

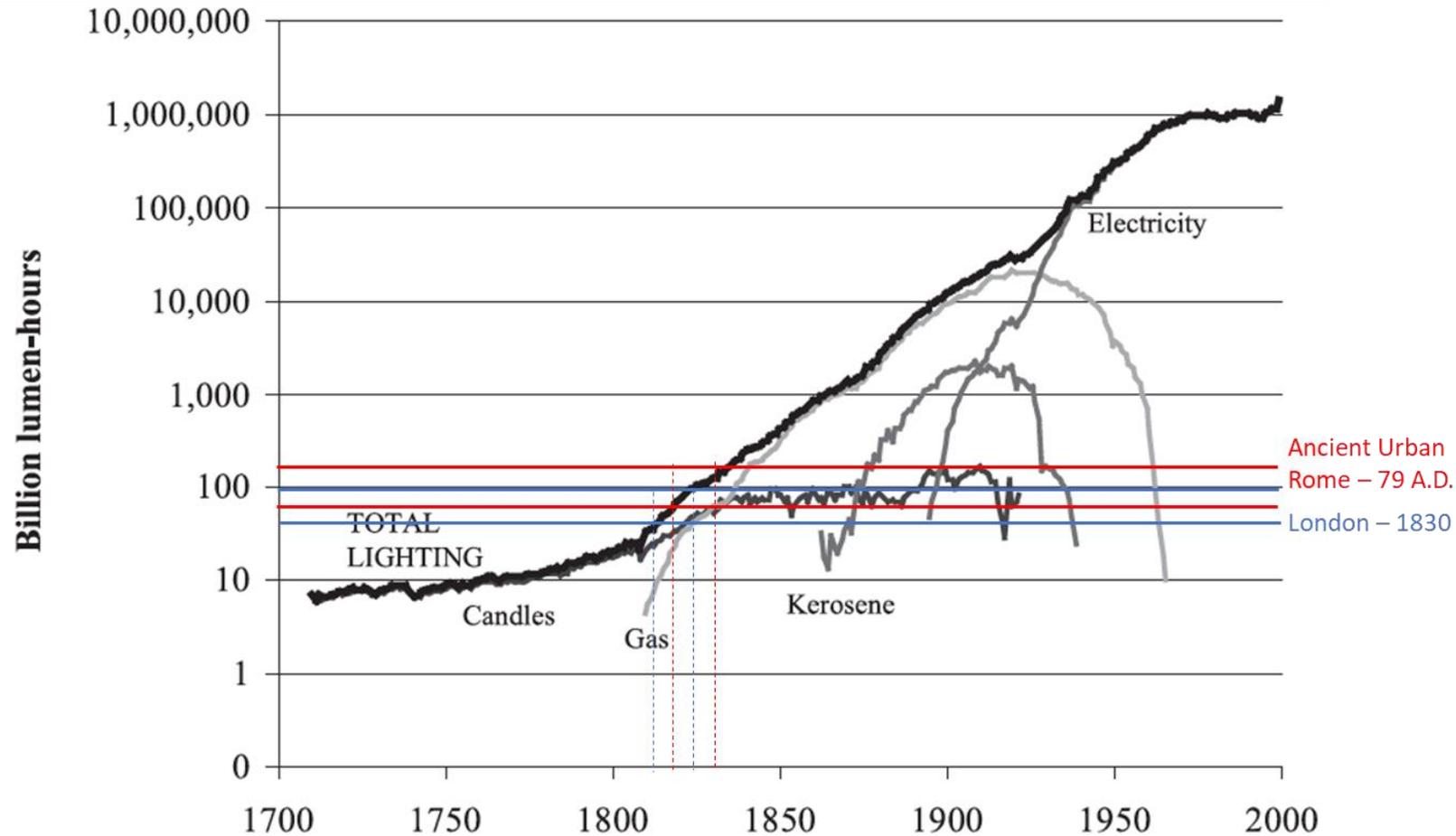
# Stoicism and Sustainability

Kai Whiting – University of Lisbon, Portugal  
and Leonidas Konstantakos – Florida International University, US

Stoicon 2018, London

# Our day jobs

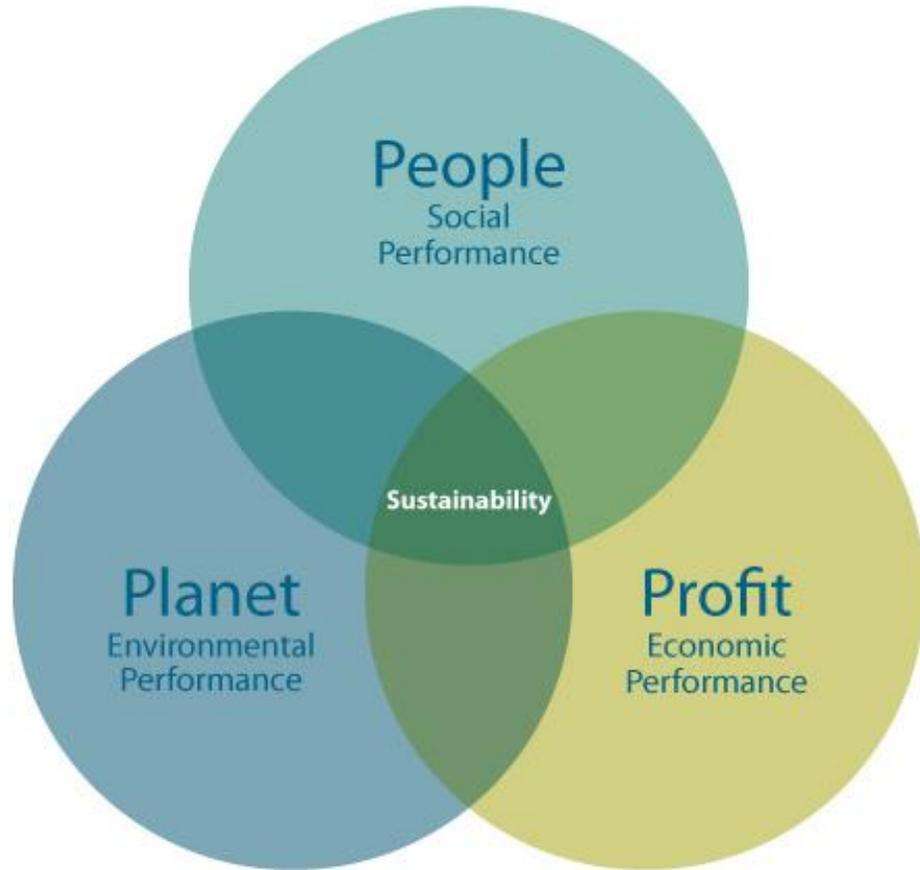
Lighting in the United Kingdom, 1700-2000



Source: Adapted from Fouquet and Pearson (2007)



# Sustainable development



**Sustainable development** is development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Brundtland Commission (1987)

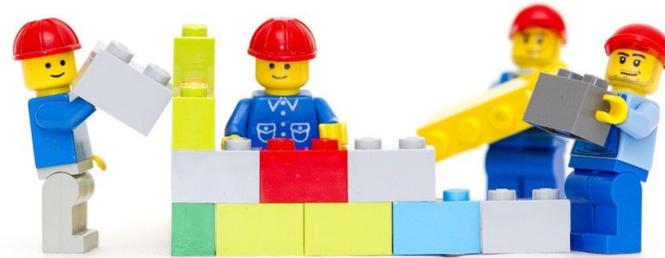
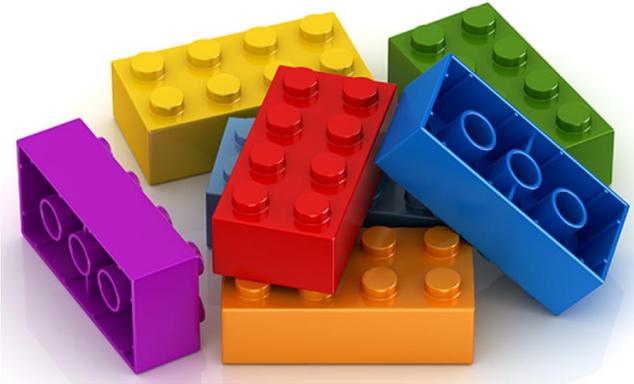
# The opposite of Sustainable Development

- Greed, as the opposite of Self-Control
- Injustice
- Cowardice
- Ignorance



# The challenges

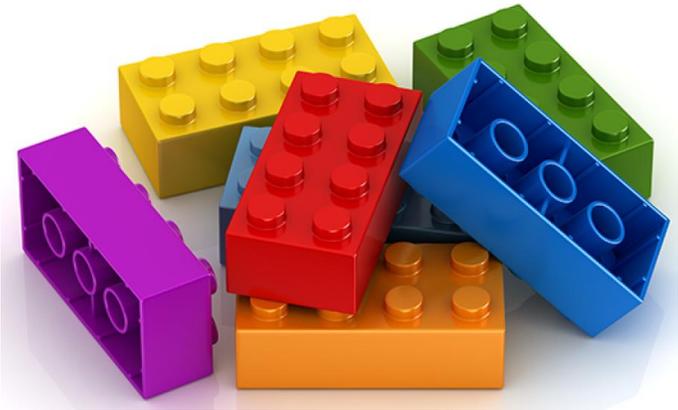
# Engineering problem



**What we have...**

**...What we want**

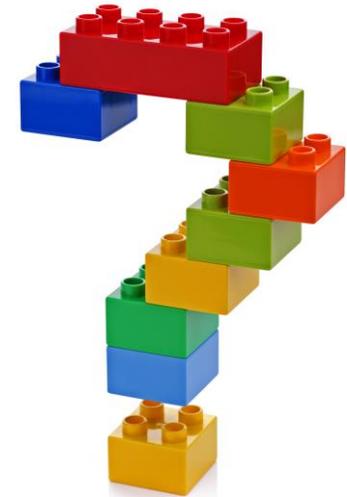
# A philosophical problem



**What we have...**



**And by the way, you  
are by yourself!!**

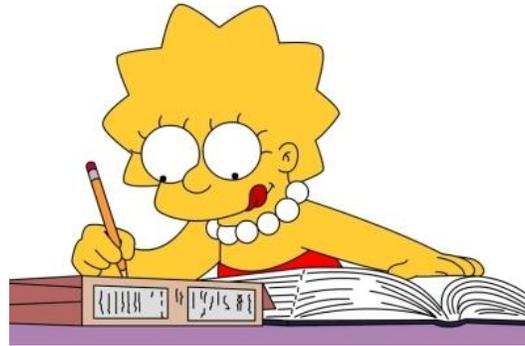


**...What we want**

# Venture into Stoicism



- What should a Stoic eat?
  - How do we provide it?
- What is the affect on the environment?



- What should a Stoic learn?
  - How many schools do we need?
- How should we educate for global citizenship?

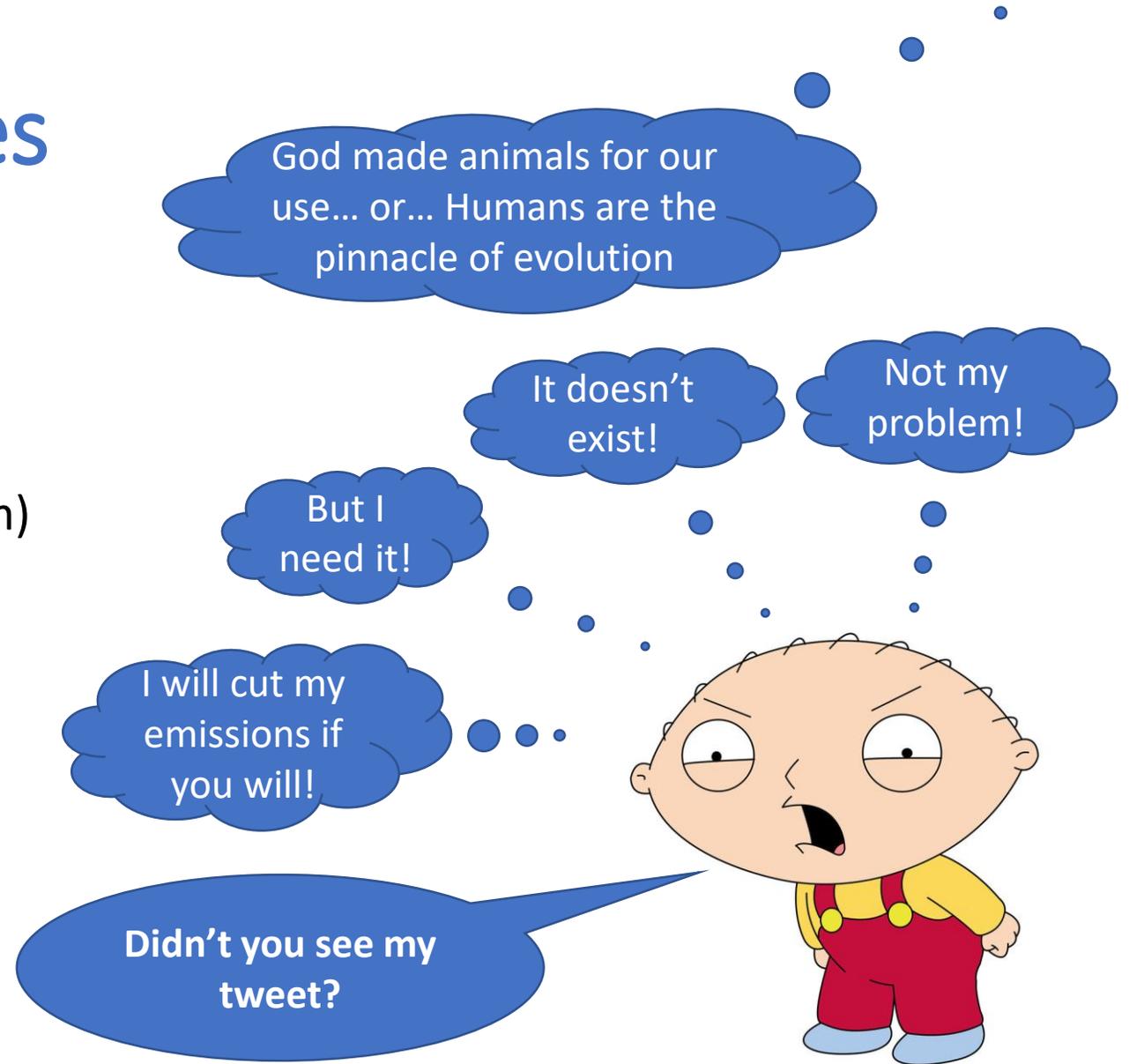


- What should a Stoic buy?
  - How can we produce this cheaply and efficiently ?
    - Do we really need sweatshops?

# 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges

## Problem

- Nationalism (as opposed to patriotism)
- Fake news
- Mass consumerism
- Climate change
- Biodiversity loss
- Political apathy

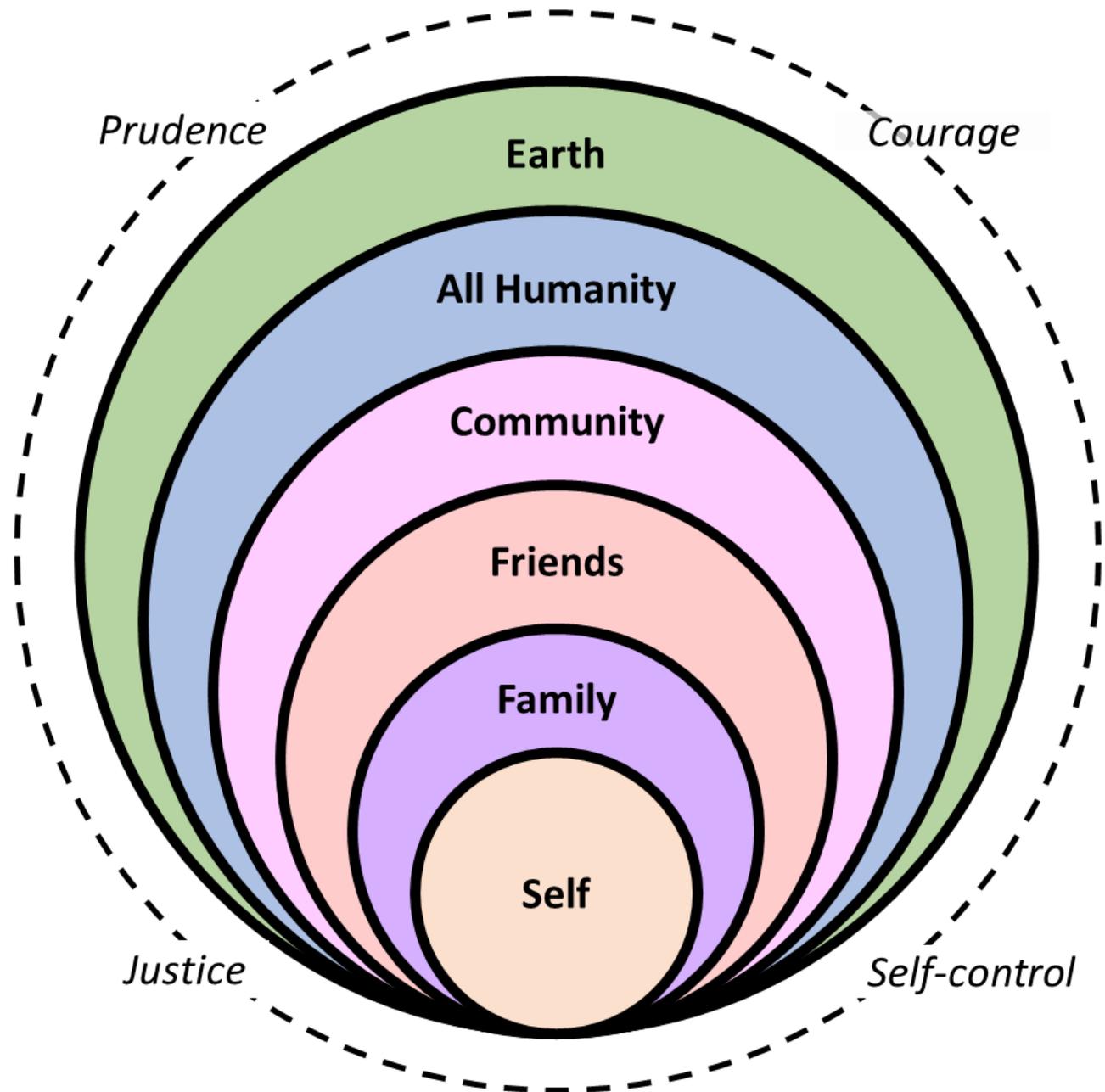


The anti-Stoic response

# The Stoic response

# A 21<sup>st</sup> century vision for Stoicism

- Provide Stoic solutions for everyday life according to Nature and to the facts.
- Take Stoicism beyond the self, the personal is political.
- Return the philosophy to the *Stoa*... It was a marketplace for the exchange of ideas and not an ivory tower built on paywalls.
- Participate in initiatives that breakdown social barriers.
- Explore what Stoicism has to offer on a societal/global level, as sustainability is, by definition, about justice, self-control, wisdom and having the courage to take the difficult decisions.



If we want to survive and flourish, humankind has little choice but to complement such local loyalties with substantial obligations towards a global community.

A person can and should be loyal simultaneously to her family, her neighbourhood, her profession and her nation – **why not add humankind and planet Earth to that list?**

Yuval Noah Harari (2018)  
*21 Lessons for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*

# Consequences of adding the Earth

If we include the Earth in the circles of concern then we can no longer justify practices such as:

- Intensive farming, that take away livestock's capacity to live according to their Nature and is the number one contributor to carbon emissions.
- Buying cheap throw away fashion – there is no “away” – or buying coffee in single use plastic cups.
- Maintaining silence when it comes to animal rights or the reality of global warming.

 Write Post |  Add Photo/Video |  Live Video |  More



Is it Stoic to...?



# Thank you

Any questions?

If you would like me to send you the papers we have been working on, please put your name on the sign up sheet or email me here:

[kaiwhiting@tecnico.ulisboa.pt](mailto:kaiwhiting@tecnico.ulisboa.pt)

 [@kaiwhiting](https://twitter.com/kaiwhiting)