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Education for the Sustainable Global Citizen: What Can We Learn from Stoic Philosophy and Freirean Environmental Pedagogies?

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Abstract: In support of sustainable development, the United Nations (UN) launched its Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) with the aims of accelerating progress towards universal access to education, good quality learning and the fostering of global citizenship. This paper explores how and to what extent Stoic virtue ethics and critical Freirean ecopedagogies can advance the UN's vision for progressive educational systems with transformative societal effects. We propose an integrated solution that provides ecopedagogical concepts a more robust philosophical foundation whilst also offering Stoicism additional tools to tackle 21st-century problems, such as climate change and environmental degradation. The result of the paper is the preliminary theoretical underpinnings of an educational framework that encompasses planetary-level concerns and offers a fuller expression of the terms “sustainable development” and “global citizen”.

Keywords: ecopedagogy; ecopedagogies; Greek philosophy; Paulo Freire; Roman philosophy; Stoicism; sustainability; transformative education; Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

1. Introduction

Educational systems play an important role in the development of an individual's reasoning, virtues and values. The need for moral development has long been recognised, beginning with Confucius [1], and the Greek philosophical schools of the Peripatetics and Stoicism. For Stoics, in particular, virtuous acts are performed for the benefit of the individual in the pursuit of a condition that is eudaimonic. *Eudaimonia* is a term commonly translated into modern English as “fulfilment”, and “flourishing”, (and also somewhat confusingly, when trying to distinguish between eudaimonic and hedonic schools of thought, “wellbeing” or “happiness”). More accurately, it refers to the attainment of a “life well lived” or the “good life” in the holistic sense. In this paper, we avoid translating the term so not to restrict its meaning. According to the Stoics, a eudaimonic state is achieved through the active propagation of justice, self-control, courage and prudence, and the removal of the vices—injustice,

greed, cowardice and ignorance—as polar opposites. Given the four virtues, Stoic practitioners have an individual and civil duty to cultivate their own moral education for the advancement of a cosmopolitan society, within which sustainable development is supported.

Education per se does not automatically result in moral progress or acts aligned with sustainable development. Furthermore, even when focused on virtue, it can equally sustain or strengthen oppressions [2]. This is because education, like other institutions, often serves to reinforce societal norms and behaviours rather than question them [3,4]. This is why modern adherents of Freirean ideas such as Carlos Alberto Torres [5,6], Peter McLaren [7], Michael Apple [8,9] and Antonia Darder [10] emphasise the need for educational structures and processes that critically evaluate what, how and why something is learned or taught. Many Freireans have focused on environmental pedagogical writings because of the integral role that environmental wellbeing plays in supporting or ending social injustice [11–16]. Thus, on the surface there appear to be many benefits that the ancient philosophy of Stoicism and Freirean-influenced environmental pedagogies can lend to each other in fostering sustainable development. Both perspectives would agree that a progressive 21st century educative framework [17]:

Must fully assume its central role in helping people to forge more just, peaceful, tolerant and inclusive societies. It must give people the understanding, skills and values they need to cooperate.

In this paper, we examine the three pillars of the United Nations' (UN) Global Education First Initiative (GEFI)—global access to education, improved quality of learning, and promotion of global citizenship [18]—through the dual lenses of modern Stoicism and Freirean-associated environmental pedagogies. We identify structural commonalities and divergences between the two philosophical frameworks and suggest where the integration of these frameworks may be helpful for the practical application of the aforementioned UN initiative. We demonstrate how, and to what extent, modern Stoic-based cosmopolitanism and virtue education, viewed alongside a Freirean-ecopedagogical critical lens, may offer a more effective and meaningful way to orientate future generations, so they may actively contribute to the vision of sustainably-driven societal transformation and global citizenship [14,19]. We also propose that Freirean ecopedagogies can lend support to modern Stoicism by examining issues that ancient Stoics could not have imagined or did not reflect upon. This includes aspects of socio-environmental justice and the role of dominant social hierarchies and ideologies, such as Westernisation, that perpetuate inequality. Likewise, we identify where Stoicism can lend its normative approach and philosophical grounding to ecopedagogy, so that the latter's theoretical underpinnings can become more robust and stand up to wider scrutiny from more conservative educational theories. In short, we demonstrate the extent to which an integrated approach can benefit the sustainable messages of both Stoicism and Freirean ecopedagogical frameworks and, thus, serve as a theoretical foundation for education designed for environmental sustainability and global citizenship. In practical terms, we propose a foundation that can inform all those with a teaching or learning role, notably school teachers, parents and young students, who have an interest in identifying and propagating a more global vision to tackle those 21st-century challenges, such as climate change and technological disruption, that Harari [20] asserts cannot be solved by national governments and geographically restricted policies.

2. Education for Social Transformation and Sustainable Development

This section examines education for social transformation and sustainable development from a Stoic and critical Freirean ecopedagogical perspective. Analysing and building on their existing theoretical foundations and applications, we consider each philosophy's respective insights and elements that we believe can pave the way for the more integrated approach we present in Section 3.

2.1. A Stoic Education for Social Transformation and Sustainable Development

In this paper, the term “education” refers to what is learned and taught in formal, non-formal, and informal settings. It is used in the modern sense because the ancients would not have understood it in the way we do today, despite the great importance they attributed to the processes of teaching and learning [21]. Whilst Stoicism calls for the education of human beings, it focuses much more on the nature of human behaviour than it does on an educative school system [22]. This is also, incidentally, why Stoic virtue ethics applied to educational ideas must be approached indirectly.

To paraphrase the modern philosopher, Julia Annas [23], in her book *Intelligent Virtue*, a virtue is an active, persistent feature; that is to say, a characteristic and tendency to be (think and act) in a certain way. It is also something that is developed through selective and deliberate responses to a given circumstance or situation. To use Annas’ example, if generosity is a virtue (as Christians suggest but Stoics do not) then a person’s virtue will be strengthened or weakened by her generous or stingy actions respectively. Similar reasoning with regard to education for the “common good” is likewise put forward by Reich [24] and Sison et al. [25].

From a Stoic epistemological and ontological perspective, virtue is a type of “knowledge”, and virtues stem from dispositions (a state of mind or “soul”) that allow (or compel) an agent to assent to cognitive (true, clear, distinct) impressions [26]. In Stoic philosophy, justice, courage, prudence and self-control are the four virtues that constitute the only true good. Together they are all that is necessary and sufficient for happiness. In contrast, there are no circumstances where injustice is good, nor cowardice, stupidity or ignorance. Likewise, under a Stoic framework, there are no circumstances in which greed is good (despite the recent popular maxim), as it is the opposite of self-control.

According to Stoicism, everything other than the four virtues is of secondary importance and referred to as “externals”. These are then categorised as “preferred indifferents” or “dispreferred indifferents”. This does not mean that Stoics are uninterested, unconcerned or unresponsive to externals, but rather that they are aware that they do not *necessarily nor sufficiently in and of themselves* bring about virtue. Health and wealth are two well-known externals, and it is natural for humans to desire good health rather than illness, or wealth rather than poverty. One can argue, therefore, that while Stoics value health and wealth, they also regard these externals as having no impact on one’s morality (virtue or vice), nor indeed on one’s happiness (*eudaimonia*). A person can be wealthy, yet morally bankrupt; physically weak, yet morally strong. Likewise, one can be healthy and wealthy yet utterly miserable. Conversely, one may be poor and sick, yet content in knowing that their present condition or circumstance does not define them nor prevent them from achieving eudaimonic wellbeing. In sum, wealth and good health, although both valuable (one would rather have them than not), make no *moral* difference; hence the Stoic indifference toward them.

Within Stoic philosophy, a purely virtuous person is one who, by definition, while not omniscient, is incapable of making a [moral] mistake [27]. Such a person, if indeed she or he exists (or has ever existed), is referred to as a “sage”. A central figure in Stoicism, a sage is one who has perfected the four virtues. As Irwin [28] explains, a sage always does the right [moral] thing, and for the right reasons. Consequently, given their perfect morality and the knowledge they can reasonably be expected to have at any moment, the impressions and actions of sages will be correct. Unfortunately, however, in proposing the usefulness of Stoicism in a modern pedagogical context, the notion of the sage is problematic, although logically and epistemologically necessary. Such an individual is unlikely to exist due to the type of educational structures that we have established in society and the pervasiveness of so-called “goods” that Stoics would consider to be moral “indifferents” [29].

For most Stoics, the sage represents a moral ideal, or a thought experiment. It is a state which can be approximated (and even hoped for) but could possibly never be achieved. As particularly striking propositions of an unattainable ideal, the goals of perfect health or sustainable development provide everyday examples of the same reasoning. The articulation of sustainable development is intended to plot a course in the (vaguely) right direction. Being or becoming “more sustainable”, therefore, does not consist of a legally or politically binding set of ascribed deeds. Instead, it is an impression

concerning the best course of action that society can pursue [30]. In other words, any consensus as to what “sustainable” action consists of can only ever be agreed upon in the nominal sense.

In this respect, we would argue that one can draw a parallel between the awareness gained by Stoics regarding their moral obligation to act virtuously, and the decision taken by society regarding moral obligations towards future generations and their collective ability to realise their own visions of the good life [31].

When distinguishing “virtues” from “values”, it is important to remember that the latter can be preferred or dispreferred, and that this judgment is dependent on particular circumstances or contexts. For Stoics, consistently choosing preferable externals in appropriate circumstances leads to a “good” disposition, exemplified by a “virtuous” thought or act. By way of extension, we can say that if Stoics value sustainable development, then it is only by consistently striving for virtue that society would truly operate in harmony with human nature, and with Nature generally (as implied, for example, in the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals—SDGs). In his *Republic*, Stoicism’s founder, Zeno, envisioned a political State of sages as an anarchical utopia. Each sage would be thinking and acting appropriately (rationally and virtuously), and would not require legally stated laws or decrees to guide them [32]. Thus, Stoic philosophers, perhaps optimistically, believed that any divergence from the neurotypical adult’s desire or inclination to progress towards virtue (and thus *eudaimonia*) was a corruption of one’s human nature and capacity to act rationally. For Stoics, a perfectly rational (and, therefore, virtuous) response would always be consistent with their inherent moral obligation, determined by the concepts of cosmopolitanism and the circles of concern [33].

The original concept of the circles of concern developed by the Stoic Hierocles begins with the circle of the “self” and thereupon a successive set that encompasses “family”, “friends”, “community”, and “all humanity”. Cosmopolitanism invites a person to reach beyond the “self” and bring each circle back in upon its predecessor, until one is able to recognise oneself in all of humanity and all of humanity in oneself. If a Stoic also acknowledges their connection to the living Earth, as the environment that necessarily sustains and supports all of the preceding circles, then their concern naturally extends to non-human living beings and the ecosystems upon which they depend [30]. Any divergence from this norm would also necessarily constitute a failure to recognise the distinctly Stoic ethical theory of *oikeiosis* (appropriation). Although a detailed discussion of this concept lies beyond the scope of this paper, it is worth stating that cosmopolitanism encompasses the natural instinct humans, and other living beings, share in preserving and caring for members of their own tribe for their own self-preservation (please see Long and Sedley [34], 57, esp. A, F(1)).

The distinction between virtues (which constitute absolute “good”) and values is apparent in the oxymoronic promotion of the UN’s SDGs, many of which hinge upon national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the notion of “sustained growth”. This can be identified by posing the following questions related to the discourse of sustainability: “Whose interests does a sustainable development based on economic growth really promote? And, at whose or what expense?” A traditional or indigenous community may find that in the name of “sustainability”, their natural environment and social fabric have become devalued or demoted as secondary to “economic wellbeing” [35]. This is a complex problem frequently discussed by Freirean ecopedagogues such as Misiaszek [14], Misiaszek and Misiaszek [36] and Gadotti and Torres [13]. The fact that such a contradiction exists in the UN’s SDGs demonstrates just how entrenched neoliberal ideology is in modern society and how engrossed societies are by growth and capital accumulation [37]. Such value judgements and actions are likely to be antithetical to sustainable development and actually undermine its progress. This is why it is important to evaluate development policies through a critical lens.

For the Stoic student and teacher, it is useful to understand epistemology in order to comprehend how mistakes (such as the doublespeak involved in expressing a desire for “sustained growth”) are made, and how both correct and incorrect judgements of impressions are formed. From a Stoic epistemological stance, knowledge (excepting perhaps the ethical knowledge derived by *oikeiosis*) may be obtained through forms of inquiry based on Socratic dialectic, a method that challenges

assumptions and cross-examines received ideas [38]. For example, when charged with identifying and promoting progress towards sustainable development, an educational framework based on Stoic ideals should ensure that scientific literacy is put into practice by the students themselves. This way they can properly understand the reality of complex phenomena such as climate change, biodiversity loss and other environmental challenges. From a Stoical perspective, one should also be aware of the hard limits of science, as well as the tenuousness of popular opinion and political and religious ideology. Stoicism holds that a perceived truth should not be taken as true until it has been examined and approximated to the ideal, just as physicians do when detecting illness and striving to restore health. This aspect is neatly summed up by Becker's [39] call to "follow the facts". As interpreted by Holowchak [40], this necessitates obtaining facts about one's physical and social world, as well as about one's position in it, before deliberating normatively about correct courses of action. Likewise, it means judging information in line with existing knowledge and evaluating its merits and whether or not it stands up to standards of validity, reliability, and authenticity.

This is not to suggest that what seems reasonable to assume as true is in fact definitive. However, from a Stoical perspective, it establishes a foundation for credible public knowledge and further scientific inquiry [22,41,42]. Nor is it wise to suggest that science and academia are the primordial founts of all knowledge. In fact, according to modern Stoic and science philosopher Massimo Pigliucci, to believe that science can provide humanity with all that it requires, including value judgements, would amount to "scientism", i.e., the exaggerated use of science to dismiss artistic, philosophical and humanities-based contributions to societal development [43]. That said, the scientific method of falsifying and validating propositions, hypotheses and theories aligns itself well with Stoic epistemology, and can serve as a precautionary foundation for policies and programmes aiming to advance the goal of sustainable development.

2.2. Freirean Ecopedagogies: Critical Analysis of Sustainable Development

The State, although a representative of collective masses, is heavily influenced by the interests of powerful individuals who dictate how public and private educational systems proliferate in mainstream society, how societal institutions are run, and to a certain extent, how diverse forms of knowledge influence public thinking [2,44,45]. The function of the State, therefore, has a significant influence on the forces and circumstances that affect our lives, including aspects of early development and much of what happens in educational systems [46]. As Desjardins [47] observes:

It is not just education per se, but the socio-cultural and socio-political contexts in which education is delivered that matter for the transformation of society in ways that are consistent with notions of social justice. For example, in Western democratic societies, the emancipation of individuals as well as of collectives is a key aspect undergirding prevailing notions of social justice, both in terms of conscientization (Freire, 2005), and the extent of freedom that people are capable of reaching so as to identify and pursue what it is that matters to them (Sen, 2009).

In this section, using a lens shaped by Paulo Freire's "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" [48], and his later works (e.g., [49–53]), we highlight the role of dominant social structures, particularly in relation to education. Many Freireans argue that the power of what Stoics refer to as an "appropriate education" lies in its ability, through dialogue and space for critical participation, to transform established systems of education and society more generally for global citizenship [54], and environmental wellbeing [15,55].

2.2.1. Freire's Pedagogy

Based on a Hegelian/Marxist persuasion, Freirean pedagogy is a utopian-based framework founded on the deconstruction of oppressive systems. From this perspective, education should support acting upon, and progressing towards, the idea of social justice for all humans. This relates to the notion of praxis—educative and political acts that allow one to dream of and strive for utopias [56]. Specifically, it is a pedagogical approach that stems from the presence of powerlessness, often manifested by extreme

poverty, and by the historical “bare-bones understanding” that most people have about democracy. For Freire, this utopia is not just imaginary but something that can be realised [57].

In a similar vein to Patrick Geddes [58], Paulo Freire believed that education can be used to engage with society, and perhaps change it through critical analysis, dialogue, cultural re-construction, and the actions that ensue from these processes [59]. Specifically, his work proposes a re-consideration of the relationship that exists between teachers and students both inside and outside of learning spaces. Freireans focus on who and how one might address and challenge social hierarchies and their supportive politics. Under Freirean educative systems, meaning is explored and negotiated through dialogue, including Socratic forms, with democratisation and participatory citizenship as its goals [60]. Whilst such “radical” transformations may be regarded as naively unachievable, from a Freirean perspective the fatalism of the “unachievable” is oppressive in and of itself, precisely because it sustains hegemony ([61]; see also Teodoro and Torres [62]). Moreover, just as humans have constructed societies and, through education, may choose to sustain what Freireans refer to as “oppressive ideologies and structures” [14], so too can humans be empowered through education to challenge them individually and collectively. From a Freirean standpoint, critical pedagogies, as forms of counter hegemony, are required to challenge conventional norms that contradict the goals of social justice and sustainable development.

For Freire [2], as for the Stoics (their concept of the sage aside), humans are unfinished beings and can therefore benefit from an education that emphasises the transformation of both teachers and learners “as citizens of the world”. In Freire’s view, the historicity of humans is such that they can be in a dialectical process to become aware of their capability to choose which actions to take and of the consequences that may ensue [61].

2.2.2. Ecopedagogies as Critical Pedagogies

Ecopedagogy is a modern adaptation of Freirean pedagogy. As Misiaszek [14] defines it:

Ecopedagogy is grounded in action-orientated teaching through democratic dialogue to better understand how environmental ills oppress people, societies, populations and everything on the planet . . . It leads to questions regarding whether economics, especially within capitalistic and/or neoliberal frameworks, really does satisfy human needs or give pleasure or whether it separates our needs from the rest of nature.

—Misiaszek [14] (drawing from those of [13,51])

Ecopedagogies are bottom-up approaches to teaching and research for transformation. Similar to some ideas advanced by Illich [63] in his seminal book, *Deschooling Society*, ecopedagogues often invoke dialogue to consider how social constructs, such as capitalist production, affect the environment by rewarding endless competition and promoting a growth paradigm, whilst disregarding or denying the existence of physical limits. Ecopedagogues likewise critically exam the politics of oppression, such as the neoliberalist tendency to over-value individual and private ownership at the expense of the collective good and the environment [64–66]. Challenging the widely held belief that Nature is only valuable upon being commodified, and that defending the Earth has a detrimental effect on human wellbeing and prosperity, is an essential ecopedagogical stance. In this respect, ecopedagogy coincides with the modern Stoic thoughts expressed by [67]:

Changing our beliefs about what constitutes virtue and happiness brings with it a unified motivational response that shapes our actions directly. Hence, coming to believe that virtuous action (and the happy life) involves acting in an environmentally responsible way carries with it motivational change, which feeds directly into the actions we take.

From a Freirean perspective, if education is in thrall to neoliberalism, then it fosters ideologies that propagate political and socioeconomic structures which, if left unchecked and sustained, prevent full civil participation and help facilitate environmentally destructive acts [11,14,16,68,69]. In attempting to address

these two issues, some Freirean advocates have extended the concept of democracy to include the rights of planet Earth. They have also added a “citizenship sphere” to include the planet and to critically evaluate humankind’s denial of socio-environmental oppressions (most notably in [11,12,14,16,19,65]). This entails looking through both biocentric (Earth-centred) and anthropocentric lenses, in order to comprehend the complex intersections between the two [14]. In many ways, these lenses are linked to non-Western constructs that include spiritually rooted indigenous epistemologies. In Gadotti’s view [12,13,70], Earth is “a living super-organism in evolution”, hence the need for spheres of citizenship to extend to the planetary level. This view of the Earth is not too dissimilar from the Stoic pantheistic concept of the cosmos as a “rationally ordered living being” [71] in which Nature exercises providential care for all non-human Earthlings, e.g., the oceans, air, plants and animals [30,33], as well as for humans (Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 2.83, 100–1, 122–30, Long and Sedley [34], 54J). Even without such teleological aspects, among Stoics and Freireans alike, recognition of extended shared kinship creates a sense of solidarity and responsibility that rationalises the enactment of socio-environmental justice.

One question arising from the notion of “shared kinship” with Nature is whether humans can comprehend the world other than from their own narrow and self-serving lenses. As Hegel stated in 1830 [72]:

The fact is no man can think for another, any more than he can eat or drink for him.

In our opinion, the answer to this problem comes from Illich [63] who argued that humankind obtains false impressions when we ignore or deny Nature’s interconnectedness. This view is supported by ancient Stoic philosophy and ecopedagogy alike. Education that perpetuates the view of humans, not as an integrated part of natural ecology, but rather in accordance with the self-serving image propagated by powerful political entities is narrow and misplaced. One cannot, therefore, claim to be progressing towards the goal of Stoic virtues at the cost of environmental sustainability and social justice [73]. Instead, the exercise of human capacity must focus on the natural processes and ecosystems we depend on. *Oikeiosis* allows us to conclude that all humans, as rational and social animals, are capable of choosing thoughts and actions for progressing towards virtue, and that education is essential for this process. It also contributes to the philosophical rationale of ecopedagogy, which promotes the idea of a truly global citizenship. Consequently, although there are differences between Misiaszek’s [65] vision of Freirean ecopedagogy for global citizenship, and Whiting et al.’s [30] depiction of the Stoic circles of concern, there is sufficient similarity between the two, as indicated in Figure 1, to question how progress towards virtue is made manifest in modern society.

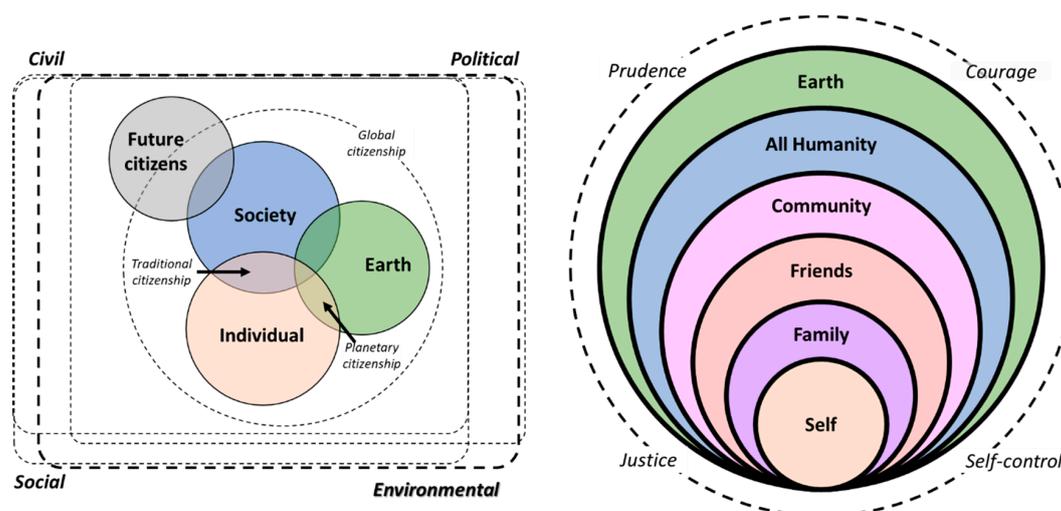


Figure 1. Comparison of ecopedagogical (left) and modern Stoic cosmopolitan (right) concepts. Note: The matching colours represent where there are overlaps of ideas and shared values. Figures adapted from Misiaszek [65] and Whiting et al. [30].

3. Working towards the UN's Vision of a Global Education

3.1. The Role of Critical Virtue Education in Social Transformation

From a Stoic philosophical perspective, universal access to quality education, as reflected in the UN's first and second pillars of the GEFI, means that everyone, regardless of any physical or social differences, should be able to acquire the capacities for attaining, or at least progressing towards, a state of human flourishing (*eudaimonia*). By receiving an education focused on the virtues, individuals are better positioned to transform, for the better, the societies in which they are located [74]. This was exemplified by the ancient Stoic, Gaius Musonius Rufus, who advocated for the universal study of philosophy on the grounds that women, having received the same cognitive abilities and natural inclinations towards virtue as men, should be taught, on equal terms, to seek and examine a life well lived [75]. Likewise, philosopher and feminist writer, Mary Wollstonecraft, who was heavily influenced by Stoic thought [76], emphasised the overarching goal of, and human capacity for, flourishing. She believed that humans could access what she considered the natural laws of rationality and morality, once the mental faculty had been sufficiently developed through the process of learning [77,78]. She argued that virtue could only flourish amongst equals [79], with benefits accruing to men and women alike if women were educated to be free and rational thinkers [80]. Similar sentiments were echoed in the 19th century by Charles Fourier's comment that social progress and historic changes occur by virtue of the progress of women toward liberty [81].

In this respect, a good (virtue-promoting) education, which adopts some aspects of critical copedagogical methods can generate positive social change, especially when learning occurs in the natural world [82]. It can also provide learners with knowledge and understanding regarding the need to improve society [83]. While grades may aid further advancement on the formal education ladder and enhance job prospects and earning potential [84], they rarely reflect the ability to identify socio-environmental injustices, such as the effects of climate change. They also frequently fail to conceptualise or undertake measures that address sustainable development [85,86]. This view relates closely to the work of Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum on the dimensions and goals of human capacity [87–90].

Importantly, whilst a virtue-driven education may be considered a pre-requisite to thoughts and acts oriented to social justice, it does not follow that practicing virtue on an individual level leads inevitably to sustainable development, any more than it led directly to the abolition of slavery. As Annas [23] (pp. 58–65) has observed, the Stoic Marcus Aurelius (responsible for the Stoic text now known as *Meditations*) was in the perfect position, as Roman Emperor, to modify imperial legislation and norms on slavery. Yet, he did little beyond reflecting on the existence of slavery and his own behaviour towards the slaves he owned. Similarly, many of the great Victorian moral thinkers such as Bentham, Mill and Wollstonecraft held the view that slavery and the social position of women were both morally indefensible. Yet, they did little or nothing to abolish or transform the structures and norms that sustained the oppression of these groups [91]. Contemporary analogies can be drawn with the perennial gap between censorious critiques of child poverty, sexual abuse, and the pervasiveness of aporophobia and misogyny (see for example [92]). Such moral contradictions can be seen in national policies and practices which limit immigration, despite global "concern" about the poor and dispossessed. Likewise, while many in the economically "developed" world bemoan the disparities between the global North and the global South, differential treatment of people on the basis of their geographic and ethnic origins continues to be an accepted reality, particularly with regard to global travel. Again, to paraphrase Annas [23] (p. 64):

Many people are brought up to be virtuous in narrow patterns and persist in thinking in ways still coloured by those patterns. [This is not helped by the fact that we are] unable, individually, to do anything effective or to make any impact on what we, and future generations will, consider to be or reject as compromised virtue.

Thus, for social change to occur, outside of a utopic State of perfectly moral individuals, and for sustainable development to be achievable, individual virtue must coincide with the will of enough strategically placed individuals or institutions to alter persisting social norms. In many respects, this starts with access to quality schooling, and specifically with ecopedagogies that engage students and teachers in discussing difficult questions centred on issues that are frequently overlooked or dealt with superficially in standardised educational curricula. It also requires further consideration as to the role structures play in an individual's progress towards eudaimonic wellbeing.

3.2. Education for Global Citizenship

The rationale behind the provision of education for global citizenship (the GEFI's third pillar) is that global challenges require global solutions. The latter depend on an education which transforms the way people think, act, and subsequently define and work towards the "common good". This, in turn, requires an active care for the world and for those with whom we share it [93]. While the notion of education for global citizenship is a seemingly recent idea, Hierocles' conceptualisation of the "circles of concern" shows that there has long been a strong Stoic conviction that we all belong to, and must participate in, a cosmopolitan society [33,94]. This conviction is built upon the precept that equality among humans is natural and desirable [95]. Such an espousal of cosmopolitan equality contrasts sharply with current dominant discourses of nationalism and neo-colonialism.

The Stoic idea of cosmopolitanism represents the interconnectedness of all of humanity within concentric circles of concern, with each member of society contributing, as a limb, to aid those who cannot thrive or function alone (*Mediations* 7.13; [96]). This extends to the acknowledgment of non-human entities within the circles. This conceptualisation is similar to Misiaszek's [14] view of global citizenship as necessarily caring for the natural environment, and therefore a rationale for the application of ecopedagogy in school systems.

The importance of maintaining the local but recognising the global is also integral to ecopedagogies for reasons we have discussed above. Specifically relating to GEFI's third pillar is the Stoic and ecopedagogical assurance that global citizenship does not mean citizenship according to a single ideology, nor does it need to lead to a homogenised culture where individuals fit their identity into a "one size fits all". Instead, global citizenship should add value to national forms and be viewed as a facet of identity rather than a replacement or an alternative [97], thus reinforcing a democratic ethos and recognition of human commonality [98–100].

4. Concluding Comment

One of the most difficult aspects to consider in the transformation of society through education for sustainable development is deciding what the "correct" course of action is. This is because a democratic society does not only have to decide collectively what the "right" thing to do is, but also the "correct" way to do it. When poor decisions affecting child and adolescent education are taken, their effects may not become apparent until long after unfortunate consequences have occurred—some of which may persist into adulthood. Whilst Stoicism can offer a philosophical basis for practitioners to decide on the basis of reason and evidence, and ecopedagogy can provide for a learning approach emphasising a critical analysis of reported "facts" and of the people propagating them, it is nonetheless difficult to bring about educational reforms in relatively short periods of time. For those involved, educational change can be stubbornly slow and bound up in red tape. Technological or operational disruptions that alter how we function in our personal lives may take many years to diffuse into our professional ones, by which time the tools may be outdated. Likewise, our curricula often reflect archaic ideas about how educators think the world should be, or how it used to be, rather than how it currently is. This leisurely approach is particularly evident with regard to issues linked to climate destruction and the urgent need for environmental conservation. Indeed, shifting knowledge from the vanguard of science into the consciousness of the general public entails a long period of time

(often decades). Arguably, this has to occur before one can place sufficient pressure on the status quo or the existing school curricula.

One such example is the debate that remains around climate change and the authority bestowed by politicians and the media on climate denial, despite more than sufficient evidence demonstrating the reality of anthropogenic climate change and the detrimental effect it has on planetary life [101]. In this respect, one is well within one's right to ask whether educators truly value progressive and transformational learning. A holistic framing of education for sustainable development needs to be proactive instead of reactive. For ecopedagogues, therefore, the imperative is to transform the many reactive models of environmental pedagogies to proactive ones that are capable of creating critical thinkers who can foresee socio-environmental degradation and geopolitical points of resistance, rather than simply trying to tidy up after the (often irreversible) damage has already been done. This kind of teaching, however, can be difficult and frustrating. It will push people out of their comfort zones, and it will not be welcomed by conservative leaders and students. This is especially the case with critical pedagogies, which incidentally are frequently referred to as "inherent enemies of hegemony" [102,103]. That said, it is important that future research examines how an integrated Stoic-ecopedagogical framework can regenerate and reinforce not only philosophical virtues and values but also the appropriate metrics, indicative signs and cultural drivers that have historically led to a "positive transformation" of our educational systems and our societies at large.

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