

Sustainable Development – unbalanced devastation of the environment and its consequences

Zrównoważony rozwój – niezrównoważona dewastacja środowiska i jej skutki

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Abstract

The article contains a reflection on the role of the idea of sustainable development in supporting the existence of human species. The problem is not easy and raises many questions. The contemporary social context does not favor sustainable development. Firstly, it is too firmly rooted in anthropocentrism, which is supported by the religion, and by the traditional European philosophy. Both make people think more about heaven than about the Earth. Thus, people are focused more on the soul than on the body; they are caring more for the favor of God than for their environment. Secondly, the ideology of consumptionism transforms people into wasters who increasingly over-exploit the Earth's resources. Thirdly, people – the social masses and the ruling elites – intensely stupefied, are not driven by reason or intellect. That is why, there is little hope that the degradation of environment will be stopped and future generations will be given the chance to survive as a result of the implementation of the idea of sustainable development.

Key words: sustainable development, the progress of civilization, consumptionism, religion, philosophy, wasters, environmental degradation

Streszczenie

W artykule zostały zawarte rozważania na temat roli idei rozwoju zrównoważonego w podtrzymaniu istnienia gatunku ludzkiego. Sprawa nie jest prosta i rodzi wiele wątpliwości. Współczesny kontekst społeczny nie sprzyja rozwojowi zrównoważonemu. Po pierwsze, zbyt mocno zakorzeniony jest antropocentryzm utrwalany przez religię i tradycyjną filozofię europejską. Jedno i drugie ukierunkowuje myślenie ludzi bardziej na niebo niż na Ziemię. Toteż więcej troszczą się o sprawy duszy niż ciała i o boską łaskę a nie o swoje środowisko życia. Po drugie, ideologia konsumpcjonizmu przekształca ludzi w marnotrawców coraz bardziej i niepotrzebnie trwoniących ziemskie zasoby. Po trzecie, ludzie – masy społeczne i elity władzy – gwałtownie głupieją i nie kierują się rozsądkiem. Dlatego nie można mieć nadziei ani na powstrzymanie degradacji środowiska, ani na zapewnienie szans przetrwania przyszłym pokoleniom w wyniku wdrażania idei rozwoju zrównoważonego.

Słowa kluczowe: rozwój zrównoważony, postęp cywilizacji, konsumpcjonizm, religia, filozofia, marnotrawstwo, degradacja środowiska

1. The haevencentristic thinking instead of the terracentristic thinking¹

From the very beginning, people cared more for themselves than for what was in their natural milieu, because it was all there in abundance, and their most important worry was how to get to the natural resources and how to process them to their benefit. Therefore, for many centuries, people developed a *predatory* economy and increasingly exploited the natural resources of our planet. Nobody took the Earth into account – what was important was satisfying people's needs or cravings, which rose disproportionately to the increase of consumption. Such unsustainable and carefree management lasted almost until the end of the 20th century. Different religious and secular ideologies supported this disregard for the Earth, which is the life-milieu of the human species and supports the mankind. This nonchalant attitude towards the Earth was fostered by a way of thinking characteristic of the western culture which can be traced back to Protagoras' anthropological philosophy; his famous saying was: *Man is the measure of all things: of things which are, that they are, and of things which are not, that they are not.* The ideologies of anthropocentrism and anthropochauvinism were built on this slogan. According to them, the human species, together with its environment, is the most important of all other species and our attention ought to be focused on the man and his welfare, even if this would mean harming his *oikos* and other living beings. The religion – apart from the ideology of anthropocentrism – also elevates the man over all other living beings in the world, because it considers him as the only creature that God endowed with the soul and made the ruler of the world. On the ground of the religion, the soul is regarded as more worthy than the body and the Earth as something worse than Heaven. After all, God has punished man for the first sin and banished him from Paradise to Earth, i.e. to some worse environment; and the immortal soul is better than the mortal body. Heaven with the entire pantheon of God, angels and saints, is the most important determinant of people's life and the ultimate goal of their existence. In order to achieve this goal, they must first of all care for the soul. Human life, thoughts and actions ought to be subordinated to the soul and Heaven, and not to the body and Earth. Although recently the church has corrected its error in the way it views the relationship of man to his environment

(now ruling the world also involves taking care of it), it has not changed the essence of the Man-Heaven relation. This cannot be done as the sense of religion and the legitimacy of the existence of the church as an institution are based on this relation. Caring for Heaven, for the favor of God and other beings *living* in Heaven, and for getting to paradise is still more important than caring for themselves, for other people and for the Earth's environment. Therefore, because of religion, man thinks more about Heaven and is more in Heaven than on the Earth. An anthropocentric stereotype of *man as the master of the world*, with its all negative practical consequences, functioned for many centuries, really for far too long, mostly due to the religious thinking.

Stereotypes are usually long-living and therefore, what became established throughout the millennia, is now difficult to change quickly. So, it is not easy to eliminate from the consciousness of people the belief in their superiority and perfection in comparison with other species and some habits manifested in the behavior toward animals (for example, the Jewish ritual of anti-bioethical slaughtering) as well as their anthropocentric way of thinking. People reluctantly give up their leading role in the world and they are not willing to be more unselfish than it is required by the need for collective life or by the life in consistent coexistence with other living beings, which is emphasized by environmentalists. The stereotype of man who determines the fate of the world (nature, history and individuals) is still strongly visible in different situations. First of all, it can be seen in the attitude of individuals towards nature. Only in a few countries and social groups, environmental awareness is highly developed. The vast majority of people treat the natural environment as their enemy that must be destroyed or can be plundered with impunity.

A similar attitude can be observed in relation to the social environment, and in particular to other people that are in the milieu, especially to foreigners (the phenomenon of xenophobia), and to those who, for various reasons, are considered to be enemies – in wars and battles on the grounds of economy (competitive struggle), politics, beliefs, ideology, etc. In the social environment, like in the natural one, individuals aspiring to power elites want to be lords-rulers to subdue others and in consequence, to rob or exploit them. They are not interested in improving the condition of the environment. Often, despite the declarations, they demonstrate an anti-ecological attitude. And in fact, the need for sustainable development policy proclaimed by them serves to carry out the sustainable, i.e. permanent robbery of people who are subordinated to them. Also, the secular ideology of consumerism dissuades people from caring for their natural environment – the Earth – and therefore the influence of this ideology on people can be compared to that of

¹ Terracentristic thinking is Earth-oriented thinking. It has nothing to do with terracentrism understood as a mythology of ground, which is a worldview of peasants (Sulima 1980, p. 224), or with terracentrism that recognizes the Earth as the center of the universe in contrast to heliocentrism. Also Heaven-oriented thinking has nothing to do with heliocentric thinking.

religion. Admittedly, recently, under the pressure of environmentalists, it calls for giving concern about the Earth, but more is spoken about the protection of natural resources than done about it. And the implementation of the postulates included in the concept of sustainable development does not change the fact that the goal of consumptionism is rather to ensure continuous, though *sustainable* growth of consumption, than to limit it by reducing superfluous and excessive consumer needs. This would contradict the meaning and essence of this ideology. Therefore, consumptionism leads to a constant, though at best *sustainable* growth of the destruction of environment and the Earth's natural resources. In addition, the ideology of consumptionism contributes greatly to the degradation of social, cultural and spiritual environments. Growth of consumption (and production), which lies at the heart of consumptionism, results in unbridled desire for achieving profit as well as continuous and – so far – rather unsustainable (unbalanced) and unlimited enrichment. The consequences of this are:

- The aggravation of various forms of the competition struggle in many areas, which causes the increasing disintegration of society (atomization, individualism and egoism) and disruption of the social order, which, in turn, contributes to the degradation of the social environment.
- The accelerated development of mass culture, total and global stupefaction of social masses by the mass media, and dissemination of the boulevard style of thinking; all these cause the degradation of our cultural environment.
- The reduction of higher-order needs to lower (primitive and mass) needs as well as the depreciation of the internal environment of man (his personality, emotions and spirituality), which causes the degradation of the spiritual environment.

Thus, contemporary consumptionism and traditional religions really contribute to the fact that the Earth is increasingly disregarded, to put it mildly.

2. From sustained devastation of human life environment to self-destruction of humanity

The progress of civilization can be somehow limited, for example by the implementation of the principles of sustainable development. However, it cannot be stopped and even more reversed. It results after all from the irreversible development of science and technology, which has been taking place, up till now, rather spontaneously, thanks to researchers and inventors. Theoretically, it seems to be possible to halt or curb this development, but in fact, nobody is interested in that for many reasons,

primarily economic ones². On the contrary, more and more effort, resources and capital are invested in science with a view to achieving greater profits thanks to scientific discoveries, which include technical inventions and innovations enabling greater productivity of people and machines, and thus reducing production costs. And the economy, regardless of the different concepts of social development, always aims at minimizing the costs. Therefore, the progress of civilization has to be absolutely subordinated to the iron rules and timeless principles of economy and not to the people's ideas or wishes. As long as money rules the world and is more important than people, pragmatic rules of economics will be more important than the lofty ideals of ecology.

Each development causes the devastation of environment. In today's spontaneously expanding civilization and under the influence of neo-liberal economy focused on the maximization of profit or wealth by all means, this development is not limited or controlled by anyone. Therefore, the progress of civilization is usually accompanied by the spontaneous, uncontrolled and rapid destruction of environment, at a rate that is not proportional to social progress, but higher. If one were to evaluate the balance of gains and losses resulting from the progress of civilization, taking into account not only the economic effects, but also the systemic criterion, including, *inter alia*, the environmental and social effects, it would probably turn out that the progress of civilization brings more damage to the environment than benefits to humans. Probably, the benefits for humans are increasing linearly with the development of civilization, while the devastation of environment is growing exponentially. Therefore, the gap between the benefits of the civilization progress and the harm done to the environment and consequently to people is continually increasing³. Generally, people do not worry about this every day. First, in today's turbulent and crazy world they have no time for reflection, and secondly, they usually enjoy the benefits of progress, which make their lives more comfortable. The damage that will happen in the future is not their concern, because it is not visible immediately and it will be felt only by

² World view reasons, especially religious ones, do not count at present as much as they did in the past, when especially in the Middle Ages, the Catholic Church delayed the progress of science. Today, the Church still acts as censor of scientific research, but with less success.

³ Another negative consequence of the progress of civilization is the gradual degradation of man by mass use of prostheses, i.e. technical devices replacing parts of the human body and taking over many human functions, including the intellectual ones. Natural environment due to the progress of civilization is gradually, but fast, replaced by an artificial environment, in particular by the virtual one, and the natural human behaviors and emotions by artificial ones. This causes dehumanization of people and virtualization of reality (Sztumski, 2011).

a generation in the far future. In fact, generally two generations: children and grandchildren, determine the time horizon of solicitude for the future of humanity. However, as a consequence of the progress of civilization, this concern is now limited more and more only to the contemporary generation, i.e. to the present time. Additionally, the following factors contribute to narrowing of this horizon:

- The presentist ideology of consumerism, focused on the immediate effects (*here-and-now*).
- Rapidly changing and chaotic world in which it is increasingly difficult to predict future events and long-term implications of today's actions.

The postulates formulated in the program of sustainable development, which aim to control and restrain the economic growth based on a spontaneous and often *predatory* development attempt to prevent a catastrophic situation. Although the concept of sustainable development refers in principle only to the development of economy, it is often extended to other areas of human activity because of the belief in some universal healing and salutary power of the idea of sustainable development, the belief which has not been proven yet, even in economy. Thus, for several years now, sustainable development has been talked about in reference to agriculture, industry, urban planning, commerce, business, infrastructure, etc., as well as in reference to society and economy, both based on biotechnology⁴.

Nowadays, everything has to be *sustainable*, whatever that would mean, and regardless of whether the sustainability is practicable at all. Hence there are attempts to implement all these ideas, but really with very little success. Sustainable development is expected to prevent the degradation of the natural environment (to reduce climate warming, carbon dioxide emissions, etc.), above all. Also, it has to balance supply and demand, productive forces with consumption forces⁵ (production of goods should be adequate to consumption power), to reduce the consumption of raw materials, to control (and to balance) demographic indicators, to harmonize interpersonal relationships, social relations and the

⁴ An economy based on biotechnology (*green economy*) uses plants, waste and renewable resources. It can replace oil by other fuels, increase food security and energy, create *green* jobs, increase incomes and provide eco-friendly (*green*) growth – all at the same time.

⁵ Force of consumption is the purchasing power of society, conditioned by the wealth and the desire of people to satisfy their needs. A long time ago, Karl Marx wrote about the necessity of balancing the force of production with the force of consumption, or in other words about their dialectical unity (Marx, 1968). He also emphasized the inseparable relationship between or the unity of the two sides of the same process – production and consumption: *The production is also directly the consumption* (Marx, 1958).

relations between humans and other living organisms, etc. Of course, all of these expectations about sustainable development are greatly exaggerated, utopian and illusory (Sztumski, 2009).

In order to implement any idea, it is necessary to fulfill some precondition, which in this case is the appropriate social and historical context. Meanwhile, neither democracy (which consists in the dictatorship of majority of the *stupid* and/or in the exercise of authority by a small number of *bandits*⁶), nor the economy (aimed at satisfying egotistic cravings of people for whom profit is the highest value, and multiplying wealth (money) is the most important goal – both being consequences of the ideology of consumptionism) do not provide the sufficient and adequate social context for implementing the guidelines of sustainable development. Simply speaking, the modern society, including the ruling elite, has not grown up yet to do so (similarly, at one time, the Russian society was not ready to implement the idea of socialism in spite of the successful socialist revolution and consequently, it was not able to materialize the idea of socialism). In fact, in the conditions of the contemporary world, there is no chance to put into practice the idea of sustainable development understood in this way and to fulfill the hopes related to. Sustainable development does not reduce the disproportion between production and consumption. It is pointless to artificially create new needs of the continuously stupefied society. Many exacerbating social contradictions of the modern world emerge as a result of the imbalance between supply and demand.

Consumption needs are growing continuously and it is hard to see the end of this process, because it is impossible to determine the limit of growth and to answer the fundamental question: How much is enough for a man to live well? (R. Skidelsky, E. Skidelsky, 2013). Contrary to expectations, sustainable development does not eliminate the mismanagement and the degradation of our environment.

⁶ Italian economic historian Carlo Cipolla, as a result of research and observation of human behavior, distinguishes four categories of people: intelligent (smart), naive (helpless), bandits and stupid. Intelligent people contribute to society something that is beneficial both to themselves and to others. Naive people give something to society, but as a result they can suffer a loss because others can take advantage of it. Bandits pursue their own interests constantly and at all costs, usually ignoring others and to the detriment of others. Fools do not only harm themselves but also others and society as a whole. Wise people are not willing to rule, because they know that the government does not like the wise and it stupefies people (Allan, 2012). The helpless are not suitable to rule because no one chooses a naive or helpless person to the authorities. The bandits strive to get power because it helps them to achieve their own goals, while the stupid, because they are easy to manipulate and they are not believed to be extremely harmful. So, the society is doomed to be ruled by the stupid or bandits.

Present wastefulness is a phenomenon resulting from the contemporary philosophy of economics. Sustainable development will not change anything. In fact, sustainable development is not about efficient use of material resources and energy, but rather about the substitution of natural materials by artificial ones, and the substitution of conventional energy sources (coal, wood or oil) by alternative sources of energy (wind, water, sun etc.). Its goal is not limiting the over-consumption of electricity (for example, unnecessary illuminations, advertising, etc.) or excessive consumption of raw materials and other substances. On the contrary, in times of consumerism, it is about increasing the consumption of energy and materials, because the more of them are needed and bought, the greater the profit of power plants, gas plants, refineries, mines, ironworks and other industrial plants. The more materials are consumed, the more waste is produced and that brings in profit to cleaning and utilization plants. In a sense, the tolerance for hyper-production and hyper-consumption (production or consumption over reasonable needs), and consequently for accelerating hyper-exploitation of energy and materials, and what follows for the degradation of environment, seems surprising in the times when the idea of sustainable development is widely promoted and partially implemented. Such tolerance contradicts the idea of sustainability explicitly! The use of energy-saving technical devices can hardly help, because it is doubtful whether the energy saved in this way can compensate the increasing demand for energy, caused by the increasing demand for various everyday devices powered by electricity. The same goes for recycling – materials recycled from the waste cannot compensate the growing demand for raw materials.

In fact, sustainable development does not do much to impose the requirements of ecology or zoology on the global economy. It is not able to weaken the role of the economy with its driving force of maximizing profits (and not the protection of environment); it rather strengthens the dominant role of the economy. After all, the point is not to reduce the consumption of energy and raw materials, but rather not to exhaust them too quickly (to prevent them from running out) and to be able to realize in the future the idea of economy based on consumption growth. Otherwise:

- The economic system based on the ideology of consumerism can quickly collapse.
- It will be impossible to further accelerate the growth of production and consumption, which in turn will reduce profit and wealth.
- Centrally-planned economy will have to be introduced and the political and social system will have to be changed radically.

Regardless of whether the development is sustainable, prodigality and waste will still accompany the

progress of civilization and growth of human living standards in the economy which aims to maximize profit in the monetary form. The prodigality concerns various goods and manifests itself in various forms. The most visible, outrageous and dangerous for humans and their environment is the waste of food, equipment, footwear, clothing, and paper. Food is wasted (the more you buy the less you pay, for example, two packs for the price of one) because we buy more than we are able to eat⁷. Throwing away the equipment that is still good is caused by technological progress, as a result of which newer and more perfect equipment appears on the market very quickly, and it is better to buy new and better things. Shoes or clothes that are still quite good are not worn because they are no longer fashionable, and the fashion is changing increasingly fast for mercantile reasons. As a result, things are thrown away not because they are worn out physically, but *morally*.

There is also a huge waste of paper⁸. People are not encouraged to save, but rather forced to be prodigal.

⁷According to the study conducted in 2011 by the Swedish Institute for Food and Biotechnology, in the international program Global Food Losses and Food Waste, under the auspices of the FAO, every year about 1.3 billion tons of food, i.e. one third of the total global annual production is wasted. In industrialized countries, 40% of the food good for human consumption, is thrown away by retailers and consumers for various reasons. This could be used to feed 12 billion people! In Germany, the studies conducted in March 2012 at the University of Stuttgart have shown that 11 million tons of food is wasted annually (60% in households), i.e. about 82 kg *per capita*.

⁸ The mass use of printers and copiers in offices and at home has contributed to an excessive and unnecessary paper consumption. Hand and machine writing has become rare, because it is easier to write and print on the computer. Nobody counts the paper which is used. A lot of paper is wasted especially for the purposes of election propaganda and advertising. A huge number of different leaflets and posters is produced. They are handed to passers-by, stuck on poles and sent by mail (for example in Germany about 30 kg of leaflets are deposited in only one letter-box annually). Nearly no one reads them and therefore, very quickly they end up in rubbish bins. And taxpayers pay for it. The same applies to official printed matter (as an example, the Polish Parliament uses nearly 6 thousand sheets of paper per day), newspapers and magazines (now, almost 7.5 thousand titles are published, while ten years ago there were 5.5 thousand, and twenty years ago, only 3.2 thousand). In fact, a few titles would be enough because they all contain the same information and pictures properly selected from one source (the global news agency) and censored. Over the past 40 years, thanks to computerization, paper consumption in the world has increased 4-fold. The annual consumption of paper in Poland was about 40 kg per person in the late 80's, and now it is 72 kg. By comparison, in the U.S. in 2012 it amounted to 340 kg (the highest in the world), and in Sweden, Finland and Germany, it is twice higher than in Poland (Germany alone uses as much paper as

Thus, at least in developed countries, the *homo economics* (the frugal man) is fast becoming the *homo prodigus* (the prodigal man, Sztumski 2013a, 2012). Furthermore, the world population increases very rapidly and consequently, the number of *homo prodigus* is growing and with time there will be a lot more consumers and wasters than producers. If the process of overexploitation is not stopped, the Earth's resources will be used up prematurely. And that, together with the escalation of global poverty and hunger in poor countries, could lead to the collapse of our civilization in the form of so-called *Malthusian catastrophe*⁹. Although food production is increasing in arithmetic progression (linearly)¹⁰, the number of people is increasing in geometrical progression (exponentially). Generally, the number of poor people in the world, estimated at around 21% at present, is growing. Therefore, one cannot exclude two possible scenarios that could prevent the demographic bomb from exploding:

- For the good of humanity, some desperate madman – a terrorist or a religious zealot, and there are more and more of them – will use weapons of mass destruction: nuclear, chemical, climatic or biological.
- The population of the world will be reduced dramatically as a result of natural or controlled decline of births to 1.5 average for the whole world (now such a rate or even lower is only observed in a few countries), and then – as the statisticians of the UN foresee – the number of people in the world would shrink to about 870 million in 2300 (Schwentker, 2013).

Both these scenarios seem to have nothing to do with the concept of sustainable development.

South America and Africa taken together). I remember that before computers became widespread, it was claimed that as a result of the digitization of documents, the use of paper would decrease significantly (this was believed to be one of the many benefits of computerization). But it did not work. On the contrary, the consumption and waste of paper increased significantly. The amount of paper being used is one of the indicators of the civilization progress (horror of horrors – it brings to mind the times when social progress was determined by the number of tons of steel produced *per capita*). So, countless documents (whether necessary or not) are printed, duplicated, copied and stored in cabinets rather than on the hard drives of computers.

⁹ Malthus pointed out that human populations tend to grow exponentially, while the capabilities of agricultural resources tend to grow arithmetically. Using these patterns, Malthus predicted that at a certain point, the demands of human population would outstrip agricultural ability. This, in turn, would trigger radical state of misery.

¹⁰ Contemporary eco-optimists – like an Italian physicist and systems analyst C. Marchetti 30 years ago – claim that the Earth can feed even thousand billion people if megalopolises transform into city-gardens, and if they use microorganisms (Marchetti, 1979).

People, in fact, are parasites on the Earth – they eat what they can grab, and in return they give nothing, except for devastating the ecosystem and the mechanisms of homeostasis functioning in nature. Human existence is inseparably connected with the destruction of environment, which is also destroyed by the progress of civilization, either resulting from the sustainable development or any other development. The human species, in the name of civilization progress, destroys the environment more than any other species. This is done not so much because of our biological needs, but rather it is a result of laziness (the need for a comfortable life), stupidity or lack of responsibility for the fate of the world and for the future generations. Engineering activities, without which the progress of civilization would not be possible, supported by modern technology, contribute to the erosion of environment, proportionally to technical progress. We have found ourselves, in a sense, in stalemate. On the one hand, in order to live, survive and develop, we must destroy everything around us – our life milieu. On the other hand, by destroying the environment we contribute to the shortening of our species' lifetime on the Earth. Sustainable development should support the existence of humanity as long as possible; it has to meet the needs of current generations without compromising the chance of future generations to survive. But this goal cannot be fully achieved because the degradation of environment, to some extent, inevitably accompanies people's life. By analogy to the principle of increasing entropy in thermodynamics, one can formulate the *principle of increasing degradation of environment: in the real world, the degree of environmental degradation by people is constantly increasing*. Thus, every next generation will have to live in an ever more devastated environment. So, implementing the idea of civilization progress, even in accordance with the requirements of sustainable development, we will, willy-nilly, constantly diminish the chance of survival for future generations. **Consequently**, the basic premise of sustainable development contained in its definition, is a fiction (Sztumski, 2004). As long as people tend to increase their needs, even to a small extent – and nothing indicates that it could be otherwise – they will contribute to the shortening of duration of mankind on our planet, due to the progressive degradation of their life environment (Sztumski, 2011). Therefore, we are the species that naturally strives for self-destruction as if of our own wish. And the process of self-destruction has been taking place ever faster since the 20th century, when people gained a sufficiently great power over the Earth and ceased to respect it and take care of it as they should, and since the world is ruled by more and more stupid elite, because *power times stupidity is equal to self-destruction* (Delavy, 2005). Long ago, Valentine Nowacki noticed that governments are exercised

more and more by stupid leaders and that their stupidity is inversely proportional to the progress of civilization. Therefore, he has formulated *the principle of the outflow of logic among the leaders of high developed countries: During the progress of civilization, manifested in the steady growth of science and technology and the continuous increase in the standard of living of the population, the leaders of the people involved in the management of public sector lose their wisdom and understanding to the poor nations. In fact, the national leaders of the developed countries are behaving like children yearning misleading, false evidence and wishful thinking to reality* (Nowacki, 1983). Although these leaders are guided by reason and think rationally, they, in fact, ultimately harm themselves and others – society and the human race. Therefore, they can be qualified as *stupid*, according to the categorization of people given by M. Cippola. Self-destruction of our species is not only caused by stupidity of the ruling elites, but also by the growing stupidity of the social masses. And *if only fools are multiplying, what a hope will remain for the mankind?* (Singer, 1995). Fools succumb, usually uncritically, to the ideology of consumptionism and contribute to the enrichment of the ruling elite. Also stupid people usually succumb to religion and they direct their thoughts more to Heaven, abstract beings and what is eternal, and do not care for the earthly and temporal existence. Overconsumption, which destroys the environment despite the attempts to implement the idea of sustainable development, and caring more for the Heaven's environment than for the Earth's life milieu – both resulting from the increasing stupidity of the masses and the banditry of the ruling elites – reduce the chance of humanity to survive and shorten the time of our species' existence. The worst thing is that people think that in democracy, which, in fact, is a dictatorship of fools, the stupid majority (where only a few wise are able to think in the universal and principled manner) can save the world. They are not aware that the majority, stupefied by politicians, scientists, business leaders, and media tycoons, will never be able to understand the principles of survival and to take action which could prevent the forthcoming catastrophe. Stupefied people cannot think holistically, because the ideology of consumptionism and the need to participate in the competitive struggle on many fronts, force them to care more for their own particularistic and egoist interests than for interests of all – for society, humanity and the Earth. They are also unable to think in a futuristic way, because ideologues of consumptionism force them to be interested mostly in what is now. In addition, their education is fragmentary, and teachers (following minimum curriculum) can generally give them only a partial and fragmentary knowledge. Anyway, not too wise educators selected negatively for their job often

have no general or holistic knowledge themselves, and in their thinking they cannot liberate themselves from the shackles of ideology and religion (Sztumski, 2013b). Consequently, the stupid teaches the stupid, and the number of stupid graduates multiplies disproportionately to the number of teachers.

Unfortunately, we live in the times when:

- the Earth and nations are ruled by the most stupid in matters of politics.
- Business leaders kill the existence of future generations, increasing their profits.
- Religions destroy the remnants of reason and ethics (the same god is invoked to defend completely divergent values and everyone wants to see their god as the winner).
- Scientists invent things that destroy our future.
- People are threatened with technological holocaust.

And why it is so? There are three reasons:

1. More than the two-thousand-year-long Western religious tradition makes people reside more in heaven than on the Earth.
2. The traditional European philosophy is not sufficiently concerned with authentic and worldly problems that are most important for human life on the Earth.
3. In addition, the ideology of consumptionism increasingly transforms people into wasters.

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