

THE ECOLOGICAL AWARENESS – A HOPE FOR HUMANITY AND CONTEMPORARY CIVILIZATION

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Abstract: In recent decades various instances of destruction inflicted by man on nature have been recorded on a large scale, in consequence of which mankind has come to face serious threats to its existence on the planet Earth. The author has undertaken to address this vital topic and to describe some causes behind and effects of the ecological crisis. The facts which are mentioned in the paper – partially connected with degradation of nature by man – entail drawing attention to the ecological awareness which equals creation of a ‘good, healthy and clean’ world in the natural sense. Ecological education should contribute to the development in human beings of the sense of co-responsibility for the condition of the closest and distant environments. The priority is given to new moral values which eliminate consumerism, drives towards abusing, excess comfort and luxury, extravagance and destruction.

Key words: degradation of nature, shallow ecology, deep ecology, ecological education

INTRODUCTION

The process of degradation of nature, which was going on on a particularly intensive scale in the last century, is of such an extensive and dangerous nature that further uncontrolled development of technical and industrial civilization can pose a serious threat to the biological foundations of life on our planet – the Earth.

That nature governs itself by its own laws is obvious and it is not necessary to convince anybody of that in this place. The current ecological crisis is connected with the history of mankind and therefore one cannot ignore the man’s attitude towards nature. It is popularly accepted that the life of nature, as a fully organized system in its variety and stability at the same time, is much longer than the life of human beings, in fact there is no comparison. The development of nature has already filled a far-spanning epoch, covering over 4.5 billion years, whereas contemporary *homo sapiens* (human being) appeared on the planet

merely 200 000 years ago.¹ The latter, thus, occupied his place in already existing and readymade ecosystems, and adapted the biotic structures to his own needs, the style and rhythm of existence and development. It is worth reminding that throughout millennia nature – due to its rich resources and small human population – had been able to endow people with its fruits, almost imperceptibly and without a risk of being degraded, since for a long time of their evolution people had used mainly nature’s renewable resources.

Not entering into a deeper discussion on a fair settling of the problem of the extent to which man should be blamed for the present state of nature’s degradation, we need to accept the thesis that the early ‘times’ should bear part of the responsibility for the heritage of nature’s devastation. We can recall here facts of the old, like man’s making use of fire, the bow, the wheel, or farming and land treatment. Agriculture revolutionized the life of people since it demanded new, improved tools, such as a hoe, a sickle, quern. Similarly, preparing meals increased man’s activity in nature, among others, because of manufacture of pots. It is also agriculture that led to setting up permanent settlements, felling trees and development of construction industry. A confirmation of the historical growth of man’s opposition to nature is also the interpretation which points to that “man has seriously abused his liberty with reference to the environment, distorting the idea of partnership with the God in shaping the world.”² The whole set of anti-ecological conduct – including the above-mentioned history – was being built to a greater and greater extent on the exaggerated raising of man above his natural environment. Building the social and economic progress over the span of recent centuries has taken different paths: philosophical, materialist, technocratic, liberal, colonial, excluding or communist, yet the ecological effects have been similar in each – they have been negative. Real progress and pseudo-progress have followed as a result of more and more dangerous injuring and polluting nature. These destructive processes were going on both in the time of peace and during wars. Certain differences related only to forms and the scope of degradation. Multiplication of nature’s degradation was first a consequence of the development of capitalist forms of economies, large-scale urbanization of the world, as well as the political confrontation between two main socioeconomic systems, lasting over 80 years, including the dangerous phase of Cold War.

¹ “Characteristics of Basic Religions”, [in:] Lewis M Hopfe: *Religions of the World*. 4th edition, New York: 1987, p.17. ISBN 0-02-356930-1.

² For more extensive treatment on this subject see: J. Grzesica, *Ochrona naturalnego środowiska człowieka-problem teologiczno-moralny*, Katowice 1983, p. 130.

Thus, one can say that the *Weltanschauung*-related orientations have brought nature down to the role of a source of matter – material to manufacture various commodities and obtain energy that man could make use of in an easy way.

It appears that in the holistic picture of the relations between man and nature, the following view ought to be accepted: “Each civilization has left traces of ecological degradation.”³ This has caused both nature and man to suffer as there exists a close relation between degradation of nature and that of human being. Hence, each crisis occurring in nature triggers a crisis in man. It seems that the above conclusion is hard to undermine: indeed, it is true that the pathological character of the attitude of contemporary people towards nature often results from humans’ biological and cultural ignorance and for a long time now has been in want of effective overcoming. In view of this fact we are in dire need of rebuilding people’s awareness.

What does the ecological threat to the world consist in at the moment? The issue is of multifarious and many-sided nature. One of the most hazardous occurrences is the progressing warming of the Earth’s climate, known under the name of ‘greenhouse effect’. This is a result of the continuing rise in emission of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. This phenomenon is normally accompanied by degradation of the ozone shield, which makes a layer protecting life on the planet against the lethal ultraviolet radiation. The decrease in the amount of ozone in the atmosphere (the ‘ozone hole’) can have serious consequences for our life on the planet Earth. Ozone is responsible for absorption of ultraviolet radiation that reaches the Earth from the Sun. The radiation itself is very harmful to all living organisms: it leads to damage of cells or skin burns, it can cause changes in the genetic material and, in turn, bring on neoplastic diseases (among others, melanoma). Excess UV radiation also contributes to weakening of the immunological power of organisms and – in consequence – to a rise in the risk of being infected with viruses and parasites. Apart from the above-mentioned negative effects, it accelerates the skin ageing process and is hazardous to eyes, potentially resulting in, among others, cataracts. An increase in the UV radiation is unfavourable to the flora as well: it may lead to damage in many species of plants grown for food, which – in turn – results in a decrease in production and worsening of food quality. Disintegration of the ozone in the

³ S. Zięba, „Historyczno-filozoficzne uwarunkowania kryzysu ekologicznego”, [in:] L. Pawłowski, S. Zięba (eds), *Humanizm ekologiczny. Jakiej filozofii potrzebuje ekologia? Ochrona przyrody a ochrona człowieka*, Lublin 1992, vol.1, p. 15.

atmosphere brings about climatic changes on the Earth. It is worth paying attention to the consequences that the greenhouse effect brings about:⁴

- There will follow a rapid increase in rainfall, which will entail a rise in the frequency of floods.
- The areas of deserts and steppes will enlarge, soils will be dry and cultivation will become harder and harder, resulting in lower yield and scarcer crops. States that will not be able to adapt to the new climate will deteriorate, so will imports of food products. The number of species of plants will decrease considerably.
- There will follow melting of glaciers as a result of the global warming. Huge areas of land will be flooded immediately, the islands in the Indian Ocean and those in the Caribbean finding themselves submerged completely. In Poland, for instance, the melting of glaciers will pose a catastrophic threat to such cities as: Gdańsk, Gdynia, Koszalin, Słupsk, Elbląg and Malbork.
- There will follow a rapid rise in the levels of seas and oceans on the planet. In consequence, areas lying in rivers' estuaries will be flooded and the areas of lands will diminish.
- The incidence and intensity of such climatic phenomena as: storms, hurricanes, fires, earthquakes or long-term droughts will reach extreme values.
- The number of parasites will rise dramatically, especially of those whose development depends on water, among others, gnats and mosquitoes which transmit microorganisms responsible for epidemics, malaria, fevers or other diseases.
- The number of indicators of species varieties will decrease considerably.

The greenhouse effect is also responsible for formation of acid rain which is connected with a substantial drop in the value of pH in the atmosphere. Acid rain occurs when the value of pH amounts to about 5.6, and is one of the elements of heavy air pollution which, in turn, results in acid falls, like acid rain, acid fog, acid snow. These phenomena cause, among others, deterioration of plants, shake the balance of water resources, poison root systems through deposits of aluminum and deprive the planet of chlorophyll. Acid rain also has a destructive effect on buildings and their structures: in the past buildings used to be made of sandstone or limestone. These substances decompose under the influence of acid rain, which puts the ancient monuments of Egypt, Greece or Rome – all kinds of unique historical sites,

⁴ <http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/wg1/ar4-wg1-chapter1.pdf>

complexes, pyramids, castles, fortresses, and the like, at the risk of dilapidating. As regards common people's everyday lives, the appearance of heavy metals in drinkable water on a larger and larger scale as a result of acid rain is a particularly detrimental negative effect brought on by acid rain.

It should be acknowledged that one of the causes behind the degradation of natural environment today, which is clearly visible, is the uncontrolled and unrestrained drive on the part of more and more numerous human communities towards getting rich through industrialization and wasteful exploitation of various raw materials from the Earth's inside.

Still another serious threat which is being posed is the rising number of all kinds of packages and waste, including the radioactive type, and the growing problem related to their utilization and storing. Apart from that the other negative phenomena include the process of lands turning into steppes or acidification of soils, destruction of forests, together with their rich fauna and flora, polluting inland water reservoirs and seas, as well as the growing deficit of water in many places of the globe.

It is also necessary to mention here such threats as the increased and uncontrolled rise in the world's population, shortage of food for the whole human population (the problem of famine), exhaustion of non-renewable resources, devastation of nature, irrational exploitation of nuclear energy, massive development of science and technology, the problem of stability in the world (growing disparities in the economic development of states), the threat of mankind being annihilated in consequence of a thermonuclear conflict (the problem of war and peace in general), international and internal terrorism, rise in crime rates, hazards of drug addiction and use of 'smart' drugs on a massive scale, contracting AIDS and other infectious diseases or epidemics which can still be looming unrecognized. The above list of threats can be made longer since it contains only a few civilization-related dangers. Unfortunately, contemporary life shows that we could add newer and newer items as the acceleration of progress in vitally all walks of life in general is not without consequences of the dramatic nature.

Pondering over the very essence of the present ecological crisis, one cannot but come to the conclusion that the true foundations on which the existence and sustenance of the crisis rest are to be looked for, primarily, in the still significant industrial-technological ideology, which, unfortunately, is being strengthened by the latest achievements of science and also needs of the military.

A different problem is the question of how long the Earth is going to be fit for being inhabited by living organisms. The sun glow is slowly but continuously growing stronger,

which means that the average temperature on the Earth will be steadily going up with time, the process being slow but irreversible, independent from climatic changes linked to the activity of volcanoes, the phenomenon of greenhouse effect or development of human civilization. In the future, this will lead to the situation in which the Earth's oceans will evaporate (in about 3.5 billion years the temperature on the planet Earth's surface will exceed 100 degrees Centigrade and then the whole of it will turn into a desert). Still, the life on our planet, as we know it, may be 'extinct' much earlier than the Sun transforms into a red giant, since it can follow – according to some scientists – as early as in a billion years.⁵

Realizing the above, it is evident that striving for protection of natural environment is a crucial task for contemporary people in contemporary times, since it touches the fundamental questions of human existence.

Tasks of the global dimension designed for the whole of mankind were formulated for the first time in 1969 – on behalf of the UNO – by the Organization's Secretary General, U-Thant, in the memorable report *Man and His Environment*.⁶ This unique – in the light of the activity of this leading international organization – document turned out to be a pioneering and highly welcome initiative of the diagnostic-programme character. U-Thant's report made the world realize – in a documented way – the extent of devastation of natural environment and the range of potential threats to the planet's nature. It also stressed the necessity of taking relevant actions collectively in the name of securing a safe prospect for the development of mankind. In the report, attention was drawn to the effects of progressing degradation of the Earth, which are dangerous for the whole world, as well as potentially tragic hazards resulting from intensifying destruction of the bases of further development of life on the planet.

Another important document issued by the UNO (passed during the 37th session of the General Assembly) was the *World Nature Chart*.⁷ It was elaborated by the International Union of Protection of Nature and Its Resources, co-participated by UN Environmental Programme. This is a historic document: until now it has performed the role of an ecological catechism. The canons and rules contained in it extend over the whole human commonwealth, all units, societies, nations and states. The proclaimed *World Nature Chart* includes a full register of duties and principles that regulate man's conduct towards nature. It should guide

⁵ D. Appeli, *Planeta na przekąskę*, <http://portalwiedzy.onet.pl/4868.17280.1507756.1.czasopisma.html> [date of availability: 27.04.2013]

⁶ *Apel U-Thanta w sprawie ochrony środowiska otaczającego człowieka*, Zakład Informacji Centralnej CIINTE, WIT 3/1970, Warszawa 1970.

⁷ K. Dubel, *Ochrona i kształtowanie środowiska*, Opole 1987, p. 80 ff.

and inspire societies to make use of legal, moral, religious, rearing, research and protective means for this cause.

As regards the problem area under discussion, it is worth mentioning the great world conference known under the name *World Summit*, which was organized by the UNO in the capital of Brazil, Rio de Janeiro between 3 and 14 June, 1992. The summit made a particular synthesis of multifarious drives of the protective and pro-ecological nature of global programmes. The following documents should be counted as the most significant achievements of that conference: *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* (eventually the document was entitled *Principles of General Rights and Duties*), *Agenda 21 – Programme of Actions Until the Year 2000*, *Convention on Biological Variety, Principles of Management, Protection and Proper Development of Forests*.⁸

The next conference of this kind took place in Johannesburg in 2002. The summit dealt with sustainable development, significant for both developing countries and economically developed states. The issues which were debated during the summit were not limited to the problem of poverty only – the delegations took up questions of excessive consumption, waste-generating lifestyles, and patterns of consumption, discussed problems of contemporary world and how to responsibly face them. The main goal of the conference was to make societies aware of threats to sustainable development and the scale of the threats.⁹

The standpoint of the European Commission is also worth mentioning in this respect: in 2011, Brussels accepted assumptions for the United Nations Conference concerning Sustainable development *Rio +20*, which was to be held in Rio de Janeiro between 20 and 22 June 2012. The joint standpoint represented by the European Union concerned two issues: (1) transition to pro-ecological economy in the context of sustainable development and (2) elimination of poverty and securing better management of sustainable development.¹⁰

The problem area of ecological crisis was also dealt with by Hamish McRae in his work *The World in the Year 2020*, expressing justified concern about dramatic degradation of the world's natural environment, shortage of water in many parts of the world and for the global crisis affecting resources and raw materials, which is caused by uncontrolled

⁸ S. Kozłowski, *Rio - Szczyt Ziemi. Początek ery ekologicznej*, Wyd. „Era Ekologiczna”, Łódź 1983. The author took part in that summit as the then Minister of Protection of Environment and Natural Resources and Forests.

⁹ <http://www.unic.un.org.pl/johannesburg/>

¹⁰ <http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/>

exploitation of Earth's riches, resulting in a serious threat to and depletion of natural resources (like the tropical rain forest or the live resources of oceans depths).¹¹

All of the above-listed facts are connected with devastation of nature by man and efforts for it to acquire a global dimension to the whole mankind. They also point to the ethical reflexion over our natural environment since there are more and more people who realize the consequences of careless destruction of our mother Earth. They also draw attention to moral duties of human beings to take care of nature, as well as to protection and conservation of it. Consequently, it is possible to distinguish three basic ethical attitudes towards the relation between man and nature that have been recorded in numerous scientific elaborations on the problem area within the last two centuries:¹²

- The attitude of liberty, which assumes extending the rights of individuals (humans) over other animal species, maybe including plants, that is one that postulates granting all living organisms the right to independent existence;
- The ecological attitude, according to which it is not rights of each individual being that have to be defended but those relating to the whole systems formed by the individuals, in other words – close relationships between all elements of the geophysiological structure of our planet and the existing differentiation of all its elements need to be acknowledged and respected;
- The conservative approach which assumes the need for a concern about the environment and preservation of it in the state of equilibrium, bearing in mind the benefits obtained by human beings, which result from accepting this attitude.

In recent years there have also appeared a number of new works that take up ethical questions of protection of the natural environment, among which the following should be mentioned:

- humanistic concepts in which the moral status is connected with sensitivity and awareness;
- biocentric concepts that acknowledge the value of all living beings;
- ecologic concepts that promote pro-ecological attitude.

¹¹. See: H. McRae, *Świat w roku 2020. Potęga, kultura, dobrobyt – wizja przyszłości*, Dom Wydawniczy ABC, Warszawa 1996, p.178-179.

¹² J.M. Dołęga, „Postawa środowiskowa – próba analizy pojęcia”, [in:] *Edukacja Biologiczna i Środowiskowa*, 2004, No. 2-3, p. 32.

Understanding ethical challenges behind protection of environment in the period of transformations should facilitate it to man undertaking actions for sustainable development simultaneously in the following three areas: economic, social and environmental, with respect to threats connected with the ecological crisis.

In the face of the dramatic threat to the natural environment, the majority of postulates of paramount importance have been channeled into two basic streams and – what is entailed as a result – have come to advocate two concepts of ecological education, whose role consists in finding new ways of co-existence of man and nature. In the light of the problem area under discussion, the moral responsibility of man, traditionally, has been limited to the area inclined towards egocentrism and one preventing solely excessive abuse or taking advantage of the environment, that is the so-called *shallow* or *moderate ecology*.

The principles of *shallow ecology*, basically, do not present any coherent eco-philosophical standpoint, since they are characterized by the belief in that the ecological crisis should be eliminated by means of modern technology and solutions contained in the Civil Law. In compliance with this assumption, human beings have the right to an unlimited use of all available natural resources and using the other elements of nature to satisfy their needs. This is in accordance with the anthropocentric thesis, that is the approach that assumes that human beings are in the centre of the universe and all other beings are – in a natural way – subjected to them. The roots of this approach should be looked for in the Christian ethics which is based on the assumption that “the world was created for man.”¹³

The principles of *shallow ecology* can be contained in the following assumptions:

- All beings on the Earth have a value only because and as long as they are of use to people.
- Complex organisms (e.g., human beings) are more important than simple organisms.
- People ought to use all resources available to them in order to secure their material and economic prosperity.
- Human population can expand without any restrictions.
- Technical development will solve all problems (including the ecological one).
- Human society should be governed by principles of materialism and consumerism.
- Material standard of living should be on the rise.

¹³ B. Prandecka (ed.), *Interdyscyplinarne podstawy ochrony środowiska przyrodniczego*, Wrocław 1993, p. 35.

- Solving environmental problems should be left to specialists.¹⁴

The above-listed assumptions were negated through the ethical conduct with reference to nature, which was formulated in the concept of *deep ecology*.

The movement of *deep ecology* is a contemporary current in the ecological philosophy of post-modernism, which appeared at the beginning of the 1970s. Its initiator was Arne Naess (1912-2009), the Norwegian philosopher.¹⁵ It was he who was the first to use the term in his article under the title *The shallow and the deep, long-range ecology movement* (1973). American lecturer on philosophy and ecological activist, Georg Sessions, is also considered to be one of the creators of the trend. A. Naess described his standpoint with reference to the natural environment, opposing the ages-long anthropocentrism and the concept of instrumental, consumption-oriented treatment of nature by man, which was connected with that philosophy. He criticized consumerism and anthropocentrism dominating the contemporary culture. He also opposed the then most-widely applied concept of protection of the environment known under the name of *shallow* or *moderate ecology*.

The assumptions of *deep ecology* are contained in eight principles as follows:

- The prosperity and development of human life and other-than-human life forms on the Earth are values in themselves (instrumental and innately-acquired values) independent of the degree of usability of other-than-human forms of life to human beings.
- The richness and variety of forms of life contribute to making their values real and are values in themselves.
- People do not have the right to restrict this richness and variety in any way unless it means satisfying their vital, real needs.
- The development of other-than-human forms of life requires curbing the increase in the number of human population. Flourishing of human life and culture can be in agreement with such a decrease.
- Human beings' interference with the other forms of life is too strong nowadays and this situation is worsening in a rapid way.

¹⁴ <http://pl.shvoong.com/social-sciences/education/2015918-nurty-ekologii-ekologia-p%C5%82ytka-ekologia/#ixzz2RllsogQn>

¹⁵ M. Dziubek-Hovland, *Przyroda nie należy do człowieka. Sylwetka i ekofilozofia Arne Naessa na tle norweskiej filozofii*, Wyd. „PnRWI”, Bystra 2004.

- The above demand implementing serious changes, especially in the spheres of economy, technology and ideology. The new situation will differ completely from the present one.
- As regards the ideological sphere, it – first and foremost – means restricting the growth in material standards of life for the benefit of a better life quality. There will form a deep awareness of the difference between what is truly valuable in terms of quantity and quality.
- Those who identify themselves with the above-listed assumptions should feel obliged to undertake indirect or direct actions for putting these indispensable reforms into life.¹⁶

Analyzing the message communicated by *deep ecology*, we can come to the conclusion that the assumptions of this current refer to a holistic approach, that is to acknowledging the indivisibility of the natural world and equality of all of its parts, thus – to a rejection of the idea of the privileged role of human beings in nature (anthropocentrism) and preference for the principle of biocentric equality (each being has equal rights to live and thrive), as well as the principle of variety and symbiosis (variety, understood as the basis of survival and effective functioning of nature, refers not only to the world of wild nature, but also to the cultural, political and economic aspects of human life). One also needs to pay attention to the very significant element in the form of concern for pollution of the natural environment and greedy, uncontrolled exploitation of mineral resources, the consequence of which is the criticism of fragmentary and specialist treatment, as well as promotion of solutions inclined towards engaging the whole of personality.

Thus, we can say that *deep ecology*, as a philosophy of life, refers to ecological consciousness, that is self-realization and the biocentric equality of individuals/communities. It allows finding the sense of existence and restoring to human beings their legitimate place in the Universe. Building the ecological awareness through education is to mean not only that we know something and hold some beliefs, but also that we feel them and are deeply moved by them as well. One of the catchphrases of *deep ecology*, which runs as follows: “We are human beings in the fullest sense of the word when we love everything that surrounds us,”

¹⁶ Ibidem.

seems to illustrate this in a most clear-cut manner.¹⁷ Nevertheless, this does demand a different perception of the ecological image of human beings. Accordingly, the following sketches of the integral awareness can be distinguished:

1. *Each organism (therefore also human beings) is a process: it is happening, follows a course of development.*
2. *This process (organism) may remain/is, exclusively, in a relation to greater and greater – in the temporal and spatial sense – processes, the Cosmos being the greatest and ultimate.*
3. *Each organism – thus including human beings – creates its surrounding and is – at the same time – shaped by the latter in return; our cognitive consciousness of the world is thus a self-consciousness: each alteration of our organism brings about a change in the perception of the world.*
4. *The global, or even the cosmos-related, awareness feels the Cosmos as its co-sensing extended body, and itself – as a concentrated consciousness of the Earth, nature and the Cosmos.*
5. *There appears an intuitive «understanding», whose part is the ability to see other cultures, beliefs, religions, one that does not regard our lifestyle as the best possible and leading, necessitating «elevating» the other ones to match ours.*
6. *There appears real tolerance; tolerance with its meaning of standing, bearing, co-bearing the weight of all people, and – at last – the whole of nature.*
7. *Man is the consciousness of the Earth, and even that of the Cosmos; this consciousness is evolving or going through mutations; now we are witnessing, or even realizing, a new mutation of the «integral consciousness».*¹⁸

The above-presented considerations offer a different look at the image of human beings, our going beyond the notion of our own ‘ego’ and realizing the fact that we are an inseparable part of the Universe in which we are deposited. In this situation, there arises the need for a different outlook on the problem of moral norms which should constitute the foundation of assuming a practical attitude to nature that expresses itself in enriching the offer of programmed visions of the world.

¹⁷ D. Kielczowski, „Nurty ekologiczne w filozofii”, [in:] B. Prandecka (ed.), *Interdyscyplinarne podstawy ochrony środowiska przyrodniczego*, Wrocław 1993, p. 40.

¹⁸ K. Marin, „Narodziny integralnej świadomości. Refleksja nad dziełem Jeana Gebsera”, [in:] *Literatura na Świecie* 1982, No. 3-4, p. 96-97.

In recent years, there have appeared more and more programmes and plans concerning the development of the world. Each of them can be used to extract an offer of a determined concept of the ecological education. Here, an example can be the report entitled *Education for Sustainable Development*.¹⁹ Among the alternative ecological currents the greatest role is played by the following ones: social ecology²⁰, deep ecology²¹, ecoethics²² and ecofeminism²³.

If we fail to radically change human beings' attitude towards nature by means of education and through other forms of socializing activity, then all efforts and undertakings in the sphere of shaping our new *humanist quality* may prove futile. After all, in the first place, man needs healthy, clean water, fresh, not poisoned atmospheric air, fertile soil, able to yield crops to feed people, as well as species of flora and fauna that are naturally renewable. If we want to survive, we are doomed to maturity and not to infantilism. It is a high level of man's ecological awareness which comprises knowledge about interdependences of parts of nature and also about those between society and nature, working out a reliable system of values, rules and norms which determine frames of actions, and also sensitivity – understood as an ability to foresee ecological effects of actions to be undertaken – that become an absolute imperative for today and for the future. Therefore, the current 21st century ought to be passing under the dominance of the ecological trend, evolutionary, so that mankind could survive – survive and develop towards new cosmological perspectives, new discoveries in the unending mystery of the surrounding world.

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¹⁹ See: Report of World Commission for Environment and Development of the UNO, which was entitled *Our Common Future*. The notion of *Sustained Development* (Le Developpement Durable) was defined in it, as well as a relevant educational concept was mentioned. It also underlined that creating a fully sustainable model of life, that is having the quality of life of people all over the world improved without robbing the planet of its resources, requires differentiated actions in individual regions of the world. <http://www.unesco.pl/edukacja/dekada-edukacji-nt-zrownowazonego-rozwoju/unesco-a-zrownowazony-rozwoj/>

²⁰ See: D. Kielczowski, *Ekologia społeczna*, Wyd. „Ekonomia i środowisko”, Białystok 2001.

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