roadmap toward clean energy is singularly magnified by the energy sectors or professionals behind the studies and practices of electricity, but I was wrong. I thought what has been done about climate action is already what it is and that the implementation of the programs is just the problem.

As I let myself submerge into the surface of understanding these subjects, it appears that I miscomprehended it all along. I have read the books they have read, they have written, and tasted the words they have said, but I had difficulty finding the answer. I have listened to their stories and put myself into their characters, but still, the answer was nowhere to be found. I have done the things they wanted me to try, and no answer was schemed out. It was like walking the trails with so many picturesque views that I couldn't choose one. Then, as I contemplated the whispers of the wild wind in the climate of the time, I began to ask: *What answer do I want to find out? What question am I trying to find an answer to? What kind of answer am I trying to search for?* Endless critical questions, at least for me, as whatever outcomes I would hold in my

hands by the end of this long-extended fleet would determine the endeavors I would devote my life to, all in the name of social reformations.

Indeed, for someone who has been writing some academic papers already, I forgot the word '*multi-dimensional*'. The universe must have had a sense of humor that hit me to a superlative degree. I often use such terms in my lectures, yet I overlooked that it is both the *question* and the *solution* to social reformations I always elucidate to my students, starting with transitioning to clean energy and thereby climate action. And so, I kept on envisioning, spending long hours of introspecting, feeling, and remembering, and there, in the deepest core of my mind where thoughts and reality meet in between and imaginations and pieces of truth were floating, waiting for someone's fascination, I saw what I never thought my eyes would see — an unlikely answer that marveled every spectacle of my beliefs, views and the entirety of my persona: the *children and childhood*.

At the crossroads of my life as a hopeful academician, I am constantly looking for an answer; and in the pursuit of finding this answer, I begin to imagine what the answer would be, what it would look like or sound like resulting in creating an expectation, prediction or predetermination, tantamount to preparing myself for a battle in the realm of the intellectual aristocracy. Social responsibility to the environment vis-à-vis the use of clean and sustainable energy sources does not emerge the moment the child reaches adolescence, rather it must start the moment they start going to school and are formally educated. What if the is well structured that by the end of the day the characterization of simply taking good care of our planet is unseen and unspoken by the child. After over 9 years of insightful observations of how the giants in the academe work, some of them try to look for answers through readings, some thorough testing, and some through calculating the responses of people, with predetermined answers already framed in their great minds. But after careful assimilation to the learning materials that Reboot generously shared, I realized that sometimes the answer is an answer that a researcher never thinks would be the answer. The particular work that I want to do at this point in the arena of child development, is a work that edifies environmental education by integrating renewable energy transition to the children which seeks neither to prove or disprove as we have plenty of those already but to apply and create solutions. And though reality has never been universal but relative and is multiple, this work freely walks and accepts every piece of reality found along the way. The scientific community where I'm standing on the same ground may find this odd and perhaps unacceptable but in all that there was, in anything that there is, and in everything that will be, my basic axiom has always been naturalistic whether any scholars accepts or rejects.

Contention on the Characterization of Environmental Consciousness to Children and their Childhood Self-concept

According to John Locke's "*tabula rasa*" theory, which holds that people are born without mental content and that all knowledge comes from experience or perception, as the kid approaches the world after conception, the senses gradually engage as they process objects (Duschinsky, 2012). In the early stages of life, it is a well-known natural phenomenon that children are unable to make decisions about things, such as the precise words to use in communicating and to use in describing, and labeling things around them. However, what is certain in this phase is the capability of feelings because it is the emotion that fuels their existence.

The life instinct and the death instinct, or good and bad, love and hate, creativity and destruction, are fundamental conflicts that Klein (2016) believed human infants are continually involved in. Infants naturally choose pleasurable sensations over unpleasant ones as the ego progresses away from disintegration and toward integration. Infants group their experiences into positions or methods of interacting with both internal and exterior things to deal with this dichotomy of good and terrible feelings. Additionally, because the need to survive is innate and no less important to a child, the youngster will express a particular type of "*demand*" that they believe is vital for their existence. This demand can be in a form of security and protection as the realities of the broken world with a broken environment are unconsciously traversing the thought-making processes. The idea that can be drawn here is purely the gratification of this demand which leads to the question, *how can parents gratify this when they are already living and experiencing environmental degradation in various forms and shapes, and contributing to a collective solution is already just an option*

rather than a responsibility?

Characteristics toward oneself and the surroundings are mostly shaped by social and cultural circumstances, particularly childhood experiences. People who don't have their fundamental needs for love and compassion met as children grow up with a basic hatred toward others and the wider world and experience basic anxiety. Using one of the three main related styles—going toward people, moving against people, or moving away from people—which put social and environmental duties on the line—people can fight basic anxiety, according to Horney's (2013) theory. Normal people are free to employ any of these ways to interact with others, but neurotics are forced to firmly rely on only one. A "*fundamental intrapsychic conflict*" is created by compulsive behavior and may take the shape of an idealized self-image or self-hatred. The idealized self-image is expressed as a "*neurotic search for glory, neurotic claims or neurotic pride*". Self-hatred is expressed as either self-contempt or alienation from self.

The comprehension of the informants' *self-concept* in the context of the Eriksonian psychosocial development theory anecdotes contends the cutting edge of these important tenets: *First*, self-concept development takes place according to the '*epigenetic principle*' i.e. *one part arises out of another and has its own time of ascendancy that does not entirely replace earlier components*; *second*, in every stage of life there is an interaction of opposites- a conflict between a '*syntonic*' (*harmonious*) element and a '*dystonic*' (*disruptive*) element (Erikson, 1993).

Many factors interact with one another and affect how the developing child develops into a unique individual during childhood and in the context of the environment. The point is that environmental education for children, which I keep bringing up in this paper, goes beyond simply imparting information to them about clean energy and climate action; rather, it sensitively works via the development of their character. According to this argument, education won't be wasted after the persona and early self-concept are defined.

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