

THE ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY: THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE AND NARRATIVES IN ECOLOGICAL CHANGE

THURSDAY 9 MARCH 2023

16:15 – 17:45

ANTHROPOLE 5196

Unil

UNIL | Université de Lausanne

Faculty of Arts

English Department



Semaine de la
DURABILITÉ
UNIL-EPFL

SPEAKERS:

PROF. AGNIESZKA S. MONNET

ALICIA FABBRI

BEATRIZ DUARTE WIRTH

ENVIRONMENT

Belief In Climate Change Hinges On Worldview

February 23, 2010 · 2:03 PM ET

Heard on [All Things Considered](#)



CHRISTOPHER JOYCE



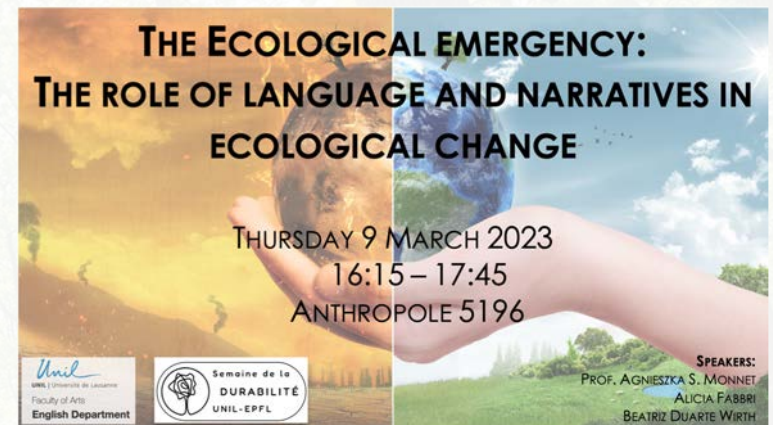
4-Minute Listen

+ PLAYLIST



How to describe the problem?

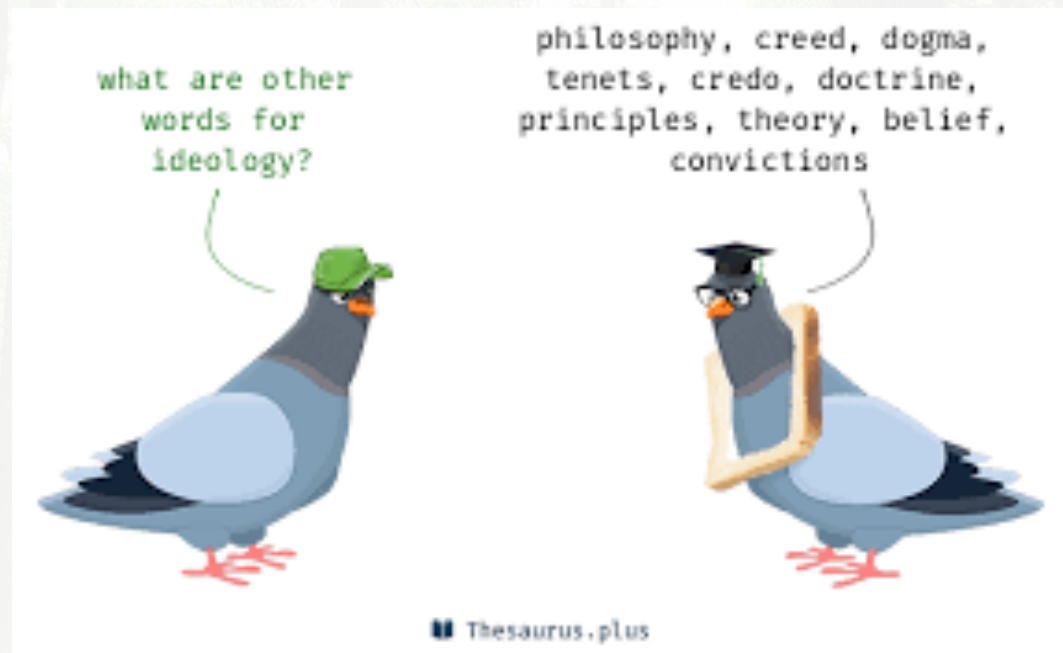
- Climate **change**
- Climate **crisis**
- Climate **emergency**
- **Climate**
- Do we need to just **stop global warming ...** or **down-scale industrial civilization and modern life** more generally in order to protect the environment?



Words ... connected to worlds (world-views)

Words linked to discourses and ideologies

Modern
Civilization
Industrial
Down-scale
Environment



“Environment”



“modern”



Progress and ... apocalypse



“down-scale”

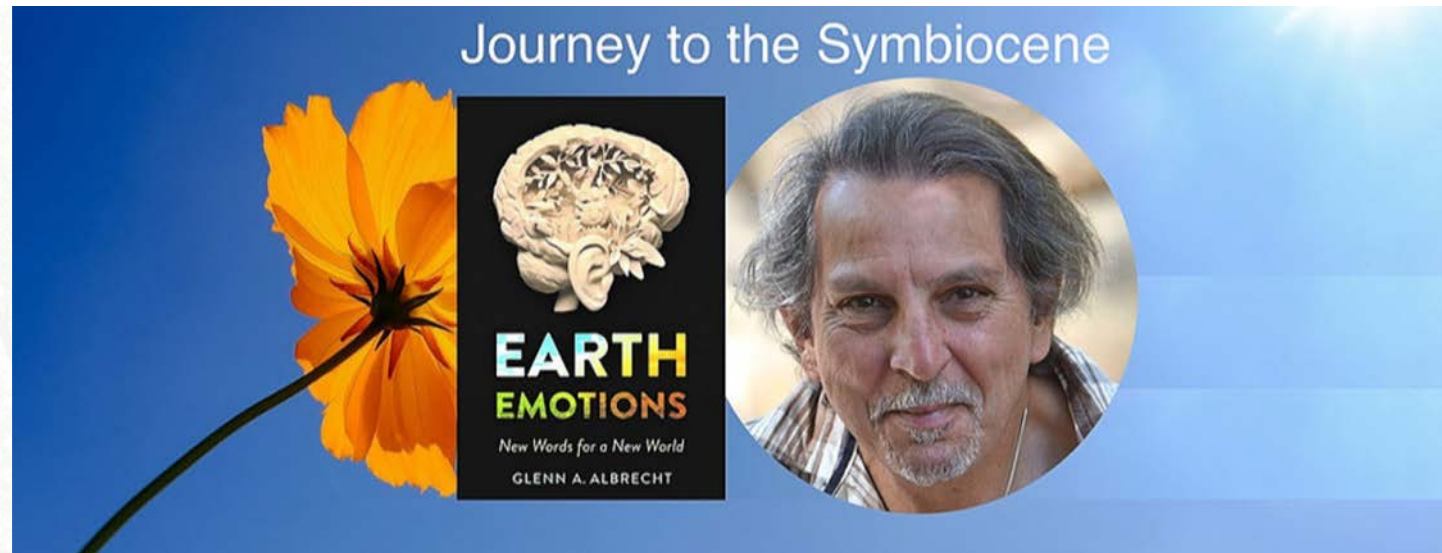
- Reduce, less, shrink, minimize, stop, down-size
- *One of the great challenges now is to name and imagine a balanced and ecological way of life that seems satisfying, meaningful and positive!*

Words for this new way of being and doing?

- In French, ‘sobriété’ and ‘durabilité’
- Green
- Sustainable
- Resilient
- Sufficient
- ?????



Glenn Albrecht



- **Solastalgia** – diagnostic neologism

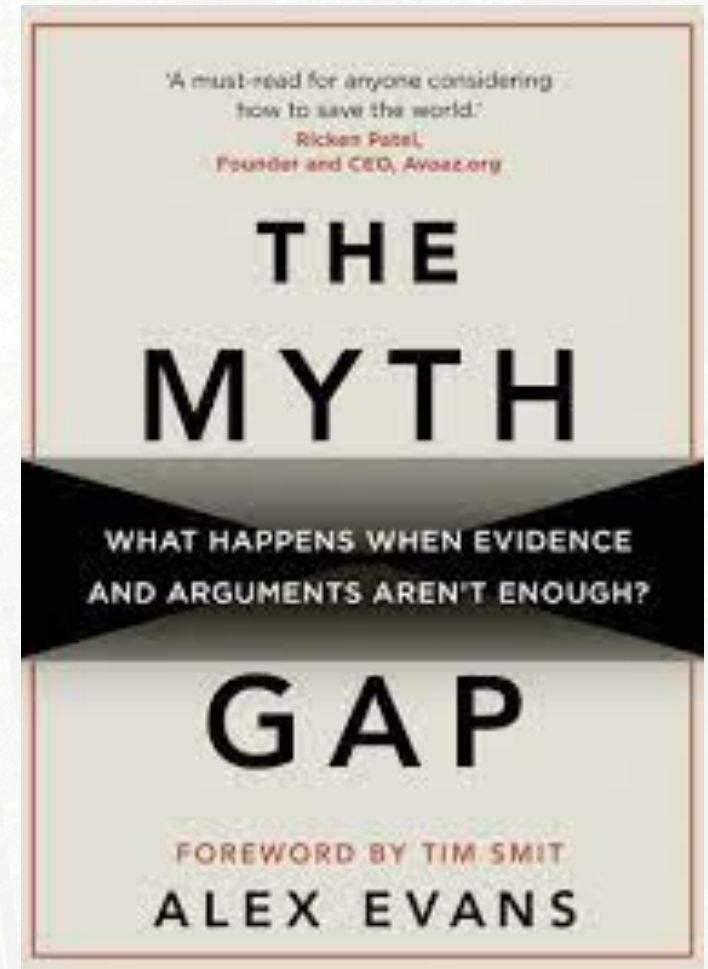
- As opposed to **nostalgia**--the melancholia or homesickness experienced by individuals when separated from a loved home--**solastalgia** is the distress people feel because of environmental change and destruction

- **Symbiocene** – programmatic neologism

- From 'sumbios', Greek for 'living together' and root of 'symbiotic'
- Word for a new era of living together for mutual benefit, to succeed the so-called 'Anthropocene'

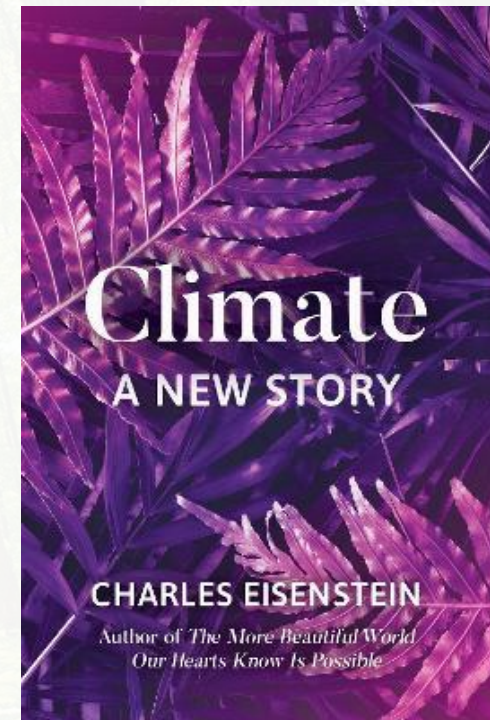
Alex Evans

- The need for new myths, including:
 - A larger us
 - A longer now
 - A better 'good life'
 - Redemption and restoration
- The need to build the climate movement around small groups rather than impersonal media campaigns
- The need to avoid enemy narratives and instead to dialogue with dismissive people – and to try to find a vision and language of the future that they can agree with



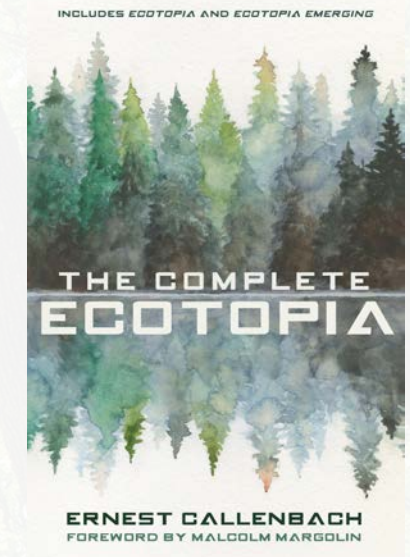
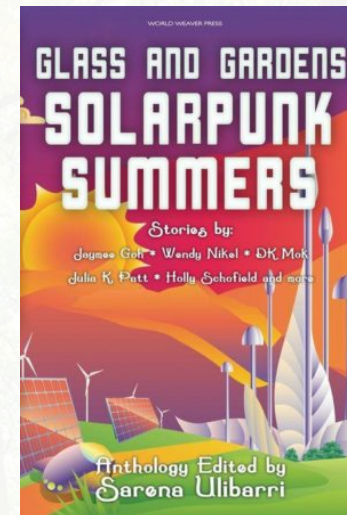
Charles Eisenstein

- Not letting climate change be the only agenda
 - 'the biggest threat to life on earth is not carbon fuel emissions, but the loss of forests, soil, wetlands and marine ecosystems'
- Letting go of the myth of separation
 - A new story that values both people and place, biodiversity and life, soil and water
- Taking care of the earth *because we love it* and not because we fear the consequences of not doing so



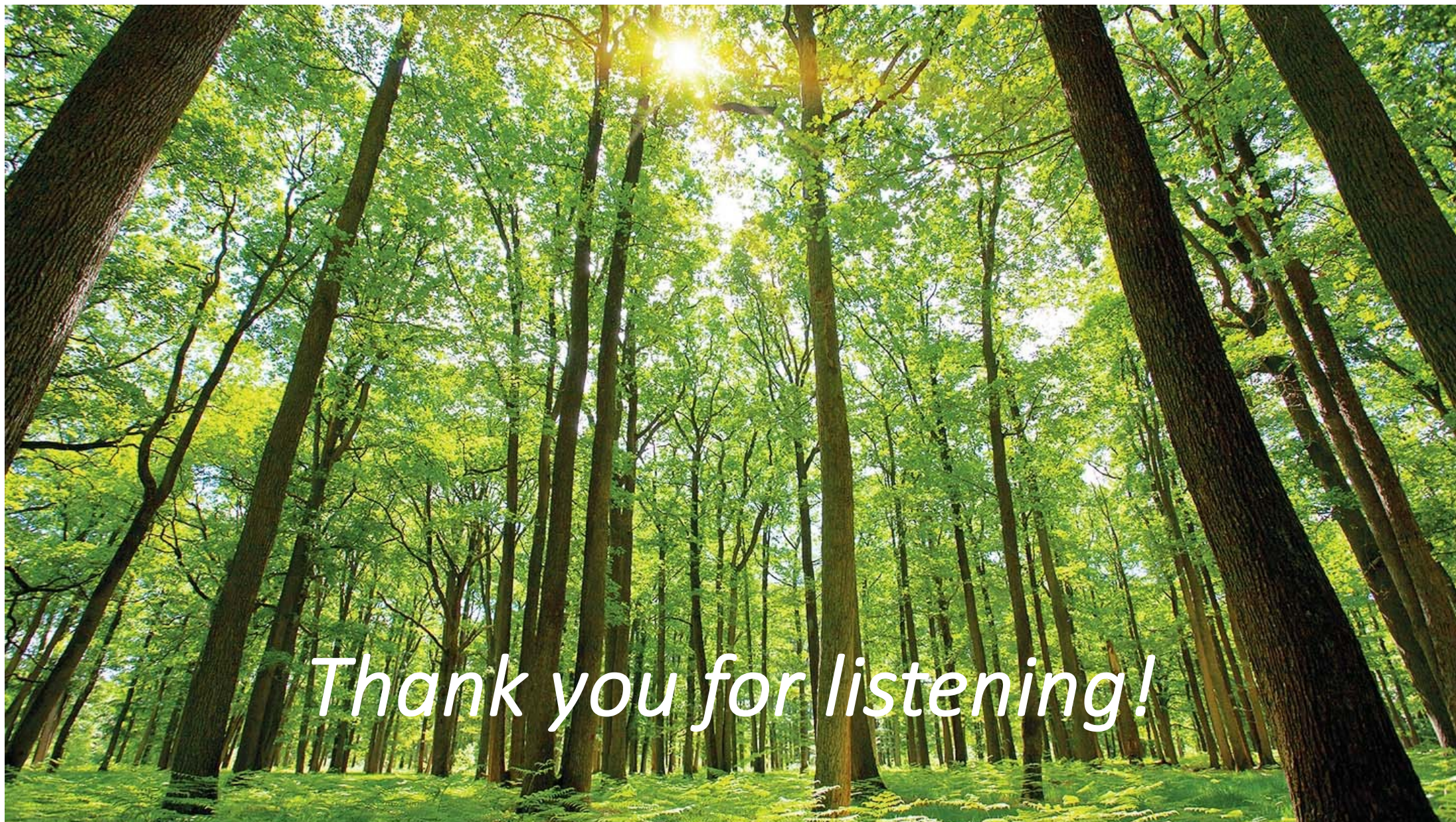
Finally, future-positive eco-fiction

- Solarpunk
 - And its forerunner, *Ecotopia*
- Deindustrial fiction
- Hopepunk



Short discussion moment (3-5 minutes)

- What do you think would be the best key-words to use to convince eco-dismissive people?
- Or, what convinced *you* to care about ecology?



Thank you for listening!