

Symposium on “Basic beliefs as context for equity and quality for well-being”  
 ENIRDELM 25<sup>th</sup> Conference, Jurmala, Latvia 17 September, 2016  
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**FOUR PROPOSITIONS FOR DEBATE**

1. *The overriding equity issue* is the inequity between the impact of the *Machine World* (a.k.a globalised neo-liberal capitalist economies) and the capacity of the *Natural World* to sustain this expansion of human impact. [**The fantasy of ‘NO LIMITS’**]
2. *The overriding issue for quality* is the -fitness for purpose of education & leadership in offering a critique of belief-driven behaviours (personal & systemic) that are contributing to socio-environmental collapse. [**“The ‘TITANIC’ purpose of avoiding the self-destruction of our species”**].
3. The current predicaments (16 stressors) brought about by humankind result from *universal expansionist anthropocentric beliefs*, both secular and spiritual, that result in *dysfunctional global stressors*. [**‘WICKED PROBLEMS that threaten well-being and species survival’**]
4. A central challenge for secondary and higher education is to offer *an analysis and critique of basic ideologies (expansionism vs. sustainability beliefs)* and the *exponentially accelerating trajectory towards self-destruction of modern civilisation*. [**‘A RELEVANT CURRICULUM for the ‘Titanic’**]

**CORE IDEOLOGIES: Sustainability vs. Expansionism**

NATURE’S WISDOM (ECO-centrism) <i>SUSTAINABILITY ETHIC OF SUFFICIENCY</i>	POWER & GREED (EGO-centrism) <i>GROWTH ETHIC OF UNLIMITED CONSUMPTION</i>
Holistic beliefs that place humans within the natural world are guided by concern for the well-being of future generations and maintaining long-term stability of human and natural systems by designing human systems adapted to the laws of the natural world and the principle of self-regulation ó a future involving living within planetary boundaries	Anthropocentric beliefs that see the natural world as a resource for humankind are guided by the desire for maximizing personal, business and national wealth through rapid economic growth that is equated with well-being, irrespective of long-term consequences for the planet and future generations ó the overloaded planet
<b>BALANCE/HOMEOSTATIS <i>ADAPTATIVE SUSTAINABILITY</i> Machine &amp; Natural World Symbiosis</b>	<b>EXPONENTIAL OVERSHOOT <i>MALADAPTIVE COLLAPSE</i> Machine World destroying Nature</b>
<b>Equitable Balance + Quality Sustained</b>	<b>Inequitable imbalance + Quality Collapse</b>

**What should a quality & relevant curriculum stress in time of global stressors?**

*How important is each stressor as a topic for study in formal education?*

0 point = Not important  
 1 point = Perhaps could be included  
 2 points = Definitely should be included

	STESSORS THREATENING WELLBEING FOR ALL	0	1	2
1	Climate disruption & sea level rise			
2	Pollution of air, water and land			
3	Depletion - fossil energy and minerals			
4	Depletion - fisheries, forests, soils, water			
5	Biodiversity and ecosystem losses (the planet's 6th Great Extinction.)			
6	Global epidemics of disease			
7	Global debt-based financial system instability			
8	Increasing inequality in wealth & poverty (recently represented as the 1% and the 99%)			
9	Plutocratic control of politics by powerful corporate interests			
10	Illegal migration & criminal global trafficking			
11	Regional ethnic, resource & religious conflicts			
12	Nuclear weapon proliferation			
13	Terrorism & extra-judicial assassination			
14	Urbanization & mega-cities (31 cities with over 10 million population)			
15	Cyber-warfare and internet fragility			
16	Uncontrolled artificial intelligence (AI) & the 'surveillance state'			
	<b>SUB-TOTALS</b>			
	<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>			

## THREE EXTRACTS FOR DEBATE

**Discussion Item 1: Anthropocentric violence against Nature** - As Pope Francis put it in his much-celebrated encyclical last year, our present ecological crisis is the sign of **a cultural pathology**. *“We have come to see ourselves as the lords and masters of the Earth, entitled to plunder her at will. The sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life reflects **the violence present in our hearts**. We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the Earth; that we breathe her air and receive life from her waters.”*

**Discussion Item 2: Climate change trajectory** - We are in a race against time, regarding climate change. Simply stated, we must decarbonise fast enough to stop the impacts of global warming running away from us. Many climate scientists tell us **there is a point of no return**, beyond which the greenhouse-gas emissions man-made warming has stimulated from the natural environment – from melting permafrost, destabilising methane hydrates, warming oceans, burning forests and many other potential natural amplifiers of warming – mean it no longer matters that we are on our way to zero anthropogenic emissions. Global warming would keep right on going. Even short of this apocalyptic scenario, the **emerging impacts of global warming** might destroy our social cohesion, over-running any survival instinct. Searing heat across the Middle East, for example, might drive the already-considerable flow of refugees ever higher, translating into a rise of support for authoritative regimes in Europe and North America.

Leggett. J (2016) *The Winning of the Carbon War* (free download)

The-Winning-of-The-Carbon-War-January-20161.pdf

### **Discussion Item 3: Impact of the technology on the quality of young people’s lives**

<http://keranews.org/post/how-screen-addiction-hurting-children> - a shocking interview with the author of an account of digital addiction among children and the dangers of unregulated access to tablets, etc. Biggest danger is to give 3 year-olds opportunity for immersion that leads to dopamine and adrenalin over-stimulation, similar in effect to mental orgasm, for hours on end at a time when the young brain is still developing. **Digital addiction** is much harder to treat than drug or alcohol addiction but it is **promoted for corporate profit**. The isolating effect of gaming stultifies language and social development and may account for ADHD and an inability to concentrate. The corporations that convince school systems have **no evidence to show that tablets enhance learning** despite the competition between school districts to equip their classrooms with expensive hardware and Pearson software, in fact, research suggest the opposite. *“A growing mountain of clinical research correlates screen tech with disorders like ADHD, addiction, anxiety, depression, increased aggression, and even psychosis. Most shocking of all, recent brain imaging studies conclusively show that **excessive screen exposure can neurologically damage a young person’s developing brain in the same way that cocaine addiction can**”.*

**SELECTED VIDEOS FOR  
A QUALITY CURRICULUM RELEVANT IN THE ANTHROPOCENE ERA**

1. [http://www.filmsforaction.org/watch/the\\_single\\_most\\_mindaltering\\_photograph\\_humanity\\_has\\_ever\\_taken/](http://www.filmsforaction.org/watch/the_single_most_mindaltering_photograph_humanity_has_ever_taken/) – “*The Pale Blue Dot*” - Carl Sagan’s famous poetic and inspiring talk on the earth from space (4 minutes)
2. <http://www.filmsforaction.org/watch/man/> - ‘*Animated History of the Taker Culture*’ (4 mins.)
3. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sc4HxPxNrZ0&feature=related> – National Geographic graphics on the 7 billion population total reached Oct 2011 (3 mins.)
4. [http://www.ted.com/talks/edward\\_burtynsky\\_on\\_manufactured\\_landscapes#t-1323292](http://www.ted.com/talks/edward_burtynsky_on_manufactured_landscapes#t-1323292) – amazing photographic revelations of large-scale human impact on landscapes with particular emphasis on China’s economic growth. Ends with a proposal for prizes for education for sustainability of 8-12 year olds (34 mins.)
5. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VNggv4yVyDw&feature=em-subtitle\\_digest](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VNggv4yVyDw&feature=em-subtitle_digest) - “*The consequences of climate change in our lifetimes*” exposes ‘corruption’ of the evidence and provides the most likely reasonable conclusions about climate change. (19 mins)
6. [http://www.ted.com/talks/chris\\_jordan\\_pictures\\_some\\_shocking\\_stats.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/chris_jordan_pictures_some_shocking_stats.html) - Chris Jordan uses supersized images to rouse feelings about enormous and shocking unimaginable statistics about US culture’s impacts the environment. (11 mins)
7. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zORv8wwiadQ&feature=relmfu> – *The most terrifying video you will ever see* - a classroom teacher takes a rational look at how to respond responsibly as citizens & educators to global climate change (10 mins.)
8. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EQqDS9wGsxQ&feature=relmfu> – Richard Heinberg’s *The End of Growth* summarised. Growth is simply made possible by the exponential expansion of debt as planetary resources become exhausted.
9. <http://therules.org/campaign/inequality-video/> - *Global Wealth Inequality – what you never knew you never knew*. Remarkable graphic representation of the huge outflow from poor to rich nations of wealth as a result of ‘the rules’ of trade, aid, debt. (4 mins.)
10. <http://www.thersa.org/events/video/vision-videos/doughnut-economics> - Kate Raworth presents a model that integrates planetary boundaries and human development goals for a sustainable future (17 mins.)
11. [https://www.ted.com/talks/simon\\_anholt\\_which\\_country\\_does\\_the\\_most\\_good\\_for\\_the\\_world](https://www.ted.com/talks/simon_anholt_which_country_does_the_most_good_for_the_world) - the creator of the Good Country Index outlines the challenge of globalising the solutions to the problems thrown up by globalisation itself. National inward-looking governments are the main obstacle. They act like ‘cultural psychopaths’ that compete in the global market place as if they existed alone on the planet. (18 mins.)
12. <http://www.filmsforaction.org/watch/taking-the-future-into-account-2014> - Why do humans have such a hard time taking the future into account? Answering this question with insightful analysis, the film offers strategies for policymakers and individuals who are interested in ways that we can overcome our conditioned habits. (30 mins.)
13. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tiulh8pTwp> – Guy Dauncey, Canadian eco-futurist, sees the bright green future 2032 (54 mins)
14. <http://www.filmsforaction.org/watch/what-a-way-to-go-life-at-the-end-of-empire/> (2007) *What a Way to Go: Life at the End of Empire* -123 min documentary - A middle class white guy comes to grips with Peak Oil, Climate Change, Mass Extinction, Population Overshoot and the demise of the American Lifestyle.

**FREE ON-LINE COURSE:** <http://www.peakprosperity.com/crashcourse> - The *Crash Course* has provided millions of viewers with the context for the massive changes (economy + energy + environment) now underway, as economic growth, as we’ve known it, is ending due to depleting resources, exponential growth of debt and human impact on natural environments (27 episodes - total time 4 hours 36 mins.)

**ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT CALCULATOR:**

<http://www.footprintnetwork.org/en/index.php/GFN/page/calculators/>

**SELECTED READINGS FOR  
A QUALITY CURRICULUM RELEVANT IN THE ANTHROPOCENE ERA**

**COMMUNITY ACTION FOR SPACESHIP EARTH WEBSITE [www.case4all.org](http://www.case4all.org)**

**ARTICLES & BLOGS**

1. <http://case4all.org/g20-1-5c-350ppm>- Sept 2016 blog from case4all.org
2. <http://case4all.org/new-insights-on-the-anthropocene> - ditto
3. <http://case4all.org/on-whose-agenda-is-the-uns-sdg-4-7> - UN Sustainable Development Goal to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education”
4. <http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/35668-george-monbiot-never-ending-growth-cannot-be-sustained-on-a-finite-planet> - George Monbiot interview
5. [http://www.truthdig.com/report/item/soaring\\_human\\_population\\_threatens\\_environmental\\_catastrophe\\_20160905](http://www.truthdig.com/report/item/soaring_human_population_threatens_environmental_catastrophe_20160905) - latest estimates of population growth
6. <https://newrepublic.com/article/135684/declare-war-climate-change-mobilize-wwii> - Bill McKibben ([www.350.org](http://www.350.org)) call for and urgent response
7. <http://www.npr.org/sections/13.7/2015/11/30/457835780/how-psychology-can-save-the-world-from-climate-change> - call for positive focus on ‘gains’
8. [http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/rmhttp/radio4/transcripts/1967\\_reith1.pdf](http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/rmhttp/radio4/transcripts/1967_reith1.pdf) - Edmund Leach “Runaway World” – man becomes god-like in relation to nature
9. [http://www.albanesi.it/english/top\\_articles.htm](http://www.albanesi.it/english/top_articles.htm) - Well being democracy; Social Limit to Profits; Gross National Well-being (GNW vs. GNP)
10. <http://www.resilience.org/stories/2016-06-01/consumerism-collective-psychopathology-waste> - Veblen onwards to Naomi Klein’s No Logo, the manipulative power of branding

**BOOKS**

1. Bakan, J (2004) *The Corporation: The Pathological Pursuit of Profit and Power*
2. Bottery, M. (2016) *Educational Leadership For a More Sustainable World*
3. Gigantes, P. (2002) *Power & Greed: A Short History of the World*
4. Gilding, P (2012) *The Great Disruption*
5. Heinberg, R. (2011) *The End of Growth: Adapting to Our New Economic Reality*
6. Homer-Dixon, T (2006) *The Upside of Down: Creativity, and the Renewal of Civilization*
7. Monbiot, G (2016) *How did we get into this mess?*
8. Leggett, J (2016) *The Winning of the Carbon War* (Free pdf download)
9. Orlov, D. (2013) *Five Stages of Collapse: Survivor’s Toolkit*
10. Quinn, D. (1992) *Ishmael: An Adventure of the Mind and Spirit*
11. Shermer, M. (2011) *The Believing Brain: How we construct beliefs and reinforce them as truths*
12. Tainter, Joseph A (2003) *The Collapse of Complex Societies*

**NEW INITIATIVES (potential future ENIRDELM collaboration?)**

<http://www.atrico.org/> - ENIRDELM friends Andy Hargreaves and Pasi Sahlberg are involved in the **Atlantic Rim Collaboratory (ARC)** whose inauguration Sept 2016 aims to establish a global group of educational systems that advances values such as equity, excellence, wellbeing, inclusion, democracy and human rights for all students within high-quality, professionally-run systems. Maybe a sustainable future will be added to the ARC’s list of values?

**9 Billion Lives** – ENIRDELM friend Stephen Murgatroyd is one of a group of senior business and educational consultants in Canada aiming to raise venture capital and provide support for high impact attempts to make the world sustainable with sufficient well-being for the 9 billion population expected by 2040. *Operating principles:* Think big; Intelligence – best practice leadership; Impact oriented; Positivity – Hope; Trust and transparency; Simplicity. *Initial foci?:* Food Supply; Education.

<b>CRUCIAL CONCEPTS FOR SUSTAINABLE PLANETARY AND PERSONAL FUTURES</b>
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1. ***There are no environmental problems*** – they are problems of selfish & greedy human belief & behaviour that are now maladaptive at the global scale.
2. ***Holistic systemic thinking*** about “***Spaceship Earth***” as our only basic life support system of finite capacity, i.e. ‘***glocal***’ ***thinking***’ that connects global and local realities & consequences.
3. Inter-disciplinary ‘***big picture***’ ***focus*** on the credit-fuelled, growth-addicted ***Machine World*** (assumes endless growth & progress) vs. the cyclical, adaptive, self-renewing ***Natural World*** (homeostatic & sustainable pattern of growth – collapse – adaptation).
4. ***Linear exponential growth human-made systems*** (Machine World) vs. ***Self-regulating, adaptive, cyclical natural systems*** (Natural World).
5. Proper understanding of ***doubling times of % rates of annual exponential growth*** (divide 70 years by the % rate) 4% = doubling every 17.5 years; 8% = 2x every 8.75 years) – Riddle of the Lily Pond. The ***inevitability of collapse of complex civilisations*** following exponential expansion beyond the limits of resources available.
6. ***Limits to growth – ‘Planetary boundaries’, ‘Peak Everything’, Overshoot & Ecological Footprint*** – business-as-usual needs 2 planets to sustain the Machine World long-term at present levels of human consumption.
7. ***Human Impact (I = P x A x T)*** Population x Affluence & Technology doubling rapidly and accelerating by depleting other species, forests, soils, fish stocks, minerals, water & energy sources.
8. ***Anthropocentric belief*** that the planet is ‘our’ resource for endless growth of P x A x T and that nature is a free dumping ground for our waste (CO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>2</sub>, nuclear, plastics, etc.)
9. The evolutionary psychology of ***short-termism, selective perception, confirmation bias*** lead us to focus on the here and now and ignore the future for the next generation or the suffering of others in distant places.
10. ***“Wicked”/non-linear/‘Black Swan’ problems*** (human systems & unintended, unpredictable consequences) cannot be treated as “tame”/solvable problems.
11. ***Design systems for resilience (anti-fragility) based on nature (biomimicry)*** -recycling, re-use, local-scale self-sufficiency, decreased dependence on complex global trading systems and the central concentration of corporate power.
12. ***Increasing concentration of wealth & power*** in the hands of ***global and national elites***.
13. ***Dominance of the core ideology of expansionism (power & greed)*** over the ***core sustainability ideology of nature’s wisdom***.
14. ***Psychopathic nature of nation states*** (and electorates) in promoting national competitiveness and power - ‘my country right or wrong’ - ***and business corporations*** (and shareholder & consumer beneficiaries) in destroying competitors.
15. ***Inability of supra-national organisations to address the above issues effectively***.
16. ***Inability of most individuals to care holistically for the well-being and health of “Spaceship Earth”, “The Good Society” and “Self”***.