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Opportunism and Exploitation: Climate Change Activism and Hostility to Liberal Civilization

An analysis of selected green rhetoric

By Ben Eisen

About the Author

Ben Eisen is a Policy Analyst with the Frontier Centre for Public Policy. His undergraduate degree is from the University of Toronto where he specialized in history and political science. He also holds a Masters Degree in Public Policy from the University of Toronto's School of Public Policy and Governance. Ben completed a public policy internship with the federal government, and he worked as a researcher for the CBC. Ben's policy columns have been published in the *National Post,* the *Winnipeg Free Press,* the *Calgary Herald, The Montreal Gazette* and the *Toronto Sun.*

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FRONTIER CENTRE
FOR PUBLIC POLICY
www.fcpp.org

MB: 203-2727 Portage Avenue,
Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada R3J 0R2
Tel: 204 957-1567

SK: 2353 McIntyre Street,
Regina, Saskatchewan Canada S4P 2S3
Tel: 306 352-2915

AB: Ste. 1280–300, 5th Avenue SW
Calgary, Alberta Canada T2P 3C4
Tel: 403 230-2435

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Executive Summary

In recent years, climate change has emerged as one of the most high-profile issues facing policy-makers around the world. Environmental activists frequently warn that there will be dire consequences if governments fail to do enough to combat climate change by mandating dramatic cuts in greenhouse gas emissions. While the activists are correct in arguing that doing too little to combat climate change would be undesirable, there also exists a danger that policy-makers will do too much. The policies advocated by environmental activists are extremely ambitious and entail enormous costs that should be recognized and carefully considered before such policies are adopted. This paper argues in favour of a cost-benefit analysis approach to environmental policy-making, and it identifies obstacles to the development of this type of rational process for policy development in the years ahead.

In particular, the paper details numerous explicit expressions of hostility to a cost-benefit approach from prominent proponents of dramatic carbon-reduction policies. This hostility to cost-benefit analysis represents a major obstacle to the development of sound public policy. This paper then discusses the reasons for this hostility. Specifically, the author examines the speeches and writings of prominent climate change activists, showing that many view climate change as not merely an environmental problem to be solved but as a political opportunity to be exploited. By examining the philosophical assumptions that underlie the rhetoric and policy proposals of certain environmental activists, this paper shows that many environmentalists view climate change as a valuable opportunity to transform Western civilization in ways they would approve of even if global warming were not occurring. These activists think that through policies that are ostensibly designed to address global warming they can accomplish a range of other objectives such as reducing global inequality of wealth, creating a more harmonious international order, strengthening the ties of community in industrial countries and even restoring meaning and purpose to modern life. For example:

Timmons Roberts and **Bradley Parks** state that aggressive carbon reduction strategies in rich countries should be used to: "signal a desire to reverse long-standing patterns of global inequality."

Bill McKibben: "We know that those [carbon] reductions will play out close to home, changing the shape of everyday life. Changing it for the better, as we learn once more to rely on those around us."

Doyle Canning: "Building an ecology movement is embedding the necessity of a systemic response to the systemic breakdown of the planet, in the necessity of synergizing the global movements for peace, global justice, freedom, and direct democracy."

Al Gore: "It [global warming] is the most dangerous challenge we've ever faced, but it is also the greatest opportunity we have had to make changes."

Van Jones (Former Advisor to Barack Obama): "This movement is deeper than a solar panel. Don't stop there. No, we're

going to change the whole system. We're going to change the whole thing. We're not going to put a new battery in a broken system. We want a new system."

Since many activists such as Al Gore, Bill McKibben, Doyle Canning and Timmons Roberts think the more dramatic policies they propose will contribute to a transformation of civilization for the better in a number of different ways, they are likely to oppose proposals that are more modest, even if they seem more reasonable on the basis of simple cost-benefit analyses.

Al Gore explicitly describes climate change as the "greatest opportunity we have had to make changes." This paper shows that Gore and others hope to achieve a wide range of goals—not just reducing global temperatures—through their preferred carbon-reduction policies. It is therefore unsurprising that they are extremely hostile to the suggestion that easier, cheaper policies may be more prudent and that they oppose a cost-benefit approach to policy analysis that fails to capture many of the benefits they hope to achieve through drastic GHG reduction efforts.

> ***"Many view climate change as not merely an environmental problem to be solved but as a political opportunity to be exploited."***

Section I: Introduction

The Need for Cost-Benefit Analysis in Climate Change Policy

In recent years, climate change has emerged as one of the most high-profile issues facing policy-makers around the world. There is widespread concern about the potential consequences of global warming, and there is tremendous pressure on politicians to actively participate in the development of aggressive responses. A significant percentage of the population in most developed countries has become convinced by the argument, made by environmental activists for some time, that governments around the world should take immediate, dramatic action to curb emissions of greenhouse gasses (GHGs), which are considered by many to be the most important cause of climate change.

The majority of scientists in the field believe that long-term global warming is taking place, that it is caused at least partially by human activities and that it may well cause problems for mankind in the decades ahead. In light of this majority opinion, environmental activists warn there will be dire consequences if the world's policy-makers ignore the problem of climate change or fail to do enough to combat it by mandating dramatic cuts in GHG emissions.[1]

While the activists are correct in arguing that doing too little to combat climate change would be undesirable, there also exists a danger that policy-makers will do too much. The policies advocated by environmental activists are extremely ambitious and entail enormous costs that should be recognized and carefully considered before such policies are adopted. Although weighing the costs of various approaches to climate change against their benefits is necessary to the development of good public policy, there exists a significant possibility that honest cost-benefit analyses will not shape our decision-making in the years ahead.

The plan for this policy study is as follows: Section 2 will examine some of the policy proposals advanced by prominent climate change activists, focusing on the significant costs that would result from their implementation. Having illustrated the human and financial costs associated with ambitious emission targets, the author will argue that all policy proposals designed to combat climate change should be subjected to rigorous cost-benefit analysis to ensure they do more good than harm to mankind. Section 3 will discuss potential obstacles to the development of such an approach including the explicit hostility to cost-benefit analysis that has been expressed by some—such as Rajendra Pachauri—and a tendency on the part of others—such as Tim Flannery—to misrepresent the threat posed by climate change. Section 4 will argue that the opposition on the part of some activists to

cost-benefit analyses, and their unrealistic representation of the threat posed by climate change, stems largely from their perception of climate change as not only a problem to be solved but also a political opportunity to be exploited. By examining the philosophical assumptions that underlie the rhetoric and policy proposals of certain environmental activists, this paper will attempt to demonstrate that many environmentalists view climate change as a valuable opportunity to transform Western civilization in ways they approve of. Since they believe that the more-dramatic policies that they propose will contribute to a transformation of civilization for the better, they will strongly oppose proposals that are more modest even if they seem more reasonable on the basis of simple cost-benefit analyses. Section 5 concludes the paper.

> ***"The policies advocated by environmental activists are extremely ambitious and entail enormous costs that should be recognized and carefully considered before such policies are adopted."***

Section II:

The Costs of Action

Environmental activists frequently warn of the enormous financial and human costs we will incur by failing to act quickly and decisively to combat climate change. It is important, however, to recognize the policies advocated by these activists also have significant costs that should be recognized and carefully considered. Before considering the costs of the more drastic policies recommended by prominent environmentalists such as Al Gore, George Monbiot, David Suzuki and Tim Flannery, it is worthwhile to look briefly at the estimated costs of the Kyoto Protocol, the most important existing international climate change policy.

The Kyoto Protocol has been in effect since 2005, but there are several reasons why it is difficult to precisely quantify the global costs of its implementation. For example, several countries, including Spain and Canada, did not come close to meeting their Kyoto targets, because the governments in those countries determined the economic cost of doing so would be too great. Because these countries did not achieve their targets, it is impossible to put a dollar amount on what the cost of the full implementation would have been. Furthermore, even in countries that met their targets, the interaction of countless economic variables makes it impossible to precisely tease out the independent economic effect of emission reductions and produce an estimate of the Protocol's cost.

Fortunately, it is unnecessary for the purposes of this paper to examine the long-standing debate over *exactly* how much the full implementation of the Kyoto Accord would have cost. It is enough to note that there were costs associated with meeting Kyoto targets for many countries and that these costs were significant. Despite the counterintuitive claim made by some activists that nations in the Kyoto regime would gain economically by their participation,[2] most estimates of the cost of Kyoto run in the hundreds of billions of dollars globally.[3] The fact that Kyoto, which even its supporters recognize would have a negligible impact on the problem of climate change, comes with a price tag in the hundreds of billions of dollars demonstrates the enormous costs associated with policies that mandate GHG emission abatement.

Considering the significant costs of meeting the targets of the Kyoto Protocol, it is discouraging that climate change activists routinely argue that fighting climate change will require more drastic and more expensive policy responses.[4] For example, because the GHG cuts mandated by Kyoto are insufficient to have a serious effect on the global warming phenomenon in the century ahead,[5] many argue for the creation of a new, similarly designed agreement with more-demanding targets.[6] The costs of such a program would be many times greater than the costs of Kyoto, not only because the total number of tonnes of GHG emissions to be cut would be greater but also because the marginal costs of cutting these additional tonnes would be much higher than the marginal costs of the tonnes of GHG cut under Kyoto. This is because the easiest, least expensive reductions in GHG are

the first ones undertaken in response to government-mandated constraints on emissions.[7] As restrictions on GHG emissions tighten, emission reductions will necessarily shift from the cheapest cuts, which will have already been made, to the more difficult and costly ones.

The cost estimates associated with the ambitious greenhouse gas reductions that many activists claim are necessary are simply staggering. For example, a 2009 study released by the Suzuki Foundation and the Pembina Institute sought to estimate the economic impact of reducing greenhouse gas emissions in Canada. The report estimates the cost to Canada of making a "fair contribution" to addressing the climate change problem through carbon reduction would be over $250-billion in lost production over the next decade. The report estimates that by 2020 the authors' preferred policies restricting GHG emissions would cause Canada's annual Gross Domestic Product to be more than three per cent lower than would be the case in the absence of such policies. When one considers that this is the cost estimate for one medium-sized country, it becomes clear the global cost of ambitious greenhouse gas reductions would likely be trillions upon trillions of dollars in lost economic production over the next decade alone.

It is noteworthy that staunch advocates for aggressive emission-reduction policies produced these estimates. Some commentators, such as University of Guelph economist Ross McKitrick, have argued that the price of emission reduction would actually be much higher.[8]

None of this demonstrates that aggressive emission-reduction policies or an ambitious future international accord would not also lead to important benefits or that those benefits would not outweigh the costs. It does, however, demonstrate that there are enormous costs associated with such policies that must be carefully considered.

> ***"Preferred policies restricting GHG emissions would cause Canada's annual Gross Domestic Product to be more than three per cent lower..."***

In addition to calling for more-restrictive international treaties, prominent activists have called for policies with costs that would dwarf those associated with Kyoto and even those associated with the more-aggressive international accords recommended by Suzuki and the Pembina Institute. George Monbiot, for example, argues that we should cut "the greater part—possibly almost all—of the world's current emissions" in an effort to combat climate change.[9] Obviously, the costs of any policy that could come close to accomplishing this goal would be enormous. Although Monbiot likely understates the cost of his proposals, which would likely create long-term global economic contraction, he accepts that his approach to climate change would require the developed world to accept indefinite zero economic growth.[10] Arguing that the developed world does not require any further economic growth because it already has enough money to provide for the "basic needs" of the people living there, Monbiot writes, "the rational policy for the governments of the rich world is now to keep growth rates as close to zero as possible" in order to ensure emission reductions.[11]

While Monbiot claims to be sensitive to the human costs associated with this proposal, he does not confront the fact that the most serious human costs would be borne by poor people in the developing world, not by wealthy people whose "basic needs" are already being met.[12] The rapid economic growth of many poor countries that has taken place in recent decades has been driven largely by the production of consumer goods for the developed world. This economic growth in countries such as China, India, South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore has lifted millions out of poverty, has reduced deaths from malnutrition and has been described by many economists as nothing short of a miracle.[13] This rapid development has largely been fuelled by economic growth in rich countries that has stimulated the demand for consumer products made in poorer ones. The global economy is extremely integrated, and permanent economic stagnation in rich countries could not be cordoned off from those it trades with. Zero growth in rich countries would dramatically slow the rate of the developing world's economic growth and the speed at which its populations are lifting themselves out of hunger and poverty. The costs of economic stagnation in the developed world would not only be borne by societies capable of providing for everyone's "basic needs" but would also be borne in large part by poor countries whose economic futures largely depend on their ability to export consumer goods.

Monbiot is by no means a fringe figure. His writing has earned applause from many other prominent environmentalists, and the radical measures he proposes to fight climate change have many prominent proponents. For example, the popular scientist and writer Tim Flannery argues for reducing world carbon dioxide emission by 70 per cent by 2050.[14]

Similarly, prominent climate change activist Bill McKibben argues for reducing emissions by 80 per cent in the same period and by a nearly impossible 10 per cent in the next three years.[15] Steven Hayward of the American Enterprise Institute puts this target in perspective by pointing out that in the United States, achieving an 80 per cent reduction would require total emissions to be reduced to the levels they were at *in the year 1910.*[16] Per capita emissions would actually need to be reduced below 1910 levels, as the population of every industrialized country has grown significantly since that time.

Similarly, Australian environmentalists David Spratt and Phillip Sutton think the world's "action goals" should include reducing the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere to 320 parts per million, an objective that they say would "require massive structural adjustments in as close to zero time as can be made humanly possible."[17] As with Monbiot's suggestions, policies that could achieve these goals would have an enormous impact on global economic productivity and would cause real hardship for millions of people in both rich and poor countries. This hardship would include much slower economic growth in poor countries, meaning shorter, less pleasant lives for millions upon millions of people.

As we have seen, while there may be serious costs associated with inaction in response to climate change, there are also serious costs associated with proposed policy responses to global warming. Clearly, the costs of different approaches to climate change should be recognized, considered and carefully weighed against their benefits in order to ensure that we do not pursue a cure that is more harmful than the disease.

Section III:

Obstacles to Cost-Benefit Analysis

Unfortunately, it is possible that honest cost-benefit analysis will not be the basis upon which climate change policies are judged in the years ahead. We can begin to understand the major obstacles to the acceptance of this approach by briefly considering the reaction of some proponents of dramatic policies to the writing of Bjorn Lomborg, a Danish statistician who has written two popular books about the world's environmental problems. In light of the many other serious problems that mankind currently faces, such as the AIDS pandemic and world hunger, Lomborg warns that policies devoting too many of our resources to combating climate change will make it harder for us to address other problems. Instead of the more-drastic proposals put forward by others, Lomborg favours gradually reducing global emissions by placing a relatively small global tax on carbon. He also advocates heavy investment in research and development with an eye toward developing new technologies that will allow us to generate inexpensive energy that does not produce GHG emissions.[18] Such a strategy, Lomborg argues, will likely allow us to achieve significant long-term GHG emission reductions without forcing us to pay the enormous upfront costs associated with a rapid and dramatic reduction of GHG emissions.

Different individuals will have different methods of measuring the costs and benefits of various policy proposals; they will use different models to predict the consequences of climate change, and they will have different views about the relative value of particular global goods. The result of these differences is disagreement on whether the costs of certain policy proposals can be justified based on the various assumed benefits. Therefore, it is not at all surprising that many individuals disagree with Lomborg's evaluation of the available policy options.[19] What is somewhat troubling and deeply revealing is the level of anger that his argument has provoked from some prominent environmentalists.

One extreme example of the fury caused by Lomborg's argument is seen in the reaction of Dr. Rajendra Pachauri, the chairman of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC):

> What is the difference between Lomborg's view of humanity and Hitler's? You cannot treat people like cattle. Lomborg thinks of people like numbers. He thinks it would be cheaper just to evacuate people from the Maldives, rather than trying to prevent world sea levels from rising so that island groups like the Maldives or Tuvalu just disappear into the sea. But where's the respect for people in that? People have a right to live and die in the place where their forefathers have lived and died. If you were to accept Lomborg's way of thinking, then maybe what Hitler did was the right thing.[20]

> ***"This objection to cost-benefit analysis is without merit. It fails to recognize that the costs of GHG abatement policies..."***

Setting aside Pachauri's use of the rhetorical device described by the philosopher Leo Strauss as the *"reductio ad Hitlerum,"*[21] let us consider the substance of Pachauri's argument. He says that a cost-benefit analysis of the impact of various strategies for combating climate change is an illegitimate exercise, because it is impossible to measure the value of the goods that such measures would preserve. This objection to cost-benefit analysis is without merit. It fails to recognize that the costs of GHG abatement policies, though necessarily described by Lomborg in numbers for the sake of simplicity,[22] include the loss of meaningful goods, human suffering and death. While it may be true that individuals have a "right" to live where their ancestors lived, an equally valid case can be made that impoverished children have a "right" to the superior nutrition and education that result from economic growth in poor countries. Although Pachauri would be correct in saying that it is extremely difficult and emotionally taxing to contemplate weighing these sorts of costs and benefits against each other when choosing between policy alternatives, *it is the only reasonable way to select the option that minimizes human suffering.*

Other prominent climate change activists also argue that cost-benefit analysis for policies related to climate change is an illegitimate exercise. Monbiot, for example, rejects this approach on the grounds that it is an "amoral" exercise.[23] He argues that it is impossible to put a price on the consequences of climate change, because those costs involve the loss of human lives. This fact, in Monbiot's view, makes Lomborg's approach impossible for anyone but a person who has "spent too much time with their calculator and not enough with human beings."[24] This is not a reasonable argument, because the entire purpose of bringing calculators into the decision-making process is to *minimize the suffering of human beings.* This author does not know if it would be "amoral" to make public policy without using calculators to add up the costs and benefits of various options, but it would undoubtedly be foolish, and it would result in unnecessary human suffering.

A more logically coherent argument against cost-benefit analysis is that global warming is literally an apocalyptic threat and the costs of insufficiently strong action will therefore be so enormous they will dwarf the short-term costs of action. Examples of this argument abound, but it is suffice to simply cite a few of them. At the Bali Conference on Climate Change, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon warned that the world faces a stark choice between "strong action on climate change" and "oblivion."[25] Tim Flannery, in his popular book *The Weather Makers,* makes a similar argument, although he expands the number of potential futures from two to three. Flannery writes that in the absence of drastic, prompt action, the warming of the climate will lead to a destabilization of global civilization, bringing about "a protracted Dark Ages far more mordant than any that has gone before."

The third possibility given by Flannery, which will occur if we do act to reduce emissions but not as dramatically as he suggests, will be a continuing of civilization under the rule of a "carbon dictatorship" that governs even the mundane details of daily life.[26]

What is important to recognize as misleading in the arguments of Ki-moon, Flannery and others is their assertion that in the absence of drastic GHG emission reductions there will certainly be either a collapse of human civilization or the extinction of the human race. We are not merely running the risk of catastrophe, according to Ki-moon and Flannery, we are choosing a path of *certain destruction* if we fail to take drastic steps immediately. This is, to state the matter bluntly, not true. Even the most cursory examination of the scientific literature surrounding climate change makes it perfectly clear that the overwhelming preponderance of climate science suggests that while there are likely to be costs associated with climate change, there remains a high level of uncertainty over how great those costs will be.[27] In their essay "Uncertainty in Climate Change Policy Analysis," Massachusetts Institute of Technology scholars Henry Jacoby and Ronald Prinn go so far as to write that "uncertainty is the essence of the issue" in climate change policy.[28] While Ki-moon and Flannery suggest we already know that the consequences of inaction will be either "oblivion" or a descent into "mordant Dark Ages," the truth is we do not know if climate change will cause catastrophic damage. In fact, policy-making in the area of climate change must by necessity be done at yet another level of uncertainty, because we lack the scientific knowledge to even determine the likelihood that global warming will cause a true global disaster.[29] In light of this high degree

"We must decide what certain costs we are willing to bear, remembering that these costs include human lives..."

of uncertainty, the choice presented by Flannery and Ki-moon between drastic action and the certain calamity is, simply, a false one.

To the extent that there is a risk that the damage wrought by climate change will be apocalyptic, that possibility should inform our decision-making. We must decide what certain costs we are willing to bear, remembering that these costs include human lives, in order to reduce or eliminate the unlikely but awful possibility that climate change will be truly catastrophic.[30]

Some advocates of the "precautionary principle" argue that the mere possibility of cataclysm because of climate change means that taking aggressive action in this area is prudent. The mere existence of a catastrophic threat, however, does not necessarily mean that the wisest course of action is to devote tremendous resources to attempting to address the risk. For example, asteroid strikes represent a truly catastrophic threat to mankind.[31] Of course, the likelihood of a major asteroid strike in the next few centuries is very small, but this sort of event is, nevertheless, capable of destroying civilization and even the human species. However, the fact that asteroid strikes represent an apocalyptic threat does not necessarily mean it would be wise public policy to devote the trillions of dollars that could be used for medicine, vitamins

and mosquito nets to the development of asteroid-detection and destruction technologies. In fact, such a course would likely be extremely unwise. The effort to address a catastrophic threat that is unlikely to materialize, and for which we may be unable to develop an efficacious response even at the cost of trillions of dollars, would consign millions of people to unnecessary suffering and early death.

To determine the appropriate types of resources to dedicate to addressing a catastrophic threat, policy-makers must examine the likelihood of the catastrophic event in question, the likely efficacy of potential solutions and a host of other factors to arrive at the most prudent policy decision. Of course, *catastrophic threats should be taken extremely seriously, even if there is a very small chance of them happening.* However, the work of policy analysis does not end when it is determined that a phenomenon may have catastrophic consequences. Difficult decisions remain to be made concerning the appropriate allocation of resources to maximize human utility and to avoid unnecessary suffering.

This is the context in which the climate-policy debate must occur and decisions made. The presentation of a simple choice between "oblivion" and continuation of the human species masks the reality of the trade-offs that climate change activists are proposing we make. These trade-offs involve major sacrifices today to prevent a catastrophe that is unlikely to occur.[32] To reiterate, *it is entirely possible these trade-offs are worth it.* The stakes in this decision, however, are extremely high, and the policy process will not benefit from unrealistic claims that present catastrophic scenarios as the certain consequence of choosing against drastic action.

Section IV:

The Diverse Motives of Climate Change Activists

The overstated certainty, exaggerations and outright falsehoods of climate change activists described in the preceding section are major obstacles to the development of decision-making processes that are based on sound, honest cost-benefit analysis. In reviewing the obviously exaggerated and sometimes patently false claims of the more hyperbolic advocates for aggressive carbon restrictions, a question naturally springs to mind: What motivates these activists to misrepresent the nature of the global warming threat? Although there is a range of motivations at work, two of them are particularly important, and they represent major obstacles to the development of a policy approach based on disinterested cost-benefit analysis. The first of these is what this paper will call the environmental "Noble Lie". The second is a widespread belief among many climate change activists that public anxiety over global warming provides an opportunity to fundamentally transform our liberal capitalist society. To those who hold this view, a massive effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions holds the potential to "improve" our civilization in ways that are completely unrelated to the global warming phenomenon. The following sections describe these two sources of hostility to straightforward cost-benefit analysis.

The Environmental Noble Lie

The tendency of supporters of drastic GHG emission reductions to exaggerate the likelihood that global warming poses an apocalyptic threat is driven in part by the co-existence of a belief that the probability of catastrophe ought to impel us to act and a fear that the public will be less willing to do so if it is aware that the likelihood of a genuine cataclysm is actually quite small.[33] This is the phenomenon that I call the environmental noble lie. Proponents of radical policies have employed this strategy for many years. For example, when Greenpeace was caught releasing clearly inaccurate predictions about the rate at which the ice cap at the North Pole is likely to melt, the organization's outgoing president almost admitted to the use of this strategy, stating that Greenpeace intentionally "emotionalizes issues" in order to bring public opinion into line with their preferences.[34]

Troublingly, it is not only activist organizations such as Greenpeace that have intentionally exaggerated the nature of the climate change threat in an effort to generate public support for aggressive carbon-reduction policies. Even respected scientists have been caught, and in some cases admitted to, engaging in this sort of dishonest behaviour.

In fact, this strategy was explicitly endorsed by Steve Schneider of Stanford University, one of the best-known scientists in the field of climate science. Speaking in late 1989, just as many people were learning of the global warming phenomenon, Schneider stated that scientists had a duty to foster public concern and even fear of climate change, even when they held doubts about the likely severity of the problem. Professor Schneider stated that scientists should "offer up scary scenarios, make simplified, dramatic statements, and make little mention of any doubts we might have."[35] Believing the political imperative of generating support for drastic policies to be of the utmost importance, Schneider explicitly urges scientists to exaggerate the nature of the threat posed by global warming and to attempt to hide the complexity and uncertainty that defines this field of science.

Crisis or Opportunity?

Clearly, the desire to ensure that the public remains frightened and motivated to demand aggressive climate change policies is one important reason for the pattern of hyperbole and outright dishonesty detailed in Section 3 of this paper. Another important cause is that a great many climate change activists do not view global warming as merely a problem to be solved but also as an opportunity to address what they view as the major problems of Western civilization: an excess of capitalism, unevenly distributed wealth, high rates of consumption, high rates of resource use and an economic focus on steady growth. This belief, more than any other factor, is at the root of the hostility to cost-benefit analysis that pervades much of the contemporary environmentalist movement.

To many, the fact that policies mandating rapid and dramatic cuts in GHG emissions will require fundamental changes in the way our societies function is not an argument against them but rather another feature that makes them attractive. Thinking that our liberal, capitalist societies are deeply flawed and unjust, many proponents of radical solutions to our environmental problems are hopeful that the current tide of public concern over climate change will provide a teachable moment during which they can convince the rest of us of the need to fundamentally change the aspirations and values that animate our civilization.

In their book *The Rebel Sell,* Joseph Heath and Andrew Potter provide a distinction between "deep" and "shallow" environmentalism. Although "deep

environmentalism" also refers to a specific movement that began in the 1970s, Heath and Potter use the term more generally to refer to those who think that environmental problems should not be addressed on a case-by-case basis but that, instead, we should address the root cause of all environmental problems, which they perceive as Western civilization's unhealthy conception of man's relationship to nature. Even if liberal society recognizes the threat of climate change and addresses it, deep environmentalists think our view of nature as "an object of domination, manipulation and control" will soon cause us to bring about another environmental crisis.[39] Only by changing this worldview, it is argued, can we hope to enjoy lasting environmental sustainability.

To understand the significance of the deep environmentalist criticism of liberal civilization's relationship to nature, one must realize that the effort to "dominate, manipulate and control nature" is not merely a feature of liberalism, *it is the liberal project.* Take away the effort to transform nature to man's advantage from the liberal project initiated by Machiavelli and carried forward by Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Francis Bacon and, to put the matter simply, there is very little left. In *The Prince,* Machiavelli compares chance or "fortune" to the forces of nature, specifically a river whose floods pose a constant threat to human life and property. Machiavelli urges the creation of "dams and dikes" to "resist and contain" this river in order to protect men and their belongings from its unpredictable flooding.[40] The originator of the liberal project, Machiavelli, argued that obtaining mastery and control over chance, which includes unpredictable nature, held the potential to vastly improve human life.

Machiavelli's successors, such as Bacon, recognized that his call to use human intelligence to control nature was meant to be interpreted broadly as a call to use science as an instrument of self-preservation and progress. Bacon's promise that modern science would be used for "the relief of man's estate" was the natural extension of Machiavelli's argument that human ingenuity should be employed to protect us from the worst blows of fortune.

When the deep environmentalists urge us to change our relationship with the Earth and cease our efforts to "dominate, manipulate and control" nature, they are arguing against the liberal project. An examination of an essay written by climate change activist Doyle Canning for the radical magazine *ZNet* in 2003 reveals the nature of this broad critique of liberalism. "I am not a climatologist, or even an NGO climate campaigner. But I do know that "'uprooting the system behind war'" is also uprooting the system behind the eminent [sic] ecological collapse." Canning goes on to write, "[b]uilding an ecology movement is embedding the necessity of a systemic response to the systemic breakdown of the planet, in the necessity of synergizing the global movements for peace, global justice, freedom, and direct democracy."[41]

The basic thrust of Canning's argument is straightforward: Climate change is not an isolated problem to be dealt with but one symptom of a much greater disease that is afflicting Western civilization. She suggests that all of the world's most serious problems, including climate change, war and poverty, are the fault of a system that

must be challenged and overthrown. The notion that climate change can only be addressed by uprooting the existing political-economic system is widespread amongst environmental advocates. Van Jones, a former adviser to President Barack Obama, alluded to the supposed relationship between the climate change problem and a broader, flawed political-economic system in 2009, stating: "This movement is deeper than a solar panel. Don't stop there. No, we're going to change the whole system. We're going to change the whole thing. We're not going to put a new battery in a broken system. We want a new system."[42] Clearly, the objectives of some environmental activists go far beyond addressing the global warming phenomenon, and involve the a fundamental restructuring of our society.

Back to Nature—and Rousseau

The "system" these activists believe must be overthrown is, of course, liberal capitalism. The argument that liberal civilization is fundamentally flawed and necessarily brings about a host of evils including war and environmental destruction is almost as old as liberalism itself. The first and most powerful advocate of this position was Jean-Jacques Rousseau. By briefly considering Rousseau's thought, we can better understand the philosophical roots of deep environmentalism and its opposition to the liberal project of conquering nature.

Rousseau argued powerfully that far from providing for the "relief of man's estate," the liberal project—to protect human beings from the violent and unpredictable forces of nature and thus make life more secure, healthier and more convenient—would actually create violent competition between men and lead to war, inequality and environmental despoliation. According to Rousseau, the natural desires of human beings are limited to what we need to survive and, perhaps more importantly, that we accept the necessity of our own deaths and are not preoccupied with terror at the prospect of it.[43] It is the liberal project itself, Rousseau argued, that removes us from this natural mindset by holding out the possibility of protecting us from death and extending our lives through scientific discoveries. Upon being exposed to this possibility, we soon become obsessed with the thought of postponing death for as long as possible, causing us to engage in all sorts of destructive behaviour including

the endless pursuit of security through the acquisition of wealth and power.[44] Rousseau thought that the liberal society's efforts to control fortune and ensure our preservation led us to become unnaturally concerned with protecting our own lives and, ironically, makes safe, peaceful co-existence with our fellows impossible.

It is in this light that Canning and Jones' call for uprooting the system that supposedly lies behind war, climate change and most other social ills must be understood. Canning is optimistic that the threat of climate change will cause people to recognize the untenable nature of society as it presently exists and the necessity of fundamental changes in the way our civilization operates. This optimism is evident when Canning writes, "the icebergs are showing us that another world is not only possible; it is clearly necessary."[45] Global warming is not viewed by Canning merely as a problem *but also as an opportunity to bring about the creation of "another world."* For Canning, any solution to the problem of climate change that fails to address its root cause, which in her view is liberal society's unhealthy appetite for ceaseless consumption, would be useless in the long run, because it would leave in place a fundamentally flawed system that will continue to produce other destructive problems.

This paper has focused on this short article by Canning because it provides a clear example of the Rousseau-like critique of liberal civilization and the deep environmentalist position on the need to fundamentally alter the system upon which our civilization is based. A more scholarly and erudite example of this basic argument can be found in Professor Timmons Roberts and Bradley Parks' book *A Climate of Injustice.* Roberts argues that the problem of climate change can only be addressed by focusing on the problem of global inequality of wealth.[46] For Roberts as much as for Canning, climate change is a valuable opportunity to fundamentally alter an unjust *system* that is responsible for both global inequality and environmental despoliation. Roberts argues that through the process of sending "costly signals" to the poor nations of the world through rapid, unilateral GHG emission abatement, the developed world can help forge a new relationship of trust between rich and poor countries that will permit humanity to come together to solve the problems of climate change and global inequality.[47] Roberts does not view drastic GHG emission reductions in the global north as *merely* a cost to be borne *but also as a means to bring about more-harmonious relations between nations and to combat global inequality.* In light of the possibilities that Roberts thinks his solutions for climate change hold for solving some of the world's most important problems, it is not at all certain that he would favour a more modest response to global warming even if he could be convinced by a simple cost-benefit analysis that it made more sense.

Further examples of the mindset that public concern over climate change provide a valuable opportunity to reform our ostensibly dysfunctional civilization abound, and we will consider one more. The popular author and climate change activist Bill McKibben writes that the endless pursuit of personal wealth that characterizes life in North America has led to the development of "hyper-individualism" that has destroyed any sense of community and thereby made people miserable.[48]

McKibben argues that the unhappiness of individuals in capitalist societies and the destruction of the Earth through climate change share the same root cause, our insatiable desire for personal consumption. He argues that we can solve both problems by rediscovering the virtues of co-operation and communal sharing. By sharing the resources we once consumed, reducing the geographic space between individuals and promoting the consumption of local goods, we can fight climate change while restoring a sense of community that will make our lives happier. Reducing our consumption, then, is not merely a solution to the problem of climate change; it also represents a solution to the atomizing impact of capitalism that makes life seem empty in liberal societies. McKibben, like the other adherents to Rousseau's critique of liberal capitalism, thinks it is our unnatural and unhealthy desire for boundless personal consumption that is at the root of the climate change problem as well as other major problems that we face. He states the matter most plainly when he writes of proposed drastic GHG emission reductions: "We know that those reductions will play out close to home, changing the shape of everyday life. Changing it for the better, as we learn once more to rely on those around us."[49] For McKibben and other critics of market liberalism, arguments that we must consider the costs of drastic GHG emission abatement are unconvincing, since they view many of these costs, such as reduced consumption and economic productivity, as good things in and of themselves.

Enter Friedrich Nietzsche and the West's Spiritual Crisis

Climate change is viewed by Rousseau's philosophical descendents as a valuable opportunity to expose the flaws of liberal civilization and to help bring about a more just and decent socio-economic order. Rousseau is one of the two philosophers whose critiques of liberalism have inspired true challenges to its hegemony in the post-Christian, Western world during the twentieth century. The other is Friedrich Nietzsche, and his critique seems to be an animating force in contemporary environmentalism.

Nietzsche warned that the "death of God" in the West had provoked a spiritual crisis, since it had become apparent to men that the codes of morality on which they based their conduct lacked cosmic support and that their lives were ultimately without purpose. In the absence of the creation of new values by superior human beings, Nietzsche wrote that the world would become overrun by "the last man," a contemptible human type who would be guided only by the pursuit of his own "pitiable comfort."[50]

In *The Malaise of Modernity,* Charles Taylor, a Canadian commentator, wrote that modern man is acutely aware of the lowness of his selfish preoccupations and is gripped by a "malaise of modernity" due to the absence of a "sense of purpose" or "heroic dimension" to modern life.[51] This perceived absence of purpose and the argument that human life is awful because it is ultimately meaningless is, in a nutshell, Nietzsche's critique of

life in liberal societies. To demonstrate both the Nietzschean influence on the contemporary environmental movement and the obstacles this influence poses to the adoption of the sort of cost-benefit analysis that should shape public policy, the balance of this paper will examine a speech given by former vice-president Al Gore immediately after Hurricane Katrina.[52] In this speech, Gore compares climate change to the other great challenges in U.S. history including the struggle for independence, the crisis over slavery and the Second World War. He warns that the United States will be unable to meet this challenge unless its people "disenthrall" themselves from the trivial "sound and light show" that is U.S. popular culture. Gore argues that a preoccupation with petty issues such as the alleged misdeeds of Michael Jackson has caused a loss of "moral health," because Americans have become absorbed by a string of seductive but ultimately useless diversions.

While this critique of U.S. society is certainly reminiscent of Nietzsche and his description of the "last man," the roots of Gore's criticism of democratic culture actually predate Nietzsche. For example, Gore echoes Alexis de Tocqueville, who referred to the "small and vulgar pleasures" upon which men come to focus in democratic societies. Simply put, the problem that Gore describes here as a lack of "moral health" is the same "malaise of modernity" described by Taylor. While Nietzsche most acutely sensed the depth of this malaise and most accurately named its cause as the historical "death of God," it is worthwhile to note that this aspect of Gore's critique cannot be described simply as Nietzschean.

Gore's thought does appear distinctly Nietzschean, however, when he expresses optimism that this problem can be overcome if society wholeheartedly embraces the cause of fighting climate change. Gore writes that by this means, the United States can recover its "moral health." Through the process of combating the crisis of global warming, he suggests that Americans can cease to be last men and can regain the "moral health" that accompanies dedication to heroic causes.[53] Nietzsche thought that the slide toward nihilism and despair and the ascendance of the "last man" could only be halted by the *creation by men of new values,* new goals to provide meaning, focus and the sense of participation in a heroic cause that makes human life tolerable.[54] Gore puts forward environmentalism as a value capable of fitting the bill.

Gore suggests, here and elsewhere, that the fight against climate change holds the potential to free us from the "malaise of modernity" or, to put it another way, to restore meaning to modern life. He invokes a series of events from U.S. history from the Civil War to the struggle against Nazism as examples of moments in U.S. history when the nation's "moral health" permitted it to overcome great challenges. What these events have in common, of course, is that they were *crises* in U.S. history. Gore suggests that the *absence* of a recent crisis has led to the United States' current moral decay and has caused the nation to become enthralled with mindless trivialities. Existential crises are clearly necessary for a society's survival, in Gore's view, since although they bring danger, they also bring the opportunity for moral regeneration.

He made this point most explicitly in a speech given in 2007 when he stated that climate change is not only the "greatest challenge" we have ever faced but is also the "greatest opportunity we have had to make changes."[55] Clearly, if something qualifies as the "greatest opportunity" in U.S. history to bring about positive change, then it cannot be all bad. One could go so far as to say that from Gore's perspective, if a challenge on the scale of global warming did not exist, someone would have to invent one.

To fully understand the relationship between Gore's assertion that facing down a crisis is necessary to restore the nation's "moral health" and Nietzsche's criticism of liberalism, we must ponder the nature of the benefits we are meant to enjoy after we have risen to Gore's challenge and vanquished climate change. With the challenge overcome, what will save us from a relapse into our sorry state as followers of trivialities on the order of the late Michael Jackson's legal woes or Paris Hilton's social life, along with other components of popular culture's "sound and light" show? One assumes Gore does not want us to rise to the challenge of climate change just so we can safely return to what he views as the mindless diversions of popular culture. But Gore's argument clearly implies that such a relapse would occur, barring the emergence of a new, equally horrific danger for us to confront.

Gore's implied argument that the United States has traditionally maintained its "moral health" through the overcoming of one great challenge after another clearly suggests that only another equally grave crisis would be able to prevent our decline from reoccurring, if not in our generation, then in the next. This is problematic, as it implies a moral crusade divorced from the empirical scientific necessity of a policy; it is a strain of argument made repeatedly by more than a few who see policy on climate change in such a framework.

Gore's argument that crises are, in important respects, good and necessary as sources of moral regeneration and that we should therefore be grateful on some level for the "opportunities" they provide represents an outright rejection of the philosophy of classical Enlightenment liberalism. Among the central philosophical claims of classical liberalism is that what most people want in life is physical security for themselves and their family, the ability to accumulate possessions and the freedom to pass their time in the professions and leisure activities of their choice. The aim of liberalism was to create a social contract between individuals based on a mutual promise to permit others to enjoy these same things. Through the creation of such a contract, the thinkers of classical liberalism hoped to *minimize* the instances of crises and to permit humankind to enjoy security, longevity and to the extent possible, conveniences and luxuries.[56] The notion that crises are somehow beneficial to us because they lift us above the petty concerns of preservation, the accumulation of wealth and the pursuit of leisure is fundamentally at odds with classical liberalism, which aimed to eliminate conflict and crisis from our societies, so we could spend our time enjoying *precisely those "petty" things.* To be sure, liberals have historically understood that daunting challenges would sometimes arise and would require great sacrifice to overcome. However, to the extent that such crises

must be confronted and such sacrifices made, it has always been understood by liberals as being for the sake of ensuring the long-term survival of liberalism's safe, free and relatively easy way of living.

Gore clearly implies that it is through constantly facing down one crisis after another that the United States has been able to preserve its "moral health" throughout its history and that climate change affords us another "opportunity" to confront a crisis and restore purpose to our lives. Since he views climate change as not only a challenge but also an "opportunity" to restore the "moral health" of the United States, we can see that he perceives extremely important benefits to drastic, costly action that cannot be captured by a simple cost-benefit analysis. Gore thinks we have much to gain *spiritually* by taking drastic, costly measures to fight climate change, and so it is not surprising that he is extremely hostile to the suggestion that easier, cheaper policies may be more prudent.

> ***"Can it really be that Gore wants us to rise to the challenge of climate change just so we can safely return to what he views as the mindless diversions of popular culture?"***

Section V: Conclusion

Albert Gore and the Attack on the Liberal Project

What Gore has in common with Rousseau's intellectual heirs is their shared view that climate change is not merely a threat but also a valuable "opportunity" to transform Western civilization for the better. These ideological descendents of the two great critics of liberalism view our society as fundamentally flawed and "morally unhealthy." Through the enormous sacrifices that would be required by the policies they recommend, these activists hope to accomplish a range of goals including curing the "malaise of modernity," restoring purpose to modern life and uprooting an unjust system that they think is responsible for most of the world's ills.

For policymakers who are primarily interested in the more prosaic concerns of classical liberalism, namely the improvement of human life in physical and material terms, it is important to recognize the range of motivations that animate many proponents of drastic climate change policies. While the radical policy proposals the activists recommend may be necessary, policymakers should recognize that these policies include enormous costs that we should accept only if we are convinced by honest consideration that the costs are outweighed by their benefits.

Making these determinations is an enormously difficult task that will require policymakers to confront the uncertainty surrounding climate science and to make excruciating decisions about how many lives are worth sacrificing in the present to head off a potential catastrophe in the future. The false claims of Flannery, Ki-moon and Gore—that these decisions are simple, that "the debate is over," and thus we must do as they say—offer us an easy way out of these ethical dilemmas by suggesting that our hands are bound by necessity. The decision as they present it is an easy one, but the choices as they actually exist are exceedingly difficult and morally complex. To make the best possible decisions, we must recognize the ideological motivations of climate change activists and refuse to accept their reductive presentation of one of the world's most difficult and important public policy issues.

> ***Flannery, Ki-moon and Gore—offer us an easy way out of these ethical dilemmas by suggesting that our hands are bound by necessity.***

Endnotes

1. Although this is the majority opinion, it is important to recognize that there exist a significant number of experts who dissent from the majority view to one extent or another. Many scientists argue that the impact of human activities on global temperatures is very small, and the warming trend that has occurred in recent decades has been caused primarily by changes in solar activity and other natural causes. For example, 31,000 U.S. scientists participated in the Global Warming Petition Project, signing their names to a statement that declares, "There is no convincing scientific evidence that human release of carbon dioxide, methane, or other greenhouse gasses is causing or will, in the foreseeable future, cause catastrophic heating of the Earth's atmosphere and disruption of the Earth's climate." Anthony Watts has compiled a bibliography of 450 peer-reviewed papers skeptical of the majority opinion.
This bibliography was published by the *Science and Public Policy Institute,* and it is available online at http://scienceandpublicpolicy.org/images/stories/papers/reprint/450_peer_reviewed_papers.pdf
2 This claim is made more often by popular journalists and by climate activists than it is by economists. For an example, see the Green Party of Canada's weblog at http://www.greenparty.ca/en/node/751
3. For example, William Nordhaus and Joseph Boyer's 1999 study *Requiem For Kyoto: An Economic Analysis of the Kyoto Protocol* estimated a global present-value cost of $716-billion. See p. 1. Available at http://www.econ.yale.edu/~nordhaus/homepage/Kyoto.pdf For an overview of a wider range of cost estimates for Kyoto, see J.C. Hourcade and P. Shukla, "Global, Regional and National Costs and Ancillary Benefits of Mitigation," *Climate Change 2001.* Eds. B. Metz, et al. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
4. Again, a small minority of activists suggests that these cuts will actually produce net economic benefits through the creation of green jobs. Few economists hold this view, however, as they recognize that regulatory restrictions on energy use create market distortions that are harmful to productivity and economic growth. Increasingly, even many environmentalist advocacy organizations are coming to accept this economic reality. For example, a 2009 report by the Suzuki Foundation and the Pembina Institute, two Canadian environmentalist organizations, estimates the cost of aggressive GHG reduction in Canada alone at approximately $250-billion in lost productivity over the next decade.
5. Scott Barrett, "Kyoto Plus," *Climate Change Policy.* Ed. Dieter Helm, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. p. 292.
6. Tessa Robertson, *The Greenpeace Guide To the Kyoto Protocol,* 1998. p. 11.
Available at http://archive.greenpeace.org/climate/politics/reports/kppop.pdf
7. Bjorn Lomborg, *Cool It: The Skeptical Environmentalist's Guide to Global Warming.* United States: Random House, 2007. p. 35.
8. Ross McKitrick, "The Models are Unreal," the *National Post,* November 3, 2009.
9. George Monbiot, *The Road Well Travelled.* October 30, 2007. For example, Monbiot argues that the United Kingdom must reduce emissions by 87 per cent in the next 25 years.
Available at http://www.monbiot.com/archives/2007/10/30/the-road-well-travelled
10. George Monbiot, *Bring on the Recession.*
Available at http://www.monbiot.com/archives/2007/10/09/bring-on-the-recession/
11. Ibid.
12. Monbiot writes, "I recognise that recession causes hardship. Like everyone I am aware that it would cause some people to lose their jobs and homes. I do not dismiss these impacts or the harm they inflict." Ibid.
13. David Dollar and Aart Kraay, "Spreading The Wealth," *Foreign Affairs,* January/February 2003. pp. 120-133.
Available at http://www.gdsnet.org/classes/Dollar&KraaySpreadingtheWealth.pdf
14. Tim Flannery, *The Weather Makers: How We Are Changing The Climate And What It Means For Life on Earth.* Toronto: HarperCollins Canada, 2005. p. 6.
15. Bill McKibben, *What a Real, Living, Durable Economy Looks Like.*
Available at http://www.clarkfriends.org/publications/documents/mckibben.pdf
16. Steven F. Hayward, "The Unseriousness of Climate Change: Confronting the Economic and Energy Realities," American Enterprise Institute, April 30, 2008. Available at http://www.aei.org/speech/28053

17. David Spratt and Phillip Sutton, "Target Practice: Where Should We Aim to Avoid Dangerous Climate Change," *Carbon Equity,* 2007. p. 20. Spratt and Sutton recognize this proposal would require "massive structural adjustments in as close to zero time as can be made humanly possible."
18. Bjorn Lomborg, *Cool It,* p. 152.
19. For an example of an argument that takes issue with Lomborg's analysis, see: Stephen Schneider. "Global Warming: Neglecting The Complexities," Scientific American January 2002. Available at http://www.sciam.com/article.cfm?articleID=000F3D47-C6D2-1CEB-93F6809EC5880000&catID=2
20. Iain Murray, *Adolf Lomborg?* Competitive Enterprise Institute, May 11, 2004. Available at http://www.cei.org/gencon/019,04013.cfm
21. *Reductio ad Hitlerum* is a play on the more commonly used Latin phrase *"reduction ad absurdum."* Literally translated, *reductio ad Hitlerum* simply means "reduction to Hitler." Strauss used it to describe the tactic of attempting to discredit an opponent's position by suggesting that Hitler held or would have held a similar position.
22. As Lomborg explains, reducing all the costs and benefits to one unit helps "make comparisons possible across different areas." Bjorn Lomborg, *Cool It,* p. 133.
23. Ibid. p. 134.
24. Ibid. p. 133.
25. To quote Ki-moon: "Today we are at the crossroads; one path leading towards a comprehensive new climate agreement, and the other towards oblivion." *Ban Ki-moon: Human Race Faces Oblivion.* December 12, 2007. http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2007-12/12/content_7234808.htm
26. Tim Flannery, *The Weather Makers,* pp. 290-291. Flannery does not present these nightmare scenarios as possible or even likely results of a failure to act but as the only two "possibilities" that will result from insufficiently strong GHG abatement.
27. Alan Ingham and Alistair Ulph, "Uncertainty and Climate-change Policy," *Climate-change Policy.* Ed. Dieter Helm, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
28. Henry D. Jacoby and Ronald G. Prinn, Uncertainty in Climate Change Policy Analysis, p. 3. Available at http://web.mit.edu/globalchange/www/MITJPSPGC_Rpt1.pdf
29. Richard Posner, Catastrophe: Risk and Response. United States of America: Oxford University Press, 2004. p. 50.
30. The existence of this uncertainty surrounding the possibility of catastrophe makes the formation of climate-change policy and the development of cost-benefit analyses extremely difficult. This problem cannot be solved, however, by either ignoring the statistical "tails" that represent the possibility of catastrophic damage or by acting as though those "tails" are the only relevant part of the distribution. Martin L. Weitzman, *On Modeling and Interpreting the Economics of Catastrophic Climate Change.* December 5, 2007. http://www.economics.harvard.edu/faculty/weitzman/files/modeling.pdf
31. Richard Posner, *Catastrophe: Risk and Response.* United States of America: Oxford University Press, 2004.
32. Although I have said that our lack of knowledge makes it impossible to state precisely the probabilities of catastrophic damage, I feel justified in using the word "unlikely" to describe the possibility. As Richard Posner writes on page 51 of *Catastrophe: Risk and Response,* "most climate scientists believe that the warming trend will continue but is unlikely to reach a catastrophic level in the near future." In support of this assertion, Posner quotes the predictions of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which set the maximum likely sea level rise in the next century at under three feet, which would be serious but not catastrophic.
33. Bjorn Lomborg, *Cool It,* p. 142. Lomborg provides a few examples of climate scientists who admit that they exaggerate the likelihood of cataclysmic damage while concealing their doubts for precisely this reason.
34. Edward John Craig, "Greenpeace Likes to Emotionalize the Issues." Blog posting on *Planet Gore.* Available at http://planetgore.nationalreview.com/post/?q=NzEyNzY3Y2E3OGY0Y2NhNmVlYTQ0NWIyYzk5NjU1MzQ=
35. H. Sterling Burnett, "Climate of Fraud," *National Review Online,* November 25, 2009. Available at http://article.nationalreview.com/?q=ODhjYjYwNGM5YzAyYmUxZDUyN2ZjOTE4Mjg2NzA5ODc=

36. Wall Street Journal staff, "Climate Science and Candor," *Wall Street Journal Online,* November 24, 2009. Available at http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704779704574553652849094482.html

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid.

39. Joseph Heath and Andrew Potter, *The Rebel Sell: Why The Culture Can't Be Jammed.* Canada: HarperCollins, 2005. p. 309.

40. Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince.* Trans. Harvey Mansfield 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998. pp. 98-101.

41. Doyle Canning, "Climate Change and Social Change," *ZNet,* October 25, 2003. http://www.countercurrents.org/en-canning251003.htm

42. Christine Hubbard, "Van Jones Resigns as Green Jobs Czar," *Associated Content.* Available at http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/2145343/van_jones_resigns_as_green_jobs_czar.html?cat=9

43. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile.* Trans. Allan Bloom. United States: Basic Books, 1979. p. 82.

44. In *Leviathan,* Hobbes described man as naturally motivated by a thirst for "power after power" pursued for the sake of security and ending only in death. This motivation causes constant conflict between men. Rousseau agreed with this as a description of man in liberal societies but argued that it is not man's natural condition.

45. Doyle Canning, *On Climate Change and Social Change.*

46. J. Timmons Roberts and Bradley C. Parks, *A Climate of Injustice: Global Inequality, North-South Politics, and Climate Policy.* Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007. pp. 5-9.

47. Ibid. pp. 224-5.

48. Bill McKibben, *What a Real, Living Durable Economy Looks Like.*

49. Ibid.

50. Charles Taylor, *The Malaise of Modernity.* Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 1991. p. 4.

51. Ibid. p. 4.

52. Al Gore, "On Katrina, Global Warming," September 12, 2005. The text of this speech can be found at http://www.commondreams.org/views05/0912-32.htm

53. One could argue that I have the causal relationship backwards, because Gore says that we must recover our "moral health" in order to fight climate change, not the other way around. It is clear from this speech and others, however, that Gore views the overcoming of crises as not merely *requiring* "moral health" but also as the ultimate source of such health. For example, in accepting his Nobel Prize, Gore suggested that the act of fighting the Second World War gave that generation the "moral authority and foresight" to tackle other challenges. Clearly, his hope is that fighting climate change will be a similar source of moral energy for our generation.

54. This is a major theme in Nietzsche's work. For example, see Essay One, Chapter Ten of *On The Genealogy of Morals.* Trans. Walter Kaufman. New York: Vintage, 1989.

55. MSNBC staff and news service, Gore, UN climate panel win Nobel Peace Prize, October 12, 2007. http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/21262661/

56. Hobbes and Locke understood themselves to be founding a social contract not based on any lofty human aspirations but on the lowest common denominator, the desire of men for security and prosperity. For example, Hobbes writes in Book 13 of *Leviathan,* "The passions that incline men to peace are: fear of death; desire of such things as are necessary to commodious living; and a hope by their industry to obtain them. And reason suggesteth convenient articles of peace upon which men may be drawn to agreement." For the philosophers of liberalism, "commodious living" is the highest possible social goal, and the prosaic nature of man's natural concerns makes it possible to achieve this goal through a social contract.

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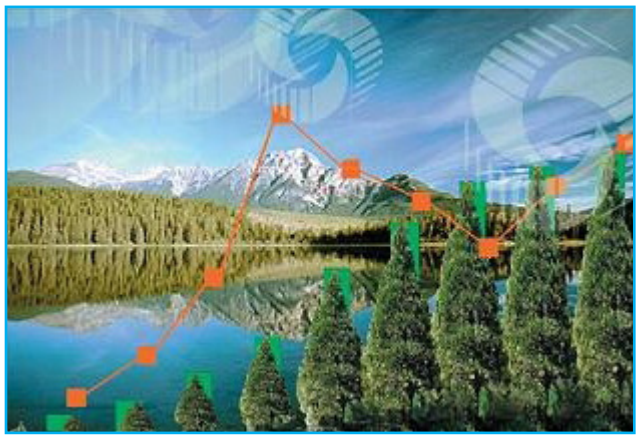

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