

## Exploring the hidden human factors

Robert Burke



'Insatiable' by Theodore Bolha, 'The Conversation'

### **Creative self-destruction: the climate crisis and the myth of 'green' capitalism'.**

We are seeing disruptions like 'Brexit', building walls between countries, and retreating from unifications such as the EU, TPP, etc. The result, as William Isaacs describes, is "fragmentation" – a word whose roots mean to "smash." We fragment the world, and in the process the parts lose their connection to the whole. The urgency to enable generative dialogue, productive collaboration and deep reflection is needed right now to explore the connections between futures and scenario thinking and practice and climate futures - particularly the study of the human and social dimensions of climate change through the arts and the humanities as creative self-destruction.

My colleague Richard Searle says "Personally I don't go along with the argument that sustainability and profits are perfectly synergistic. I think there will be real costs and real losers, and that capitalism itself will need to change and adapt, especially beyond the current consumerist stage, and that will take some real leadership from many quarters". Unchecked and unconscious consumerism is at the root of many of the world problems. The role of the humanities and the arts is linking scenarios to learning creating a change in consciousness. Wellness is about consciousness, our inner and outer world in harmony. The features of a global wellness culture are the celebration of cultural and geographical diversity, environmental sustainability, social responsibility, secular spirituality and conscious humane consumption. David Korten (2008) wrote *'Pull away the curtain to look behind the headlines, and we find a potentially terminal economic crisis with three defining elements:*

1. **Excess human consumption**, which is accelerating the collapse of Earth's ecosystem.
2. **Unconscionable inequality** and the related social alienation, which are advancing the social collapse manifest in terrorism, genocide, crime, and growing prison populations.

3. ***An economic system ruled by financial markets***, global corporations, and economic theories devoted to increasing consumption while rolling back real wages and benefits for working people to make money for the richest among us'.

Climate issues strategies often fail not because of a lack of alternative futures but because of a lack of understanding of deep culture. The role humanities and the arts can play in deepening the scenarios, by role-playing, narrative, and visuals, is to engage the worldviews of multiple stakeholders to reduce risk of the change process. This would be made explicit by the scenarios surfacing blind spots, which are built into the knowledge framework of each person and organisation, and address these by including difference using the creative use of images and stories supported by philosophical narrative addressing the tension between continuity versus discontinuity.

In this way the humanities and arts, through the use of scenarios, enable sensemaking to align values and purpose. By offering different visions of climate futures, by shifting innovation to a social not a technical process, surface the hidden human dimensions as a means to forecasting the difference between success and failure.