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The Vision of State and Social Life in the Normative Models of Environmental Awareness

Wizja organizacji państwa i życia społecznego w normatywnych modelach świadomości ekologicznej

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is to compare the normative concepts of the most influential authors on environmental awareness and their visions of the state and society. In particular, it presents their attitudes toward the political system in the face of the environmental crisis, their opinions on modern technology, and their visions of an environmentally friendly social life. While the vast majority of the authors share the conviction that it is necessary to limit consumption, combat the domination of the destructive technosphere that alienates man from the environment, and base environmental policy on the needs of local communities, they often strongly differ in their visions of social life. Traditional models of the rule of law and democracy are sometimes countered with extremely utopian and metaphysical postulates that may – at least according to their critics – pose a real threat to freedom and human rights. Some are blatantly totalitarian, citing the impotence of democracy in the face of the looming ecological disaster. As this article is descriptive and theoretical in nature, organizing knowledge in the field of the issues discussed, its author decided to refrain from formulating research hypotheses.

Keywords: environmental policy, sustainable development, environmental awareness, anthropocentrism, biocentrism

Streszczenie: Celem niniejszego artykułu jest omówienie podobieństw i różnic występujących pomiędzy autorami wybranych – najbardziej wpływowych – normatywnych koncepcji świadomości ekologicznej w zakresie postulowanych przez nich wizji organizacji życia państwa oraz społeczeństwa na rzecz przeciwdziałania kryzysowi środowiskowemu. W szczególności zaprezentowany zostanie ich stosunek wobec pożądanego w obliczu kryzysu środowiskowego ustroju państwa, ocen na temat techniki oraz technologii i oczekiwanych – w kontekście potrzeby dbałości o środowisko przyrodnicze – stylów życia społecznego. Podczas gdy zdecydowaną większość przywołanych w tekście autorów łączy przekonanie o konieczności ograniczenia konsumpcji, walki z dominacją destruktywnej i wyobcowującej człowieka od środowiska technosfery, a także oparcie polityki ochrony środowiska na motywacjach odnoszących się do wartości i potrzeb lokalnych wspólnot, to dzieli jednak szczegółowa wizja ustroju, na którym opierać się ma życie społeczne służące osiągnięciu powyżej zasygnalizowanych celów. Wizje tradycyjnych modeli praworządności i demokracji przeplatają się tu z jej skrajnie utopijnymi i metafizycznymi wersjami, postulatami stanowiącymi – zdaniem ich krytyków – realne zagrożenie dla wolności i praw człowieka, ale i jawnymi propozycjami nowych systemów totalitarnych, które wskazują jednocześnie na niemoc demokracji w obliczu zagrożenia katastrofą ekologiczną. Artykuł ma charakter opisowo-teoretyczny, porządkujący wiedzę w zakresie omawianej problematyki. Stąd też wynika decyzja autora o rezygnacji z formułowania hipotez badawczych.

Słowa kluczowe: polityka ekologiczna, zrównoważony rozwój, świadomość ekologiczna, antropocentryzm, biocentryzm

Introduction

Environmental awareness is a term whose gaining in importance in social life has reflected the intensification of the global environmental crisis in the late 1960s and early 1970s. At that time, the international community started to identify environmental problems as threats to human civilization, and academics in the field of the humanities and social sciences began researching human attitudes towards the natural environment and devising programs of socio-ecological practice. Their rich output allows distinguishing descriptive and normative models of defining ecological awareness (Burger 1986, 376; Papuzinski 1998, 209-223; Tyburski 1998, 100-101; Mirowski 1999, 9-17; Poskrobko 2001, 30-34; Fudali and Smolinska 2015, 41-46).

According to descriptive approaches, environmental awareness is a set of explicit or latent attitudes, based on specific knowledge, intuition, values, sensitivity and experience, generating: a) relatively stable beliefs, judgments and assessments about nature, human relation with nature and human impact on nature; b) feelings connected with nature, human relation with nature, and behaviours towards it; and c) predispositions to certain behaviours towards nature, between which there is a certain relationship of internal consistency and a certain convergence with actual behaviour. This definition allows to answer the question of what the environmental awareness of society is.

In contrast, normative models serve to determine in what direction environmental awareness should develop in the face of the global environmental crisis. In this approach, environmental awareness is defined in terms of the desired state that can be achieved by axiological transformations in the organization of social life or culture. Not infrequently, these concepts are also radical and, as a result, arouse controversy and criticism.

Therefore, in the face of the growing consequences of the environmental crisis, they are worth recalling and subjecting to further

analysis. The Covid-19 pandemic or Russia's aggression against Ukraine have shown that a single government press conference can shut down free and democratic societies; that a decision by one man and one state can turn peace into war and renew the fear of a nuclear winter; that as humanity we are still not free from the predisposition to adopt extreme ideas and display radical and even violent behaviour; and that this predisposition grows with the sense of danger. The same dynamics of change is possible if the tipping points of the environmental crisis are crossed, bringing us ever closer to the catastrophe affecting the entire biosphere.

The aim of this article is to discuss the similarities and differences between the selected authors of the most influential and well-known – not only in scientific but also in mass culture discourse – normative concepts of environmental awareness in terms of their postulated visions of the organization of state and society life for environmental prevention. In particular, it presents their visions of the political system that would be best fitted to tackle the environmental crisis and the most desired lifestyles of individuals. As this article was intended to organize the knowledge of the issues discussed, its author decided to refrain from formulating research hypotheses.

1. Environmental crisis and democracy

According to the *Environmental Performance Index 2020: Global metrics for the environment: Ranking country performance on sustainability issues*, the effectiveness of environmental policies depends not only on the level of wealth but also on the degree of consolidation and the internalization of democratic patterns of a given country. The authors of the report point to factors such as the rule of law, developed and active civil society, media pluralism, economic freedom, political stability, low level of corruption, and well-drafted and enforced laws (Trempala 2021, 160-162).

However, although mature democracies are best at dealing with environmental challenges it does not mean that they have completely succeeded in coping with them. Their economies are still associated with a high level of consumption and growing demand for energy. Their efforts to improve the quality of the global environment appear to be counterbalanced or perhaps even irrelevant in the face of the ambitious but unpredictable environmental transformation in centrally managed China or the environmental ambiguity of the United States, where everything depends on whether the administration is Democratic or Republican (Trempała 2021, 162-170).

The problematic approach to the environmental crisis by the two major economic powers in the modern world has been accompanied by the growing global instability associated with pandemics, Russia's aggression against Ukraine, and the resulting economic crisis, which at this stage may hamper the readiness of poorer societies to pursue ambitious environmental goals. The instability that exacerbates the social effects of the environmental crisis may consequently lead to an even greater instability, a sense of insecurity, and the crisis of democracy. As Erich Fromm would put it, it intensifies the predisposition of society to escape from freedom – from loneliness and insecurity under the protective wings of dictators and totalitarian ideologies.

Such a scenario is opposed primarily by proponents of building a foundation of environmental awareness based on normative reformist programs, that is, programs that do not call for the rejection or far-reaching transformation of the existing cultural norms of the Western world.

A British philosopher, Roger Scruton notices the weaknesses of democratic regimes in the context of centralized, international environmental politics. As he points out, democracies most often achieve social equilibrium under the conditions of economic growth but not in recession. Meanwhile, most international solutions – such as those

to counter the climate crisis – are based on the principles of sacrificing some of their material comforts to combat environmental problems. As a result, many politicians find it difficult to sign on to regulations that may cost them the electoral votes of their supporters. Scruton refers to this condition as *organized hesitation* which paralyzes the decision-making process in the field of environmental improvement (Scruton 2017, 20-23, 96-101).

Scruton is also an advocate of economic freedom, citing the environmental degradation in centrally managed economies, where large corporations were owned by the state and controlled by its monopoly. The public control of these companies was virtually non-existent, especially when the diagnosis and elimination of problems contradicted the political goals of those in power or the dominant ideology (Scruton 2017, 15-17). In contrast, economic freedom can be effectively controlled, and environmental costs can be reduced by implementing the rule of law and building motivations based on nurturing oikophilia – love and a sense of responsibility for home, common territory, and state (Scruton 2017, 23-27, 32, 41, 245). According to Scruton, a British conservative, this collective responsibility is most developed in democratic and prosperous states; at the same time, these countries should not shy from taking responsibility for the current environmental crisis (Scruton 2017, 373-375).

A French philosopher, Luc Ferry also advocated a decidedly democratic and humanistic approach to environmental protection. According to him, the postulates of radical ecological movements – especially deep ecology – pose the risk of the rise of new totalitarianism. He claimed that through the slogans of equal rights for non-human living beings and even inanimate nature, revolutionary ecology leads to the rejection of the values and sources of Western civilization, urging the construction of a new culture that will combine romantic dreams of a conservative revolution, hatred

of modernity, and the progressive visions of anti-capitalist revolution (Ferry 1995, 67-91).

According to Ferry, this form of anti-humanism, anti-modernism, and unreflective sanctification of nature, which is also based on neglecting even the fact that nature can threaten humans in certain situations, may lead to placing the rights of nature above human rights. This means a return to the fascist or communist models of political life hidden under the catchy slogans of saving the planet. For the French philosopher, democratic ecology cannot be devoid of the humanist tradition he identified as anti-Cartesian anthropocentrism. As he wrote: "The external critiques of the liberal universe, those made in the name of a radically different other world, whether past or future, risk leading again to the worrisome seductions of the various totalitarianisms. The internal critique, the critique of democracy, real and imperfect as it is, in the name of its promises and its own principles, is, by definition, the only critique that remains compatible with the requirements of democracy" (Ferry 1995, 125).

Political convictions of both reformist ecologists and representatives of deep ecology were in turn criticized by Murray Bookchin – the founder of social ecology, one of the currents of eco-anarchism. In his opinion, both these groups are linked by equally far-reaching extremism and hierarchical mentality. However, while the representatives of anti-ecological forces or anthropocentric ethics postulate slogans of man's domination over nature, the supporters of biocentric democracy (as he called the system proposed by deep ecologists based on egalitarian biocentrism), on the contrary, proclaim the need for humankind to submit to nature. While the reformist branch of the ecological movement tries to pursue its goals based on the principles of parliamentary democracy and forgetting that capitalism and the state are the cause of deep ecological problems, the radical current tries to turn the environmental issues

into a new, anti-humanist quasi-theology. Bookchin emphasizes that the prerequisite for overcoming ecological problems is, in the first place, building harmony between people by rejecting the hierarchical mentality and existing conflicts resulting from the division into classes, gender, ethnic groups or nationality. This ideal of freedom could be attained by introducing the principles of direct democracy (Bookchin 2009, 28-55).

The guarantor of a society-wide consensus in the context of overcoming existing social conflicts would be assemblies confederated with each other, formed at different levels of the functioning of social groups – a building, a neighbourhood, a city. For Bookchin, their direct participation in decision-making processes is the essence of democracy. Administration by popular mandate could be carried out by councils, commissions, or collectives, which, even when subject to elective rights, would remain under strict public control (Bookchin 2009, 172-176). This process, however, should not involve a departure from classical Enlightenment ideals which, at the same time, must not be distorted by the capitalist commodification of human relations or mechanization of reality. The reconstruction of society must be based on the potential of thought, feelings, ethical judgments, a rational social order, the pursuit of stable relations with nature, the immersion of humanity in the light of reason and empathy, unity in diversity, the strengthening of wholeness through its diverse components, and trans-classism (Bookchin 2009, 164-169). What is worth noting at this point, however, is that some representatives of anarchism have referred to Bookchin's social ecology as "an authoritarian democratic utopia" (Malendowicz 2013, 285-287).

The radicalism of deep ecology is also emphasized by one of the precursors of ecophilosophy, Henryk Skolimowski. American representatives of deep ecology have accused him that his concept changes nothing in the context of the human privilege

over nature since it is based on the hitherto dominant anthropocentric perspective. Skolimowski responded by accusing them that their arrogance and support for extreme environmental organizations negatively affect the image of all currents of ecological philosophy in the world (Skolimowski 2001a, 59-61). At the same time, he mentioned that: "(...) environmentalism can in no way be a terror, for it is ultimately a messenger of love" (Skolimowski 2001a, 60).

According to Skolimowski, the highest form of government and the highest form of democracy is cosmocracy (Skolimowski 2003, 133-151). It can be achieved through building ecocracy, a system based on the recognition that not only the human species, but also other living beings have the status of persons and are endowed with a divine spirit, and as such they deserve respect. In turn, cosmocracy can be attained by generalizing the ideas of ecocracy, i.e., when we again recognize that the universe is the source of all power, and its sanctification is ingrained in political systems. In this way, Skolimowski argues, we can recognize that democracy and freedom are not for a handful of chosen nations, but for the entire universe. This system is supposed to be based on an understanding of the world as a sanctuary in which man temporarily resides and for which he should care; on environmental thinking involving a holistic view of reality, reverence for every life, and the recognition of the value and beauty of all beings; and on the participation in creation, individual experience and social solidarity. All these elements lead to a sense of responsibility not only for the planet but for the entire universe.

Contrary to the accusations that deep ecology is fascinated by and inclined toward anti-modern, authoritarian or even totalitarian political models, its precursors clearly declared that dictatorship cannot be the condition for the realization of even the most extreme demands, e.g., the need for reducing the human population (Devall and Sessions 1994, 105-106). After all,

decentralization, lack of hierarchy, democracy, and leadership based on leading by example rather than power, are the main elements of the tradition of alternative communities – considered the most appropriate by deep ecologists (Devall and Sessions 1994, 35-37). It is worth remembering, however, that Arne Naess, the founder of deep ecology, treated it as a general framework for various ecosophical systems and this open formula resulted in a rather heterogeneous community of thinkers. Its negative image was determined by the fact that it was invoked by extreme environmental organizations, such as *Earth First* or *the Earth Liberation Front* (frequently accused of terrorism,) and figures such as Norwegian philosopher Frank Walter Zapffe and Finnish eco-fascist Pentti Linkola.

Zapffe's thought is associated with deep ecology primarily because of the long friendship he shared with Arne Naess. In his biosophical approach, Zapffe pointed out that human awareness of mortality has developed to such an extent that human life has become an escape from it through coping mechanisms. For the aware, the fullness of awareness means tragedy, living in a world of abstract categories, such as the meaning of life, justice, which do not exist in reality. As he wrote (Zapffe 2013, 18): "As long as humankind blunders along under the dire misconception that we are biologically preordained to conquer the earth, no alleviation of our angst for life is possible. As the number of people on the earth grows, the spiritual atmosphere will become tighter, and defense mechanisms will have to become ever more brutal." According to Zapffe, the only solution to this situation is to refrain from procreation and to leave the earth in silence after the human species is gone (Zapffe 2013, 19).

Linkola was not only an anti-natalist who advocated birth licensing along the lines of the infamous police of the communist regime in China; he also saw the point of wars only if they hit populations of women capable of procreation, and he called the human

species a monstrous error of evolution, a cancer of this world, an unfortunate accident, *homo insipiens* (Linkola 2011, 153-155, 167-168). The Finnish ecologist was also an opponent of democracy as a ruling system under the threat of ecological disaster. He referred to it as a religion of death, a source propelling the world toward extinction. He advocated the centralization of power in the hands of a narrow elite with the competence to rule for the common good. He argued that just as only a few have the talent to be experts in particular areas of life, so this principle also applies to issues of managing the organization of social life. In his view, personal freedom and democracy cause greater but more rapid environmental disasters than any form of dictatorship which allows for greater control over the actions of individuals and individual actors involved in environmental destruction (Linkola 2011, 38, 168-169).

He saw the only chance to save the life of the human species in centralized power and control over citizens. Compared to the previously quoted authors, Linkola seemed to overlook the destructive nature of authoritarian socialist systems. His model of organizing the state for a controlled future is an overtly totalitarian and oppressive project toward people, which places this Finnish thinker among the most radical representatives of revolutionary ecology.

2. Decentralization, technology, and lifestyle

The postulate of decentralization unites the convictions of most of the aforementioned authors of normative concepts of environmental awareness. They also share the criticism of the consumer lifestyle and the domination of technology in contemporary culture and its negative impact on the natural environment. In this case, however, they also differ in the scope and radicality of the postulated solutions.

According to Scruton, the sentiment of oikophilia should be defended against the wars waged against it by oikophobia and

technophilia (Scruton 2017, 32, 234-269). According to Scruton, oikophobia is a culture, created in the late 20th century under the guise of political correctness, of denying traditional values rooted in societies, especially values such as home, family, and nation, which are fundamentally important in terms of finding individual motivations for pro-environmental actions. Technophilia, on the other hand, manifests itself in the loss of contemporary societies in a peculiar dichotomy between techno-optimism, the constant belief that technological progress will solve all environmental problems, and the increasing, amplified by consumerism, confusion of individuals in a world of gadgets and machines that take control and become addictive. For some, they are an escape from life and its demands, while for others they lead to a sense of homelessness or lack of shelter. Scruton, however, does not advocate giving up even the most controversial nuclear or geoengineering technologies that could help solve some environmental problems. His convictions are accompanied by the maxim that to save everything, one can risk nothing; on the contrary, to save something, one must risk everything. The excessive, even radical, caution inherent in the precautionary principle, in his view, inhibits innovations that are important for dealing with the environmental crisis (Scruton 2017, 115-132).

Scruton saw a chance for the implementation of effective environmental actions based on the ideas of oikophilia in local civic associations – devoid of political ambitions and outside the leadership and control of the state – or, as he called them, referring to the words of Edmund Burke, little platoons (Scruton 2017, 33-41). He was also a proponent of inhibiting unrestricted settlement sprawl, which leads to the disappearance of traditional settlement patterns. He advocated for the development of local food economies, removing regulations that make it difficult for farmers and small producers to compete effectively with supermarkets. Also important to Scruton

was an attitude that sanctified home, landscape, and beauty – patterns that evoke the memory of our sense of attachment and motivate us to protect what is ours (Scruton 2017, 268-269, 353-376). Nurturing the sense of oikophilia must also take into account the processes of demographics and migration. The latter – caused, among other things, by the deficit of hands for work in developed countries struggling with the low birth rate and the aging population – should be limited by extending the retirement age and creating incentives for older people to work. This should avoid passing on the costs of maintaining societies to future generations. For newcomers, on the other hand, integration activities should be implemented to instil a sense of attachment and love for their new home (Scruton 2017, 367).

Criticism of the consumer lifestyle, domination of technology over man, or praise of decentralization and entrusting decisions to those communities that are most affected by them are also present in Luc Ferry's works. However, these processes should be regulated by democratic mechanisms and not by appealing to the material world, biosphere, or the Universe as ethical models to follow. And so, for example, instead of fighting for total self-governance and self-sufficiency, which, according to the French philosopher, is impossible to achieve, we should focus more on expanding local autonomy, e.g., fighting for an extension of the referendum held on a grassroots initiative. The French philosopher sees no contradiction between increasing the demands of environmental ethics and reconciling them with democracy and humanism (Ferry 1995, 120-135).

Also interesting is James Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis, which assumed that the Earth together with all the life functioning in the biosphere is a huge super being with internal self-regulating properties. Also accused of depreciating the value of the human species in the context of its role on the planet, the concept presented Gaia as a personal entity where humankind is just

one of its elements which needs Gaia in order to survive, but not the other way round. This, however, does not change the fact that human activities threaten not only the current forms of life, but also the very existence of Gaia. Hence the proposed principle according to which man has no special rights but only duties towards the biosphere (Lovelock 2003, 8). This way of approaching the place of man in nature is not infrequently associated with accusations directed at Lovelock's beliefs that they situate man only in the category of a pest, a "weed" in the biosphere (Majcherek 2015, 56). What sets the human species apart from other entities, however, in his view, is the ability to collect, store, process, and use the information to manipulate the environment. The problem is that, while rural or tribal life remains in numerous interactions with the living and non-living environment allowing for the correction of attitudes in situations of conflict between the community and Gaia, urban lifestyle involves a very limited information flow from the biosphere (Lovelock 2003, 143-144). In this sense, his beliefs correspond to the postulates of basing social relations and realizing the needs of human collectivities under the conditions of decentralization, bioregionalization or permaculture.

According to Lovelock (2003, 146-147), the key to understanding Gaia, and thus maintaining her in a favourable, stable condition necessary for human life, is a constant flow of reliable information about all aspects of the world around us. The British scholar also rejects any possibility of giving up the technosphere, the escape from which would currently mean suicide. However, we should bet on alternative, self-sustaining technologies, which are in harmony with the Earth's resources and possibilities. Nor did he oppose the development of nuclear energy.

The latter was demonized by Murray Bookchin. He pointed out that it was turning the Earth into one big atomic bomb. However, he was critical of the entire

contemporary technological base of society. According to the American thinker, capitalism has turned technology into a source for pursuing selfish interests. Instead, he advocated innovative, human- and nature-friendly machines that could optimize the production process and increase the quality and durability of manufactured goods. Thanks to them, man could free himself from excessive work, in return gaining time for himself as an individual and citizen serving his community (Bookchin 2009, 181-198).

As shown in earlier sections, Bookchin was also a fierce advocate of self-government. In Bookchin's vision, a system based on confederative relations between municipalities – so-called libertarian municipalism – is the proper way for the emergence of regional power based on bonds and common life interests, while the need to rescale communities to match the natural capabilities of the regions in which they are located and to build a new balance between the city and the countryside is one of the main ecological imperatives (Bookchin 2009, 177-182). The American philosopher opposed large urban agglomerations that alienate society from the natural environment and intensify its destruction. In his opinion, small cities make it possible to realize the ideal of freedom and to satisfy the most basic needs in harmony with the natural environment. He also warned against the urbanization of rural areas, perceiving this phenomenon not only as a threat to unique agricultural communities but also to the natural landscape. The municipalized economy would be oriented toward the production of durable, high-quality products, the rotation of labour between the town and the country, and the various activities of the day. Resources would be integrated into a confederal system. Control over them would be exercised by assemblies of free people. The ecological society would consist of medium-sized communes made up of smaller communal holdings, and their activities would be planned and adapted to the conditions of the region

taking into account non-human life forms and natural balances (Bookchin 2009, 187-198).

The views of Henryk Skolimowski are slightly different in this respect. In his ethical program, humanity should adopt a new way of life based on respect for the cosmos, the entire universe – a sanctuary, a habitat for each of us. Living in reverence for the cosmos will, as already mentioned, constitute the highest level of development of freedom and democracy. As far as the lifestyle of consumption is concerned, Skolimowski, similar to the aforementioned authors of the other normative models of ecological awareness, postulated a reorientation of human attitudes from 'having' to 'being'. He was a strong critic of contemporary technology, which he saw as economically counterproductive and ecologically ruinous, while making humans addicted to it. His concept of ecological humanism presupposes a new kind of technology, which should be based on the idea of economy, processing of secondary raw materials, and reverence for nature (Skolimowski 2001b, 221-225).

The idea of decentralization, basing social relations on local communities, grassroots initiatives, opposition to hierarchization of power, putting quality of life and satisfaction of modest material needs above consumerism, not limiting wealth and diversity of life forms except in special life situations – these are the main assumptions of deep ecology from the Norwegian thought of Arne Naess and its more extreme, Californian school represented by Bill Devall and George Sessions. As indicated earlier, however, deep ecology has been an open source of inspiration for more specific programs of ecological practices of social life, varying in their radicality. It is worth recalling at this point the beliefs of Pentti Linkola, who, although he referred to himself as a deep ecologist, is more often referred to as an eco-fascist.

In Linkola's case, state self-sufficiency was to be based on the self-sufficiency of each

household. Food production would be carried out by neighbouring local communities, mainly through the physical labour of human hands and horses. Produced goods would be of high quality and durable, and food would have a long shelf life through natural processes of salting, pickling, and drying. Individual life would be centred around the family home, one neighbourhood, with all services available nearby, fossil fuels would be banned, hydroelectric power plants (power dams) would be destroyed, and energy consumption would be limited. He recommended the use of wind turbines to a limited extent. Heat would be ensured primarily by wearing warm clothes and fireplaces. Any excess carbon emissions would be absorbed by the 330 cubic meters of forest for every hectare of land area in the country (Linkola 2011, 186-190).

The economy would be based on the logic that a need precedes a product, and not a product precedes a need. In Linkola's state, no one was to go hungry, but the issue of obesity or any waste of food would be non-existent. In an ecological society there is no place for large private enterprises, media pluralism, sciences, and fields of study engaged in education for the purposes of business, competition, and commercial endeavours. Education should be about teaching practical skills (food processing) and creating biases towards technology. Universities would be permitted to deal with humanities and natural sciences. The Finnish conservationist could not imagine an ecological prevention state without art and music. The minister of education would decide which literary publications would appear on the market (Linkola 2011, 192-198). Linkola's world is a closed world – without private, mechanized transportation, global tourism, extensive international relations, migration, full of controls in which almost every area of life is subject to licensing and limits. As he underlined: "We still have a chance to be cruel. But if we are not cruel today, all is lost." (Penttilinkola.com 2022).

Conclusion

The selected normative models of environmental awareness and social practice presented in this article are united by at least three goals. At a general level, the intention of all the authors mentioned is a concern for the future of the planet and the survival of human life on Earth. The reorientation of attitudes from 'having' to 'being' is certainly a common postulate. Also common is the criticism of the domination of modern technology over man and the negative assessment of its destructive influence on nature. The authors quoted in the text are also united by the slogan of basing environmental protection policy on local communities. They talk about effective fulfilment of human needs in harmony with nature in a way that is adequate to their specific character to the place of residence – which is supposed to increase individual motivation to act and limit mobility, transport and consequently consumption, use of energy, fossil fuels and preference for large-scale production in favour of greater self-sufficiency of households, villages, and towns. However, they differ in their views on how to implement these solutions and, above all, on how to apply them within a defined political system.

Scruton proposes a conservative approach based on the activities of small civic associations, the rule of law, and oikophilia – the attachment to one's place of origin, small homelands, and the nation-state. The question that arises here, however, is whether, in a world of global environmental crisis, such motivation will not become a source of local selfishness in which to recognize and solve one's own environmental problems, while avoiding shared responsibility for the consequences of environmental destruction where states are less likely to identify them. Is the strength of the community of law-abiding states that the British thinker points to sufficient to overcome the aforementioned crisis without the cooperation and involvement of the countries that Scruton excludes from the group

capable of awakening collective responsibility, namely China, Russia, and African or Middle Eastern states?

Similar doubts can be formulated about the theses of Luc Ferry, for whom the environmental policy will be effective only under conditions of democracy, humanistic values, identified by him with the anthropocentric paradigm of human exceptionalism. Cannot biocentric ecology be democratic, and is democracy the only way to overcome the vision of ecological disaster? Neither do the creators of revolutionary concepts provide answers to these questions. Bookchin was aware that his vision of an extremely decentralized representative democracy was utopian. His thought was guided by one principle: utopia or destruction of the basis of human existence on the planet. Skolimowski's metaphysical cosmocracy as the highest form of democracy is also questionable. For as Krzysztof Kilian (2005, 325-330) rightly points out, if the universe is a sanctuary, then there is a risk that sooner or later priests will appear to show us the ways to live. The same doubts also apply to Gaia Lovelock's concept of the confessional potential of sanctifying the titular super-being. Although it is worth mentioning at this point that Lovelock describes the future of the planet as a cybernetically-based epoch of the Novacene, in which cyborgs will stand at the gate and observe humans, just as humans observe plants – a reality in which the biological world will not disappear, but it will be less fundamental than now.

Neither can deep ecology be defended against accusations of promoting solutions contrary to democratic principles. Although its precursors warned that the implementation of their proposals must be free of tyranny and dictatorship and they advocated decentralization and openness to diversity, the formula of deep ecology, flexible in principle, is an inspiration for the representatives of radical environmentalism, supporters of centralization of power, anti-modernism, and anti-natalism. A case in point is Pentti

Linkola, who invokes the ideas of deep ecology, and his model of state control that is obviously unacceptable from the point of view of the values of Western civilization, supporters of the rule of law, human rights, and sustainable development based on ethics. But perhaps this program should be taken as a warning of what might happen if the escalating effects of the environmental crisis cross a tipping point where the aggregation of fear and social anxiety leads to moral anomie and the implementation of extreme policies. How and when will this happen, and if at all, and who will be those who reach for power then? This question is also left unanswered by Linkola but it seems that everything must be done to avoid this scenario.

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