

---

© OLGA V. ZAKHAROVA

*olga.hazarova@mail.ru*

UDC 316.477:502.12

**RESOLUTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES  
AND «THE VITAL WORLD» OF A PERSONALITY**

*SUMMARY. This article is devoted to the analysis of modern ecological situation. The relation to the natural world is estimated through a concept prism «the vital world».*

*KEY WORDS. Global environmental problems, Vital world.*

The contemporary situation in terms of understanding relationships between man and nature discourages its unconventionality. That Europe is home to an ecological crisis, seems to have seriously taken hold of the mind, and the efforts of authorities and residents of the European states are worthy of respect. Developed countries are creating a healthier environment for their citizens. There is a belief that Europeans are quite sincere in their desire to make their house cleaner and curb even very profitable production if it contradicts environmental standards. We want to believe that European news carries the marks of civilization changes, changes in ecological awareness. We want to believe that European civilization, again as before, will be able to inspire other regions by its example.

But for the present, developing countries demonstrate frightening examples of blindness when it comes to environmental policy. These countries with a billion people are obsessed with catching up and overtaking the developed economies. China is particularly successful in this activity. The government of China is eager to raise standards of living for the “golden billion” at any cost, thus reducing to nought the condemnation of predatory policies of the developed capitalist countries in relation to nature. All the errors of capitalist development are already known and described. But countries, following the path of rapid economic development, refuse to consider them as supplementing their own negative experiences. Reasons for ignoring ecological limitations lie not only in the economic field. Researchers into contemporary global problems have repeatedly noted the priority of the spiritual component of addressing these issues. Environmental issues in developing countries cannot be analyzed by losing sight of issues of the mentality of people in these countries. There is an ideology of the slighted people, provoked by the fact that developed countries have allowed themselves to become such on account of the general environment and literally at the expense of their colonies, but now they are trying to keep back the economic growth of developing countries, appealing to their conscience. This situation, of course, causes protest among the people of these countries.

Perception of the world by citizens of two worlds refers to the area of mentality. If people of developed countries are seriously concerned about global environmental issues, then disadvantaged and starving people in developing countries can know nothing about these issues and not think about them. There is no global world for them. Their world includes hungry children, social issues and diseases. This is evidenced by the almost complete absence of an environmental movement in these countries.

To understand this situation, one can refer to the concept of “the vital world”, developed in the works of Edmund Husserl, in the sociology of Max Weber, Alfred Schutz, Peter Berger, Tomas Luckman, and in the ethnomethodology of Harold Garfinkel. The objective world begins to have meaning for a person only when it becomes an internal subjective world. “The vital world” for Edmund Husserl is a world of our everyday subjective experience. It precedes the creation of a concept of the world, including the scientific one, which we are used to consider as objective. The vital world is the daily life of people, which is interpreted by them and represents the whole world for them. A. Schutz crystallizes the vital world of a “home” group into the concept “home”. “Home means different things to different people. It means, of course, father-house and mother-tongue, the family, the sweetheart, the friends; it means a beloved landscape, “songs my mother taught me”, food prepared in a particular way, familiar things for daily use, folk ways, and personal habits — in short, a peculiar way of life composed of small and important elements, likewise cherished” [1; 139].

From this point of view on the attitude of modern people to nature, we see that a person shows the greatest interest in the protection of the environment in the world which is considered to be his/her own. The success of environmental activities is in the field of dialectics of near and distant worlds, in the priorities that we place in a particular case.

The connection of direct immersion in the world and a vivid sense of the presence of others, vested as the individual by the status of essential witnesses of the world, is possible only in the near world, the world of everyday life that is opposite to the objective-neutral, quantitative distant world. Nature included in a circle of the near world is alive and we seem to hear of its needs and it knows about ours, and the same, as it would seem, nature having been in a distant world, numbs and becomes just a “thing”.

In the near world all is subjectively necessary, here we have to be responsible. Exactly here our fate is decided personally and directly. As for a distant world we can afford speculations, insufficiently weighted hypothesis. The distant world is a subject of explaining knowledge, the near world is a subject of understanding. According to A. Panarin, a reliable criterion of distinguishing the near and distant world is a degree of concern.

“Care” is one of the fundamental categories in the philosophy of Martin Heidegger. “Care as the constitution of the being of Da-Sein uncovers the world...” [2; 176], he writes. A person concerned about his/her world will relate to it in a fundamentally different way than a person creating theoretical constructs about the world. The word “to relate” should be understood here literally: to relate to the whole world, to feel a connection with the whole entity. Moreover, it is necessary to be not just a part of the world, but an active part able to influence it,

and, therefore, obliged to build a barrier of concern against irresponsible actions. "All motivations of theoretical knowledge are pale in comparison to its identity, and thus the depth of penetration into the essence of life, to the disclosure of entity as care. The higher the level of our concern, the higher the level of our penetration into the essence of things..." [3; 147].

According to Heidegger, care is related to an individual's willingness to share entity with others.

The distant world is objectified as a global community whose foundation is the global economy, the market economy, in fact. There were attempts to solve the environmental issue at the global, strategic level. In 1991, with the support of the UN and the World Bank was established the Global Environment Facility. Its objectives were the preservation of biological diversity, the struggle against climate change, the reduction in the use of ozone-depleting substances, and the protection of water resources. But to solve such a difficult objective by force through one organization with funding of several billions is impossible! And it was clear from the moment of creation. In a world where three billion dollars a day is spent on armaments and the maintenance of the army, the economy is not able to "lift" the necessary programs for the survival of mankind!

In response to the population explosion of the 20th century, which exacerbated the problem of hunger, there was formed a geo-economic strategy called "the Green Revolution". Modernization in the sphere of agriculture has led to an increase in cereal production, and meat production has nearly tripled in parallel to the doubling of the population of the Earth. But there was further degradation of arable land, and a threat to life and health as a result of using pesticides. The food problem is not solved yet, and at the present time the world is in a state of a food crisis. In this connection there are developing industries related to the production of transgenic products. Modern biotechnologies greatly increase the productivity of agriculture, create new drugs. Simultaneously with the beginning of the mass use of biotechnology products in the world, the number of their opponents is growing. The essence of their concerns is that transgenic plants pose unpredictable consequences for humanity and for its habitat.

Attempts to combat global climate change are also significant. In 1992 was signed the Framework Convention on Climate Change, which stated the inadmissibility of dangerous anthropogenic impact on climate. In 1997 some states signed the Kyoto Protocol to the Framework Convention which set a goal of reducing emissions. By 2008-2012, 39 industrialized countries must reduce total emissions by 5.2% compared to the 1990 level. Emission trading was officially authorized. Those countries that pollute the atmosphere less than their permitted quota could sell the right to pollute the atmosphere to the countries where the production overlaps the quota level. Even in such a commercial form protocol will enter into force upon the signature of such countries as the USA, China, Russia, which produce 60% of global carbon dioxide emissions. But now many countries are taking different steps to "slew" the Kyoto Protocol, while harmful air pollution increases. With luck, by 2015 the reduction of carbon oxides emissions will be 2% compared to the 1990 level, which is much less than the originally approved minimal level [4; 70].

The overall picture of today is very clear. The global economy independently living in its own shell, cannot help to get out of the ecological impasse. The benefit

motive and the desire for profit outweigh fear of disease, pollution, extinction of animals and plants. It is even not necessary to mention the admiration of the beauty and the perfection of nature, which are generally not taken into account.

So it is clear that in the frames of distant and global worlds, environmental problems sharply raised by the theorists of the «Club of Rome» in the late 1960s have not yet been solved like other global issues.

Politicians pretend to care about the future of the planet and about public health. But in reality they are profoundly indifferent to everything that does not apply directly to “their” world. Solutions they develop for the whole world are not suitable for a particular region. In developing countries control over resources, the right to their disposal is concentrated in the hands of the ruling elite and heads of large state-owned corporations. They have little concern about ordinary people, their health and prosperity, not to mention the natural world. These people are able to provide a comfortable existence for themselves, thus they don’t want any changes. In almost all developing countries, democratic institutions are imperfect and no social forces can confront elites. Here the elites, whose interests lie in the field of the distant world, and citizens are opposed directly. The fight takes place in «the vital world», changing the fate of the planet.

We have adequately characterized above what we include in the concept of «the vital world». How high the degree of emotional attachment of a man is to it, how high is the intensity of concern about its needs and health, how well a person realizes his presence in it: and his own and all that is dear to him, how strong in him and through him the relations of a man with the whole entity.

Annually as part of the course “Global Issues of Modern World”, students participate in “environmental training”. In short, they carry out work on a “letter of a protest”. Its meaning is to draft a letter with a protest against environmental pollution and to address it to those who in their opinion are the most responsible for the pollution.

Here are almost unchanged extracts from these letters.

*“A letter from the future! People of the planet Earth, we, your descendants, cry for help. Only you are able to change the world in which we live. For 30 years we have not seen the sun ... each day passes in fear of accidents. Every day our friends die, before the age of 30. The population is slowly dying out, women have lost the ability to give birth, the black book is much bigger than the red one. If you cannot help, still write, what the sun looks like! ”*

*“A letter to all people! I got up early today. I was awakened by the Sun. I looked out of the window. There is crisp white snow, a blue sky, the bullfinches sit on a branch of a mountain ash. I opened the window. Frosty air piercing with purity burst into the room. There appeared first cars, and the air stopped being so clean. The noise forced me to close the window. A dropped candy wrapper on the ground did not decorate it. A passer-by decided to give his daughter a branch of the mountain ash, having scared the cheerful birds and the sunlight. Factories started working, and smoke poured out of their pipes into the blue sky ... It’s amazing how things have changed in a short time. What will be in 10 years?”*

*“Dear Chelyabinsk Metallurgical Plant! We write to you with a lamentable mood, as your acid rains have reached us. Perhaps, it is not new for your region,*

*but our animals and plants met it without much enthusiasm. Since you are up the river, the river comes to us in an even worse state than our sewage..."*

Is it naive? Is there no philosophical reflection?

But there is what these people like, what they are afraid to lose, for what they are ready to struggle. And it does not have to be proved. It is obvious for them, it is a primary and basic truth. It is a vital world. It is a world in which we must decide how to organize ourselves not to do worse. And having decided, we need to act.

These letters are living evidence, human voices, capable of telling others about their concerns, of "animating" the world around them. They have a chance to be understood, to attach others to their concerns. "Discourse expresses most and foremost as a speaking concern for a world..." [2; 276]. It is no accident that the situation of misunderstanding is described by such expressions: "we live with you on different planets", "we speak different languages". But the problem is most clearly articulated in the Tower of Babel story: if you want to make people weak, to deprive them of a common understanding of goals — take away their ability to talk to each other, but rather, to understand each other in the process of communication.

An important characteristic of the vital world for Heidegger is that being-in-the-world is not at the same time being-with-one-another, co-being: "Just as Da-Sein is far from being first only a wordless subject and an 'interior' to which the world is added, so is it far from becoming being-with because an other turns up in fact" [2; 251]. We need another person as a witness of a true state of affairs, not giving ourselves to diving into the world of subjective fantasies, not to appear in the objectified and dead distant world. "The elements and processes of the world, not articulated by a human voice, never reveal to us the internal truth about the world they are able to transmit with the voice of a biased person" [5; 148].

Devotion to the vital world and concern about it does not mean that the near world is static and not open to innovation. The scientific world scares not with its inventions, but its callousness, its attempt to eliminate human interests and entirely rely on considerations of efficiency. In assessing technological advances and economic activities there should be a socio-cultural, human dimension, not just evaluating technical and technological optimization and economic efficiency. Socio-cultural comprehension of technology increases responsibility for the range of decisions, provides an opportunity to prevent the blind actions of people, to foresee consequences, and induces to build alternative models. And if the economic development of certain regions, despite all the assurances, brings obvious danger to life, health and normal life functioning on the Earth, we have to change our view of the situation, to refuse. We need to refuse despite all the short-term benefits associated with this development.

Thus, the concept of «the vital world» is not only able to explain the modern ecological situation, but also to see the way in which we are able to get out of the environmental impasse.

REFERENCES:

1. Schutz, A. Come Back Home // Socis. 1995. No. 2. P. 139-142. P. 139.
2. Heidegger, M. History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena. Tomsk: Vodolei, 1998. P. 176.
3. Panarin, A.S. Globalization as a Challenge to Life in the World // Twilight of Globalization: Handbook of anti-globalization. Moscow: AST: Ermak, 2004. P. 147.
4. Richard, J.F. Turning Point; Twenty Global Problems - Twenty Years to Solve Them. Moscow: Ladomir, 2006. P. 70.
5. Panarin, A.S. Globalization as a Challenge to Life in the World // Twilight of Globalization: Handbook of anti-globalization. Moscow: AST: Ermak, 2004. P. 148.