

"We are all stewards of the earth, but often lack specific information and advice on what we can do personally and collectively. *Right Relationship* provides a wonderful guide for all of us."
—President Jimmy Carter

Right Relationship

Building a Whole Earth Economy

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*A thing is right when it
tends to preserve the
integrity, resilience and
beauty of the
commonwealth of life.*

*It is wrong when it tends
otherwise.*

- adapted from Aldo Leopold, *A Sand
County Almanac*

Moral Economy Project
Quaker Institute for the Future
moraleconomy.org

Could This Be A Moment of Grace?

A time to find a renewed, Human-
Earth Relationship based on
science and religion?

Wrong relationship in Canada



Alberta Tar Sands

© Garth Lenz

September Arctic Ice Cap 1979/2005



Reverend Jones



1978



AP / file

Can we change the question?

- How would we live if we changed the question *from*: how can we best dominate and use nature; *to*: how can we live with an ethics of respect and reciprocity toward Earth and the life on it with we share heritage and destiny?
- Could this change open our hearts and minds to a moment of grace? Could it help us rethink citizenship, the economy, and our personal role in securing a just and flourishing earth.

Four steps to Right Relationship

- 1. How we got on the wrong path
- 2. how to re-envision who we are
- 3. How to get economics and governance on the right path
- 4. 4 steps to a whole earth economy for citizens

Part One: Getting on a tragic course

- A. The dualism built into both Judeo-Christian and Greek thought. (Schweitzer)
- B. Too narrow a conception of morality. The quest for eternal life—the Samaritan story.
- C. Further deflections points—rise of science as power (Bacon). The enlightenment conception of mind as uniquely human—mind is bountiful.
- D. The pre-scientific character of Judeo-Christian, Greek, and enlightenment thought. *The Magic Christian*. We need a morality of systems, not only individuals.
- The idea of *exogenous* rescue.

Part Two: Rediscovering who and where we are.

An Opening to Grace?

Opening our Hearts and Minds to the Gift of Grace

- A. Vast creative processes
- B. Small planet
- C. Special nobility
- D. Citizenship
- E. The Commonwealth of Life

A. Continuous Creation



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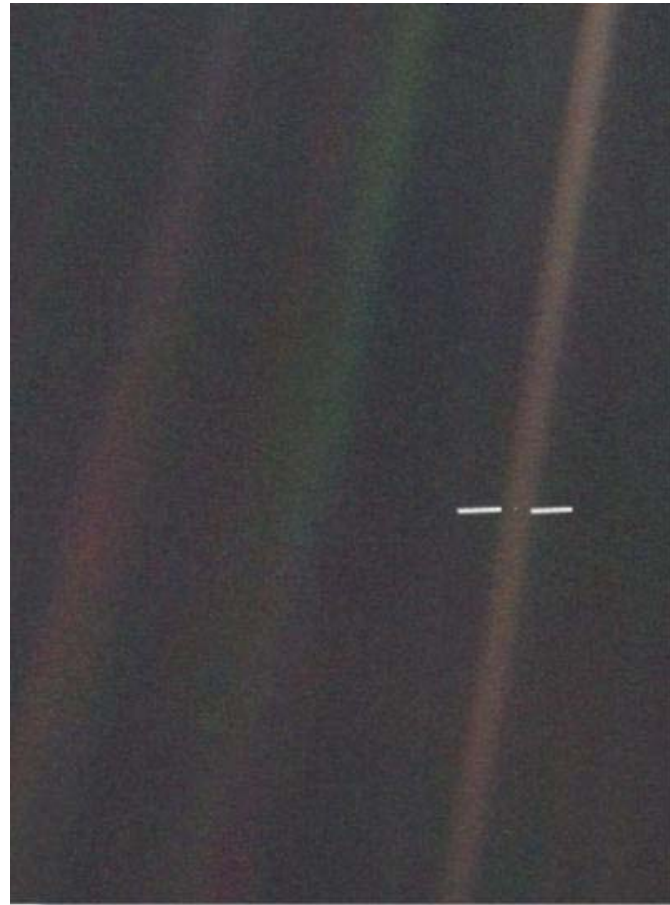
Some features of an ever advancing universe.

- Beginning 13.8 billion years ago it is evolutionary in which biological evolution is a special case. (Chaisson)
- The principal driver of the process is the second law of thermodynamics. *The law of laws—why everything is not the same as everything else.*
- The law describes the processes that reduce temperature and other gradients. Entropy.
- To do this the universe uses *dissipative* structures, and *self organizing* entities—wind, currents, life. It both creates and destroys complexity.

Mind and Spirit

- This universe has direction but no destination. It is an optimizing process trying to be as cool as it can be. Tropical forest.
- Human mind and spirit are *emergent* properties implicit from the beginning. Chardin.
- But mind is widespread. As Henry Beston says of the other animals: “we patronize them for their incompleteness, for their tragic fate of having taken form so far below ourselves. And therein we err, and greatly err. The animal shall not be measured by man. In a world older and more complete than ours they move finished and complete, gifted with extensions of the senses we have lost or never attained, living by voices we shall never hear. They are not brethren, they are not underlings; they are other nations, caught with ourselves in the net of life and time, fellow prisoners of the splendor and travail of the earth. (*The Outermost House*, 1928)
- Plants—the maple tree and the septic system.

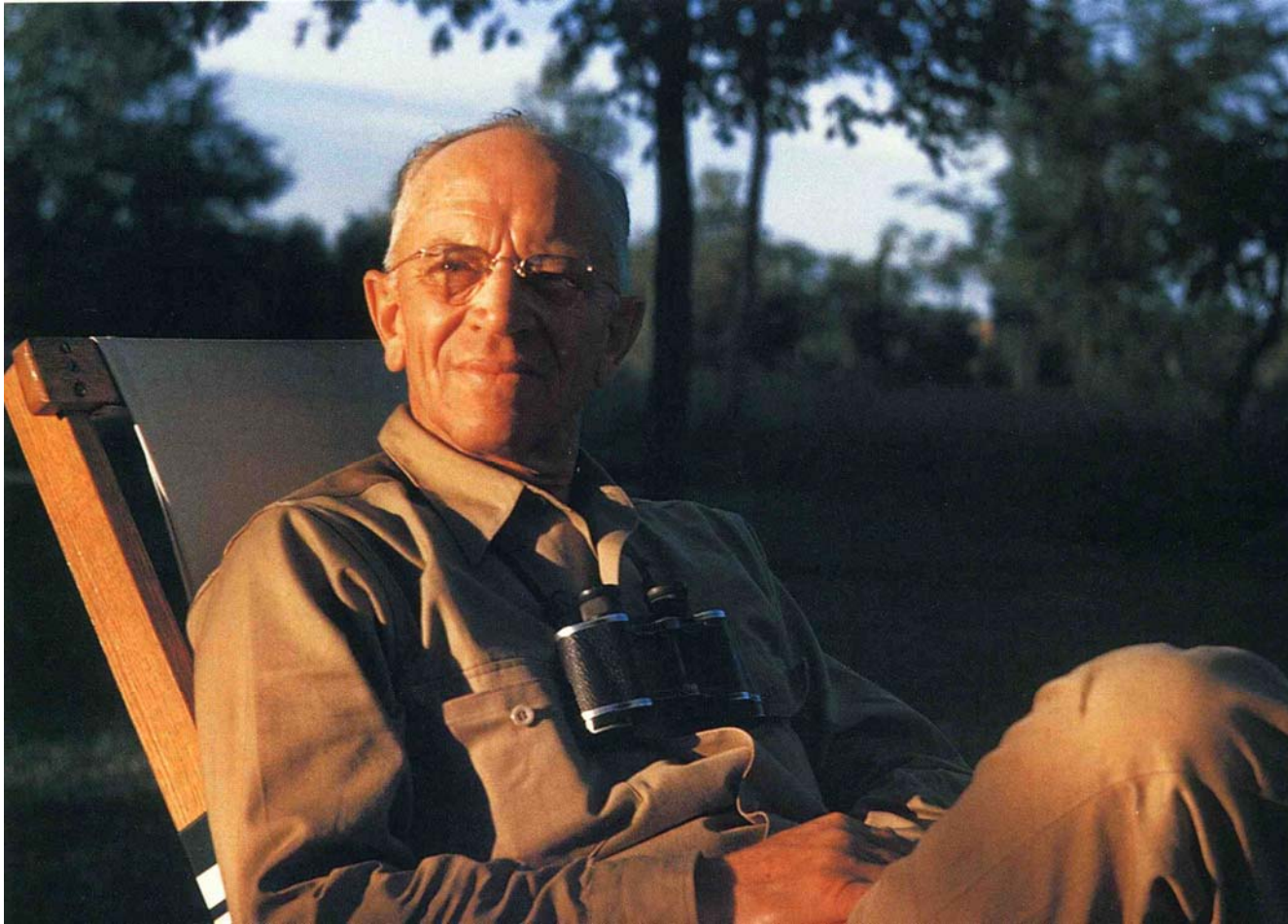
B. Earth from 4 billion miles



Carl Sagan October 13, 1994.

- The earth is a very small stage in a vast cosmic arena...To my mind, there is perhaps no better demonstration of the folly of human conceits than this distant image of our tiny world. To me, it underscores our responsibility to deal more kindly and compassionately with one another and to preserve and cherish that pale blue dot, the only home we've ever known."

C. Aldo Leopold



Leopold's challenge

- “If there be ...a special nobility inherent in the human race—a special cosmic value, ...by what token shall it be manifest? By a society decently respectful of its own and all other life, capable of inhabiting the earth without defiling it...[\[i\]](#)”
- Aldo Leopold, "Some Fundamentals of Conservation in the Southwest"

D. What is citizenship?

- The character of games: Finite and Infinite. (Carse.)
- The character of citizenship: to recognize one's membership as a finite player in an infinite game.
- The ultimate infinite game is evolution – chemical, biological, ethical, cultural, economic, spiritual, and political which all require flourishing communities.

God made man in his image and gave the world to him.



But co-evolution suggests:
The Commonwealth of Life



Part Three

Rethinking the Economy

Situating it in a contemporary scientific
and moral/spiritual narrative



**New Answers to Five Questions About the Economy
Based on Right Relationship.**

**What's the Economy For?: A Flourishing Commonwealth
of Life**

How Does It Work?: Putting the Economy in Its Place

**How Big Is Too Big?: Boundaries on Consumption and
Waste**

What's Fair?: Sharing Life's Bounty

**How Should It Be Governed?: New Ways to Stay in
Bounds and Play Fair**

A photograph of a dense forest with tall, slender trees. Sunlight filters through the canopy, creating dappled light on the forest floor. The text "What's the economy for?" is overlaid in the center.

What's the economy for?

Whole Earth Economy

Keynes had it right: a principle goal of the economy is social stability, but we need to broaden this to include the well being of Earth's ecological systems. We seek a flourishing commonwealth of life—encompassing human and natural communities.

To obtain this perspective we need an ethic of respect and reciprocity such as that found in the wisdom of many indigenous cultures, and in some of the world's major religions.

The economy is for
maintaining a thriving
commonwealth of life.



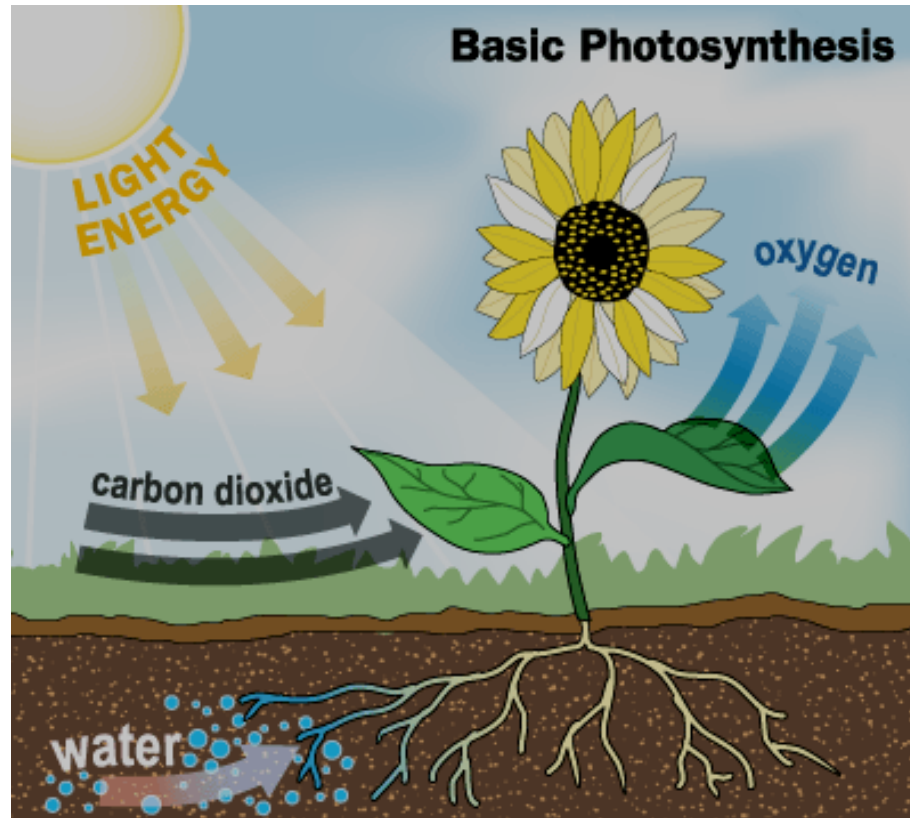
How does it work? It is part of the universe and subject to its laws. (Bernanke)



Two Features of Our Spaceship (Boulding)

- **Open to energy: Implications of the Second Law (Complexity Budget)**
- *The earth is (or was) an island of growing complexity in a gathering sea of simplicity - since the universe as a whole is running toward net disorder (entropy). Earth's capacity to support life, in part made possible by life itself, is limited, but not fixed.*
- **Closed to matter: Implications of the First Law (Assimilation Budget)**
- *There is no production only transformation. All consumption causes a net increase in high entropy matter or energy-this is waste. At present many waste streams overwhelm the ability of the ecosphere to absorb them; e.g. carbon, CFC's, mercury, nitrogen, etc.*

Basic unit of wealth is not \$



Rethinking some Economic Terms

- **Money (and its surrogates like credit):** *the right we give to each other, now or in the future, to take a piece of a limited ecological pie - in other words, to exert an ecological footprint.*
- **Cost:** *how much life must be exchanged to get something.*
- **Efficiency:** *the ratio of life's complexity gained relative to complexity and assimilation capacity lost. High efficiency means doing something with a low cost in life.*
- **Budget:** *an accounting of how much of Earth's life support capacity is available and how much is used to provide for us and absorb or process our waste.*

A photograph of a forest with several large, mature trees in the foreground and a path leading into the woods. The text "How big is too big?" is overlaid in the center of the image.

How big is too big?

The economy is too big when

- It overwhelms the earth ability to support complex and abundant life—what biologists call self organization.
- It overwhelms the ability of earth's living and nonliving systems to assimilate the waste it produces.
- The celebration of the “recovery.” Are the polar bears at the party?

A photograph of a forest with tall, slender trees and a dense canopy of green leaves. Sunlight filters through the trees, creating a dappled light effect on the forest floor. The text "What's fair? Sharing life's bounty" is overlaid in the center of the image.

What's fair? Sharing life's bounty

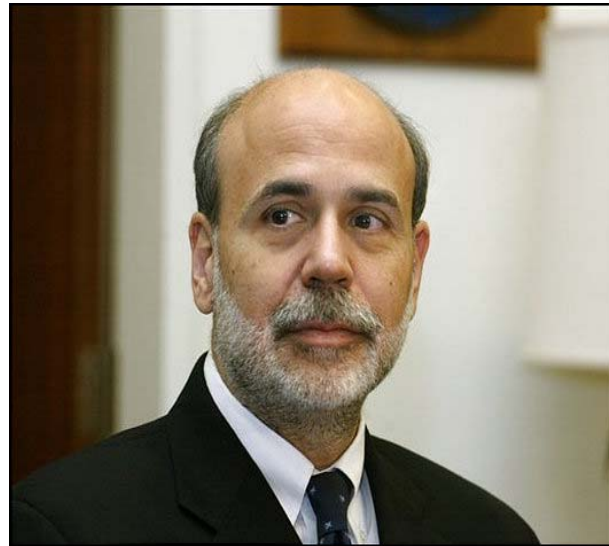
Fairness in a Whole Earth Economy

- Fairness is among humans, between humans and other species, and among generations of humans and other species.
- The most fundamental concern is shares of net primary productivity that supports complexity—in short life support capacity. How “money” affects this.
- The problematical nature of human rights and the 1st law of thermodynamics. (Obama and Harper)

How Should it be governed? Rethinking and Re-grounding Governance

- Government's duty to "secure the future" cannot be generated by the prevailing "market failure" theories of legitimacy. (Stern)
- We have entered a post-national period of governmental function and purpose. The nation state is a metaphysical anachronism and a moral and spiritual impediment.

Leave governance to the high priests
of the state sponsored religion?



Merwyn King



The inadequacy of national governments

- Velocity and scale
- Failed or failing states
- Capture
- Many nations, one world
- Nickel and diming: growth before environment
- The devil is in the (boring) details

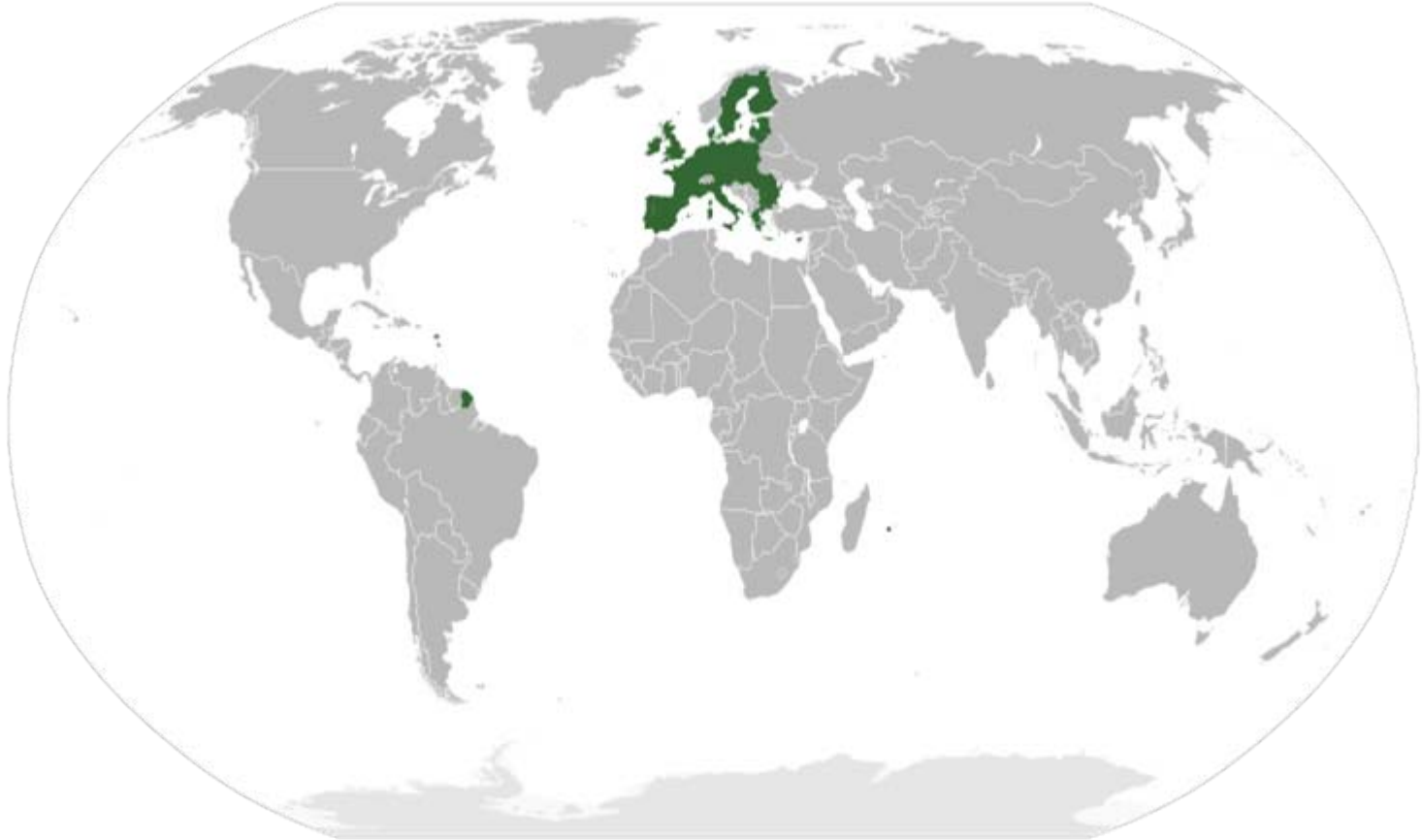
Why international governance is not working

- No means to ensure fairness.
- Growth Über Alles.
- Power imbalances toward the “winners” of WWII.
- Little power, less money (UNEP).
- Free riders: talking but not walking.
- IPCC—a step, but a small one, in the right direction.

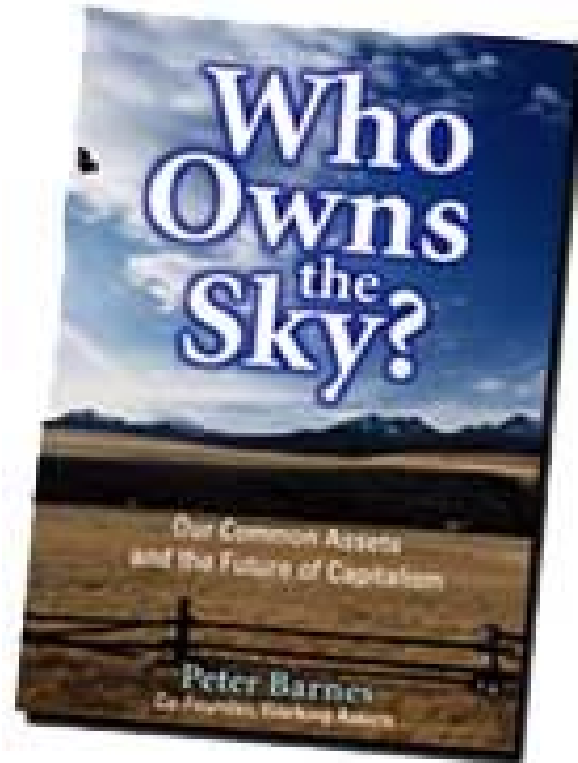
Institutions for Life's Commonwealth

- A. Institutions of global democratic federalism; the European Union Model (Frankman).
- B. Trusts for the protection and restoration of the global commons.
- C. An *Earth Reserve Bank*. I = PATE
- D. Redesigning, strengthening and making mandatory the World Court.

Global Federalism

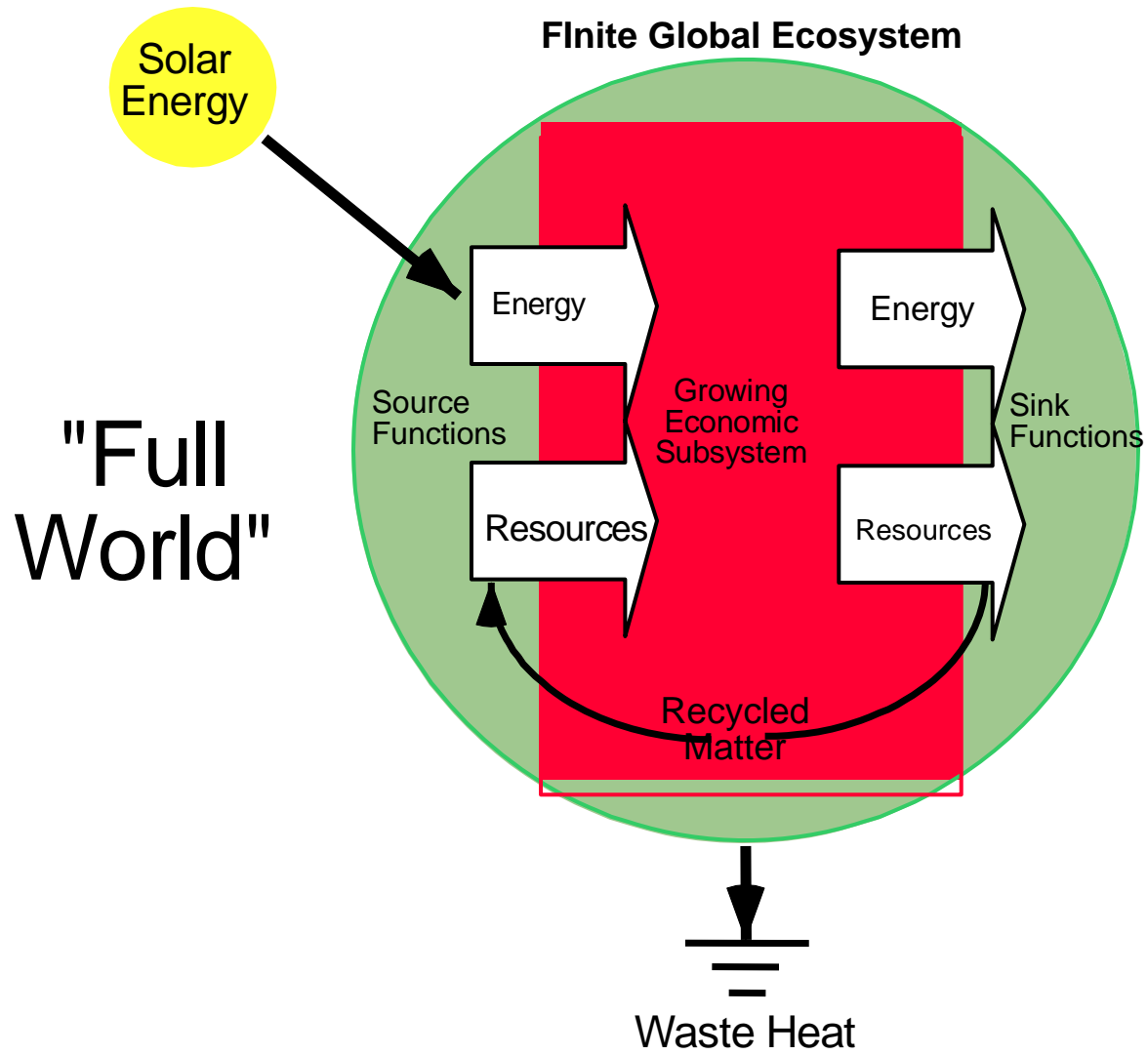


Trusts for the Commons



The *Global Reserve*

- Calculating how the earth works when full as it now.
- Setting limits based on good morals and science. $I = PAT(E)$
- Following image is from Robert Costanza.



A Strengthened World Court



Part Four: Four steps to a whole earth economy

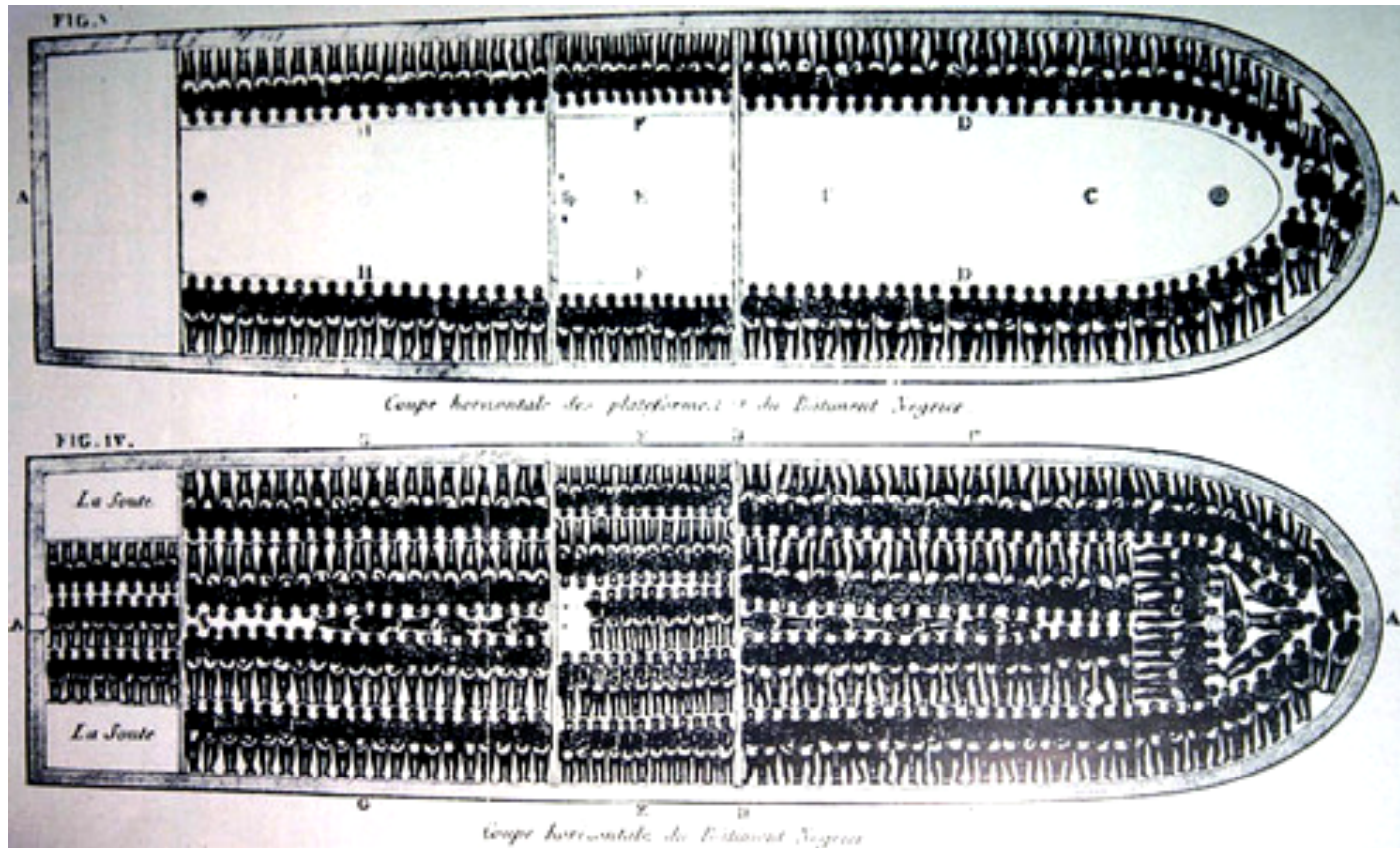
1 *Grounding and clarification.* Going to the Fountainhead (Thoreau) Finding and nurturing inner strength and resolve. The connection between inside/outside. (Dahl)

2 *Design.* Models, pilots and techniques

3 *Witness.* Mass epiphany

4 *Non-violent reform.* Abolishing slavery as a leading model.

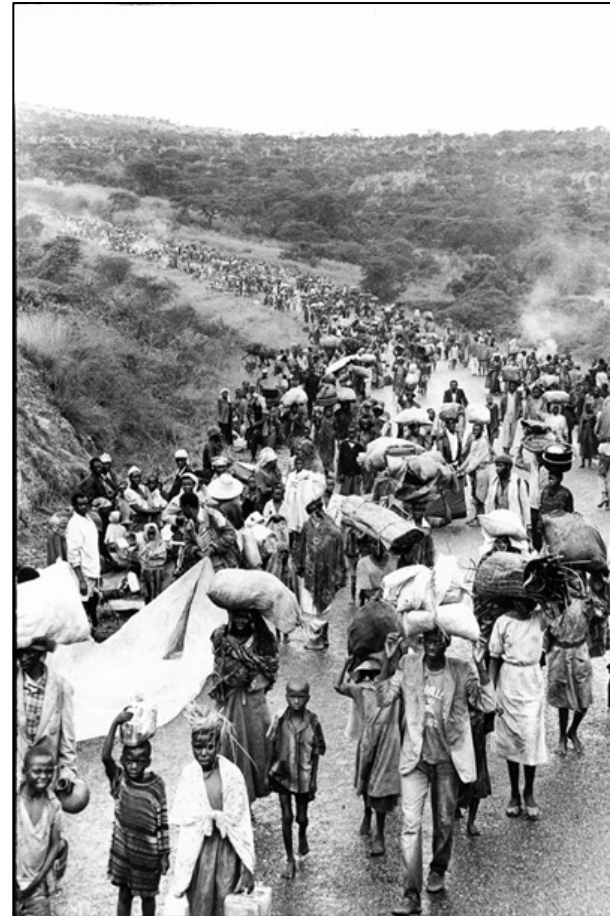
Overcrowding on the slave ship “Brookes”



Toward a Whole Earth Economy



Environmental refugees



Can This Be Our Moment of Grace?

- Understand our and Earth's place in a learning universe.
- Move from consumer to ecological citizen.
- We need economics and governance in Right Relationship with Earth.
- The challenge is great-BUT it has been done before. ***The alternative is unthinkable.***

E. Communion

- Humans can “become a mutually beneficial presence on the Earth...only when we understand the universe as composed of subjects to be communed with, not as objects to be exploited. Use as our primary relationship with the planet must be abandoned.” (Thomas Berry, *The Great Work*, pp. x-xi.)

The Gift of Eternal Life on a Flourishing Earth

