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STUDIA ECOLOGIAE ET BIOETHICAE



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Report on the 17th International Scientific Conference in the “Humanistic Ecology” Series: “Environmental Philosophy and Ethics in the Face of the Ecological Crisis” (Warsaw, 20-21 September 2023)

Sprawozdanie z XVII Międzynarodowej Konferencji z cyklu „Ekologia Humanistyczna” pt. „Filozofia i etyka środowiskowa w obliczu kryzysu ekologicznego” (Warszawa, 20-21 września 2023)

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The 17th International Scientific Conference, “Environmental Philosophy and Ethics in the Face of the Ecological Crisis,” is one of the series of events organized by the Department of Ecophilosophy at the Faculty of Christian Philosophy of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw. The thematic scope of the present conference revolves around a highly topical issue, namely, the ecological crisis. As this crisis spreads, humanity around the world experience its effects more intensely. Teams of scientists representing diverse scientific disciplines are involved in the analysis of the phenomenon of the ecological crisis. These analyses indicate that the environmental crisis is highly complex, and its causes are closely interrelated and mutually conditioned. To recognize the nature of the ecological crisis, it is necessary to take an interdisciplinary approach to this issue. Only such an approach gives hope for identifying the optimal strategy for combating the crisis and avoiding undesirable consequences of our actions.

With the deepening of the discussion on the ecological crisis and acknowledging its complexity, it became evident that the problems of nature and the people living in it could not be solved solely by technical means and the involvement of natural sciences. It is, therefore, necessary to broaden the research on the ecological crisis by including philosophical reflection (Weizsäcker 1994; Schäfer 1993; Tyburski 2006, 7; Sadowski 2023). Moreover, it has also been realized that an attempt to counter the ecological crisis only technologically will be ineffective and destructive for both nature and humans (Łepko 2011, 88).

Philosophical reflection on the ecological crisis leads to the conclusion that this crisis has an anthropological character. In other words, it is not a crisis of nature but a crisis of civilization within which nature is exposed to abuse and destruction. The ecological crisis understood in this way is based on the apparent civilizational success, which alienates people from nature to such an extent that their actions become

destructive for both nature and themselves. A civilization that serves humans to defend themselves against nature and then to master it leads to a state in which humans have almost conquered nature. The disturbance of the desired balance between nature and civilization brings about fatal diseases in nature. Therefore, it is necessary to make people aware of the seriousness of the situation and adopt a therapy which will move away from symptomatic and emergency treatment – as was the case when the natural sciences alone were involved – and move on to treating the causes.

Consequently, the success of this therapy must include humanistic reflection, which guarantees far-reaching and forward-looking thinking about the style of human presence in the world. The remedy for nature's disease is not, however, a simple replacement of the domination of culture with that of nature. Building a complex balance that would allow mutual respect for each other's specificity is necessary. The final effect will be resolving the ecological crisis thanks to a symbiosis of civilization and nature (Łepko 2003, 170-171).

The adoption of this approach by the organizers contributed to the shape of the "Humanistic Ecology" conference series in 2023. Hence, its interdisciplinary character and the presence of researchers that represent both natural and social sciences, as well as the humanities. According to the organizers, an appropriate platform for discussion on the issue of environmental crisis can only be provided through participation of a vast and diverse group of scientists. Therefore, varied topics were presented at the conference.

The significance of the conference topic was confirmed by the honorary patronage of:

- Anna Maskwa, Minister of Climate and Environment of the Republic of Poland
- Adam Struzik, Marshal of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship, Poland

- Rev. Prof. Ryszard Czekalski, President of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, Poland
- Prof. JUDr. Marek Števec, DrSc., President of Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia

The main organizer and originator of the conference was the Department of Ecophilosophy at the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw. The conference was co-organized by the Marshal's Office of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship, the Department of Philosophy and History of Philosophy at Comenius University in Bratislava, the Department of Philosophy at Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, Slovakia, and Francis de Sales Scientific Society, Poland.

The conference was held in hybrid mode. All speakers participated in the on-site conference, providing additional opportunities for unofficial discussions and exchanging ideas and views. Other conference participants could either be present at the venue or follow the conference transmission on the Internet.

Out of all submitted conference proposals, the conference's Scientific Committee accepted twenty papers for presentation. Papers were presented by twenty-four speakers representing fifteen scientific institutions. Twelve speakers represented eight Polish universities; the others represented seven foreign scientific institutions. Polish speakers represented the following universities:

1. Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw
2. John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin
3. Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz
4. Lublin University of Technology
5. Maria Grzegorzewska University
6. Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń
7. State Higher Vocational School in Konin
8. University of Warsaw

The following foreign universities and scientific institutions were represented at the conference:

1. Catholic University of Croatia, Croatia
2. Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia
3. Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, Slovakia
4. Slovak Academy of Sciences, Slovakia
5. Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra, Slovakia
6. St. Elizabeth University of Health and Social Work in Bratislava, Slovakia
7. University of Žilina, Slovakia

The conference topic was introduced by two plenary papers presented by Prof. Peter Fedor, "Can Humans Rule on the Planet of Insects" and by Prof. Artur Pawłowski, "Environmental Ethics in Times of Pandemic and War." Prof. Ryszard Sadowski was the moderator of the plenary session. In addition to the plenary session, there were two English and two Polish-Slovak sessions. Prof. Artur Pawłowski from Lublin University of Technology and Prof. Tatiana Sedová from Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica chaired the English sessions. The Polish-Slovak sessions were chaired by Prof. Andrea Klimková from Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica and Prof. Zlatica Plašienková from Comenius University in Bratislava, who also moderated the concluding plenary session.

The English sessions included the following presentations:

1. Eva Pechočiaková Svitačová, "Finding Ways Out of The Ecological Crisis Using New Ethics – Ethics of Sustainability and Ethics of Responsibility for The Future"
2. Agata Kosieradzka-Federczyk, "The concept of the ecological city as a response to environmental crises"
3. Andrzej Kobyliński, "Friedrich Hölderlin or Emanuele Severino? The Sacred Dimension of Nature in The Context of Modern Technology"

4. Andrea Klimková, Daniela Kováčová, "The Problem of Environmental Shame in The Technological Age"
5. Jerzy Śleszyński, "Normative Ecological Economics as a Condition for Sustainable Development"
6. Peter Sabo, Ludmila Sabová, Ingrid Turisová, Zlatica Plašienková, "How to Save The Earth"
7. Ariadna Ciężela, "Will We Soon Experience a Major Ecological Catastrophe? Polish Students' Beliefs about the Natural Environment Before and After the Smog Alert"
8. Wojciech Trempała, "Environmental Awareness Among Young Citizens of Bydgoszcz – Empirical Studies 2018-2023"
9. Zoran Turza, "Ecotheological Critique of Anthropocentrism and Biocentrism in The Old Testament Book of Job"

The Polish-Slovak sessions included the following papers:

10. Mariusz Chamarczuk, "Sustainable Development Concept in The Light of The Catholic Social Teaching"
11. Grzegorz Embros, "Responsibility as An Integrating Factor in Actions for Environmental Protection"
12. Eva Smolková, Zlatica Plašienková, "In Defence of (Environmental) Anthropocentrism"
13. Jerzy Gocko, "Ecology and Justice. From Environmental Justice to Integral Ecology of *Laudato Si*"
14. Marcin Leźnicki, "Ecological Anthropology in The Face of The Ecological Crisis: An Overview of Selected Directions of Ecological Anthropology"
15. Peter Mlynarčík, "Josef Tvrdy and the Concepts of Emergence and Wholeness as The Interwar Foundation for Ecophilosophy"
16. Jakub Švec, "On the Legitimacy of State Power to Interfere with Personal Freedom in Favor of the Public Interest Institute of Sustainable Ecology"
17. Marcin Klimski, "Educational Practice to Counter Deforestation"

18. Agnieszka Klimska, "Dilemmas in Climate Education"

Selected conference presentations will be published in the "Studia Ecologiae et Bioethicae" journal as part of the 1/2024 issue, while others will be published in the 2/2024 issue. The conference papers will not be discussed in detail here as most will be published soon or are already published in the Online First version. All published papers will be available on the "Studia Ecologiae et Bioethicae" website: www.seib.uksw.edu.pl.

Apart from the speakers, the conference was attended by seventy participants, including the offline and the online participants. The non-speaker participants represented thirteen scientific and research institutions, local government units, enterprises, and non-governmental organizations. The following institutions were represented:

1. Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, Poland
2. EKOS Club of Environmental Protection Publicists, Poland
3. Jagiellonian University, Poland
4. Lower Silesian Ecological Club, Poland
5. Maria Grzegorzewska University, Poland
6. Ministry of Climate and Environment, Poland
7. Sariputra Buddha Vihara & Meditation Centre, India
8. Statistics Poland
9. University of Agriculture in Krakow, Poland
10. University of Science and Technology AGH in Cracow, Poland
11. University of Szczecin, Poland
12. University of Warsaw, Poland
13. Wetlands Conservation Center, Poland

The organizers express their gratitude to the Honorary Patrons of the conference as well as all its participants for creating a friendly and inspiring atmosphere for the exchange of thoughts and joint effort to find solutions to the complex

environmental challenges facing humankind today.

We would especially like to thank our colleagues from Poland and abroad who were directly involved in the preparation and implementation of the conference for their constant support and hard work. The people without whom the conference would not be possible include Prof. Peter Fedor and Prof. Zlatica Plašienková from Comenius University in Bratislava, Prof. Tatiana Sedová and Prof. Andrea Klimková from Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, Prof. Eva Smolková from Slovak Academy of Science, Dr. Agnieszka Klimska and Prof. Agata Kosieradzka-Federczyk from Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw. We hope that this team's excellent and fruitful cooperation will contribute to the undertaking of future conferences and joint projects.

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