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A FEW QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE GROWING IMBALANCE OF THE DEVELOPMENT

"It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change." (Charles Darwin)

Abstract: In the post-industrial era, the degradation of the natural environment is progressing faster and faster because it is being handled in an irresponsible manner. The idea of unlimited economic growth and the ideology of consumerism have been implemented rather than that of sustainable development. In addition, fossil and non-fossil resources are overexploited. At the same time, the degradation of the social (cultural and spiritual) environment is taking place because of excessive liberalisation. The ruining of both environments causes proportionally the worsening of human condition. This prompts reflection on the further fate of humanity, and thus it forces us to answer the questions important from the point of view of practical philosophy: How long can one thoughtlessly devastate the environment? How long can one adapt to an increasingly devastated environment? How long will economics be more important than ecology? How long will one let fools rule? How long should one wait for the New Metanoia? These questions are explained and discussed in detail in this article. It should draw the attention of readers to the current state of the environment and threats to humans, as well as convince them of the need to return from the path to collapse paved by the corporatocrats that is by the "invisible market hand" of our time. (For them, world domination and the unlimited growth of their bank accounts are the most important.) This can be prevented with the New Metanoia, which will transform the economic way of thinking into ecological way and restore the fundamental values and principles of the 18th-century Enlightenment that are still valid today.

Keywords: environment, sustainable development, exploitation of natural resources, threats to humanity, new metanoia, new Enlightenment

KILKA PYTAŃ W ZWIĄZKU Z NARASTAJĄCĄ NIERÓWNOWAGĄ ROZWOJU

Streszczenie (abstrakt): W epoce postindustrialnej degradacja środowiska naturalnego postępuje coraz szybciej na skutek nieodpowiedzialnego obchodzenia się z nim przez ludzi, realizacji idei nieograniczonego wzrostu gospodarczego i ideologii konsumpcjonizmu, jakby wbrew idei zrównoważonego rozwoju. Ponadto nadmiernie eksploatowane są zasoby kopalne i niekopalne. Jednocześnie postępuje degradacja środowiska społecznego

(kulturowego i duchowego) w wyniku nadmiernej liberalizacji. Rujnacja obu środowisk powoduje proporcjonalne pogarszanie kondycji człowieka. Skłania to do refleksji nad dalszymi losami ludzkości, a tym samym zmusza do odpowiedzi na ważne z punktu widzenia filozofii praktycznej pytania: Jak długo można bezmyślnie dewastować środowisko?; Jak długo można przystosowywać się do coraz bardziej zdewastowanego środowiska?; Jak długo ekonomia będzie ważniejsza od ekologii?; Jak długo ludzie pozwolą głupcom rządzić?; Jak długo trzeba będzie czekać na Nową Metanoję?. Te pytania są wyjaśnione i szczegółowo omówione w tym artykule. Powinien on uświadomić czytelnikom aktualny stan środowiska i zagrożenie dla ludzi oraz przekonać o konieczności zawrócenia z drogi upadku wytyczonej przez korporatokratów. (Dla nich najważniejsze jest panowanie nad światem i nieograniczony wzrost ich kont bankowych.) Można temu zapobiec dzięki Nowej Metanoi, która zmieni styl myślenia ekonomicznego na ekologiczny i odnowi fundamentalne wartości i zasady XVIII-wiecznego Oświecenia, które są nadal aktualne.

Słowa kluczowe: środowisko, rozwój zrównoważony, eksploatacja zasobów naturalnych, zagrożenia dla ludzkości, nowa metanova, nowe Oświecenie

1. An introductory note

For millennia, but especially in the last century, for various reasons, the world has become more and more unbalanced, asymmetrical and contradictory. In addition, since industrialisation and the accompanying explosion of scientific discoveries and inventions in the twentieth century, there has been a rapid acceleration of the pace of work and life. In addition, the ideology of liberalism violated the social order; in its place, it made a mess. In addition, the ideology of consumerism, along with the obsession with economic growth, contributed to the devastating exploitation of raw materials in nature and in man - in his body, psyche and intellect. Natural resources (non-renewable) will run out in the worst case within a few dozen, and at best - within a few hundred years. Human resources are depleting, because human biological evolution is much slower than social evolution. One supplements them with robots equipped with artificial intelligence, which is not the best for humanity. In the twenty-first century people have had to live in an increasingly unbalanced and turbulent world, full of contradictions, crises, tensions, conflicts, aggression, mess, as well as stupid and naive people who trust fools and are therefore dumber than them. Life in it is becoming unbearable, and it will get worse in the near future. This raises serious concerns about the future. Having reflected on this state of affairs, I have formulated a few "How long?" questions:

How long can the environment be thoughtlessly devastated?

How long can one adapt to the constantly deteriorating environment?

How long will economy be more important than ecology?

How long will people let fools rule?

How long does one have to wait for a New Metanoia?

I further developed them in individual chapters in order to explain what they are about and justify their importance for the further fate of modern civilisation and the humankind. I was not able to give specific answers explicitly, but you can give them your own way by

reading the text, where they are partially and implicitly contained. Besides, it is not about exact answers, but about formulating appropriate questions to realise how little time there is left to make rapid and radical changes in the way of thinking, attitudes and behaviour – the New Metanoia – to prevent a collapse of the human species.

2. How long can the environment be thoughtlessly devastated?

People have to destroy their environment as much as technology and knowledge allow, because they feed on it. In primitive civilisations, they destroyed it imperceptibly, and then more and more in proportion to the advancement of knowledge, technology, and growing needs. Significant devastation of the environment started only in the industrial civilization, mainly where the mining and processing industries were developing. Only in the Anthropocene epoch, in the second half of the 20th century, from the beginning of the post-industrial ("Western") civilization, this destruction progressed faster and faster on a global scale and to an unprecedented degree. People, blinded by the ideology of speciesism, believed that thanks to the advances in science and technology, they would be able to rule the Earth and even the cosmos. To a certain extent, they managed to do so, and their victories in the fight against nature made them even more encouraged. Therefore, ruthlessly, thoughtlessly and irresponsibly, they interfere with their environment more and more, destroy the mechanisms of homeostasis and do not worry about the harmful effects of their actions. Inspired by the desire to get rich, they exploit the natural resources of nature more and more. Therefore, they cut as many forests as possible and extract coal, metal ores, oil, natural gas and other raw materials, regardless of the fact that these non-renewable resources of nature will run out quickly. It was only in the 1970s that people began to realise the effects of degrading the environment thanks to environmentalists and through experiencing them firsthand. Then people began to oppose the further environmental degradation and demand that the over-exploitation of natural resources be limited. However, political and economic decision-makers ignored the appeals and warnings of prominent experts, including in the Report of the Club of Rome¹ and the Earth's resources continue to decline significantly. Some scientists and technocrats console the masses by repeating the slogan "What technology destroys, it can fix". Nevertheless, that is not true. There have been and still are more people who damage the environment than those who repair it, more capital is invested in destruction than in revitalisation and technology is still used first of all to destroy the environment. Nature and humanity are still treated as separate worlds competing with each other. One side is people equipped with an increasingly formidable arsenal of technology and the other – nature, equipped with its inherent forces and self-defense (homeostatic) mechanisms. Therefore, people's relation to nature can be described as "I-AND-THE WORLD" as opposed to the original "I-IN-THE WORLD." The first suggests that man is next to the world (environment) and the second that he is inside of it, that he is a part of the world. Due to ecology and zoology, ecophilosophy and zoophilosophy, "ecological awareness" is being shaped. Consequently, more and more people know that

¹ D. H. Meadows [et al.], *The Limits to Growth. A Report For The Club of Rome's Project on The Predicament of Mankind*, Universe Book, New York, 1972.

they are part of nature and that they form an indivisible, coherent and balanced whole with it and their ecosystem. All activities that result in disrupting this unity and destabilising the environment, sooner or later affect their condition. Only global policymakers cannot grasp it, or they consciously ignore it and oppose limiting economic growth at the expense of ruining the environment. It is a shame that a lot of people who trust politicians more than ecologists and other scientists support them. Meanwhile, the condition of the natural environment is moving faster and faster to the tipping point, after which it will enter a dead end of evolution and there will be no possibility of turning back. This must be borne in mind and the degradation of the environment must be reduced immediately, even if it requires resignation from excess profits, excessive consumption and maximum convenience. Time is pressing; we must act fast. In the 2017 Club Rome Report, it was written that the modern generation is perhaps the last one that could prevent the collapse of our civilisation and humanity.² It may be an exaggeration, but after all, experts are sure that there is very little time left to take appropriate remedial and rehabilitation measures. The 2018 Progress Report of the Intergovernmental Committee on Policy-makers shows how the state of the natural environment has changed since the beginning of industrialisation, and the negative impact on human health and well-being, on ecosystems and species, on the economy and culture are caused by global warming.³ However, little has changed since then. Adverse climate changes are progressing, which ultimately threaten the lives of people on Earth. In August 2021, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published the Sixth Report in which it exacerbated the warning of a climate catastrophe: “The climate is changing, the earth is warming. People are responsible for quick changes. It has been known for a long time, but humanity is still doing too little to mitigate future catastrophes. We can expect more frequent storms, droughts, floods and forest fires with unpredictable effects on humans and ecosystems. We must prepare for troublesome decades or even centuries. This applies to all regions of the planet and all aspects of the climate system, from temperature to the global water balance to the ice sheets in the polar regions. Much of the observed climate change has been unprecedented for thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of years. Some of the changes caused by greenhouse gases are now irreversible.”⁴ As reported by the National Snow and Ice Data Center in Boulder (USA), the Greenland ice sheet is melting as a result of global warming and on its highest peak, Ice Shield (3216 m above sea level), for the first time, there was rain instead of snow.⁵ It is not hard to imagine

² E. Ulrich v. Weizsäcker, A. Wijkman, C. A. Pereira, *Wir sind dran! Was wir ändern müssen, wenn wir bleiben wollen*, Club of Rome: Der große Bericht, Vrl. Bertelsmann, Gütersloh, 2021.

³ *Zusammenfassung für politische Entscheidungsträger. Ein Sachstandsbericht des Zwischenstaatlichen Ausschusses für politische Entscheidungsträger*, 2018.

⁴ V. Masson-Delmotte, V., P. Zhai, A. Pirani, S. L. Connors, C. Péan, S. Berger, N. Caud, Y. Chen, L. Goldfarb, M. I. Gomis, M. Huang, K. Leitzell, E. Lonnoy, J. B. R. Matthews, T. K. Maycock, T. Waterfield, O. Yelekçi, R. Yu and B. Zhou (eds), *IPCC, 2021: Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, Cambridge University Press 2021. (Report prepared by over 230 scientists from 66 countries of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.)

⁵ *Regen in Grönland weiteres Alarmsignal*, "Spektrum der Wissenschaft", 23.08.2021.

what this could lead to. If someone runs out of imagination, he should read the publicly available catastrophic scenarios of the effects of global warming.

2.1. The end of fossil resources

It was only at the beginning of the 21st century that it became clear to what state the natural environment was brought and how many years remained until the natural resources were completely depleted and when a critical point would be reached, from which it would be impossible to turn back from the path leading to the extinction of mankind. The mining of hard coal and lignite, crude oil, natural gas, iron ores and non-ferrous metals was considered as one of the main reasons. Increasing production levels – no matter if it is a robbery or planned – is a necessary condition for the economic growth, and so far modern civilization cannot do without an increase in the extraction of these raw materials. However, the resources of both are limited and exhausted. This is what many specialists say. There are also those who question it. They accuse them of lowering the pressure of various corporations or unreliability. After all, at a time when science is becoming more and more sellable, one can earn good money on properly prepared scientific opinions. Is the mining industry actually a significant cause of environmental degradation and climate change (warming)? It is not as sure as it is presented in mass media and various scientific studies. Geologist Volker Wrede⁶ claims that mining not only does not harm the environment, but it even has a positive effect on nature. In his book *Is mining a robbery economy? Raw material extraction and sustainable development*, he wrote: "The Earth's geological resources are theoretically infinite, while renewable bio-sources are finite because, unlike geological resources, they are cultivated in a limited area. He further noted that "mining holds itself responsible for many of the world's disasters, that it worsens global environmental problems such as climate change and that it would lead to a loss of biodiversity in ecologically sensitive areas".⁷ The bad reputation of the mining industry is the result of the lack of knowledge in the society and of misinformation about replacing fossil energy resources with renewable ones. He proves this by studying replacing a carbon- or oil-powered power plant by a wind-powered power plant. First of all, wind turbines have less spatial performance compared to coal-fired power plants and areas. Secondly, in places with a strong wind you need to build stronger concrete foundations of wind farms that irreversibly destroy the soil structure. Thirdly, wind turbines with more power deteriorate the quality of life of residents, harm bats and even disturb the monitoring of earthquakes. In his opinion, the extraction of fossil resources can be carried out in an environmentally friendly way. And if it is not done, it is the fault of the governments and global energy corporations that manipulate the data. There are reports of the depletion of crude oil, lithium for electric car batteries, and rare earths, which always causes confusion on the markets. And soon thereafter, that suddenly these

⁶ Dr. Volker Wrede headed the Division of Applied Earth Sciences in the Geological Service of North Rhine-Westphalia, where he dealt with issues of regional and spatial planning, conservation of raw materials, and protection of geotopes and nature. Since 2004, he has been managing the Ruhrgebiet National GeoPark. He is a lecturer at the Martin Luther University in Halle-Wittenberg.

⁷ V. Wrede, *Bergbau gleich Raubbau? Rohstoffgewinnung und Nachhaltigkeit*, Springer, Berlin, 2020.

resources are plentiful again. However, these data are not certain. As Anja Røyne (Norwegian physicist from the University of Oslo) proves quite convincingly that "Nobody is able to estimate the real resources of all minerals, if only because the Earth's crust is penetrated as far as the technology allows, and thus currently up to several kilometres from the surface."⁸ . Nobody knows what is deeper. According to Anja Røyne, the "depletion" claim comes largely from the equation of "resources" with "reserves". Reserves include available and unexplored and inaccessible discovered reserves and resources include only available and discovered reserves, i.e. not all reserves. They include only those parts of the resources that companies expect to extract in a specific area. Their size is determined by mining concerns, legally obliged to publish documentation on how much of a given resource they expect to extract in their mines. The reserves do not take into account those deposits that one has not yet found and those whose extraction is currently unprofitable or controversial from the environmental protection point of view.

2.2. Deficit of non-fossil raw materials

Too little has been written about the depletion of non-fossil resources – wood, sand and drinking water – which will disappear faster than fossil ones. The demand for these raw materials is less and less balanced by their supply despite the idea of sustainable development. Progressive deforestation, extraction of sand and water threaten the environment, fauna and flora, and people living in mining, forest and dry areas are unable to keep up with the even faster growing demand for these resources. The growing spiral of supply and demand can in a short time lead to the total consumption of these resources – to a world without forests, sand and water, to the collapse of the Western civilisation and the human species.

2.2.1. Wood deficiency

"If man does not learn to treat the oceans and rainforests respectfully, man will perish."⁹ (Peter Banchley).

Before civilization began, 60 million square kilometres of forest covered our planet. In the years 2000-2012, 2.3 square million km of forests were cut down (2,105 km² per year). At this rate, all forests will be gone in 100-200 years. It is hard to imagine that humanity will feel the effects of deforestation only after the last tree is felled, as "The last man will die with the last tree." The progressive environmental degradation caused by deforestation will begin much earlier and lead to the fall of humankind. The higher level of technology contributes to population growth and hence to greater consumption of forests. Although appropriate technologies could be developed and implemented, little is being done in practice to prevent the collapse, mainly for economic reasons. Unless we slow down the pace of deforestation, the Earth will not be able to support its growing human population over time. At some point it will exceed its "carrying capacity", i.e. the state of afforestation will

⁸ A. Røyne, *Z czego zrobiony jest świat*, [What the world is made of] Wydawnictwo Muza, Warsaw, 2020.

⁹ Bradford Banchley (1940–2006) was an American writer, screenwriter, and ocean activist.

not be able to provide the necessary amount of oxygen for the world's population. This "carrying capacity" is estimated at 10 billion people. After crossing it, there will be a catastrophic decline in the number of people, and even their extinction. Therefore, this moment is called the "point of no return". Currently, the number of people on Earth is 7.88 billion. 2.12 billion is still needed to reach this point. This seems like a lot at first glance. However, if the average annual population growth, which now stands at 81 million, continues, the critical point will be reached in about 26 years, so very soon. However, this rate of increase varies. For now, it is decreasing. Thus, the "point of no return" will not be reached for about 40 years, but still in this century.¹⁰ The destroyers of forests console us that it will not be so bad, because new nurseries are being set up in place of the cleared forests. This does not solve the problem. The best trees, over a hundred years old, are being cut down and young trees are being planted. One does not know what will grow out of them. Old forests have a varied structure of the flora and fauna. Young plants are not able to provide life to various species of plants and animals. In addition, old trees have larger crowns than young trees and provide more oxygen.

2.2.2. Sand deficiency

"A Handful of Sand Is The Anthology of the Universe."¹¹ In the "age of concrete", the demand for sand for the construction of houses, industrial plants, shopping centres and roads has increased rapidly. This is why there has been more and more lack of it lately. There is even talk of a "global sand crisis". It can be surprising because of the "unlimited" sand resources located in the deserts. Where does the crisis suddenly come from? Not every type of sand is suitable for construction purposes, only one that provides high resistance to construction materials produced from it. And this depends on the strict adhesion of the quartz grains which sand consists of. The grains with sharp angular edges adhere to each other. Such grains can be found in the sand extracted from underground deposits or from water. Desert sand is not suitable because its grains are oval in shape. This has resulted in sand being sometimes harvested illegally – whole islands are dug, huge areas of seabed are sucked out and coral reefs are silted up. One steals sand from the beaches and cemeteries close to the rivers. Sand is mainly used for the production of concrete and glass, but also silicone implants, electronic parts and integrated circuits used in computers, mobile phones, etc. They require a large amount of sand. The annual global consumption is about 50 billion tons. For example, rapidly expanding its infrastructure, China used more sand only in the second decade of the 20th century than the United States did in the 20th century

¹⁰ Two professors, Mauro Bologna (Universidad de Tarapacá, Arica, Chile) and Gerardo Aquino (University of Surrey, Imperial College London) investigated the effects of deforestation on maintaining human population growth on Earth. They calculated on the basis of statistical analysis that due to deforestation, the total duration of modern civilization initiated 150 years ago by the developed industrial era is approx. 200 years. (Mauro Bologna, Gerardo Aquino, *Deforestation and world population sustainability: a quantitative analysis*, "Scientific Reports", No 10, 2020).

¹¹ A handful of sand is an anthology of the universe (D. McCord, American poet (1897–1997)).

and India's use of construction sand has tripled in the past 20 years.¹² From six to seven tons of sand is needed for each tonne of cement. Twenty years ago, world cement production was 1.37 billion tonnes; today it is 3.7 billion. During one year, it consumes so much sand that it would be enough to lay a swath around the Equator as high as 27 metres and just as wide. The water in the rivers and seas cannot carry such amounts of sand. Therefore, in the future more places may become like Florida, where 90% of the beaches have been destroyed and concreted. Now tonnes of sand from the bottom of the ocean are brought to the coast to restore the old beaches. The situation in Asia is the worst. 600 million tonnes of imported sand were used to build the artificial palm islands in Dubai because the local sand is too fine and loose so water would wash it away quickly. 200 tonnes of sand are needed to build a medium-sized house, 3,000 tonnes to build a hospital. 30,000 tons to build one kilometre of a motorway, 12 million tons for the construction of a nuclear power plant. The estimated annual value of the sand market is 70 billion dollars.¹³ The rapid increase in sand mining has led to a total ecological disaster in some places.¹⁴ According to estimates by the *Japan Times*, due to sand mining in 2005-2014, twenty-four Indonesian islands disappeared under water and eighty more are threatened. The mining of the sand also threatens the Mekong delta, which provides food for tens of millions of people. The harvesting of sand destroys mangrove forests and causes the death of marine fish and birds. A huge amount of sand is used to fracture underground gas and crude oil deposits to maintain the permeability of artificially made cracks. For this reason, thousands of hectares of agricultural land and birds' nesting areas disappear, and where the sand gathers, people suffer from lung diseases because they inhale a lot of fine dust. Many workers die. Therefore, in several industrialised countries sand extraction has been prohibited. It is done illegally, mainly where it is allowed.¹⁵ The sand deficit and difficulties associated with its extraction contribute to the increase of its price. Consequently, construction materials, buildings, residential houses and apartments are more expensive. The rapid demand for sand and the increase in its prices resulted in the appearance of "sand mafias" competing with each other. Many people die in the fights between them – hundreds of journalists, policemen and ecologists in Mexico, Kenya, South Africa, Gambia and Indonesia.¹⁶

2. 2. 3. Drinking water deficiency

Not so long ago, the water was a commodity commonly available and consumed in unlimited amounts in many countries. Nobody would expect that after about one hundred years

¹² A. Swanson, How China used more cement in 3 years than the U.S. did in the entire 20th Century, "Washington Post", 25.03.2015.

¹³ K. Pytko, *Czy czeka nas globalna wojna o piasek?* [Are we facing a global sand war?], "Focus" 15.02.2015.

¹⁴ This conclusion has been drawn by Pascal Peduzzi, the Director of the GRID-Geneva, a UN Environment Program and professor at the University of Geneva.

¹⁵ V. Beiser, *Sand. Wie uns eine wertvolle Ressource durch die Finger rinnt*, Vrl. Oekom, München, 2021.

¹⁶ *Na świecie może zabraknąć piasku*. [The world may run out of sand], (<https://www.polsatnews.pl/wiadomosc/2021-06-04/na-swiecie-moze-zabraknac-piasku-zniknely-juz-24-wyspy/>; Access date: 17.08.2021).

of intensive industrialisation, it will transform into one that is rationed, hard-to-get and more and more expensive. Today, hydrology and environmental engineering experts already ring the alarm, call for maximum drinking water saving and predict a rapid exhaustion of its resources, which will undoubtedly lead to the end of humanity on the "Blue Planet". Why did this happen? First of all, its consumption increased rapidly as a result of the development of industry and agriculture, urbanisation, human population growth and living comfort. In the years 1930-2002, water consumption increased sixfold due to the worldwide population growth and the average water consumption per capita doubled.¹⁷ Although there are huge water resources in the oceans and seas (97% of water resources), it is saline water. No more than 2.5% freshwater is accumulated on the earth's surface and in underground reservoirs. Only 1% is suitable for drinking. It is estimated that sweet water resources are about 35 million km³ (35 billion liters). 70% of this amount is water frozen in glaciers and snow cover, mostly in Antarctica (69%). The rest is groundwater at the depth of less than 100 metres and rivers, sweet lakes, swamps and shallow underground water. The minimum water demand for a person is 20 liters a day. However, over one billion people in 43 countries have only 5 liters a day. It is predicted that in about 40 years two-thirds of the inhabitants of the Earth will feel the lack of drinking water.¹⁸ According to data provided by Statistics Poland (2020), the average resident of Poland consumes 3900 litres of water daily, including about 92 litres directly (for drinking, washing, and cleaning) and 3808 litres indirectly, (water consumed in the production processes of goods and in the provision of services), whereas a US resident consumes 7,800 litres, with Australians and Italians consuming 6,300 litres each. Agriculture consumes most of the world water resources (about 70%), mainly for breeding and irrigating fields. (One needs 5 thousand litres of water to produce one kilogram of meat and 500 litres for one kilogram of potatoes.) The industry consumes another 20% and households – the remaining 10%. The demand for water will continue to grow with the development of industry, which must not only meet the real present needs of the consumers but also produce more to meet artificially created needs. So water consumption will grow, and its resources shrink. An increase in the imbalance between the water reserves and demand for it has led to the high "water stress" in the countries of the Middle East and North Africa and India, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, San Marino, Spain, Italy, Greece, Macedonia and Belgium, where 80% of their surface and underground water resources have already been exhausted. Nevertheless, according to Andrew Stere, Director of World Resources Institute, hardly anyone is talking about one of the largest crises of the modern world, which is "water stress", and about its consequences – hunger, conflicts, migration and financial uncertainty. One quarter of the world's population is threatened by increasingly severe lack of water. For many megacities, it will soon be "day zero" when the water supply is turned off. In 2017, Rome had to ration water for

¹⁷ Ł. Madej, *Jakie są zasoby wody pitnej na świecie?* [What are the world's drinking water resources?]; (<https://inzynieria.com/wodkan/wiadomosci/53036,jakie-sa-zasoby-wody-pitnej-na-swiecie>; Access date: 22-07-2018).

¹⁸ P. Borek, *Woda jako przyczyna konfliktów zbrojnych w XXI wieku* [Water as the cause of armed conflicts in the 21st century], Państwowa Szkoła Wyższa im Papeży Jana Pawła II w Białej Podlaskiej, „Rozprawy Społeczne”, 2018, nr 12 (2).

the first time, in 2018, Cape Town was at the threshold of the "day zero" and last year the Indian city of Čednina (Madras province), with a population of over one million, faced empty water reservoirs. Researchers from the World Resources Institute in Washington expect a dramatic drop in water availability from 2025 as a result of constantly growing consumption of it, caused by both global economic growth and the spread of consumer lifestyle in poorly developed countries. In 2040, 33 countries will be affected by serious water deficits. And by 2050, the demand for drinking water will have increased by 55%.¹⁹ What is worse, the water deficit is accompanied by the deterioration of its quality due to pollution. We could reduce the water deficit, if we got it from resources at depths of more than 200 m below the surface of the Earth, which is too costly. It is also possible to bring water from other planets, but this must be treated as science fiction. The fight for water is a fight for life for the countries that are already experiencing a high "water stress", and in a few dozen years, they will be joined by more countries. Then, another world war could break out, not for oil, natural gas, coal, gold, diamonds or other energy sources, strategic and precious raw materials, but for water. "The Next World War will be for water."²⁰ The energy obtained from fossil resources can be obtained from other sources, natural raw materials can be replaced by synthetic ones, but no one has invented artificial water yet and probably nobody will do that.

2. 3. The destruction of the social environment

Intensive degradation of the social environment proceeds with the development of civilisation. It manifests itself in the weakening of interpersonal relations and functioning of institutions, language vulgarisation, the devaluation of traditional canons as well as ethical and aesthetic criteria, the collapse of legal and educational systems, the depreciation of authority, the crisis of customs, the primitivisation of ways, means and forms of communication, the weakening of interpersonal bonds (even within the family) and the equilibrium mechanisms. All this contributes to destabilisation, disorder, mess, uncertainty, randomness and unpredictability. As a result, the horizon of planning in social reality and in the life of individual persons is more and more narrow. In this case, the future is enigmatic and not worth worrying about. One should care only for today. No wonder that people live from day to day, "now", and that they want to achieve everything "here and now" according to the appeal of Horace "Carpe diem quam minimum credula postero" repeated later by the poet of the French Renaissance Pierre de Ronsard "Cueilles, cueilles vôte Jeunesse" and by contemporary philosophers – presentivists and recentivists. The degradation of the social reality causes the devastation of the internal environment of individuals because of socialisation, ideologisation, education and enculturation. This manifests in negative changes in consciousness, psychic, nature, way of thinking and communicating, spirituality and personal culture. Criticism and common sense weaken through increasing thoughtlessness and stupidity. Shocking behaviour and vulgar language have become the standard. Higher feel-

¹⁹ N. Podbregar, 17 Länder stehen kurz vor dem „Day Zero“ (<https://www.scinexx.de/news/geowissen/17-laender-stehen-kurz-vor-dem-day-zero/> Access date: 12.08.2019).

²⁰ *Water Wars? A Talk with Ismail Serageldin*, "World Policy Journal", Vol 26, No 4, 2009/2010.

ings such as empathy disappear. Attitudes such as selfishness, individualism, intolerance and xenophobia appear more and more frequently. It increases the number of internal moral dilemmas, conflicts and dissonances. Imitating robots and uncritical aping of idols and celebrities are spreading. This all causes the deepening of the mental discomfort and in effect, an increase in mental diseases and the savagery of people. There is a "wild" fashion among young people – "wild" (boorish) behaviour, "wild" screaming, "wild" beautifying of the body (disgusting tattoos, piercing), "wild" hairstyles (afro, dreadlocks, the mohawk), a "wild" way of expressing emotions using screaming and "wild" dances referring to ritual dances of primitive peoples. The new savage behaves and acts much worse than the former barbarians. He maltreats his own children, abuses weaker people and animals, murders his own parents or grandparents for trivial reasons, kills schoolmates, tourists, shopping centre customers and casual passers-by in terrorist attacks or a tantrum of crazy under the influence of drugs, etc. He often does this so for entertainment or out of boredom, to be similar to the superman devoid of conscience and not respecting the norms of social coexistence. Mass culture (pop culture) is more and more soaked in savagery and probably will soon transform itself into a culture of savages.

3. How long can one adapt to the constantly deteriorating environment?

Since the beginning of the 20th century, the pace of changes in the environment has been increasing, everything is happening quicker and quicker. The paradox of change itself is the invariant of change. The social reality changes faster than the natural reality. In the last century, as many paradigms in culture, science, politics, art, thinking, customs, etc. have changed as before that during tens or hundreds of years. One learns, teaches, treats oneself, consumes, relaxes, talks and writes faster and faster. Before we adapt to the existing conditions, they will already change.²¹ The time of technological processes and working time of technical devices have shortened notably. What took hours not so long ago, now only takes a few seconds. The speed of making decisions and choices has also increased. This is not only because the decision-making process is supported by the super fast technology of today but also because there is not enough time to reflect. One has to make them immediately in rapidly changing situations. The main reason for accelerating the pace of life and work is "explosion of knowledge", which must have occurred in the twentieth century at a specific stage of its development and also the striving to know, to do, to experience, to have and to be as much as possible.²² It is difficult to adapt to such a rapidly changing environment, not only because of the shortage of time needed to adapt the body to new conditions, but also because the environment varies and worsens with the progress of civili-

²¹ In the eighteenth century, means of transport moved by humans or animals reached a maximum speed of 15 km/h, in the middle of the nineteenth century steam trains moved at a speed of 45 km/h. At that time, it seemed that man had already exceeded the limit of his natural (biological) mobility. Currently, the speed of trains has increased to 570 km/h (12 times), cars - about 250 km/h, planes – 1225 km/h, and spacecraft – by about 2900 km/h. The speed of information transmission, transmitted by electromagnetic waves, has rapidly increased to 300,000 km/h.

²² J. A. Wojciechowski, *The Present Moment*, *The Dialogue of Cultural Traditions: A Global Perspective* (William Sweet, F. McLean, Tomonobu Imamichy, Safak Ural, O. Faruk Akyol eds.), The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, Washington D.C. 2008.

sation and its degradation includes more and more areas. In addition, adverse changes are less and less predictable (forecasts also require more time), more and more chaotic and difficult to control. One cannot prepare for them. On the other hand, the human adaptive potential (adaptive abilities) is very limited and only slightly manages to increase it thanks to the technique by various auxiliary devices, prostheses, artificial intelligence, drugs, etc. The adaptation potential of human is limited by his anatomical, physiological, psychological and personality possibilities. Human organism is flexible and resistant to changes in the natural environment, but in very small scopes of temperature, humidity, atmospheric pressure, etc. and concentrations of pollution and toxins. This also applies to the social environment. More and more people are no longer able to do with it, and in the future, that will be even harder. Therefore, one lives in permanent and deep stress, which is the cause of various diseases with more and more people. The number of patients with emotional and psychiatric disorders (neurosis and depression) is on the increase.²³ The number of suicides is growing, even among young people. People seek rescue in medicines, supplements, boosters and drugs. The increasing number of terrorist attacks, shootings in public places, schools and churches, and other manifestations of violence is evidence of this. In the "galloping society" there is a growing number of "excluded" people who do not keep up with the increasing pace of life and work and lose their ability to survive. The human psyche, our character and personality have a lot of inertia. In many cases, they do not change over the course of a lifetime, or change a little. If the environment continues to change as hitherto, the adaptation potential of people will soon exhaust and humanity will face extinction sooner than we expect. Humankind is not eternal. It emerged at a certain time, and one day it will disappear. This may happen not necessarily because of external causes, such as a global ecological disaster, a flood resulting from climate warming, a collision with a celestial body or because of supernatural forces. It may disappear as a result of internal causes, such as unbalanced development and unlimited economic growth. If people do not get wise in time, which is unlikely to happen, because the more they use "smart devices" the stupider they get, it will become more and more difficult for them to survive and, at their own request, they will pursue to self-destruction faster and faster. One more catastrophe for humans is the massive and rapid extinction of species due of them. Matthias Glaubrecht, professor of animal biodiversity at the University of Hamburg pointed this out.²⁴ What people do not realise is that they are entangled in many networks of dependencies with different species of animals. Destroying other species, they act like turkeys voting for Christmas - they will inevitably destroy themselves.

²³ Data compiled by the Institute for Health Metrics Evaluation show that in 2017, approximately 13% of the world's population (971 million people) suffered from mental disorders. UK charity organization Mind reports that one in four people has experienced some form of mental illness in a year. In the EU countries, as much as 38%. (*Zaburzenia psychiczne – globalna epidemia?* <https://emocje.pro/zaburzenia-psychiczne-globalna-epidemia>; Access date: 02.09.2021).

²⁴ M. Glaubrecht, *Das Ende der Evolution. Der Mensch und die Vernichtung der Arten*, Pantheon Verlag, München, 2021.

4. How long will economy be more important than ecology?

Caring for a healthy environment should be a priority for people, regardless of their skin colour, nationality, views, beliefs, faith, ambitions, etc. And if so, other matters, including economic goals, can never and should never be the most important. Ecological activity is a sine qua non condition for the survival of our species. Concern for technical and economic development is also important, but of secondary importance nonetheless. You can live without food for several days, but not without air. The statement "Primum vivere, deinde omnia aliud facere"²⁵ is a truism. Unfortunately, political and economic decision makers tend to forget about this. They are fascinated with the current state of technological progress and economic growth²⁶ thanks to the constant increase in production and consumption and imbalances between demand and supply, productive powers and spending power, price and incomes growth, etc.²⁷ Philosophy of economics contributes to this because it constantly claims since the end of the 18th century that economic activity is motivated above all by the pursuit of getting rich and the rich individuals contribute as if automatically to the well-being of all. However, nothing happens automatically in a society, only thanks to people, who are often motivated by their own interests. It does not matter how this goal to be rich is achieved – honestly or not, thanks to conquests, slavery and exploitation or diligence, saving and rational management, thanks to competitive fight for life and death and deception or decent competition. The desire to get rich has become absurd because it has no limits (whoever has a lot wants to have even more) and perverse, because as an end in itself (l'art pour l'art) it has become an obsession. On the basis of this philosophy, a specific type of man was formed – Homo Oeconomicus²⁸ – a being who does everything to have more money, goods and luxury with the least work and sacrifices. It is mechanically subjected to the laws of the market and the Golden Calf. He works rationally in the economic sense, but he ignores the human, ethical, social and ecological considerations. In making decisions and actions, he is guided by the principle of profitability: "It is not worth doing anything that does not pay off, that does not bring a tangible profit." He is guided by this principle in research and creativity, in interpersonal relations, in the sphere of feelings and religious beliefs. Instead of adapting to the environment according to self-preservation instinct, like other living entities, he wants to adapt the environment to himself without being afraid that it harms the environment, other people and himself. For several decades, another type of human – Homo Consumens – has also developed. He is not focused on profit, but on consumption. They both contribute to the economic growth – the first does everything to produce more goods than necessary (contributes to hyperproduction), and the other – to sell them (contributes to hyperconsumption). These types of man have been ruling the world economy for about half a century and will probably rule as long

²⁵ "Live first, then do everything else".

²⁶ W. Sztumski, *Krótkowzroczność temporalna i ucieczka w teraźniejszość* [Temporal myopia and escape into the present], "Res Humana", 2017, Nr 6/(151).

²⁷ E. Saez, G. Zucman *The Triumph of Injustice: How the Rich Dodge Taxes and How to Make Them Pay*, University of California, Berkeley, 2019.

²⁸ This term was first introduced by John Stuart Mill at the end of the 19th century.

as the goal of economic activity is to increase production, consumption and the enrichment levels, as long as the economy is a sphere uncontrolled by non-economic factors, as long as economists and economic criteria will determine the functioning of people.²⁹ This will likely end with a new philosophy of economics based on ecological economics. It was established in the 1960s but it began to develop since 1998, when the International Society for Ecological Economics was founded. It turned out that the economy does not have to contradict ecology, that it intertwines with ecology, and that its interests can be compatible with ecological ones.³⁰ The basic categories of ecological economy are: natural capital (renewable and non-renewable resources), human capital, intra-generational, intergenerational and interspecies justice, and sustainable development. It should answer following questions: how to integrate the economic models with the ecological ones, how to manage the economic development not only by means of economic indicators (e.g. GDP), but also biophysical and social ones and how to sensibly determine the boundaries of economic growth in accordance with the guidelines of sustainable development to avoid environmental ruin. A draft reconciliation of economics with ecology was presented by Stefanie Kuhnhen (director of strategy in one of the leading global creative agencies in Germany) and Markus von der Lühe (founder of Future Academy employing entrepreneurs in the field of digital competences, psychology, innovation and artificial intelligence) in the book *Das Ende der unvereinbaren Gegensätze. 12 Überraschende Lösungen für Menschen, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*.³¹

5. How long will people let fools rule?

"The biggest threat to humanity is not earthquakes and tsunamis, nor deprived of scruples politicians, greedy managers or evil-intentioned conspirators, but an unusual, global and multidimensional enormity of stupidity!"³² Stupidity is one of the "great solids" in human history, as is the speed of light in nature. It is the sole global power that has grown over the millennia. Kings, popes and presidents died, societies rose and fell, electoral programs were announced and forgotten, and stupidity remained immune to revolutions, natural disasters, world wars, and financial crises. I argue that the rapid spread of stupidity is the result of an imbalance in the material and spiritual development of society. A highly developed civilisation not only increases the technological potential of humanity, but also raises human stupidity to an unimaginably high level. The combination of the newest technology and advanced stupidity, as is the case today, is an extremely dangerous phenomenon, the consequences of which are mostly tragic.³³ Attempts to fight the fools and remove them

²⁹ W. Sztumski, *What kind of Homo will shape the future?*, "Transformacje/Transformations", 2017, Nr 3-4 (94-95).

³⁰ D. B. Vukovic, R. Shams, *Economy and Ecology: Encounters and Interweaving*, "Sustainability", 2020, Nr 12.

³¹ S. Kuhnhen, M. von der Lühe, *Das Ende der unvereinbaren Gegensätze. 12 überraschende Lösungen für Menschen, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, Springer Vrl, Wiesbaden, 2018.

³⁶ M. Schmidt-Salomon, *Keine Macht den Doofen! Eine Streitschrift*, Piper Vrl., München, 2012.

³⁷ Ibidem.

³³ Ibidem.

from power have never been successful, because "The International of Fools" – of narrow, eternally and hopelessly backward minds – soon made the stupid the conductors of history. Stupidity is still doing well. It prevails in politics, economics, religion and society. As early as in the eighteenth century, John Adams, the second president of the United States, regretted that "While all other sciences have moved forward, achievements in politics remain far behind the achievements in other fields. Governments rest in the hands of "polydiots", for whom the only thing that counts is the votes and not facts or arguments, of stupid financiers who juggle billions though they failed to master the basic multiplication table, of religious fanatics who want to draw back our civilisation to the dark Middle Ages using the most modern weapons. Global stupidity hides behind the global misery, too. The support for the power of fools is not an individual's stupidity, but a collective one – a common lack of skills of thinking. And when stupidity becomes an epidemic, it is ubiquitous, unrecognisable and considered as something normal. It is a paradox of our times that there are more and more educated people and more and more stupid, which let to be enslaved by stupid. Perhaps the goal of cultural and social evolution is not *Homo Sapiens Sapiens*, but *Homo Stupidus*. Friedrich Nietzsche's aphorism, "Madness among individuals is rare, but among groups, parties, nations and epochs it is the rule" one can apply to stupidity. According to Arthur Schopenhauer, a deep aversion to mental effort is a typical species feature of people. This is understandable, because why should a person overstrain his organ of thought, if it does not seem to be profitable for them. The connection of power with stupidity has been for a long time, but only now, it has turned into permanent, feedback-transformed and universal stupidity and it is the work of stupid rulers³⁴, who are additionally often psychopaths.³⁵ Therefore, rebelling against the collective stupidity they fall into a conflict with rulers. Nobody wants to deal with high representatives of the state, society and the Church, because the one who exposes the stupidity of the rulers finally loses. Power makes people stupid and does not tolerate wisemen. Social progress happened at such a quick pace because of globalisation and the developments in technology and it would be something extremely irresponsible to allow fools to guide it. The greed and stupidity of politicians led to their coupling with big business. As a result, politicians lose power to businessmen. Currently, "independent politician" is an empty word, because politicians only pretend to rule for the good of citizens and the security of the state. In fact, behind them hides corporatocracy - a global network of corporations – together with world financiers, which manipulate politicians like puppets. Therefore, politicians rule conscious or involuntarily guided by the good of corporatocrats and financiers. Social masses have quite lies and fraud proclaimed in mass media more and more brazenly by governments and give it an expression in various ways. Pretty millions of victims absorbed revolutions, wars, ethnic cleans, concentration camps, pandemics and other genocidal acts from the fault of stupid monarchs, dictators, chiefs, presidents and party leaders. Soon you will have to take

³⁴ Prof. Walenty Nowacki proved it on the example of presidents of several countries, especially the USA. W. Nowacki, *Civilization and Logithe USAc: the Law of Inversely Proportional Stupidity*, Forest Hills, New York 1983.

³⁵ K. Kalinowski, *Im wyższy szczebel władzy, tym więcej psychopatów?* [The higher the rank of power, the more psychopaths], "Gazeta Wyborcza – Nauka", 07. 04. 2021.

power from them and definitely oppose the madness of our stupid times. And time presses. The delay multiplies unnecessary sacrifices and brings about a collapse. Do not let stupid people – especially autocrats – decide about social development, the application of science and technology and the fate of humanity. But there are those aware of threats, reasonable and competent, who will think soberly and effectively act for the survival of the human species. They should not be elected in quasi-free elections (in fact previously designated by political parties), but in genuinely democratic and free elections.

6. How long does one have to wait for a New Metanoia?

The Anthropocene age initiated an intense interference of man with the natural environment and rapidly progressing destruction by means of the latest technology. At first, people did not worry about it. It was important to implement three aims – the growth of ever unsatisfied consumption, maximising the comfort (idleness) and satisfying the ambition of ruling the Earth. Then, detrimental effects of this were more and more severe and the condition of people worsened with the destruction of the environment. This is still happening. Such Anthropocene could be called "bad". However one can also interfere with the environment by means of modern technology in a friendly way, in order to prevent further destruction of the environment, rehabilitate it and make it more friendly for people. One can transform the "Bad Anthropocene" into a "Good" one. This cannot be easily realised. Firstly, one should give up excessive luxury and comfort and secondly, from an unlimited growth of production and consumption more than reasonably justified existential and functional needs, which normally results in a waste of capital, strength, resources, and human work. I understand "Good Anthropocene" differently than the ecopragmatists (Michael Schellenberger, Ted Nordhaus, Peter Kareiva, Erle Ellis, Emma Marris, Stewart Brand, Mark Lynas), who define it as a human interference in geobiosphere based on a boundless faith in a modern technology, human ingenuity and in the fact that nature, although susceptible to human manipulation, is sufficiently resistant to what one does to it. The ecopragmatists assume that, on the basis of historical thinking, people have previously solved similar problems effectively and technology has always found good solutions. Therefore, one does not need to worry about the pessimistic scenarios of the future which experts present, because in the end "somehow will be" and people will survive again.³⁶ Understood this way, "good anthropocene" is "good", because it serves the interests of the fossil fuel industry and it sanctions the obsession of the economic growth ignoring its side-effects that threaten with the global crisis. However, for me, "good Anthropocene" is one in which ecological and social interests are appreciated more than business interests of the corporatocrats. Before this takes place, one must implement a "New Metanoia", consisting in replacing economic thinking by ecological one. Then, the ideology of consumerism will lose its topicality, unlimited economic growth will stop, and the latest technology will be used mainly to protect the environment and to survival of humanity. Is it some utopia? Clive Hamilton claims that adherent of the "good Anthropocene" live in a fantasy world constructed by them. He is only partially right. But one should not condemn fantasy or utopia,

³⁶ C. Hamilton, *The Theodicy of the "Good Anthropocene"*, "Environmental Humanities", 2016, Nr 7.

if they give hope and creative optimism. Planning and defining aims would be senseless without optimism resulting from hope for their implementation. Thus, fantasy or utopia is useful when they are a driving force of progress, hope and optimism. This is not about exaggerated optimism, hopes and utopia, but about their moderate or "soft" forms.³⁷ As a rule, extreme forms of utopia are dangerous and they are a source of misfortune. Fantasy and utopia are bad when they lead to the ignoring of the sensory world, to the escape into the world of illusions or to the walking in the clouds, what characterises artists, clergymen and politicians. "Good Anthropocene" is not a story about the world written by powerful global corporatocrats, which made a "mess" of today's world and do everything to prevent it from being cleaned, as Clive Hamilton writes. This is an idea that is perceived as an effective measure by means of which one could prevent the miserable end of humankind.

The New Metanoia requires a wise and responsible interference in the environment as in the case of "Good Anthropocene" and compliance with the principles of balance as in sustainable development. It requires the creative, courageous, pragmatic and futurological thinking based on scientific knowledge, vision or fantasy. The implementation of New Metanoia will be possible if the New Enlightenment will be broken by the resistance of conservatives, nationalists, neo-fascists and obscurantist. More and more researchers in different countries, which see, where leads the development of our civilisation according to the ultra-nationalist, religious or fascist model, proclaim the ideas of the eighteenth century Enlightenment, i.e. of the "First Enlightenment". "Liberal democracies have largely discredited themselves by opening the gates to predatory capitalism. They are increasingly being rejected by the people. We will see what can still be cemented when all universalism has become suspect and the claim to the right to be different is thwarted by efforts to build a common civilisation project."³⁸ Marcel Fratzscher (professor of macroeconomy at Humboldt University in Berlin, director of the Deutsche Institut f. Wirtschaftsforschung), reflecting on what the world will be like after the Covid pandemic, hopes that this pandemic will lead to the emergence of a new consciousness (metanoia), New Humanism and the New Enlightenment. "Time for New Humanism! Pandemic of Koronavirus plunged society and economy in the deepest crisis since World War II. There is a great danger that this will result in a further division of world community. There are good reasons for pessimism, but there are also better reasons for optimism. Pandemic shows us contradictions in our activities. This led to a moral consciousness, which makes as a society pay great importance to the community and to protect the weakest. This new humanism requires the reform of a guardian state so that all people have the opportunity to participate in society. Freedom, justice and humanism, three ideals of the Enlightenment are more important than ever and will decide how the world and us as a society we will get out of this pandemic,

³⁷ Name introduced by psychologist Shelley Taylor. (S. E. Taylor, J. D. Brown, *Illusion and Well-Being: A Social Psychological Perspective on Mental Health*, Psychological Bulletin 1988 by the American Psychological Association, Inc., Vol. 103, No. 2, 1988).

³⁸ *Face au retour de l'obscurantisme religieux et politique, bâtir un nouveau siècle des Lumières*, "L'Inspiration Politique", 21.05.2021.

where it will follow the world and how it will look after this pandemic.”³⁹ Michelle Baddeley (professor at the University of South Australia, Business School, Adelaide, expert in the field of behavioural economics and behavioural finance) demands immediate initiation of the New Enlightenment Age also. “The last decade was turbulent. The financial crisis and the uncertainty of globalisation effects and the technological revolution led to the questioning of representative and free market democracy. To materialise the enormous potential of economic growth and the idea of prosperity for everyone as a result of technical revolution to reduce dissatisfaction and pessimism, the need for new enlightenment. It's long and a complicated process, but the first steps (economic and legal reforms) can be taken immediately.”⁴⁰ Each of them demands restitution and materialisation the grand ideas of Enlightenment - sovereignty of reason, freedom, justice, humanism, progress, tolerance and brotherhood. Moreover, apart from this they demand recognition of sensual experience as a basic source of knowledge, introduction of constitutional governments and separating the Church from the state. Today it is difficult to predict whether and when this will come.

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³⁹ M. Fratzscher, *Die neue Aufklärung: Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft nach der Corona-Krise*, Vrl., Berlin 2020.

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