

## ETHICS FOR A SUSTAINABLE WORLD ORDER

### — A Think Piece on Politics, Development and Environment\* —

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#### 1. What on Earth Are We Doing?

We are chopping down the world's rain forests at the rate of three Switzerlands per year. They cover 7% of the land territory of Earth but host more than 50% of all living species. It will never be regenerated.

We exterminate around 17,500 species from flora and fauna per year, 2 per hour. There may be between 5 and 30 million species on Earth, but science has only described 1.4 million.

We pollute the air in many ways. The largest single polluter is car driving. Eight per cent of the world's population own its 400 million cars of which 140 million roll in the United States and 60 in Japan. Twenty per cent of the Earth's population live in areas where the air is not fit to breathe. Car accidents worldwide kill 250,000 people annually and injure many more.

We emit 5.7 billion tons of carbon per year from fossil fuels and another 1.0-2.6 billion tons from the burning of forests; the figures increased 3.7% in 1988. The largest polluters are the United States, the Soviet Union, China, Japan, Brazil and Germany; but most Third World countries are well below 1/10 of the industrialized countries in per capita emissions and none of these have yet proposed lowering carbon emissions by the needed 20-35% in the next ten years.

We inhabit an Earth that could, theoretically, well sustain a population of 11 billion people (today we are 5.3 billion). The population growth problem is much less taxing on the world's resources than the overconsumption by the upper 20% of the world's people.

We, that is the life styles of the richest, contribute to the fact that at least 60,000 people die unnecessarily every day on Earth—almost

20 million people annually. They die not in wars—they have “only” killed around half a million people every year since 1945—but because they do not have enough or healthy food, clean water, a place to live, medical care, schooling, etc. At the same time, 20-30% of all food is wasted in the rich parts of the world.

We have polluted the Earth's drinking water reservoirs to such an extent that most diseases in the Third World are related to poor drinking water. In the rich world ever more are drinking polluted or strongly chlorinated water. In Japan one can now buy clean mineral water imported from France.

We are only producing more food because of applying ever more chemicals. American agriculture today requires approximately 10 calories of fossil energy input for each calorie of food to a dinner table. In the 1980s the Third World, populated to a large extent by starving people, exported 10% more food to the rich world than they imported from it.

We produce and pollute to such an extent that the average temperature of the globe is estimated to increase by 1.5-4.5 degrees centigrade up to the year 2050. If so, sea levels could rise anywhere from 20 centimeters to 4 meters. A 1 to 4 meter rise would threaten major cities such as Cairo, New Orleans and Shanghai. Enormous rice-producing fields in Southeast Asia would be destroyed by salt water which would affect negatively the living conditions of up to one billion people and turn one-fifth of us into ecological refugees.

We use such methods and overexploit the fertile lands to such an extent that 16 billion tons of fertile topsoil disappears worldwide annually and 6 million hectares become deserts.

We in the rich nations such as the United States, Sweden and Japan consume so much that if all peoples were to achieve the same living standards as we take for granted today, we would have to find 6-8 new planets like the Earth to take the resources from.

Whether one believes the main culprit to be capitalism or socialism, Western industrialism and the philosophy of limitless, permanent material growth, Christianity or a socio-biological drive—or some kind

of mixture of some or all of them—the modes of production and consumption of the privileged few, developing over the last 300 years or so must end. There is simply no way, no technological fixes or scientific breakthroughs, that will allow this to continue without wrecking havoc on humankind and Mother Earth, Gaia—or both.

The “we” above include those individuals and nations that are predominantly white, Western (in this respect also Nipponic), capitalist, socialist, Judeo-Christian-Islamic, rational, scientific, male-oriented, democratic, market-based and advocate (Western) human rights but no duties or obligations.

What we have done and continue to do today is simply a) unsustainable, b) unethical and c) self-defeating. The Earth can do without us, but we cannot do without her. We hardly need more alarming research reports; I venture that we know enough to take societal action and that science—not the least social science—will increasingly declare itself irrelevant to the extent it analyses *only* the problems and forgets that its *main* task is to help us find ways to new action, governance and forms of living in and beyond the 21st century.

## 2. Sustainability: A Meta-Critique of the Brundtland

### Commission Report

The catchword of the international debate on this issue has been “sustainability” since the Brundtland Commission report “Our Common Future” was published. Sustainability is as old as the mountains, one might say. Indigenous people that are often called “primitive” and belong to the low civilizational level of the so-called “Fourth World” have known and practiced sustainability for ages. And ecologists have worked with the concept for a hundred years or so. The World Commission on Environment and Development’s report, “*Our Common Future*” (The Brundtland Commission, 1987), for the first time, placed sustainability in an international political and economic framework as seen by politicians in the late 1980s. It defines it in this manner:

“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs

of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains within it two key concepts: the concept of 'need,' in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs... In essence, sustainable development is a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development, and institutional change are all in harmony and enhance both current and future potential to meet human needs and aspirations."

It goes on stating that the satisfaction of human needs and aspirations is the major objective of development, and beyond the very basics, people have legitimate aspirations for an improved quality of life. "Development," it is stated, "is the progressive transformation of economy and society... physical sustainability cannot be secured unless development policies pay attention to such considerations as changes in access to resources and in the distribution of costs and benefits." Other aspects of the core conceptualization of the report are presented in terms such as: "Sustainable development requires meeting the basic needs of all and extending to all the opportunity to satisfy their aspirations for a better life" and "... sustainable development requires the promotion of values that encourage consumption standards that are within the bounds of the ecological possible and to which all can reasonably aspire" ... "at a minimum, sustainable development must not endanger the natural systems that support life on Earth: the atmosphere, the waters, the soils, and the living beings." (pp. 43-44)

Further, that "ultimate limits there are, and sustainability requires that long before these are reached, the world must ensure equitable access to the constrained resource and re-orient technological efforts to relieve the pressures ..."

The question is what all this means. We are skeptical about the

entire intellectual underpinnings of the report because, *theoretically*:

a) *Sustainability* is made dependent upon a conceptualization of needs of future generations and their ability to satisfy their needs. But by means of what can we know what their needs will be and how they will satisfy them? It is highly *utilitarianistic*: acts and policies are viewed in terms of their consequences, not on the basis of some kind of ethical or ecological principle(s).

b) The concept of development as *need satisfaction* is fine, but it focuses only on human needs and without any qualification (there exist no universal set of basic 'human needs' after all). It is anthropocentric in the sense that the needs/rights of other living organisms are not taken into account.

c) The idea of *limitation* is not specified, criteria not stated, which organizations to judge what limitations should apply where and when are not presented.

d) The conceptualization is *environmentalist*. The report looks mostly into physical resources and population growth and advocates a gentle way of doing the same wrongs as previously combined with repairing Nature and finding substitutes for her products after the exploitation has taken place.

The report never addresses basic issues such as consumption levels and structurally determined overdevelopment. Repeatedly we are told that growth is necessary and the exploitation of even non-renewable resources perfectly all right, and that every ecosystem everywhere need not be preserved intact *provided the rate of use is within the limits of regeneration and natural growth*. But, how? Do we not know already that human culture and the production modes of world capitalism are out of synch with organic life processes?

And what about the resources which, when used, will not regenerate such as rain forests? The answer, in vague terms, is that we should "take into account" the criticality of the resource, the technology for minimizing its exploitation, and the likelihood of developing substitutes.

e) "Transformation of society and economy" indicates an abstraction, a *fragmentation between "society" and "economy" worldview*.

Furthermore, what is meant by *transformation*?

f) The report does not deal with the issues of *distribution or priorities*, it never addresses what it would imply to give *overriding priority to the world's poor people*.

g) Stating as the report does (p.44) that development is acceptable only if reflecting both sustainability and *non-exploitation of others* and simultaneously increasing both productivity and ensuring *equitable opportunities for all* it seems to have lost contact with the realities. The present world system is unthinkable without gross exploitation of Nature and peoples in peripheries of core capitalism.

h) One must be skeptical about *the worldview of harmony*, of common interests and "our common future" when it is not attached to a consistent change perspective. The Commission seems to neglect any aspect of conflict between its stated goals, priorities or between peoples or governments, economic structures or, worse, between humankind's needs, massive economic growth and the carrying capacity of Gaia.

When we look at the disparities and increasing inequality on virtually all vital world indicators we must ask ourselves: What do we have in common? What does the subsistence farmer with six children and a tiny plot of land that he toils with primitive tools have in common with the social science professor shopping his or her way through the Ginza department stores?

Do we really have a common future with those who suffer and those who die? "It is not that there is one set of villains and another of victims. All would be better off if each person took into account the effect of his or her acts upon others," the report states (p.47).

i) The Brundtland Report *lacks a causal analysis* of the world's malaise and *explicitly refuses to pinpoint power structures* and advocates no changes in the situation of the over-privileged. Consequently, it serves as a smoke-screen over the extremely exploitative present system.

j) Whenever we see a Christmas lists of all good things that should be done—material growth, conservation, sustainability, equity, etc. —

we should ask: And what will we have to *abstain* from doing? *What types of policies and acts caused the present situation and how do we change these factors?* The commission's report basically promotes the somewhat outdated view that everything is possible and the future is bright. In whose interests?

*Politically*, a skeptical view would look at:

k) The fact that the first "strategic imperative" is said to be the *reviving of (economic) growth*, both in what is euphemistically called the "developing countries" and in the industrial countries. "Meeting essential needs requires not only a new era of economic growth for nations in which the majority are poor, but an assurance that these poor get a fair share of the resources required to sustain that growth" (p.8). What is a fair share, and why does the report advocate growth first, redistribution second, instead of the opposite? Not only the poor nations shall grow, so shall we, and the report mentions the likelihood of a five- to tenfold growth of the present world economy of 13,000 billion dollars in the coming 50 years (p.4).

l) *Poverty is related to ecological catastrophe*, overexploitation, overdevelopment and luxury consumption are not—"a world in which poverty is endemic will always be prone to ecological and other catastrophes" (p.8 and 69).

m) *The strategic imperatives* suggested concerning growth, the quality of growth, needs, population, resource conservation, new technologies or decision-making procedures have little if any impact on the life-styles of the rich minority, say, 20 per cent on Earth. The implicit hypothesis of the Brundtland Report seems to be that living standards can be raised for all, and within ecological limits, so that we all—including future generations—get a "fair share." Virtually all statistics available point to the illusory character of this hypothesis.

n) There is *no linkage between poverty and underdevelopment in peripheral countries and overdevelopment in central countries* such as ours. Instead it is pointed out that industrial countries must help the poor more and for that they need economic growth. This—impossible—equation goes like this:

“In practical terms, this means more rapid economic growth in both industrial and developing countries, free market access for the products of developing countries, lower interest rates, greater technology transfer, and significantly larger capital flows, both concessional and commercial.. The Commission’s overall assessment is that the international economy must speed up world growth while respecting the environmental constraints” (p.89).

Since the material growth of, say, 20% of the world’s population over the last 5-10 decades has caused so much trouble and brought us on the verge of a civilizational crisis, one may ask how not only these 20% but the remaining 80% shall achieve their “fair share” of global welfare? The answer of the report is virtual one: By means of the diffusion of environmentally sound technologies (p.87). The *possible* is compatible with the *necessary* and that again is compatible with the *desirable*.

So, we are presented with a “technological fix” for what is truly an ecological, political, cultural, ethical, socio-economic and security problematic. These elements of a fundamental critique of the Brundtland Commission Report will do here.

The basic challenge, as I see it, is this: *Sustainability will have to be linked somehow with true limitations, self-control, care, preservation— i.e., with an ethical standpoint— and not only with a utilitarianistic, environmentalist reformism.*

From here, let’s elaborate a little on the development/growth problematic.

### 3. The false distinction between growth and no growth

For heuristic purposes, let’s start out with a few distinctions about growth/environment models: *Growth (G)* can be negative, zero or positive; the *environmental impact (EI)* of human activity can be negative, balanced or positive.

These rather simple distinctions offer us nine possibilities:

A	Negative G	+	negative EI
B		+	balanced EI
C		+	positive EI
D	Zero G	+	negative EI
E		+	balanced EI
F		+	positive EI
G	Positive G	+	negative EI
H		+	balanced EI
I		+	positive EI

If we imagine that this can be applied to (at least) the local (subnational), the national, the regional and the global level, we have 36 ( $4 \times 9$ ) dimensions. Thus, the debate about "growth" or "no growth" and environmental impact is sometimes a bit narrow-minded. There is no theoretical or conceptual reason why growth must automatically imply environmental destruction (G), or why "no growth" should automatically lead to environmental regeneration or sustainability (F). Neither is there any universality in the claim that only massive material growth will lead to a better environment as advocated by the Brundtland Commission Report (I). There are many other possibilities. The real world displays them:

The Western OECD world is approaching zero or negative economic growth. It is beyond doubt that they are the main destroyers of their own as well as the world's environment. In many regions and countries poverty and real GNP decline is accompanied by environmental destruction. If the costs of losing biomass and of repairing environmental damage were incorporated in national budgets, there would probably be negative growth in the majority of OECD countries today.

Furthermore, some countries display a pattern of improving the overall quality of their environment over time while maintaining high growth rates—Japan probably being the foremost example. However, it relies heavily on destroying the environment outside Japan, e.g., the rain forests in Malaysia.

At the local level, close to ourselves, in our gardens and agricultural fields, we know that sustainability is natural. We can harvest only a certain number of potatoes per time and space unit by natural methods, and only by means of chemicals or bioengineering can these processes be forced. Nature takes its time, for production as well as regeneration—as composting reveals to the observer. Growth is natural, so is decay and recycling. There are limits to how fast these cycles are. Therefore, one vital element is missing in the growth/no growth debate—*time*.

Man will probably always make an impact, hopefully balanced, being in partnership with Nature. But the speed with which we do so today with artificial, mechanic time rather than organic time, forcing production and consumption processes through Nature's cycles in a much higher pulse than is natural throughout history, is clearly unsustainable. The fact that the rhythms of culture and of nature are anything but synchronous is often forgotten (as is so eloquently illustrated from an evolutionist perspective in Ornstein and Ehrlich's "New World. New Mind.")

And the time dimension must be coupled to the constant *expansion* of human activities which affects Nature. Not only do we add 220,000 new people per day (80 million per year) to the world's population, but a minority insists on expanding their daily consumption ad absurdum (signified more than anywhere else in the United States and Japan).

Then there is the whole issue on how to "*assess*" the impact of human activity on or in the environment. Is Nature only worth the costs of repair, substitution and technological fixes or does she (also) *hold* a value that is immeasurable, or *is* Nature a value by simply being, that is, something that is beyond evaluation?

As there is a problem with time, there is one with *space*. Many analyses, so too the Brundtland Commission, takes for granted that there must be growth everywhere in a system, that it is a uniform phenomenon and that non-growth is a negative feature. This is an uncouth simplification. Nature does not operate that way, neither does the individual human being. There is growth and decay, there is

stability and change, there are periods when a system gives priority to certain types of growth while others are left stable.

We would dispute that the precondition material growth in the Third World is massive material growth in the industrialized world or in the world economic system in general. History shows that, perhaps with the exception of a few small "newly-industrialized countries," this massive growth at the centers has not led to true development in the peripheries; rather, the result is structural over- and underdevelopment, in short systemic maldevelopment. A basic hypothesis is that countries, and systems, with very different socio-economic, political and cultural features and histories shall not necessary be given identical medicine, such as "massive economic growth everywhere."

Evidently, too, *growth must be qualified*. There is material, economic, measurable growth and there is everything else, including human, mental, civilizational growth or, better, maturity and quality. But there is also a distinction to be made between endogenously stimulated, self-reliance oriented growth and exogenous, other-dependent growth, there is inner exploitation, exploitation of someone else and there is non-exploitation.

Be this as it may, it all depends on what is meant by "growth" and by "development," essentially contested concepts as they are. To equate development with economic material growth, measured in terms such as GNP, as is most often done, is absurd. We would not dream of taking the calorie in- and throughput of a human being as an indicator of his or her personal development.

Why are such absurd measures and national goals preserved against all common sense? Presumably because modern bourgeois, neo-liberal economics ranks fairly low in terms of intellectual quality but high in terms of compatibility, if not isomorphism, with power elites in whose interest it is to preserve rather than abolish such intellectual detachment and abstract simplifications such as "Homo economicus." We are still in need of a true economics, as pointed out recently by Etzioni and by Daly and Cobb Jr.

As an alternative, let us simply quote the definition of development

as we find it in *"The Challenge to the South. The Report of the South Commission"* from 1990 under the chairmanship of Tanzania's former president Julius Nyerere. It has not received any international media attention in comparison with the Brundtland Commission Report. The reason, of course, is that it is intellectually so much better and politically so much less system compatible.

"Development is a process which enables human beings to realize their potential, build self-confidence and lead lives of dignity and fulfillment. It is a process which frees people from the fear of want and exploitation. It is a movement away from political, economic, or social oppression. Development therefore implies growing self-reliance, both individual and collective. The basis for a nation's development must be its own resources, both human and material, fully used to meet its own needs... Development is a process of self-reliant growth, achieved through the participation of the people acting in their own interests as they see them, and under their own control. Its first objective must be to end poverty, provide productive employment, and satisfy the basic human needs of all the people, any surplus being fairly shared. This implies that basic goods and services such as food and shelter, basic education and health facilities, and clean water must be accessible to all. In addition, development presupposes a democratic structure of government, together with its supporting individual freedoms of speech, organization, and publication, as well as a system of justice which protects all the people from actions inconsistent with just laws that are known and publicly accepted."

This definition emphasizes a set of societal qualities centered around growing self-reliance of all units, from the smallest and upward, coupled with human and social need satisfaction, a fair distribution of opportunities for realization of individual as well as societal potentials.

If these principles were to form the basis of development policies

worldwide (and they are universalizable to a higher extent than the present economic growth philosophy) sustainability would be enhanced by all units and the present world order becomes totally transformed.

One may argue that this does not say much about our attitude to Nature. Implicitly, however, it does. It emphasizes human needs, not ever growing market demand and it points to the realization of potentials that clearly does not mean utility maximizing behaviour of an "economic man" as is the case in neo-liberal economics.

Self-reliance means seeking one's resources first at the local level and adapting to some extent at least to what is available. If the First World did that today and stopped exploiting the Second, Third and Fourth Worlds there would be plenty of opportunity for those to regenerate, satisfy their needs and realize their tremendous potentials. Also with limitless materialism gone, the rate of destruction of Nature would slow down considerably.

Thus, recycling, conservation, abstention from certain absolutely non-essential types of consumption and the care for things of high durability are all characteristics of a society that strives for self-reliance, because self-reliance is also an effort to reduce the *dependence* on exploitation of Nature that we know today. Because of the tremendous energy of the sun and its wide and equal distribution over the globe, this will be the major energy source in all its forms, of the future, more self-reliant local and world-community. The more we consume, the more we become dependent on the environment to provide all we want (but do not always need) and the more we will be harmed by the accumulated consequences of Nature's degradation. So, self-reliance means less self-inflicted pain from e.g. pollution and from the consequences of conflicts and wars fought for access to resources that do not belong to those who attempt to control or possess them because they are other-reliant. Is solar power so uninteresting in the eyes of power elites because it cannot be monopolized and profited from in the same way as oil wells can? Or because its power cannot be transformed to sophisticated weaponry?

Optimizing self-reliance is not only common sense from the points of

view of development and environment. It is also good security and disarmament policy: It should be fairly evident by now, that had the United States been more self-reliant as an economy and society and had its deliberate policy over the last few decades been set to increase rather than decrease its self-sufficiency and domestic production in primary energy, its proneness to intervene in the oil rich Middle East would probably have been much smaller.

Now it must squander incredible amounts of dollars to fight for "its" oil—and that of other Western powers and absurdly other-reliant Japan. If we add the price of military activities to secure the oil, the real post-1991 price per barrel crude must be the highest ever in human history.

#### 4. The need for an ethical approach

If you read an appeal for new thinking between the lines in this think piece you are right. The question is: When will we be humble enough to see that we *have* problems and *cause* problems and that *things can be done differently*? Where to look for inspiration?

We urgently need a Western "perestroika" including self-criticism. We have different problems from those of the Soviets and East Europeans, but we share a civilizational fate: Our system is built on such assumptions, operates on such a "mental program" that there is not the slightest chance—or probability—of survival in the long run by just, or predominantly, doing as we have done the last 300 years.

*Both the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, the United States and Western Europe belong to the Occidental civilization.* The Eastern bloc (now wisely dissolved) and the Western (unwisely now being expanded) are essentially two versions of the same civilization or cosmology. The most serious problem with the West is that our material standards blind us vis-a-vis our problems and those we create for others. Materialism the Western way has been a blessing but is now a curse. Thus, whereas the Gorbachev generation has started out a process of self-criticism and, implicitly, humility and new thinking, the West congratulates itself that "we have won the Cold War, our system is the

best." Whereas the Third and the Second Worlds have someone else to look at, the First World is bound to believe that it is "Second to None" and will remain so.

It is presumably in such psycho-political mechanisms we shall find some of the *raison d'être* of the incredible blindness to the disintegration of the American society compared with the attention paid to that of the Soviet society.

Thus, the Western Occident is proud of its welfare, technology, democracy, freedom, human rights and environmentalism. It forgets—or, to borrow a term by late economist Gunnar Myrdal, it practices opportune ignorance—about *the other sides of the coins*.

We try to forget the truth that *consumption* over a certain level does not foster happiness—and pretend that existential emptiness can be compensated with ever more consumption. With increasing welfare, we talk more, almost obsessively, about money, salaries and profits than ever before.

We forget the *poverty* pockets and minorities within our own nations and the utter deprivation of everything human for the majority of world citizens that is causally related to our very materialism. We forget the social alienation and passive consumption in the wake of *technological wonders* and the incredible stress we feel the more time-saving devices we surround ourselves with. We forget that *democracy* means genuine participation, not performance by "representatives." Today, hardly anyone in the media speaks for him- or herself but "on behalf of" large organizations which is the same as never taking full personal responsibility or showing civil courage, when needed. And we create organizations the size of which makes it virtually impossible to practice democracy.

We forget the lack of *freedoms*—from war risks, poverty, economic pressures, unhealthy jobs, advertisements, state intrusion, military service, and the not negligible self-censorship generally practiced to achieve certain positions. We forget the commercialization of news media within the "free press" and the systematic marketization of qualities in our lives. And we tend to ignore that most *human rights*

violations are committed within the Western hemisphere and its dependencies in the peripheries. Thus, while the world united in indignation over the indeed brutal events in Beijing, the United States killed about the same number of people (3,000) in Panama.

And, finally, had Western governments taken the environmental crisis serious, policy-making would look entirely different from what it does today. Challenging the *consumism* of the Western Occident would take as much of a “perestroika” there as did the challenge of *communism* in the Eastern Occident. There is a high probability that the change in the Eastern system implies a set-back of several years for necessary socio-economic and -cultural change in the West?

##### 5. From neighborhood ethics to global ethics

Humankind’s technological capacity has outgrown the traditional ethical framework. In that the agents belonged to and shared a common present. It was strictly anthropocentric, limited in time and space—“Love thy neighbor as thyself”, “Do unto others as you wish them to do unto you” etc.

Today, the consequences of our actions reach far into the space and time. Local action often has global and cumulative consequences; the empathy with others harmed (or joy with those delighted) by our action, diminishes with increasing distance and time horizon. So is the case with our normative and legal considerations. You are not permitted to kill your neighbor but it is—and remains even so into the 1990s, although norms and attitudes *may* be changing—part of legitimate high politics that statesmen take responsibility for peacetime nuclear war planning, and in case of war, command the launch of nuclear weapons that could kill hundreds of millions.

The German-American philosopher, Hans Jonas, has developed an ethics of care. In his seminal work “*The Imperative of Responsibility*” he offers us a set of universal norms and guidelines concerning the duty toward the existence and the condition of future generations.

The highest principle of modern civilization is: “Act so that the effects of your action are compatible with the permanence of genuine

human life" or "In your present choices, include the wholeness of Man among the objects of your will." That is, since man can destroy Earth, and does so every day—and could do it probably once and for all in a "nuclear winter"—and since we are in this sense taking upon us the role of God, we have become responsible for "there being something rather than nothing." Because of our powers, we must be humble, we must care, we must preserve what is, we have a duty to care for what is extra-human—and *do so for its own sake, not for ours.*

Ethics can no longer be exclusively anthropocentric and local, it must encompass Gaia, the living Earth of which we are only one among perhaps some 20 million species and it must reach out in the future, that is, we shall have to develop a completely new intuition, empathy and future-orientated sentiment to answer questions such as: What will our decision here and now imply for coming generations, the yet unborn? What duties do we have to honor the rights of the things and the humans and the extra-humans of the future who cannot give voice to the obvious right they have to an existence?

We would like to suggest three domains of responsibility that must be included in an ethics of care for Gaia:

- \* Caring for the *permanence* of existence of present lives—  
Catchwords: "Be humble!"
- \* Caring for *bio-diversity*—Catchwords: "Abstain, appreciate, preserve!"
- \* Caring for the *yet unborn*—Catchwords: "Empathize, love!"

These are three vital, truly universal domains, not only from the point of view of ethical concern. They, not a particular Western idea about human rights, are universalizable. They also touch upon the essentials of what global development, security, and peace must be about if, in the long run, we shall all survive.

In other words, we would like to suggest that the concept of rights apply not only to human beings alive today, but also to the extra-human species such as the trees and animals and the complex web of billions of processes that connect them. What we do not present a

formula for here is the exact ways in which such rights can be respected. And, indeed, no one has come up with a viable set of principles. Likewise, the yet unborn have rights with which we have a duty to *empathize*.

This is the essence of what environmental ethics must deal with. The horizons of responsibility, of ethics and human duties are facing a great deal of "musts" because of our power and the "system failure" we have operated with all through the industrial phase: the anthropocentric view of ourselves and the mechanistic-material-scientific image of (a female) Nature as an object to be penetrated, controlled and exploited by male, Western science.

Humility, stewardship, wisdom and love are, once again, becoming essential in the vocabulary of the social scientist. Inspiration can be sought in many directions. One would be Mohandas K. Gandhi, another would be the contemporary feminine and spiritual sentiment, a third would be new integrative science endeavours. And, as ever, poetry, myths, metaphors and fiction will help us a long way. But most important is the genuine development of a free, creative mind—something, by the way, so wonderfully depicted in Peter Weir's film "*Dead Poets' Society*" (1990).

Conventional knowledge, based on empirical analysis and scientific approaches, will be necessary. But it will not suffice. The same goes for traditional policy-making. We cannot know the future with any certainty, we cannot plan it on behalf of coming generations, less ought we try to colonize it. What we can do, however, is to *intensify all types of future-orientated capabilities and faculties—intuition, imagination, empathy, forecasting, scenario-production*. We can try to identify with, understand—by means of fiction, future workshops, etc.—what imagined futures will be like, and we can open up, be receptive to information we obtain by such methods.

The problem is not that this need for anticipatory analyses and politics is new. The problem, rather, is that it has been with us for a long time but is constantly thrust aside by "politics" and mainstream academia. This is a double challenge. To social science in general and

peace and future research in particular.

\*I would like to dedicate this little piece to the students in my five courses at I.C.U. 1990-91 because of what they all taught me, during our lengthy discussions in the classes and my office, about Japan and quite a few taught me about the strengths of their multicultural identities. Some of you belonged to the most concerned citizens I have met and have all it takes to become re-searchers for a better future.

### **Suggested readings—on which parts of the article are based**

#### **On the ecological crisis**

- Arne Naess, *Økologi, samfunn og livsstil. Utkast til en økosofi*, (Ecology, Society and Life Style), Oslo University Press, Oslo 1974.
- Barry Commoner, *Making Peace with the Planet*, Pantheon Books, New York 1990.
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## 維持可能な世界秩序のための倫理

### 〈要 約〉

ヤン・エーベル

本論文では、将来の世界秩序に関する相互に関連しあう問題点をマクロな視点から考察する。はじめに、国際的制度和地球の現状についての基本的な情報を読者にあたえ、われわれ先進諸国がすでに成し、現在も続けている行為が、a) 維持不可能 (unsustainable) で、b) 非倫理的で、c) 自己破壊的であるということを述べる。

つぎに、Brundtland Commission 報告，“Our Common Future”で展開された、維持可能 (sustainable) な発展という概念をメタクリティクし、より理論的に一貫した、政治的に革新的で緊急な議論を行い、維持可能な発展の概念を新たに定義する。

自立と新しい地球規模の倫理の必要性を強調するオルタナティブな発展論の観点から、成長対非成長の議論における誤った区別を批判する。人間というのは権利ばかりを持つのではなく、われわれはある種の義務も課せられている。たとえば、人間という種の恒久的存続や、生物の多様性や、まだ生まれない子供にたいして、それらがあたかも権利を表明しているかのように、それらにたいして注意をはらうことが求められている。

最後に、筆者は、科学における新しい感受性について、未来に向けられたあらゆる種類の能力と才能—つまり、直観力、想像力、共感、予測、青写真を描く能力—を磨いている学者について論ずる。こうした能力は、通常「政治」や学界の主流からは、脇に押しやられているのである。