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## ABSTRACTS

### **prof. dr hab. Ewa Bińczyk**

Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń

#### **Pro-environmental Rethoric at the Beginning of the 21st Century**

The presentation discusses the most original and surprising motives of the pro-environmental thought of the first decades of the 21st century. We will talk about tipping points at the end of time, the serious risk of the loss of future, the monstrous problem of irreversibility, the end of nature and hyperagency of the humankind.

### **prof. dr hab. Małgorzata Kita**

University of Silesia in Katowice

#### **The polyphonic nature of the climate discourse**

The lecture focuses on the climate change discourse from the linguist's point of view. This is, to use Pierre Bourdieu's term, a field: extensive, polyphonic, multidirectional, diversified. The project of linguistic discourse understood as an integrating research program in linguistics turns out to be inspiring for its findings.

I understand discourse as a way of using language, a conglomerate of various linguistic and multimodal practices that refer to each other. Climate discourse is determined by a topic, just similar to some other types of discourse, e.g. a love discourse.

According to the dominant ideology, one can indicate the bifurcation of the climate and ecological discourse into two diametrically different trends: pro-climatic and negationist / denialist. In the further part of the lecture, we focus on the discourse activity of the supporters of the scientific consensus recognizing the climate crisis, indicating its causes and consequences, designing ways of minimizing and avoiding them it. Thus, the participants of this type of discourse are: science and scholars, politics and politicians, media and people related to them, international and national organizations, climate activists, promoters of scientific knowledge about climate, art and artists, documentary filmmakers, computer game developers, pro-climate celebrities...

The amount of actors in the climate discourse, senders and recipients, producers, both in quantitative and qualitative terms, as well as other characteristics of this discourse, such as multilingualism, multimedia and multimodality, translate into the social range and effectiveness of pro-climatic texts in the broader sense. On the other hand, there is a visible fragmentation of the climate discourse into microdiscourses, e.g. climate science discourse, colloquial climate discourse, political climate discourse, media climate discourse, fashion climate discourse, bottom-up/independent climate discourse, artistic climate discourse, educational climate discourse, including popular science climate discourse. Does such fragmentation favor synergistic actions, or is it a chaotic, accidental distraction of a problem essential for human and planet survival? The question remains open: is it possible that despite the discursively manifested care for the future of Earth and man, we will have to look for Earth B?

## **dr Ryszard Kulik**

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### **Man against nature**

Contemporary physics and ecology paint a picture of reality based on several fundamental laws. Life and inanimate matter operate by following patterns: interdependence and constant change. We humans have a problem with accepting such a picture of reality. Our reaction is fear and the attempt to break our dependence on nature. We are against the natural order of things because it is a source of suffering for us. We create a civilization which is a tool for manipulating reality and making it a predictable and controlled system that meets our expectations. This, however, causes a deep disturbance in the functioning of the life system and ultimately leads to disastrous consequences for the humankind itself. Disagreement with suffering and the attempt to tame nature lead to even greater suffering. The way out of this vicious circle is psychological work on the ability to contain difficult experiences and agreeing to the way the nature works.

## **prof. dr hab. Piotr Skubała**

University of Silesia in Katowice

### **On the way to the Symbiocene**

Almost every week there are new scientific reports signed by the best research centers, UN agencies or European institutions, describing the planetary crisis, which has two main faces - the climate and environmental crisis. Today - according to many scientists - we no longer live in the Holocene, but in the Anthropocene - characterized by the negative impact of human activity on the functioning of natural processes occurring on a global scale. In one of the reports of the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change), the authors describe our situation and say that we are looking at a closing window. Will we be able to react and avert the climate and environmental crisis? And how should we do that?

We are slowly beginning to realize that in order to at least limit the worst effects of global warming and stop the biodiversity crisis, we need to rethink our place in the living world and start living in accordance with the laws of nature. We have to understand and accept that we live in an extremely complicated world in which all its elements (plants, animals, microorganisms, water, air, soil) are interconnected in all sorts of ways. Every living being, regardless of the level of evolutionary development, is necessary, important, and has a vital role to play. Each being lives only thanks to other beings. We live in a world where everything is connected. Nothing is self-sufficient. The problem is that most of us don't see these connections.

What we need most today is to see the world as a great web of life, to see the interconnections and interdependencies that permeate every aspect of life on this amazing planet. This is what today's school should teach. Gregory Bateson (British anthropologist, philosopher) believes that "Relationship could be used as basis for definition ... This should be taught to children in primary school" (Bateson 1979). Unfortunately, school education has so far failed to fulfill this task at all, or to a small extent.

Lord Alfred Tennyson (nineteenth-century English poet) is the author of the famous saying, which is a metaphor for Darwinian evolution: "*Nature, red in tooth and claw*" (Tennyson 1849). These Darwinian ideas, among which the concepts of cutthroat competition and the survival of the fittest have been most spectacularly influential, are still cornerstones of contemporary popular thinking about nature

(Skubała, Oziewicz 2006). Meanwhile, contemporary studies of ecosystems indicate that relations between living organisms are mostly based on cooperation, the principle of coexistence and mutual dependence, and that these relations are more or less symbiotic. Symbiotic interactions permeate modern ecosystems (Weiner 2020). A full understanding of the role of symbiotic interactions in the functioning of ecosystems and their role in the process of evolution is yet to come.

However, we can see today that the perception of nature as a great community "*green in root and flower*", as Douglas H. Boucher (a biologist at the University of Quebec) described it, proposing an alternative description of nature to that proposed by Tennyson (Fausto-Sterling 1993), it is fundamentally true and desirable in times of climate and environmental crisis. Slowly, a new scientific view is emerging that sees life on our planet as a process by which each element adapts to each other, ensuring the continuation of life within the biosphere. If our species of *Homo sapiens* does not want to go down in the history of the Earth as one with the shortest history, we must create a "symbiocene" - a state in which man begins to fully live with nature and all non-human beings.

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