

Nature vs. Culture in Sustainable Environmental Management

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degree Master of Arts in Philosophy at the North-West University,
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Potchefstroom

Dedicated to:

Jan, Tiny & Ilani

“Ek is lief vir julle”

Title:

Nature vs. Culture in Sustainable Environmental Management.

Abstract:

The material of this study includes literature on the historically bound nature of the ideographical nature vs. culture polarity. From this material, general concepts of “nature” and “culture” are formed on the basis of value in the context of environmental management. Then, the existence of a polar dualism (nature vs. culture) is indicated via a transcendental critique of the worldview underlying the construction of this relationship. It is shown that the polarity is asymmetrical, causing a hierarchical organization in the Western ontology. The nature/culture hierarchical polarity is subjected to a less radical deconstruction and a non-dualistic, less reductionist conception of “nature” and “culture” formulated. This enables a foreseeably sustainable environment in terms of quality of life of the human being in totality.

Keywords:

Nature, Culture, Dualism, Sustainability, Environmental Management, Dialectics, Worldview, Mastery, Control, Technological Society.

Titel:

Natuur vs. Kultuur in Volhoubare Omgewingsbestuur.

Opsomming:

Die materiaal van hierdie studie sluit literatuur oor die histories-gebonde aard van die ideografiese natuur vs. kultuur polariteit in. Vanuit hierdie materiaal word basiese konsepsies van “natuur” en “kultuur” gevorm op basis van waarde in die konteks van omgewingsbestuur. Verder word die teenwoordigheid van ‘n polêre dualisme (natuur vs. kultuur) aangedui via ‘n transendentale kritiek van die wêreldvisie wat die onderbou van die konstruksie van hierdie verband vorm. Daar word gewys dat die polariteit asimmetries is en ‘n hiërargiese organisering in die Westerse denke veroorsaak word. Die natuur/kultuur hiërargiese polariteit word blootgestel aan ‘n minder radikale dekonstruksie en ‘n non-dualistiese, minder reduksionistiese konsepsualisering van “natuur” en “kultuur” word geformuleer. Dit maak ‘n voorsienbare volhoubare omgewing, in terme van lewenskwaliteit van die mens in totaliteit, moontlik.

Sleutelwoorde:

Natuur, Kultuur, Dualisme, Volhoubaarheid, Omgewingsbestuur, Dialektiek, Wêreldbeskouing, Oorheersing, Beheer, Tegnologiese samelewing.

Acknowledgement

To the person who has taught me so much of what I know about Philosophy, Prof. Ponti Venter, thank you for being my mentor.

Preface

What if someone offered you a drug that was guaranteed to, within 24 hours, erase all of the fundamental flaws in your character.

The catch is that it would affect you holistically, i.e. that the good/strong aspects of your character would be changed *with* the bad.

It would be a kind of strange rebirth, with the overarching idea that the new person that emerges (although vastly different) will be better than the previous.

Would you take the drug?

Most of us would probably decline the offer. Not because we are averse to improving, but because the improvement is attained through artificial means. Taking the drug would produce an “unnatural” you.

Curiously, this sentiment appears to pertain only to the ailments of mind. Administration of chronic medication for physical misfortunes like high blood pressure will be widely accepted. Taking blood pressure regulatory drugs does not produce “unnatural” effects. The circulatory system derives additional effectiveness from their habitual taking.

How do we decide which interventions are in accordance with nature?

(Why is “natural”, more acceptable than “miraculous”, “unusual”, “artificial”, “civil”, “supernatural” or “cultural”?)

This mini-dissertation is presented in the format of a scientific article for future publication in a scholarly journal, such as *Acta Academica* or *Koers*.

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