

Society and the Natural World

March 26 – 31, 2018

The Symposium Challenge

Never has the interaction between human beings and the natural world been of such relevance. In just the past few months we have noted different governmental approaches to the Paris Climate Accord, the decision of France to ban petrol and diesel cars by 2040, and Volvo's decision to concentrate production on electric vehicles. As we look to the future, the way in which we as a society use and allocate our natural resources, make decisions on personal and social energy and transport use, and cope with nature and its own volatility, will be vital to both the success of our species and the sustainability of our planet.

Over the past eight years of the Winchester International Symposium we have considered a number of tangential ways that we as a society interact with the planet: from the single environmental topic in the first WIS, to poverty in ALAWIS, to architecture in JKWIS, to the public understanding of science in KGSWIS, and to the future of the city in SWIS. In Kobe at the Nada-Winchester International Symposium, we will look directly at the relationship between society and the natural world, and in particular at the future challenges to that successful relationship. Japan's unique natural situation (in particular its seismic activity and the effects of that on how society operates) makes this topic particularly apposite.

The challenge of NWIS 2018 is to examine the past, present, and future interactions between society and the natural world, and to determine and evaluate the practical steps we can take to ensure that the future of the relationship between society and the natural world is as successful and sustainable as possible.

Students from the group of ten Symposium schools will come together in Kobe in March 2018, after having worked online for six months on the topic areas overleaf. Each school will draft a monthly 750-word response to a particular question set within each topic area; the response will follow a month of discussion of the issues arising from an introductory essay. The response will be posted online in the shared *Google* group, and submitted to TJP. Students will thus have a further week in which they are expected to comment on others' submitted responses.

As before, TJP will send participating students the introductory essay on each topic area, together with required and suggested reading, on the dates overleaf. Intermediate tasks – such as reading relevant articles, watching YouTube or TED talks, listening to podcasts – will also be assigned as appropriate. Students will again be encouraged to form their own *Facebook / Google* group to become acquainted before the Symposium.

Student pairs will pursue a personal project which will examine one aspect of society's interaction with the natural world. The specific project must gain prior approval. Students must submit their completed projects to TJP, by means of *YouTube* upload (or other common video format) one month before the beginning of the Symposium; this will allow for greater consistency, as well as improving the time collaborating at the Symposium. Completed and approved projects will be presented at NWIS.

At NWIS 2018, students will discuss ideas during daily debates, listen to expert speakers, and respond to prompts that will allow them to use their online work. These responses will take the form of short presentations. At the end of the week, students will come together to draft The Symposium Accord, which will be a common response to The Symposium Challenge.

Symposium Online Topic Schedule (and deadlines)

October 1, 2017 (Nov 1, 2017)	The Evolution of the Relationship; essay posted by TJP Students submit essays to TJP and post online for general comment)
Nov 8, 2017 (Dec 8, 2017)	The Effects of Economic Development; essay posted by TJP Students submit essays to TJP and post online for general comment)
Dec 15, 2017 (Jan 25, 2018)	Government, Science, and the Individual; essay posted by TJP Students submit essays to TJP and post online for general comment)
Feb 1, 2018 (Mar 1, 2018)	The Future of the Relationship; essay posted by TJP Students submit essays to TJP and post online for general comment)
Jan 25, 2018	Deadline for Personal Project approval
Jan 2017 - Mar, 2018 (Mar 12, 2018)	Personal Project work students submit completed personal projects to TJP

Block 1 (Oct 1 – Nov 1): The Evolution of the Relationship

A history of the key developments in the relationship between society and the natural world. The evolution of an understanding of natural phenomena (such as the solar system, tides, the rhythms of the planet). Society's dependence on the natural world (such as the locations of great cities, the need to farm and to fish). The vulnerability to great natural disasters such as flooding and earthquakes. The increasing ability to harness the natural world (e.g. solar, wind, and tidal power)

Block 2 (Nov 8 – Dec 8): The Effects of Economic Development

The effects of the industrial revolution in terms of the natural world. The internal combustion engine and the power of the machine; the need for fossil fuels and their mining. The issues facing modern developing countries (especially China and India) and the burgeoning environmental consciousness of the richer post-industrial countries. The difficulties of tackling climate change, and its public understanding. The question of nuclear power in particular.

Block 3 (Dec 15 – Jan 25): Government, Science, and the Individual

The increasing awareness of individual action on the natural world; the power of market economics to change behaviour (e.g. customers preferring low-emission cars and organic produce) and the limits to that power (e.g. the need for governmental regulation and independent scientific advice). Science and its role in explaining and understanding the relationship between society and the natural world. The particular problem of predicting earthquakes. Governmental and individual responses to natural disasters (e.g. in Japan and Italy).

Block 4 (Feb 1 – Mar 1): The Future of the Relationship

How will the relationship between society and the natural world evolve? How far will individuals be able to make the same choices in terms of energy use and transport that they have made up to now? Will greater understanding and affluence lead to more sustainable choices, or less? How far will science be an ally (e.g. cleaner and more efficient fuels, autonomous vehicles, safer aviation) and how far will it be a threat (e.g. a greater ability to exploit natural resources; the limits of understanding and communication of scientific advance)? International cooperation. Generational differences (e.g. is the best hope the passion of youth?).

Personal projects (Deadline March 12, 2018):

Students must complete an independent and original investigation into an element of the relationship between society and natural world of their choice, but from their home country, concentrating on one of the four themes above. The project must be approved by TJP by **January 25, 2018**. The completed investigation must be uploaded as a video by **March 12, 2018** and take no more than ten minutes. Students will present their projects during NWIS 2018.