

## Notes on Naomi Klein's *This Changes Everything*

Naomi Klein's *This Changes Everything* (2014) is an important contribution to the discussion of strategy and tactics for climate action. Klein has covered a lot of bases in her description of the importance of climate change as an issue demanding concerted action, the social forces which are contributing to the problem or demanding climate action, the weaknesses of frequently touted remedies, the state of the environmental and climate action movements, and possibilities for organizing an effective mass movement.

Klein does not go into details about our climate change emergency, expecting that her readers are already familiar with the causes and magnitude of the problem. Instead she focuses on an argument in favor of organizing a mass movement for climate action that fights for big changes in our economic system, representing a conflict between the reigning neoliberal ideology and an alternative worldview "embedded in interdependence rather than hyperindividualism, reciprocity rather than dominance, and cooperation rather than hierarchy." She recommends a strategic alliance between climate activists and activists in the various movements for social justice, based on their common interests and the galvanizing effect of climate emergencies. She recognizes the great difficulties that a movement for climate action faces, but is hopeful that effective action can be forced before it becomes too late to avoid catastrophe.

These notes are taken from my reading of the book. They are organized by chapter, with an additional section at the end containing my interpretation of Klein's worldview as presented in the book. Excerpts from the book are shown with page references in parentheses. Quotations from online articles by Klein, and quotations from other about the book, are also given. Texts not in quotation marks are my own paraphrasing of the book.

My own opinions differ, particularly about the practicality of Klein's approach: I am afraid that the dominant worldview and resulting political inertia that form an impediment to effective climate action cannot be overcome. However, I have tried to represent her book without bias and without introducing my own ideas. If there is an opportunity for effective climate action, I believe Klein's approach may offer the best chance of achieving it.

## Contents

Introduction: One Way or Another, Everything Changes .....	2
1. The Right is Right: The Revolutionary Power of Climate Change.....	4
2. Hot Money: How Free Market Fundamentalism Helped Overheat the Planet .....	5
3. Public and Paid For: Overcoming the Ideological Blocks to the Next Economy.....	6
4. Planning and Banning: Slapping the Invisible Hand, Building a Movement .....	7
5. Beyond Extractivism: Confronting the Climate Denier Within.....	8
6. Fruits, Not Roots: The Disastrous Merger of Big Business and Big Green .....	10
7. No Messiahs: The Green Billionaires Won't Save Us.....	11
8. Dimming the Sun: The Solution to Pollution Is ... Pollution? .....	11
9. Blockadia: The New Climate Warriors .....	12
10. Love Will Save This Place: Democracy, Divestment, and the Wins So Far.....	13
11. You and What Army? Indigenous Rights and the Power of Keeping Our Word .....	14
12. Sharing the Sky: The Atmospheric Commons and the Power of Paying Our Debts .....	14
13. The Right to Regenerate: Moving from Extraction to Renewal .....	15
Conclusion: The Leap Years: Just Enough Time for Impossible.....	16
Naomi Klein's Worldview.....	20

## Introduction: One Way or Another, Everything Changes

Climate change is a crisis leading toward disaster. Everything will change, whether by force of nature or by our choice. We need a Marshall Plan for the Earth, a mass movement. We need to deal with a "savagely unjust economic system." We need a comprehensive vision and serious strategies. Deregulated capitalism is rampant. Its ideology of neoliberalism (market fundamentalism) is dominant. The ideology fetishizes centrism (incrementalism), and has been a key force against climate action. The ideas of materialism have led to extractivism.

"The resources required to rapidly move away from fossil fuels and prepare for the coming heavy weather could pull huge swaths of humanity out of poverty, providing services now sorely lacking, from clean water to electricity." (7)

"And there are plenty of signs that climate change will be no exception [to *The Shock Doctrine*]*—*that, rather than sparking solutions that have a real chance of preventing catastrophic warming and protecting us from inevitable disasters, the crisis will once again be seized upon to hand over yet more resources to the 1 percent." (8)

"... opposition movements ... will need a comprehensive vision for what should emerge in the place of our failing system, as well as serious political strategies for how to achieve those goals." (9-10)

"... we have not done the things that are necessary to lower emissions because those things fundamentally conflict with deregulated capitalism, the reigning ideology ..." (18)

"A different kind of climate movement [not led by Big Green] would have tried to challenge the extreme ideology that was blocking so much sensible action, joining with other sectors to show how unfettered corporate power posed a grave threat to the habitability of the planet." (20)

"... our economic system and our planetary system are now at war. Or, more accurately, our economy is at war with many forms of life on Earth, including human life. What the climate needs to avoid collapse is a contraction in humanity's use of resources; what our economic model demands to avoid collapse is unfettered expansion. Only one of these sets of rules can be changed, and it's not the laws of nature." (21)

"... even more powerful than capitalism ... is the fetish of centrism—of reasonableness, seriousness, splitting the difference, and generally not getting overly excited about anything. This is the habit of thought that truly rules our era ..." (22)

We need a shift in political "power—specifically ... a shift in who wields it, a shift away from corporations and toward communities, which in turn depends on whether or not the great many people who are getting a rotten deal under our current system can build a determined and diverse enough social force to change the balance of power." (25)

"But I have never said that we need to “slay,” “ditch” or “dismantle” capitalism in order to fight climate change. And I most certainly didn't say we need to do so first. Indeed I say the opposite, very early on in the book (page 25), precisely because it would be so dangerous to make such a purist claim."<sup>1</sup>

"Some say there is no time for this transformation; the crisis is too pressing and the clock is ticking. I agree that it would be reckless to claim that the only solution to this crisis is to revolutionize our economy and revamp our worldview from the bottom up—and anything short of that is not worth doing. There are all kinds of measures that would lower emissions substantively that could and should be done right now. But we aren't taking those measures, are we? The reason is that by failing to fight these big battles that stand to shift our ideological direction and change the balance of who holds power in our societies, a context has been slowly created in which any muscular response to climate change seems politically impossible, especially during times of economic crisis (which lately seems to be all the time). (25)

"So this book proposes a different strategy: think big, go deep, and move the ideological pole far away from the stifling market fundamentalism that has become the greatest enemy to planetary health. If we can shift the cultural context even a little, then there will be some breathing room for those sensible reformist policies that will at least get the atmospheric carbon numbers moving in the right direction. And winning is contagious so, who knows? Maybe within a few years, some of the ideas highlighted in these pages that sound impossibly radical today—like a basic income for all, or a rewriting of trade law, or real recognition of the rights of Indigenous people to protect huge parts of the world from polluting extraction—will start to seem reasonable, even essential." (26)

---

<sup>1</sup> "No, We Don't Need to Ditch/Slay/Kill Capitalism Before We Can Fight Climate Change. But We Sure As Hell Need To Challenge It" by Naomi Klein <http://thischangeseverything.org/no-we-dont-need-to-ditchslaykill-capitalism-before-we-can-fight-climate-change-but-we-sure-as-hell-need-to-challenge-it/>

"... the thing about a crisis this big, this all-encompassing, is that it changes everything. It changes what we can do, what we can hope for, what we can demand from ourselves and our leaders. It means there is a whole lot of stuff that we have been told is inevitable that simply cannot stand. And it means that a whole lot of stuff we have been told is impossible has to start happening right away." (28)

## 1. The Right is Right: The Revolutionary Power of Climate Change

Many do not believe in climate change's high risk, especially those on the right, those with strong "hierarchical" views. They resist the call for strong measures, and they fear undermining faith in capitalism, and in humans' project to dominate the Earth. Many believe they will be protected through their wealth. Moderate environmentalists try to make emissions reduction more palatable to the right, with little effect. Many people cannot imagine an alternative. Deliberately strengthen egalitarian and communitarian values.

"The Yale researchers [of Yale's Cultural Cognition Project] explain that people with strong 'egalitarian' and 'communitarian' worldviews (marked by an inclination toward collective action and social justice, concern about inequality, and suspicion of corporate power) overwhelmingly accept the scientific consensus on climate change. Conversely, those with strong 'hierarchical' and 'individualistic' worldviews (marked by opposition to government assistance for the poor and minorities, strong support for industry, and a belief that we all pretty much get what we deserve) overwhelmingly reject the scientific consensus."

"... the tight correlation between 'worldview' and acceptance of climate science [is attributed] to 'cultural cognition,' the process by which all of us ... filter new information in ways that will protect our 'preferred vision of the good society.' If new information seems to confirm that vision, we welcome it and integrate it easily. If it poses a threat to our belief system, then our brain immediately gets to work producing intellectual antibodies designed to repel the unwelcome invasion.

"... In other words, it is always easier to deny reality than to allow our worldview to be shattered ...  
"This kind of defensive reasoning helps explain the rise of emotional intensity that surrounds the climate issue today." (36-37)

"It's nearly impossible to convince people to abandon their core worldview."<sup>2</sup>

Climate change calls for "heavy-duty interventions", not "a few gentle market mechanisms." (39) "And there will obviously need to be substantial transfers of resources and technology to help battle poverty using low carbon tools. ... a Marshall Plan for the Earth. ... [a] sort of wealth redistribution ..." (40)

"A belief in a system that vilifies collective action and declares war on all corporate regulation and all things public simply cannot be reconciled with a problem that demands collective action on an unprecedented scale and a dramatic reining in of the market forces that are largely responsible for creating and deepening the crisis." (41)

The deniers remain strong because "... they are protecting powerful political and economic interests ..." (44)

---

<sup>2</sup> Reddit comments by Naomi Klein, 11/20/2014

[http://www.reddit.com/r/IAMA/comments/2mw0nf/im\\_naomi\\_klein\\_author\\_of\\_this\\_changes\\_everything/](http://www.reddit.com/r/IAMA/comments/2mw0nf/im_naomi_klein_author_of_this_changes_everything/)

"Basically we're up against those who benefit most from the status quo and would see their profits eroded if climate action became a reality. That's not just fossil fuel companies, but all the large corporations that benefit from a culture of deregulation, low taxes, free trade, etc, that is standing in the way of a robust response. And of course we're up against the intellectuals they pay to think."<sup>3</sup>

"... the real reason we are failing to rise to the climate moment is because the actions required directly challenge our reigning economic paradigm (deregulated capitalism combined with public austerity), the stories on which Western cultures are found (that we stand apart from nature and can outsmart its limits), as well as many of the activities that form our identities and define our communities (shopping, living virtually, shopping some more). They also spell extinction for the richest and most powerful industry the world has ever known—the oil and gas industry ..." (63)

## 2. Hot Money: How Free Market Fundamentalism Helped Overheat the Planet

How free market fundamentalism helped overheat the planet. Free trade is pitted against climate action. As manufacturing moves offshore, those other countries are blamed for climate change. Some Big Green groups supported free trade agreements. Indiscriminate economic growth is fetishized at the expense of climate action, yet we need managed degrowth. Green capitalism won't be sufficient, we must consume less. We cannot merely rely on lifestyle decisions; we need policy changes remaking our economies. There will be benefits, including strengthened safety nets and reduced inequality: "a just, equitable, and inspiring transition".

"Climate change demands that we consume less, but being consumers is all we know. Climate change is not a problem that can be solved simply by changing what we buy—a hybrid instead of an SUV, some carbon offsets when we get on a plane. At its core, it is a crisis born of overconsumption by the comparatively wealthy, which means the world's most manic consumers are going to have to consume less.

" ... The problem is the inflated role that consumption has come to play in our particular era.

Late capitalism teaches us to create ourselves through our consumer choices: shopping is how we form our identities, find community and express ourselves. Thus, telling people that they can't shop as much as they want to because the planet's support systems are overburdened can be understood as a kind of attack, akin to telling them that they cannot truly be themselves. ..."<sup>4</sup>

"I always tell people that the most important thing they can do is join groups of other people taking action. And that action depends on where they can have the most influence. If they're university students, that may mean divestment. If they live somewhere in the path of a pipeline, it may mean stopping that pipeline. If they're a brilliant economist, it may mean working with colleagues on policy approaches that movements can champion.

"What's important is to break out of the mindset that climate change can be tackled by individual [*sic*] action. Those actions are important when they model change, but they do not substitute for organizing."

---

<sup>3</sup> Reddit comments by Naomi Klein, 11/20/2014

[http://www.reddit.com/r/IAMA/comments/2mw0nf/im\\_naomi\\_klein\\_author\\_of\\_this\\_changes\\_everything/](http://www.reddit.com/r/IAMA/comments/2mw0nf/im_naomi_klein_author_of_this_changes_everything/)

<sup>4</sup> "The Change Within: The Obstacles We Face Are Not Just External" by Naomi Klein

<http://www.naomiklein.org/articles/2014/04/change-within-obstacles-we-face-are-not-just-external>

"We should definitely all fly less (particularly the richest of us who do it the most often). Many people I know would fly less often if we had better rail systems in North America."<sup>5</sup>

"Indeed the three policy pillars of the neoliberal age—privatization of the public sphere, deregulation of the corporate sector, and the lowering of income and corporate taxes, paid for with cuts to public spending—are each incompatible with many of the actions we must take to bring our emissions to safe levels." (72)

"... wealthy countries need to start cutting their greenhouse gas emissions by something like 8 to 10 percent a year—and they need to start right now." (87)

"The truth is, if we want to live within ecological limits, we would need to return to a lifestyle similar to the one we had in the 1970s, before consumption levels went crazy in the 1980s." (91)

"... as we remake our economies to stay within our global carbon budget, we need to see less consumption (except among the poor), less trade (as we relocalize our economies), and less private investment in producing for excessive consumption. These reductions would be offset by increased government spending, and increased public and private investment in the infrastructure and alternatives needed to reduce our emissions to zero. Implicit in all of this is a great deal more redistribution, so that more of us can live comfortably within the planet's capacity." (91)

### 3. Public and Paid For: Overcoming the Ideological Blocks to the Next Economy

Shift from privatization to community ownership and control. Wealthy countries and regions can shift their energy infrastructure to renewables in 20-40 years (101), but it requires public (governmental) action which is resisted by the dominant ideology. Disasters reveal the need for universal health care, decentralized energy production, remediation of inequity. Austerity and anti-government campaigns are pushing in the wrong direction. We need large public sector investments for emissions reduction: shift to renewable energy, smart grids, light rail and other mass transit, composting, building retrofits, urban redesigns for reduced auto use, preparation for storms and other emergencies, etc. Revenues should come from polluters, such as high royalties, or a steep carbon tax with redistribution to those who cannot afford higher prices. The auto, arms, shipping, and air transport industries should pay too. There are a variety of tax schemes available. The mechanisms must seem fair, socially just, and not protective of corporations and the wealthy. Bold, long-term public planning is needed, in the face of resistance from powerful corporations.

"If you live in the U.S., check out The Solutions Project: <http://thesolutionsproject.org/>. It maps out how to get to 100% renewables, state by state."<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Reddit comments by Naomi Klein, 11/20/2014

[http://www.reddit.com/r/IAmA/comments/2mw0nf/im\\_naomi\\_klein\\_author\\_of\\_this\\_changes\\_everything/](http://www.reddit.com/r/IAmA/comments/2mw0nf/im_naomi_klein_author_of_this_changes_everything/)

<sup>6</sup> Reddit comments by Naomi Klein, 11/20/2014

[http://www.reddit.com/r/IAmA/comments/2mw0nf/im\\_naomi\\_klein\\_author\\_of\\_this\\_changes\\_everything/](http://www.reddit.com/r/IAmA/comments/2mw0nf/im_naomi_klein_author_of_this_changes_everything/)

## 4. Planning and Banning: Slapping the Invisible Hand, Building a Movement

Government can force changes in industry, if so demanded by masses of people. Workers can take over enterprises and run them as cooperatives, as in Argentina, even with low profit margins. Buy-local and hire-local policies make sense. The potential for job creation is huge, but it will take public involvement and often control. Sometimes nationalization of industries is needed. Decentralized implementation and control will help, and it must avoid bureaucratization. Agroecology is promising along these lines. Governments must not only provide incentives for alternative energy generation, transportation, etc., but also limit the use of fossil fuels. The threat from coal and from fracking is growing; there is also a great threat from tar sands. Oil companies are driven by the market to continue extraction or die, and they have tremendous influence in government. Many constituencies can join together to demand political change, to avoid disaster capitalism arising from climate change. Most people no longer believe neoliberal claims. A broad array of struggles are actually climate action struggles, since their successes help to limit climate change or strengthen society in the face of climate change, and since they call for similar political and economic changes as climate action requires. Populist movements have failed to be sustained; they've been repressed or co-opted. The climate crisis arises from a deep cultural context, which we must understand to build a politics based on reconnection to place, to past and future, and to each other.

"Imagine ... a powerful social movement—a robust coalition of trade unions, immigrants, students, environmentalists, and everyone else whose dreams were getting crushed by the crashing economic model ..." (121)

"If that kind of coherent and sweeping vision had emerged in the United States in that moment of flux as the Obama presidency began, right-wing attempts to paint climate action as an economy killer would have fallen flat. It would have been clear to all that climate action is, in fact, a massive job creator, as well as a community rebuilders, and a source of hope in moments when hope is a scarce commodity indeed. But all of this would have required a government that was unafraid of bold long-term economic planning, as well as social movements that were able to move masses of people to demand the realization of that kind of vision." (124)

"Progressives [must show] that the real solutions to the climate crisis are also our best hope of building a much more stable and equitable economic system, one that strengthens and transforms the public sphere, generates plentiful, dignified work, and radically reins in corporate greed.

"But before that can happen, it's clear that a core battle of ideas must be fought about the right of citizens to democratically determine what kind of economy they need. Policies that simply try to harness the power of the market—by minimally taxing or capping carbon and then getting out of the way—won't be enough." (125)

"... attempts to fix glaring and fundamental flaws in the system have failed because large corporations wield far too much political power—a power exerted through corporate campaign contributions, many of them secret; through almost unfettered access to regulators via their lobbyists; through the notorious revolving door between business and government; as well as through the 'free speech' rights these corporations have been granted by the U.S. Supreme Court." (151)

"... the only thing politicians fear more than losing donations is losing elections. And this is where the power of climate change—and its potential for building the largest possible political tent—comes into

play. ... a rallying cry could bring together all of the various constituencies that would benefit from reducing corporate power over politics—from health care workers to parents worried about their children's safety at school." (152)

"... the climate moment [the urgent need for bold action] offers an overarching narrative in which everything from the fight for good jobs to justice for migrants to reparations for historical wrongs like slavery and colonialism can all become part of the grand project of building a nontoxic, shockproof economy before it's too late.

"... the alternative to such a project is not the status quo extended indefinitely. It is climate-change-fueled disaster capitalism—profiteering disguised as emission reduction, privatized hyper-militarized borders, and, quite possibly, high-risk geoengineering when things spiral out of control." (154)

"Free market ideology may still bind the imaginations of our elites, but for most of the general public, it has been drained of its powers to persuade. The disastrous track record of the past three decades of neoliberal policy is simply too apparent." (154)

"... for a great many people, climate action is their best hope for a better present, and a future far more exciting than anything else currently on offer." (156)

There "are encouraging signs, ... Yet the kind of counter-power that has a chance of changing society on anything close to the scale required is still missing. ... most leftists and liberals are still averting their eyes, having yet to grasp that climate science has handed them the most powerful argument against unfettered capitalism since William Blake's 'dark Satanic Mills' blackened England's skies .... And yet when demonstrators are protesting the various failures of this system [throughout the world], climate change is too often little more than a footnote when it could be the coup de grâce." (156-57)

"As many are coming to realize, the fetish for structurelessness, the rebellion against any kind of institutionalization is not a luxury today's transformative movements can afford." (158)

"To understand how we got to this place of profound disconnection from our surroundings and one another, and to think about how we might build a politics based on reconnection, we will need to go back a good deal further than 1988. ...

"... Indeed the roots of the climate crisis date back to core civilizational myths on which post-Enlightenment Western culture is founded—myths about humanity's duty to dominate a natural world that is believed to be at once limitless and entirely controllable. This is not a problem that can be blamed on the political right or on the United States; these are powerful cultural narratives that transcend geography and ideological divides." (159)

## 5. Beyond Extractivism: Confronting the Climate Denier Within

Extractivism was a feature of colonialism and early industrialism, and continues in modern capitalism. Coal provides a prime example. There are unintended consequences, such as climate change. Socialist countries, and left-leaning countries, also have, and continue to be, extractivist. Indigenous peoples offer a different worldview. Ecological Economics also challenges extractivism. The environmental movement, however, "tried to prove that saving the planet could be a great new business opportunity."

"... 'extractivism,' a term originally used to describe economies based on removing ever more raw materials from the earth, usually for export to traditional colonial powers, where 'value' was added. ...

"Extractivism is a nonreciprocal, dominance-based relationship with the earth, one purely of taking. It is the opposite of stewardship, which involves taking but also taking care that regeneration and future life continue. Extractivism ... is the reduction of life into objects for the use of others, giving them no integrity or value of their own .... It is also the reduction of human beings either into labor to be brutally extracted, pushed beyond limits, or, alternatively, into social burden, problems to be locked out at borders and locked away in prisons or reservations. In an extractivist economy, the interconnections among these various objectified components of life are ignored; the consequences of severing them are of no concern.

"Extractivism is also directly connected to the notion of sacrifice zones—places that, to their extractors, somehow don't count and therefore can be poisoned, drained, or otherwise destroyed ..." (169)

"... just one of the reasons climate change is so deeply frightening. Because to confront this crisis truthfully is to confront ourselves—to reckon, as our ancestors did, with our vulnerability to the elements that make up both the planet and our bodies. ... we should not underestimate the depth of the civilizational challenge that this relationship represents. ... facing these truths about climate change 'means recognizing that the power relation between humans and the earth is the reverse of the one we have assumed for three centuries.'" (175)

"The strongest challenges to this worldview have always come from outside its logic, in those historical junctures when the extractive project clashes directly with a different, older way of relating to the earth—and that older way fights back." (177)

"But for those of us born and raised inside this system, though we may well see the dead-end flaw of its central logic, it can remain intensely difficult to see a way out." (178)

"... the deeper message carried by the ecological crisis—that humanity has to go a whole lot easier on the living systems that sustain us, acting regeneratively rather than extractively—is a profound challenge to large parts of the left as well as the right.

"... self-described socialist states devoured resources with as much enthusiasm as their capitalist counterparts, and spewed waste just as recklessly." (178)

"The good news, and it is significant, is that large and growing social movements in all of these countries are pushing back against the idea that extraction-and-redistribution is the only route out of poverty and economic crisis." (182)

"Space is opening up for a growing influence of Indigenous thought on new generations of activists ... [so that] progressive movements are being exposed to worldviews based on relationships of reciprocity and interconnection with the natural world that are the antithesis of extractivism." (182)

"We have a big lift ahead in figuring out new ways to live in a post-capitalist world. The transition will no doubt be messy and painful and we don't necessarily know where we are headed, only that the current status quo is [*sic*] certain demise. Fortunately, there are people on this planet – indigenous peoples – who have long carried a vision of how to live on this earth worthy of emulating in spite of centuries of attempts to crush their vision and disempower them. They indeed continue to shine the light in spite of an onslaught of oppression, most recently as their lands are targeted for extraction. From them, not from the

UN and their corporate partners, we can find inspiration, hope, humanity and leadership as we move forward."<sup>7</sup>

## 6. Fruits, Not Roots: The Disastrous Merger of Big Business and Big Green

Many large environmental organizations ("Big Green groups") have close ties to large polluting businesses. Many of these groups champion watered-down climate actions, such as "market-based" solutions, which do not aim for a full transition away from fossil fuels. "The failure of this polite strategy is beyond debate." (200) Some have even supported fracking. Businesses have gamed the cap-and-trade system implemented in Europe; carbon offsets don't work very well.

"Simple principles governed this golden age of environmental legislation [1960s and 1970s]: ban or severely limit the offending activity or substance and where possible, get the polluter to pay for the cleanup." (203) Confronting the neoliberal ideology advanced by President Reagan, many green groups chose to look friendlier and cooperate more with big business. The Environmental Defense Fund pushed the first full-fledged cap-and-trade system to combat acid rain.

"Far from using climate change as a tool to alter the American way of life, many of the large environmental organizations spend their days doing everything in their power to furiously protect that way of life, at the direct expense of demanding the levels of change required by science." (210)

"... the refusal of so many environmentalists to consider responses to the climate crisis that would upend the economic status quo forces them to place their hopes in solutions—whether miracle products, or carbon markets, or 'bridge fuels'—that are either so weak or so high-risk that entrusting them with our collective safety constitutes what can only be described as magical thing." (210-211)

"All together, *This Changes Everything* holds the Big Greens accountable for redirecting public attention away from the need for big, systemic change and toward lifestyle and consumer approaches to climate change—complete with on-line carbon calculators—that did little to actually lower emissions."<sup>8</sup>

"But most of all, regular, noncelebrity people were called upon to exercise their consumer power—not by shopping less but by discovering new and exciting ways to consume more. And if guilt set in, well, we could click on the handy carbon calculators on any one of dozens of green sites and purchase an offset, and our sins would instantly be erased.

"In addition to not doing much to actually lower emissions, these various approaches also served to reinforce the very 'extrinsic' values that we now know are the greatest psychological barriers to climate action—from the worship of wealth and fame for their own sakes to the idea that change is something that is handed down from above by our betters, rather than something we demand for ourselves. They may even have played a role in weakening public belief in the reality of human-caused climate change. Indeed a growing number of communications specialists now argue that because the 'solutions' to climate change proposed by many green groups in this period [2000s] were so borderline frivolous, many people concluded that the groups must have been exaggerating the scale of the problem. ...

---

<sup>7</sup> "Corporations Are Not Going to Save Us From Climate Disruption" by Rachel Smolker, reposted by Naomi Klein at <http://thischangeeverything.org/corporations-are-not-going-to-save-us-from-climate-disruption/>

<sup>8</sup> "'This Changes Everything' Including the Anti-Fracking Movement" by Sandra Steingraber <http://ecowatch.com/2014/09/15/naomi-klein-this-changes-everything-fracking/3/>

wouldn't the environmental movement be asking the public to do more than switch brands of cleaning liquid, occasionally walk to work, and send money? Wouldn't they be trying to shut down the fossil fuel companies?" (212-13)

"The excerpt above will likely be flagged as one of the most controversial passages of the book: Klein lays the blame for widespread climate change denial at the feet of the environmental community!"<sup>9</sup>

In the farms and forests used for carbon "offsets," which allow pollution to occur elsewhere: "In order for multinational corporations to protect their freedom to pollute the atmosphere, peasants, farmers, and Indigenous people are losing their freedom to live and sustain themselves in peace." (222)

## 7. No Messiahs: The Green Billionaires Won't Save Us

Richard Branson pledged \$3 billion from his businesses to tackle climate change, but did not make good on the pledge.

Branson "dangled the prospect of a miracle technological fix for carbon pollution just over the horizon in order to buy time to continue escalating emissions, free of meddlesome regulation." (249)

"Branson set out to harness the profit motive to solve the climate crisis—but the temptation to profit from practices worsening the crisis proved too great to resist. Again and again, the demands of building a successful empire trumped the climate imperative—whether that meant lobbying against needed regulation, or putting more planes in the air, or pitching oil companies on using his pet miracle technologies to extract more oil." (251-52)

"There is plenty of room to make a profit in a zero-carbon economy; but the profit motive is not going to be the midwife for that great transformation." (252)

"... the profits from our dirtiest industries must be diverted into the grand and hopeful project of cleaning up their mess. ... it won't happen on a voluntary basis or on the honor system. It will have to be legislated—using the kinds of tough regulations, higher taxes, and steeper royalty rates these sectors have resisted all along." (254)

## 8. Dimming the Sun: The Solution to Pollution Is ... Pollution?

Solar Radiation Management (SRM) involves "various means of injecting particles into the atmosphere in order to reflect more sunlight back to space, thereby reducing the amount of heat that reaches the earth." (258) Side effects include continuing ocean acidification, and possibly worse climate in some regions—which is very hard to determine in advance, though it's predicted in some models. Testing is necessarily inadequate, some important results will not be known until a scheme is actually implemented for years. Historically, droughts have followed volcanic eruptions, which similarly dim sunlight. It's likely that developed countries would be willing to risk droughts in undeveloped countries. Many supporters of geoengineering are looking for ways to continue using fossil fuels as long as possible.

---

<sup>9</sup> "This Changes Everything' Including the Anti-Fracking Movement" by Sandra Steingraber  
<http://ecowatch.com/2014/09/15/naomi-klein-this-changes-everything-fracking/3/>

"... I have been repeatedly struck by how the hard-won lessons about humility before nature that have reshaped modern science, particularly the fields of chaos and complexity theory, do not appear to have penetrated this particular bubble." (267)

"... we would be wise to anticipate even small amounts of geoengineering unleashing a new age of weather-related geopolitical recrimination, paranoia, and possibly retaliation, with every future natural disaster being blamed—rightly or wrongly—on the people in faraway labs playing god." (269)

"We have options, ones that would greatly decrease the chances of ever confronting those impossible choices, choices that indeed deserve to be described as genocidal. To fail to exercise those options—which is exactly what we are collectively doing—knowing full well that eventually the failure could force government to rationalize 'risking' turning whole nations, even subcontinents, into sacrifice zones, is a decision our children may judge as humanity's single most immoral act." (284)

"In pragmatic terms, our challenge is less to save the earth from ourselves and more to save ourselves from an earth that, if pushed too far, has ample power to rock, burn, and shake us off completely." (285)

"As environmental author Kenneth Brower writes, 'The notion that science will save us is the chimera that allows the present generation to consume all the resources it wants, as if no generations will follow. It is the sedative that allows civilization to march so steadfastly toward environmental catastrophe. It forestalls the real solution, which will be in the hard, nontechnical work of changing human behavior.'" (289)

## 9. Blockadia: The New Climate Warriors

"Blockadia is not a specific location on a map but rather a roving transnational conflict zone that is cropping up with increasing frequency and intensity wherever extractive projects are attempting to dig and drill ..." (294-95)

"Resistance to high-risk extreme extraction is building a global, grassroots, and broad-based network the likes of which the environmental movement has rarely seen. And perhaps this phenomenon shouldn't even be referred to as an environmental movement at all, since it is primarily driven by a desire for a deeper form of democracy, one that provides communities with real control over those resources that are most critical to collective survival—the health of the water, air, and soil. In the process, these place-based stands are stopping real climate crimes in progress." (295)

"The collective response to the climate crisis is changing from something that primarily takes place in closed-door policy and lobbying meetings into something alive and unpredictable and very much in the streets (and mountains, and farmers' fields, and forests)." (295-96)

"These activists understand that keeping carbon in the ground, and protecting ancient, carbon-sequestering forests from being clear-cut for mines, is a prerequisite for preventing catastrophic warming.

"... Indeed, if the movement has a guiding theory, it is that it is high time to close, rather than expand, the fossil fuel frontier." (304)

People organized in Nigeria against oil extraction, and the government responded brutally. The conflict escalated to "a full-blown armed insurgency, complete with bombings of oil infrastructure and

government targets, rampant pipeline vandalism, ransom kidnapping of oil workers .... In the process, the original goals of the movement—to stop the ecological plunder, and take back control over the region's resource—became harder to decipher." (308-09)

The movement has been propelled by expansion of fossil fuel extraction, often into hostile territory, and by the heightened risk of extraction and transportation operations.

"... in the era of extreme energy, there is no longer the illusion of discreet sacrifice zones anymore." (314) The expansion of fracking and other extractive activities has galvanized the new climate movement. Resistance is increasing.

"One battle doesn't rob from another but rather causes battles to multiply, with each act of courage, and each victory, inspiring others to strengthen their resolve." (324)

In Blockadia, risk assessment is being replaced by the precautionary principle. The burden of proving safety is being put back on the industry.

"This sense of moral clarity, after so many decades of chummy green partnerships, is the real shock for the extractive industries." (336)

## **10. Love Will Save This Place: Democracy, Divestment, and the Wins So Far**

"... when the extractive industry's culture of structural transience bumps up against a group of deeply rooted people with an intense love of their homeplace and a determination to protect it, the effect can be explosive." (344)

"... what has emerged in the movement against extreme extraction is less an anti-fossil fuels movement than a pro-water movement." (344)

Water is contaminated not only by spills, but in regular production of tar sands and in fracking.

Resistance is growing in India, and particularly in China where pollution has become a big issue.

The student-led divestment movement has "put the fossil fuel companies' core business model on trial, arguing that they have become rogue actors whose continued economic viability relies on radical climate destabilization—and that, as such, any institution claiming to serve the public interest has a moral responsibility to liberate itself from these odious profits." (354)

The divestment movement won't bankrupt the industry, but it is "chipping away at the social license with which these companies operate." (354)

"Divestment is just the first stage of this delegitimization process, but it is already well under way. None of this is a replacement for major policy changes that would regulate carbon reduction across the board. But what the emergence of this networked, grassroots movement means is that the next time climate campaigners get into a room filled with politicians and polluters to negotiate, there will be many thousands of people outside the doors with the power to amp up the political pressure significantly—

with heightened boycotts, court cases, and more militant direct action should real progress fail to materialize." (355)

Fair trade laws are being used by extractive industries to quash environmental wins.

"Again and again, after failing to persuade communities that these projects are in their genuine best interest, governments are teaming up with corporate players to roll over the opposition, using a combination of physical violence and draconian legal tools reclassifying peaceful activists as terrorists." (362)

Many cities, and the Transition Town movement, are working to limit or plan for climate change.

## **11. You and What Army? Indigenous Rights and the Power of Keeping Our Word**

"... Indigenous land and treaty rights have proved a major barrier for the extractive industries in many of the key Blockadia struggles.

"... Even more critically, many non-Natives are also beginning to see that the ways of life that Indigenous groups are protecting have a great deal to teach about how to relate to the land in ways that are not purely extractive." (370)

Many Indigenous communities, having trouble meeting basic needs, feel pressured to make quick-and-dirty deals with extractive industries.

## **12. Sharing the Sky: The Atmospheric Commons and the Power of Paying Our Debts**

Renewables "demand that we adapt ourselves to the rhythms of natural systems, as opposed to bending those systems to our will with brute force engineering." (394)

Poor communities are often forced to support extraction projects in order to gain some jobs and "development" funds. "Part of the job of the climate movement, then, is to make the moral case that the communities who have suffered most from unjust resource relationships should be first to be supported in their efforts to build the next, life-based economy now.

"And that means a fundamentally new relationship, in which those communities have full control over resource projects, so that they become opportunities for skills training, jobs, and steady revenues (rather than one-off payments)." (399)

"As discussed, the resources for this just transition must ultimately come from the state, collected from the profits of the fossil fuel companies in the brief window left while they are still profitable." (401) Meanwhile, the divestment movement is asking institutions "to reinvest that money in entities that have a clear vision for the healing process." (401)

"During these times of continual economic stress and exclusion, the communities on the front lines of saying no to dirty energy have discovered that they will never build the base they need unless they can simultaneously provide economic alternatives to the projects they are opposing." (403)

"Increasingly, [Blockadia doesn't just say no, it] is also a constructive movement, actively building an alternative economy based on very different principles and values." (405)

"... developing countries [are] owed a debt for the inherent injustice of climate change—the fact that wealthy countries had used up most of the atmospheric capacity for safely absorbing CO<sub>2</sub> before developing countries had a chance to industrialize. ...if wealthy countries do not want poorer ones to pull themselves out of poverty in the same dirty way that we did, the onus is on Northern governments to help foot the bill.

"This, of course, is the core of the argument for the existence of a 'climate debt' ..." (409)

"The truth is—and this is a humbling thing for cultures accustomed to assuming that our actions shape the destiny of the world to accept—the real battle will not be lost or won by us. It will be won or lost by those movements in the Global South that are fighting their own Blockadia-style struggles—demanding their own clean energy revolutions, their own green jobs, their own pools of carbon left in the ground. And they are up against powerful forces within their own countries that insist that it is their 'turn' to pollute their way to prosperity and that nothing matters more than economic growth." (412)

"And there are alternatives—models of development that do not require massive wealth stratification, tragic cultural losses, or ecological devastation." (413)

"With many of the biggest pools of untapped carbon on lands controlled by some of the poorest people on the planet, and with emissions rising most rapidly in what were, until recently, some of the poorest parts of the world, there is simply no credible way forward that does not involve redressing the real roots of poverty." (418)

### **13. The Right to Regenerate: Moving from Extraction to Renewal**

"... protecting and valuing the earth's ingenious systems of reproducing life and the fertility of all of its inhabitants, may lie at the center of the shift in worldview that must take place if we are to move beyond extractivism. A worldview based on regeneration and renewal rather than domination and depletion." (424)

"It suddenly dawned on me that I was indeed part of a vast biotic community, and it was a place where a great many of us—humans and nonhuman alike—found ourselves engaged in an uphill battle to create new living beings." (427)

Pollution is hurting fertility and affecting health in other ways. Animals are affected as well. Eggs, larvae, and juveniles are especially hard hit.

"What is emerging [in Blockadia], in fact, is a new kind of reproductive rights movement, one fighting not only for the reproductive rights of women, but for the reproductive rights of the planet as a whole .... All of life has the right to renew, regenerate, and heal itself." (443)

Such rights are being adopted as legal rights. People are remembering their connections with nature.

"Again and again, linear, one-way relationships of pure extraction are being replaced with systems that are circular and reciprocal." (446)

"... systems are being created that require minimal external inputs and produce almost no waste—a quest for homeostasis ....

"And contrary to capitalism's drift toward monopoly and duopoly in virtually every arena, these systems mimic nature's genius for built-in redundancy by amplifying diversity wherever possible .... The beauty of these models is that when they fail, they fail on a small and manageable scale—with backup systems in place. Because if there is one thing we know, it's that the future is going to have plenty of shocks.

"... living nonextractively means relying overwhelmingly on resources that can be continuously regenerated ....

"These processes are sometimes called 'resilient' but a more appropriate term might be 'regenerative.' Because resilience—though certainly one of nature's greatest gifts—is a passive process, implying the ability to absorb blows and get back up. Regeneration, on the other hand, is active: we become full participants in the process of maximizing life's creativity." (447)

## **Conclusion: The Leap Years: Just Enough Time for Impossible**

"... global capitalism has made the depletion of resources so rapid, convenient, and barrier-free that 'earth-human systems' are becoming dangerously unstable in response." (450)

"... only mass social movements can save us now. Because we know where the current system, left unchecked, is headed. We also know, I would add, how that system will deal with the reality of serial climate-related disasters: with profiteering, and escalating barbarism to segregate the losers from the winners." (450)

"The events out on the streets in New York this week did provide some hope and inspiration. There were plenty of wishy-washy, nonsense calls ("100 percent renewable energy, now," "Go Vegan: Save the Planet," "electric cars," "biofuels" etc.). But there were also many who have dug in deep enough to conclude that our only real chance for addressing the multipronged crises we face is to overcome divisions and disparities to build unity and take action including bold nonviolent direct action targeting the roots of the problem. People are recognizing that all of the various issues, concerns and struggles that we contend with – from tar sands, to fracking, from nukes and uranium mining to biofuels, from oppression and incarceration to poverty, sexism, racism and a lack of basic rights – all stem from a common root cause (named capitalism). With virtually everything at stake, we can and must use our power in numbers to put an end to the utterly grotesque system that currently reigns and which has demonstrated that it is willing to go to any lengths – including destroying our only planet – in the name of endless profitmaking and accumulation of wealth and power in the hands of a tiny few. Only then can real solutions prevail."<sup>10</sup>

"The movements explored in these pages—Blockadia's fast multiplying local outposts, the fossil fuel divestment/reinvestment movement, the local laws barring high-risk extraction, the bold court challenges by Indigenous groups and others—are early manifestations of this resistance. They have not only located various choke points to slow the expansion plans of the fossil fuel companies, but the economic alternatives these movements are proposing and building are mapping ways of living within planetary boundaries, ones based on intricate reciprocal relationships rather than brute extraction. This is [what] is needed to put the brakes on the forces of destruction and destabilization." (451)

---

<sup>10</sup> "Corporations Are Not Going to Save Us From Climate Disruption" by Rachel Smolker, reposted by Naomi Klein at <http://thischangeeverything.org/corporations-are-not-going-to-save-us-from-climate-disruption/>

"My movement heroes right now are a Bay Area [East Bay] group called Movement Generation — check them out: <http://movementgeneration.org/>"<sup>11</sup>

"... lowering global emissions in line with climate scientists' urgent warnings demands changes of a truly daunting speed and scale. ... forcing some of the most profitable companies on the planet to forfeit trillions of dollars of future earnings by leaving the vast majority of proven fossil fuel reserves in the ground. ... coming up with trillions more to pay for zero-carbon, disaster-ready societal transformations. And let's take for granted that we want to do these radical things democratically and without a bloodbath, so violent, vanguardist revolutions don't have much to offer in the way of road maps." (452)

Previous movements—for civil rights for African-Americans and women—were successful in gaining legal rights against institutional discrimination, but not regarding "fundamental challenges to the free market economic order." (453)

"... huge gains [were] won by the labor movement in the aftermath of the Great Depression—the massive wave of unionization that forced owners to share a great deal more wealth with their workers, which in turn helped create a context to demand ambitious social programs .... In the same period, social movement pressure created the conditions for the New Deal and programs like it across the industrialized world. These made massive investments in public infrastructure—utilities, transportation systems, housing, and more—on a scale comparable to what the climate crisis calls for today." (454)

"... the movements for the abolition of slavery and for Third World independence from colonial powers. Both of these transformative movements forced ruling elites to relinquish practices that were still extraordinarily profitable, much as fossil fuel extraction is today." (455)

"... the climate justice movement is demanding that an existing set of political and economic interests be forced to say goodbye to trillions of dollars of wealth. It is impossible to point to any precedent other than abolition.

... It is an audacious demand, and those making it should be clear-eyed about just what they're asking. They should also recognize that, like the abolitionists of yore, their task may be as much instigation and disruption as it is persuasion. There is no way around conflict with this much money on the line, no available solution that makes everyone happy."<sup>12</sup>

"While not equivalent, the dependency of the U.S. economy on slave labor—particularly in the Southern states—is certainly comparable to the modern global economy's reliance on fossil fuels." (456) The value of the slaves was "very roughly similar to the value of the carbon reserves that must be left in the ground worldwide if we are to have a good chance of keeping warming below 2 degrees Celsius.

"But the analogy, as all acknowledge, is far from perfect. Burning fossil fuels is of course not the moral equivalent of owning slaves or occupying countries. ... Nor were the movements that ended slavery and defeated colonial rule in any way bloodless: nonviolent tactics like boycotts and protests played major roles, but slavery in the Caribbean was only outlawed after numerous slave rebellions were brutally suppressed, and, of course, abolition in the United States came only after the carnage of the Civil War.

"[Also] the economic side of the struggle was far less successful." (456-57)

---

<sup>11</sup> Reddit comments by Naomi Klein, 11/20/2014

[http://www.reddit.com/r/IAmA/comments/2mw0nf/im\\_naomi\\_klein\\_author\\_of\\_this\\_changes\\_everything/](http://www.reddit.com/r/IAmA/comments/2mw0nf/im_naomi_klein_author_of_this_changes_everything/)

<sup>12</sup> "The New Abolitionism" by Christopher Hayes <http://www.thenation.com/article/179461/new-abolitionism>

"The only transformation of comparable scope, Klein argues, was the abolition of slavery. Ironically, abolition may have succeeded when it did only because coal power was quickly replacing human toil. In trying to cut the world's dependence on fossil fuels, activists have their work cut out for them."<sup>13</sup>

"Truly addressing the crisis will require building people power on a scale that the world has never seen before."<sup>14</sup>

"... if climate justice carries the day, the economic costs to our elites will be real—not only because of the carbon left in the ground but also because of the regulations, taxes, and social programs needed to make the required transformation. Indeed, these new demands on the ultra rich could effectively bring the era of the footloose Davos oligarch to a close." (457)

Climate justice economic demands "represent nothing less than the unfinished business of the most powerful liberation movements of the past two centuries, from civil rights to feminism to Indigenous sovereignty. ... Such is the promise of a Marshall Plan for the Earth." (458)

"So climate change does not need some shiny new movement that will magically succeed where others failed. Rather, as the furthest-reaching crisis created by the extractivist worldview, and one that puts humanity on a firm and unyielding deadline, climate change can be the force—the grand push—that will bring together all of these still living movements. ... Climate change is our chance to right those festering wrongs at last—the unfinished business of liberation." (459)

"A central idea behind the approach I take is that we all have to get out of our "issue" silos: labour, environment, poverty — and build a genuine social movement that is democratic and has a coherent narrative. Part of our problem is the NGO-isatin [*sic*] of the left."<sup>15</sup>

Activism "becomes an entirely normal activity throughout society .... During extraordinary historical moments—both world wars, the aftermath of the Great Depression, or the peak of the civil rights era—the usual categories dividing 'activists' and 'regular people' became meaningless because the project of changing society was so deeply woven into the project of life. Activists were, quite simply, everyone." (459)

More ideas for action: "Twenty Things YOU Can Do To Address the Climate Crisis!"<sup>16</sup>

Most of us cannot imagine being part of the mobilization that's needed. "In other words, we are products of our age and of a dominant ideological project. One that too often has taught us to see ourselves as little more than singular, gratification-seeking units, out to maximize our narrow advantage, while simultaneously severing so many of us from the broader communities whose pooled skills are capable of solving problems big and small." (460)

---

<sup>13</sup> "'This Changes Everything,' by Naomi Klein: review" by Mason Inman

<http://www.sfchronicle.com/books/article/Review-This-Changes-Everything-by-Naomi-5764874.php>

<sup>14</sup> "Twenty Things YOU Can Do To Address the Climate Crisis!" by Patrick Robbins, reposted by Naomi Klein

<http://thischangeseverything.org/twenty-things-you-can-do-to-address-the-climate-crisis/>

<sup>15</sup> Reddit comments by Naomi Klein, 11/20/2014

[http://www.reddit.com/r/IAmA/comments/2mw0nf/im\\_naomi\\_klein\\_author\\_of\\_this\\_changes\\_everything/](http://www.reddit.com/r/IAmA/comments/2mw0nf/im_naomi_klein_author_of_this_changes_everything/)

<sup>16</sup> "Twenty Things YOU Can Do To Address the Climate Crisis!" by Patrick Robbins, reposted by Naomi Klein

<http://thischangeseverything.org/twenty-things-you-can-do-to-address-the-climate-crisis/>

"All of this is why any attempt to rise to the climate challenge will be fruitless unless it is understood as part of a much broader battle of worldviews, a process of rebuilding and reinventing the very idea of the collective, the communal, the commons, the civil, and the civic after so many decades of attack and neglect. Because what is overwhelming about the climate challenge is that it requires breaking so many rules at once—rules written into national laws and trade agreements, as well as powerful unwritten rules that tell us that no government can increase taxes and stay in power, or say no to major investments no matter how damaging, or plan to gradually contract those parts of our economies that endanger us all.

"And yet each of those rules emerged out of the same, coherent worldview. If that worldview is delegitimized, then all of the rules within it become much weaker and more vulnerable." (460-61)

We need "game-changing [policy battles] that don't merely aim to change laws but change patterns of thought." We need to open up "a space for a full-throated debate about values—about what we owe to one another based on our shared humanity, and what it is that we collectively value more than economic growth and corporate profits.

"Indeed a great deal of the work of deep social change involves having debates during which new stories can be told to replace the ones that have failed us. Because if we are to have any hope of making the kind of civilizational leap required of this fateful decade, we will need to start believing, once again, that humanity is not hopelessly selfish and greedy—the image ceaselessly sold to us by everything from reality shows to neoclassical economics." (461)

Many of us are overwhelmed by our concerns for people and the earth. We are silent "because we lack the collective spaces in which to confront the raw terror of ecocide [and] the end of the world as we know it ...." (461-62)

"Fundamentally, the task is to articulate not just an alternative set of policy proposals but an alternative worldview to rival the one at the heart of the ecological crisis—embedded in interdependence rather than hyperindividualism, reciprocity rather than dominance, and cooperation rather than hierarchy. ... Because in the hot and stormy future we have already made inevitable through our past emissions, an unshakable belief in the equal rights of all people and a capacity for deep compassion will be the only things standing between civilization and barbarism." (462)

The transformative movements of the past "modeled different values in their own behavior, and in the process liberated the political imagination and rapidly altered the sense of what was possible. They were also unafraid of the language of morality—to give the pragmatic, cost-benefit arguments a rest and speak of right and wrong, of love and indignation." (462)

Abolitionists used "highly polarizing rhetoric" to emphasize their moral arguments. Climate activists need to take a similarly clear moral stance.

"... there are plenty of solid economic arguments for moving beyond fossil fuels ... But we will not win the battle for a stable climate by trying to beat the bean counters at their own game—arguing, for instance, that it is more cost-effective to invest in emission reduction now than disaster response later. We will win by asserting that such calculations are morally monstrous ..." (464)

"... there is little doubt that another crisis will see us in the streets and squares once again, taking us all by surprise. The real question is what progressive forces will make of that moment, the power and confidence with which it will be seized." (466)

## Naomi Klein's Worldview

We can foresee important effects of our action or inaction, confidently aiming for good and for avoiding harm. Our collective actions can build the better future we can imagine. Through long-term planning and collective action (extending globally), we humans (not just elites) can intentionally change our economic and political systems, perhaps just barely fast enough to deal with current emergencies.

Scientists are helping us to understand climate change (part of a greater ecological crisis) and our role in it. The prognosis is dire—great suffering among humans, and harm to the natural world—so we must act to prevent disaster.

Climate change is the result of a system in action: the capitalist system, which also results in inequity and many injustices (at all scales, from individuals to countries). Left to its own, it will grind every bit of value out of the earth and our labors. We cannot just blame "bad guys", ignorance, or greed. Politicians, business leaders, and others implementing extractivist policies are acting as the system demands, so we must radically change the system.

Some people believe in technological innovation solving our big social problems, but that's magical thinking. Only a global mass movement may be effective. Violence cannot be part of the strategy, since it leads to severe repression and loss of life. We must, united across the globe, express our love and indignation, set goals, strategize, make sacrifices, and (shifting the balance of power) force governments to rein in corporations and reorient the economy. Decisions should be made democratically, not by elites or bureaucrats, according to our deep compassion, what we collectively value (and our understanding of right and wrong), and what we owe to one another based on our shared humanity and the equal rights of all people.

This is challenging because the system enculturates people according to the dominant ideology, which supports the system's destructive operations. For example, the culture leads us to define ourselves by what we buy, worship wealth and fame for their own sakes, compromise, accept change as something that is handed down from above by our betters rather than something we demand for ourselves, and generally not get overly excited about anything. We are also encouraged to believe the narratives of neoliberalism, including the magic of "free markets" and the "fact" that humanity is hopelessly selfish and greedy.

Our cultural narratives include myths about humanity's duty to dominate a natural world that is said to be both limitless and entirely controllable. We must regain a feeling of humility before nature, which is ultimately more powerful than us humans. We are part of a vast biotic community engaged in an uphill battle to create new living beings. We must act (among humans and in relationship to the natural world) according to principles of interdependence rather than hyperindividualism, reciprocity rather than dominance, and cooperation rather than hierarchy. Linear, one-way relationships of pure extraction will be replaced with systems that are circular and reciprocal. Nature sets ecological limits, within which we must live. We must adapt ourselves to the rhythms of natural systems and, acting as stewards, regenerate and renew rather than dominate and deplete, thus fully participating in nature's process of maximizing life's creativity.