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ISSUES OF ENVIRONMENTAL (IR)RESPONSIBILITY

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Abstract

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In this paper the author reflects the questions of humans' relationship to the environment and of their ecological behaviour that becomes together with the development of modern technologies increasingly relevant just as the question whether humans are able to affect fundamentally the environment on the Earth by their activities. According to some authors (e.g. Ehrlich, 1968; Gore, 2006; Wilson, 1995; Winter, Koger, 2009; Šmajs, 2005) human survival is directly connected with people's relationship to the nature; but other influential authors have contradictory opinions or they are at least afraid of overestimation of ecological activities that can lead to neglecting of other important problems (e.g. Simon, 1981; Goklany, 2007; Lomborg, 2007; Klaus, 2007, 2009).
These issues are dealt in this article mainly from the perspective of psychological theories and concepts – the Freud's concept of unconsciousness is discussed as well as groupthink, theory of dissonance, contingency trap, Milgram's theory of autonomous and agentic state of consciousness, group and intergroup behaviour, social dilemma – tragedy of the commons.
Achieving a sustainable way of life depends on the equilibrium between consumption of individuals and regenerative abilities of the natural environment. However, people still behave as if they were separated from the nature. The linking axis of this article is the question of psychic powers causing individual and collective ecological (ir)responsibility and the resulting consequences.

environmentalism, ecopsychology, paradigm, sustainable development, pseudo-ecology, global solution, responsibility

1 AIM AND METHODS

The aim of this paper is a critical evaluation of relation of human to its environment, to the nature. This issue can be viewed from many perspectives – ecological, environmentalistic, political, economic, philosophical, psychological etc. In this article psychological aspects of this problem are highlighted, but elaborating this text I realized that they cannot be solved separately, that is why in the opening part of this study important terms and concepts are defined as well as the neverending dilemma of human ability to influence fundamentally the changes in the nature is mentioned here. The core of this paper is devoted to psychological aspects that cause that some people have tendency to environmentally protective behaviour while the others feel to be separated from nature or even to be superior to it. These questions are set into the political and economical frame and behind the lines is emphasized that for understanding human behaviour to the nature is required more than the knowledge of separated disciplines.

This paper was based mainly on analysis of written sources using a comparative approach enriched by the author's notes and comments.

2 DEFINITION OF BASIC TERMS AND CONCEPTS

To be able to speak about issues of environmental responsibility or irresponsibility we have to mention basic terms, concepts and paradigms that create platform for – in many times different – attitudes and conclusions.

Environmentalism[1] is a philosophy, ideology, social and political movement whose central topic is the relationship of humankind to the environment. Environmentalism strives to change the social, political and economic mechanisms that damage the environment. The origins of environmentalism as a political theory were set in the 60th of 20th century, when scientists and populists began to point to an impending population explosion. Environmentalism often comes into opinion conflict with proponents of freedom as basic value of humans. So we can see on the one hand often very suggestive efforts drawing attention to a deteriorating quality of the environment due to human activities and to proposals of various ecological arrangements, and on the other hand endeavours emphasizing human freedom and the danger of misuse of environmental activities for economic and political manipulation with consequences of limitation of human freedom.

The representative of the first approach is one of the founders of environmentalism Paul Ehrlich, who in his book "The Population Bomb"[2] (Ehrlich, 1968) warned of a population explosion and predicted that in the 70th of 20th century massive starvation in the world will start and millions of people die of hunger. (Of course the failure of this prediction was later attacked by his opponents, including Václav Klaus). Another important representative of ecological activities is former candidate for U.S. president – Al Gore – who in his book "An Inconvenient Truth" (Gore, 2006) and in his presentations suggestively warns against "the worst disaster in human history" – which is undoubtedly meant an ecological disaster mainly caused by **global warming**.[3]

Environmental activities have their support even in philosophical works, for example Šmajs (2005) puts into contradiction "natural evolution" that created the universe and "the evolution of anti-natural human culture" – this ontic conflict of culture and nature is, according to Šmajs, the deepest essence of the current ecological crisis. "People uncritically admire culture, and on the contrary, they consider the nature to be useless, boring and uninteresting" Šmajs (2005, p.7). "But the 'romantic' idea of nature as infinitely loving mother that all human activities willingly accepts and endures, and does not punish them evilly is unsustainable. Development of cultural being is aimed against the creativity of natural evolution; this development destroys the most precious values of nature and causes impairment of values of natural being" Šmajs (2005, p. 11). These values of natural being represented by **biological diversity (biodiversity)**, which is now reduced the most quickly since the natural disasters at the end of the Mesozoic, which killed the dinosaurs (Wilson, 1995).

Contradictorily, Klaus (see below) assigns an insignificant value to biodiversity (and thus also to its reduction) and considers also the question of values; according to him they are likewise biodiversity indefinable without human subject and they have no sense – the man attributes the sense to all values (Klaus, 2007, 2009). Klaus and other authors with similar paradigm are afraid of abuse "conservation" for promoting of various political and economic arrangements. Klaus in his book "Blue, not Green Planet" points out the possibility of this negative impact already in the subtitle of the book: "What is Endangered: Climate or Freedom?", and he highlights the lack of scientific evidence confirming the influence of human activities on global warming.

The polemic issue is also the depletion of exhaustible natural resources (which are non-renewable) and from the point of view of the anti-environmentalists these resources are only potential because the meaning, respectively the usability, is given to them only the human and their technology that is constantly evolving and with this development "new" resources are "discovered". This idea is elaborated in Simon's book "The Ultimate Resource" (Simon, 1981) where the ultimate resource is represented by human and their ability to transform potential resources into real. Similarly, a few years ago mass media published a statement of Sheikh Zaki Yamani[4] (which is an evident paraphrase of the ideas of Goklany, 2007 and Lomborg, 2007; author's note): "The Stone Age did not end for lack of stone, and the Oil Age will end long before the world runs out of oil" (www.economist.com).[5]

Also Lomborg (2007) in his book "The Sceptical Environmentalist" says that things are getting better, not worse. The life expectancy increases, infant mortality declines and the prosperity rises.

1 Environmentalism emphasizes the preservation, restoration and/or improvement of the natural environment, and may be called as a movement to control pollution. Concepts such as a land ethic, environmental ethics, biodiversity, ecology and the biophilia hypothesis (Wilson, 1984) are relevant in this context. */author's note/*

2 Paul R. Ehrlich wrote this book together with his wife, Anne Ehrlich, but she is quoted as a co-author in later editions. */author's note/*

3 **Global warming** (and the **depletion of nonrenewable resources**) has become the most topical issue of environmentalists and ecologists currently. */author's note/*

4 **Ahmed Zaki Yamani** (born 1930) is a Saudi Arabian politician who was Minister of Oil (Petroleum) and Mineral Resources from 1962 to 1986, and a minister in OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) for 25 years. */author's note/*

5 However, if the abovementioned authors are wrong and people do not invented new technologies using "new" natural resources to replace those depleted ones, it will be difficult to find a consolation in these theories. */author's note/*

Lomborg's main argument is that vast majority of environmental problems such as pollution, water shortages, deforestation, and species loss as well as population growth, hunger, and AIDS, are area-specific and highly correlated with poverty. Therefore, challenges to human prosperity are essentially logistical matters, and can be solved largely through economic and social development. Concerning problems that are more pressing at the global level, such as the depletion of fossil fuels and global warming, Lomborg argues that these issues are often overstated and that recommended policies are often inappropriate if assessed against alternatives.

Lomborg argues that scientists – conservationists, environmentalists and ecologists – work on the assumption based on exaggerated and sometimes even falsified information about global environmental problems, which is exactly the same accusation that these scientists ascribe to Lomborg (Winter, Koger, 2009).

We can see that the environmental activities are viewed from two totally different paradigms and the aim of this paper is not to find arguments in favour of one or the other, but to consider the psychological phenomena causing that humans like predators fundamentally change the environment and with this attempt their own survival tries to ignore the nature or solve the ecological problems only utilitaristicly with the effort to overshadow the economic or political profit of these activities.

3 ECOLOGICAL BEHAVIOUR IN PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTEXT

The theme of the nature and the environment becomes an important issue for psychology in the early twenties of the last century. First, psychologists focused more on the impact of environment on humans (J. B. Watson, K. Lewin, E. Brunswik). Environmentally oriented researchers recognized the need to explore the relationship between environmental stimuli and human reactions, and use this knowledge to solve current problems (Výrost, Slaměník, 1998).

Thus, the discipline, which is called environmental psychology, is established and at that time it is defined as a study of the influence of environment on the human psyche. Since the early seventies of the 20th century the environmental movement has been formed and the issues related to the protection of the environment also began to be asked by some psychologists – gradually "ecological psychology", "conservation psychology", "psychology of environmental problems" and "psychology of sustainable development" came into existence. For all these disciplines there are common themes expressing human's relationship to the nature.

For this relationship between human and nature we can find two different approaches in the literature:

a) the human is an exogenous factor for the nature; which means that the human is an external factor for the nature and is able to change it (to destroy, "to save" it etc.);
b) the human an endogenous factor in relation to the nature, i.e. the human is a part of the nature (which however in my opinion cannot be a paradigm for excuses of all bad human deeds and actions in their relation to the nature).

As we can see both these approaches can be used within the ecological efforts or misused in the context of "pseudoecological" activities, in which beautiful speeches about the protection of nature only hide economic and political objectives. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to distinguish one from the other not only for the concerned ones but especially for bystanders. Moreover, even good intentions may be based on false premises; nothing to say about the power of our unconsciousness (see below).

If we look at the human psyche from the perspective of **psychoanalysis**, we can see that under the visible part of the imaginary iceberg illustrating our personality a much larger part is hidden, i.e. our unconscious, which can sometimes give unexpected turn to our decisions and actions. In the context of relation human – environment would be appropriate to underline here Freud's concept of **eros** versus **thanatos**.[6] The terms eros and thanatos originally come from Greek mythology and Freud used these mythical figures for description of the life and death drives that co-exist within the psyche. Eros represents the sexual drive, life, creative forces, growth, productivity, construction and increase of tension; eros inspires us to strive for individual happiness and realize our wishes. It drives living organisms to develop. Thanatos represents the effort to eliminate all tensions, and it heads for dissolution, negation, destructiveness and death. Thanatos drives us toward a return to the inorganic. We are constantly stimulated and driven into action by a balance of these energies. Both fundamental drives are empowered by libido energy. According to Freud, these two forces fight each other, and their conflict and interaction determine the development of individual life and culture.

For one of the options how to explain the destructive tendencies that are concealed in humans Freud's concept of thanatos can be used, which is in

6 The terms Eros and Thanatos originally come from Greek mythology. Eros was the God of love and desire; it has been argued that Eros has two possible origins: the first theory states that Eros was the son of the Goddess Aphrodite. The second suggests that "Eros emerged from Chaos…along with Gaia (the Earth) and Tartarus (the Underword)." Thanatos, in contrast to Eros, was the Greek God of death and the son of Nyx (the Goddess of night).

this theory inextricably linked with eros, that is (or) should be a creative force, but humans' creativity is a problematic aspect for the nature even if it is associated with the best intentions, without the intervention of unconscious destructive forces. Positives of eros can be seen in the source of our philosophic or religious explorations and in the urge for self-actualization provided it is connected with positive ethical values.

Humans are social creatures and carry out most of their activities together with other individuals who may ultimately affect their decisions. The psychological literature often mentions the term **groupthink**, which is related mainly to political causes, but it can be applied to group decisions with environmental impacts. The principle of this phenomenon lies in the fact that the group is closed to relevant and objective information from the outside and consequently takes decisions which catastrophically fail.

The **illusion of invulnerability** is one of symptoms of groupthink. It is connected with excessive optimism that encourages members of the group to take extreme risks. So people overestimate their „immunity" to threats in many situations. This symptom is interconnected with **rationalization**.

The classic example often cited in the literature is a crisis in the Bay of Pigs (1962). After this military fiasco J. F. Kennedy (the president of U.S.A. that time) took action that led to the new decision strategy: supporting free expression of ideas, openness to information, the occasional absence of authority (the president) in the decision making process, the role of "devil's advocate" (i.e. the opponent or critic of the authority). In the case of environmental management decisions should be incorporated the role of "devil's advocate", i.e. of a critic who should defend environmental interests (which are however often in a discord with the economic interests of the company).

Similar phenomena like groupthink are obedience and conformity. **Obedience** is primarily known from experiments of Milgram (1963) and Hofling (1966 in Hayes, 2007), when most of the participants were willing to obey at the first sight unreasonable order of authority even if it was contrary to their conscience. Also studies of **conformity** (Sherif, 1935, Asch 1951 in Hewstone, Stroebe 2006) show how difficult it is to resist authority, or more precisely in these cases, to group pressure and keep own opinion. For environmental or ecological education is a positive finding that the mere knowledge of these experiments reduced the conformity of the research participants in some subsequent experiments; and thus we can assume that training of resisting the group pressure should have positive results. But the question remains whether the corporate culture will sometimes reach such an eco-ethical level to be interested in education and training of their employees in resisting the pressure of the group, pointless conformity or obedience, and if environmental/ ecological aspects will be sometimes superior to economic aims and, if we do not get rather stuck in what Baum (1994) called "contingency trap" – that is a concept similar to the "social trap" – and expresses the difficulty to change our bad habits. We will not give up driving, using cosmetics tested on animals, etc. because we are lazy, we are accustomed to do it and it is convenient for us.

This issue of human selfishness and ruthlessness and its impact on the environment is elaborated in the concept "the **Tragedy of the Commons**" (Hardin, 1968). The tragedy of the commons represents the depletion of a shared resource by individuals, acting independently and rationally according to man's self-interest, despite their understanding that depleting of the common resource is contrary to the group's long-term best interests. The tragedy of the commons occurs when individuals neglect the well-being of society (or the group) in the pursuit of personal gain.

"The tragedy of the commons" is frequently cited as a consequence for policies which restrict private property and espouse expansion of public property. Hardin's proposals how to solve this tragedy emphasize private property put an accent on regulatory measures[7] (according to Hardin even freedom in the commons brings a ruin to all).

Both these proposals (private property and/ or regulations), however, have their weaknesses. We can be witnesses how various responsibility took the new owners to their possessions acquired in restitution, we can see that private ownership does not always correlate positively with the responsibility to this object, but that the desire for profit can on the contrary to devastate it (e.g. urban development on fertile soil, environmentally unsecured dump sites, junk yards in inappropriate places). And if we look at regulatory measures, we would get back into the vicious circle of bureaucracy, corruption that products **usefulness but in reality useless measures**.[8] Therefore, from the psychological point of view the issue of responsibility and conscience is further mentioned.

One of the main outcomes of famous Milgram's experiment with electroshocks (Milgram, 1963)[9] was the creation of agency theory in which Milgram

7 Legal aspects of this issue considers e.g. Jurčík (2007).

8 The question: what are the real environmental concerns, and what are mere meaningless measures, whose goals are only political and/or economic is a topic for endless debate. */author's note/*

9 Stanley Milgram was interested in how easily ordinary people could be influenced into committing atrocities for example, Germans in WWII.Milgram (1963) wanted to investigate whether Germans were particularly obedient to authority figures as this was a common explanation for the Nazi killings in World War II. He examined justifications

suggested two states in which people operate – the autonomous and agentic. In autonomous state individuals make decisions based on their own ideas, beliefs and experiences. In agentic state individuals give up their own responsibility, even if they had to act in contrary to their own values, and they only obey superiors. When people shift from the autonomous state to the agentic state (the agentic shift) they give up their responsibility and follow orders without considering adequacy and the consequences of the request. This diffusion of responsibility means that the person no longer monitors their own behaviour. Milgram believed that his participants were 'just following orders' and did not consider themselves to be responsible; his participants even sighed with relief when the experimenter said: "I am responsible for what happens here."

Agency theory also explains why some people do not obey – they have remained in the autonomous state (or they shift back to it from agentic state) where they are able to make informed decisions about how to behave in concordance with their values and consciousness. A weakness of this theory is, however, the difficulty to verify the 'shift', experimentally reveal the processes involved in the shifts. Another weak point of this theory is the possibility of misuse of it for the excuse of all bad deeds committed on orders of authorities.

Milgram's theory was developed for other purposes (see note), but it can be successfully applied to any explanation of absurd obedience to authority, when orders are inconsistent with the ethical standards of his subordinates (e.g. for explanation of anti-environmental behaviour in some companies).

The consequences of conflict between our attitudes, but also between our thoughts and actions are expressed in the **theory of cognitive dissonance** (Festinger, 1957). If we are in the state of cognitive dissonance, we experience unpleasant feelings of tension, which force us to take the necessary steps to reduce this tension. If a man has in his value system internalized ecological behaviour, and for some reason he made actions against these values and beliefs (for example, secretly exported waste into wood), usually he has three options how to deal with cognitive dissonance which strikingly reminiscent of bad conscience (Dundelová, 2011):

He/she can take away this (and possibly other) waste from the forest; although it sounds simple in reality it is the unlikeliest way of coping with cognitive dissonance, because in this case people have to denounce their previous bad behaviour and thus suffers their self-esteem, thus we meet with this response, I dare to say, really very rarely.

The second eventuality of solving this problem is the trivialization of the problem when this polluter excuses himself that he did not harm the forest so much, that worse things happen in the world and he basically had no choice (he was forced by circumstances, he did not have enough money, etc.).

A third option is an addition of a new positive value to this action; in this case for example "our offender" can start to think that although he established a new forbidden dump in the forest, he spared money for the family (because he did not have to pay a fee for a legal dump site) and that's a 'good thing'.[10]

Cognitive dissonance can also be used for enlarging the scale of pro-environmental behaviour; in the literature is often mentioned the technique "foot-in-the-door-technique". This technique is based on the idea that if we are willing to cooperate on a small project, then it is probable that we will cooperate on larger events solving similar issues. Results of many surveys (in Winter, Koger, 2009) verify that people are more likely to fulfil their promises to participate in the project (in our case in a project with environmental objective), if their names are public if they are "forced" to talk about the project with neighbours or if they confirm their participation with their signature.[11]

The difficulty to persuade individuals or groups to cooperate is shown in a classic (but in Czech literature less known) social psychological study conducted by Sherif (1956) that demonstrated that prejudices and animosity towards members of other groups occurs when they are in competition for the same resources. This was very important on the heels of the Holocaust to explain how the Germans (who saw the Jews as competition for economic resources) could mutually support their egregious acts against Jews.

In this study Sherif (1956) conducted a quite complicated field experiment to examine group dynamics. This experiment is known as the **Summer Camp**; boys of age from 11 to 12 were brought to a summer camp and they were randomly assigned to one of two groups. During the first phase of the experiment group members participated in challenging tasks with each other (e.g. hiking); this lead to creation of social hierarchies and also leaders emerged.

9 for acts of genocide offered by those accused at the World War II, Nuremberg War Criminal trials. Their defense often was based on "obedience" – that they were just following orders of their superiors. The experiments began in July 1961, a year after the trial of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem. Milgram devised the experiment to answer the question "Could it be that Eichmann and his million accomplices in the Holocaust were just following orders? Could we call them all accomplices?" (Milgram, 1974).

10 The first example represents the action, the redress of previous bad behaviour and also atonement. The second and third solutions are typical examples of rationalization. */author's note/*

11 In marketing we meet quite a misuse of this technique. */author's note/*

During the second phase of the experiment, the groups had to compete against each other in various types of contests with trophies and prizes being offered to the winning group. During this phase, group cohesiveness increased while intergroup conflict and animosity strengthened.

During the third phase of the experiment, Sherif attempted to reconcile the two groups. This was accomplished by presenting them with problems in which they had to all work together to solve them (and which successful solution was good for all of them). They had to repair interrupted pipes leading water from a tank or push a truck having a "breakdown". These activities were important for all of them and required members from both groups. These joint efforts did not immediately dispel hostility but gradually frictions and conflicts were reduced and new friendships were developed. This finding can lead us to suggestions how to make people cooperate and considerations if it is actually feasible in the global extent.

4 POSSIBLE GLOBAL SOLUTIONS

The Sherif's experiment shows how difficult it is to make two groups that have developed mutual rivalries and hatred to cooperate. The results of this study also set a solution (probably the only possible in this situation) – two or more groups would have to face a common threat, in which all of them are involved. In the case of environmental issues, it is easy to imagine how extensive damage or danger it should be … and moreover the planet Earth is not small Sherif's Summer camp; organization, communication, dynamics, hierarchies, relationships – this everything would be modified in the global extend compared to the model situation. Nevertheless, some authors try to develop ecological concepts embracing the whole planet, e.g. Campbell (1988), who introduced the concept of **"society of the planet"**, which should be interconnected society on the Earth that works in harmony with the nature.

Shrivastava (in Stead and Stead, 1998) proposes to implement into business organizations so called **"ecocentric management paradigm"** that puts nature into the center of interest of management and organization. The problem is that managers are usually trained only for one subsystem of the Earth – the economic subsystem – which cannot exist separately from the other subsystems.

Recently, we can encounter the concept **"environmental management"**, which deals with the issue of environmental problems, and especially with their solution; the aim should be to achieve the very often discussed **sustainable development**. Even though this issue is commonly viewed from the planetary perspective, the key to the solution must be in an attitudinal change of the companies, or rather of the individuals who work in them. An example can be the difference in thinking about long-term planning in terms of age of the Earth instead of in terms of human life, which offers a completely different paradigm for decision making. Unfortunately, for contemporary western world the short-term thinking – the concentration on the consumer way of life – is very typical in which consumption prevails over life, and a genuine interest in solving environmental problems is often mistaken for a mere effort to gain visibility, to attract the public attention with the aim of getting public support; and the ecological issues are abused for advertising, marketing gimmicks with the only aim to acquire the greatest number of customers.

The abovementioned concepts (society of the planet, environmental management, ecocentric management paradigm) seem to be idealistic, even unrealistic and utopian, but their benefits can be seen in visualization of environmental and ecological issues, in establishing basements for changes in only profit-oriented, and anti-ecological and **pseudoecological**[12] paradigms.

CONCLUSION

Probably it is not in human powers to prevent major natural or evolutionary changes, but to treat the nature according to our own conscience and resist various pressures – psychological, economic or political – it should be a challenge for each responsible human. Even if we agreed with eco-pessimists we had to cope with the question of ethical values and respect for life, for the nature. The boundary between ecology and pseudo-ecology will always remain very thin and the results of scientific researches as well as theories are often contradictory and we can guess that in some cases also apparently purpose-built.

At the beginning of this paper some influential and conflicting theories related to ecology were discussed: according to some authors (e.g. Ehrlich, 1968, Gore, 2006, Wilson, 1995, Winter, Koger, 2009, Šmajs 2005) human survival is directly connected with people's relationship to the nature; but other influential authors have divergent opinions or they are at least afraid of overestimation of ecological activities that can lead to neglecting of other important problems (e.g. Simon 1981, Goklany, 2007, Lomborg, 2007, Klaus, 2007, 2009).

As it was documented in the overview of selected psychological theories and researches, all of them described a human psychic phenomenon that can be generally called **destructive element** (in this context were mentioned Freud's concept of

12 Pseudo-ecological paradigms (or concepts, products etc.) are presented as ecological, but their goal is not the genuine interest in the environment and in solutions of ecological problems, but the visibility with the only goal of gain of their promoters. */author's note/*

unconscious – especially his idea of thanatos; illusion of invulnerability, contingency trap or social trap that corresponds with laziness, egoism; conformity, obedience that corresponds to fear, self-interest, egoism, fear to disagree with authority or group, animosity, tragedy of commons that can be related to individualism and short-sightedness and egoism) which might positively correlate with development and with the survival of the individual, a group, but the question remains whether this element cannot cause the extinction of entire species, i.e. of humankind. We can seek footholds in philosophy, education, and particularly in the personal eco-responsibility, in general values, and in questionable term "human's conscience". Of course it is possible to argue that everyone has different boundaries of their own conscience but those who feel superior to the nature, should remember Albert Einstein's quote: "If the bee disappeared off the surface of the earth, man would only have four years left to live."

SUMMARY

This paper is focused on the critical evaluation of humans' relation to their environment, to the nature. With the development of modern technologies is this issue increasingly relevant as well as the question whether humans are able to affect fundamentally the environment on the Earth by their activities.

The author reflects these issues mainly from the psychological point of view but also some influential and conflicting theories related to ecology are discussed: according to some authors (e.g. Ehrlich, 1968, Gore, 2006, Wilson, 1995, Winter, Koger, 2009, Šmajs 2005) human survival is directly connected with people's relationship to the nature; but other influential authors have divergent opinions or they are at least afraid of overestimation of ecological activities that can lead to neglecting of other important problems (e.g. Simon, 1981; Goklany, 2007; Lomborg, 2007; Klaus, 2007, 2009).

The core of this paper is devoted to psychological aspects that cause that some people have tendency to environmentally protective behaviour while the others feel to be separated from nature or even to be superior to it (in this context is mentioned Freud's concept of eros versus thanatos, groupthink, the illusion of invulnerability and rationalization, phenomena like obedience and conformity, the concept "the Tragedy of the Commons", the theory of cognitive dissonance, group dynamics and Sherif's experiments). This article is set into the political and economical frame and behind the lines is emphasized that for understanding human behaviour to the nature is required more than the knowledge of separated disciplines.

For contemporary western world is typical the short-term thinking and pseudo-ecological paradigms (or concepts, products etc.) that are presented as ecological, but their goal is not the genuine interest in the environment and in solutions of ecological problems, but the visibility with the only goal of gain of their promoters. Finally, there are discussed possible solutions of ecological problems and common obstacles that honest ecologists and environmentalists have to cope with.

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