WENDY LYNNE LEE

THIS IS
ENVIRONMENTAL
ETHICS
AN INTRODUCTION

WILEY Blackwell

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Forthcoming:

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is customary to thank all of the people, friends, family, and colleagues, whose patience and forbearance make research and writing possible. There are plenty of these folks, and they know who they are. This book, however, requires a different introduction. It began as a meditation on the implications of the climate crisis for environmental ethics. Not because there aren't many other issues confronting an ecologically beleaguered planet and its citizens, but because climate change poses an existential crisis for human beings, for communities, and for every living thing with whom we share the earth and its atmosphere. Like so many of its predecessor crises—pollution, species extinction, resource exhaustion—the climate crisis is substantially anthropogenic. Human greed, excess, recklessness, and hubris are its causes. Unlike its predecessors, however, the climate crisis has the potential to render life no longer worth the struggle that is living.

Then, two things happened that altered the course of this book. First, and without warning, my daughter, Carley, died. Then the coronavirus pandemic descended and began to devour the world. The first still leaves me speechless. The second must be spoken and theorized. Covid-19 must be understood as the environmental crisis it is at the juncture of human chauvinism, ecological destruction, rapacious capitalism, and ever-increasing greenhouse gas emissions. The pandemic is not, as we might prefer to believe, simply a moment in time; it foreshadows an anguished future we could act to deter through will and foresight; though we haven't so far. Of course, it's not this simple. Some refuse to wear masks; others risk infection to help us breathe. Some deny the climate crisis; others are forced to flee its consequences. Both the pandemic and the climate crisis evolve in ways we can model, but not really predict. And most of us live somewhere between soldiering on, enculturated cognitive dissonance, outrage, and doing the best we can. The root-message of any ethic is: do better by the other who is you. Pandemic teaches us we cannot resurrect the dead. But while coronavirus will meet its match in a vaccine, for a while, the only armor we have against the climate crisis is thoughtful, deliberate, and collective action driven by the

decision to care for others, listen to science, and make a reclamation of humility. The tipping points are right in front of us—climactic, viral, civilizational. We can do better. I would like to say: if only we had the right moral compass. The future will arrive. But it's late in the day.

<div align="right">

For Carley Aurora Lee-Lampshire, my "Carlita Bonita,"
"Car-Bob" to her friends.
I love you to the moon and back.
8.28.88–1.18.20

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ABOUT THE COMPANION WEBSITE

A Companion Website for *This is Environmental Ethics* can be accessed at https://thisisphilosoph.wordpress.com

There is a website for each title that hosts material such as an instructor pack with teaching resources and resources intended to aid student learning.

INTRODUCTION: ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS IN THE ERA OF ECOLOGICAL CRISIS

One Planet, Many Worlds

What may be most striking about the incredibly dynamic terrain of contemporary environmental ethics is that while its many, sometimes competing, ideas, theories, and principles are grounded in philosophical thinking about moral issues, they're also driven by a deep-going sense of duty to speak to a world whose planetary conditions are changing in potentially ruinous ways that demand urgent, deliberate, informed, and collective action.[1] There are three basic truths to keep at the forefront: first, ecological conditions are existential conditions. Second, the crises we currently face, especially the climate crisis, mass human and nonhuman migration, war over access to clean water, and the potential for future pandemic, clarify the relationship of the ecological to the existential in ways pressing and paralyzing.[2] Third, like most other emergencies, environmental, economic, social, and geopolitical, the climate crisis impacts some in dramatically disproportionate ways. Global North and global South, human and nonhuman, rich and poor, women and men, brown, black, and white—no single metric of impact will be comprehensive save the obvious: exceeding the tipping points to measurable irreversible change signaled by Amazon rainforest die-back, Greenland Ice Sheet disintegration, Arctic permafrost melt, West African and Indian monsoon shift, extreme and more frequent weather events, and their ancillary impacts on human and nonhuman migration, food security, geopolitical violence, and species extinction.

Still, we tend to compartmentalize "environmental," segregating it from other domains of moral concern. Yet some of our most difficult moral questions erupt from our reflections in one domain that hemorrhages onto others: trash incinerators built in working-class neighborhoods, mining leases on

indigenous lands, food deserts, economically stressed communities washed away by tsunamis or burnt to the ground by firenadoes. We can't avoid these social, economic, and geopolitical intersections. The climate crisis is no more solely an environmental emergency than exploring for oil in the Arctic is solely the province of energy demand, or that the Covid-19 pandemic and its many evolving variants is merely a matter of public health.[3] Each threatens serious environmental consequences for every living thing that dwells on the planet's surface, under its soils, in its waters, over its lands, or within the bodies of every creature, living and dead. But as impact is unequal, it may be that our greatest moral crisis is not, at least in the first place, the failure to act, but the refusal to *know*. A realistic environmental ethic must then make a priority *epistemic responsibility*, that is, an understanding of the current state of the planet's environmental conditions and its atmospheric integrity is key to formulating personal moral compass, just social and economic policy, and ultimately global consensus about the future sustainability of the only home most of us will ever know: Earth.

Put another way: we may be tempted to think narrowly about climate change, reserving our concern to its environmental impacts, themselves enormous, of melting polar ice caps, shifting bread-baskets, habitat loss, extinctions, firenadoes, extended drought, bomb cyclones, vanishing shore lines, and the like. This seems like quite enough. But the fact is that climate change is a *crisis* because it poses at least as great a challenge to the ways in which we *think about* the planet's capacity to support life, its limited resources, vulnerable tenants, and its geopolitical stability as it poses to more immediate and tangible concerns like combatting firenadoes, bomb cyclones, or rapid viral spread. We tend, in other words, to be geared to the crisis right in front of us, but the climate crisis is also, and fundamentally, about the future. It disrupts many of the comforts and conveniences we take for granted in the privileged global "North," and it exacerbates much of the hardship that renders life in the developing world of the global "South" tenuous.[4] It raises critically important questions about who all counts as "we" with respect to access to critical resources like clean air, potable water, and food. Dividing those agents, institutions, and governments most culpable for the crisis from those most harmed, climate change makes it all the harder to ignore what we already know about social and economic inequality.[5] It alters the planet's capacity to recuperate from the abuse to which we subject it, enthralled as we remain by the myth of its endless treasure trove of resources and inexhaustible atmospheric toilet. It forces us to rethink whether it makes sense to conceive everything as a potential commodity. The climate crisis, in other words, disrupts not only the planet, but the *world*, or more precisely, the many and diverse *worlds* of human culture, religion, government, economy, politic—each interwoven with the ecologies upon which their tenants, human and nonhuman, wealthy and poor, entitled and disenfranchised depend.

In short, the climate crisis raises crucial, but difficult questions not only about what we value and why, but about *who* gets to decide value—and with what authority. Five observations seem certain:

- The climate crisis *will* impact all of us one way or another.
- Some human communities will bear its brunt in far greater ways than others.
- Environmental crisis tends to provoke new geopolitical antagonisms and worsen old ones. This includes war, as well as the ecological ruin and greenhouse emissions that come with war.
- Capitalism, a system of economic exchange rooted in the largely unchallenged assumption that all value can be converted to exchange or commodity value, plays a central role in environmental destruction, pollution, geopolitical violence, species extinction, and the climate crisis.
- An unprecedented number of nonhuman animal species will confront loss of habitat, starvation, and migration. But one of the most ethically troubling legacies of the *Anthropocene*, the age of human industrial domination, is extinction.

Climate change simply *is* the greatest challenge of our times. Yet, for too many it seems not to feel that way. Despite the fact that it's human-made, an *anthropogenic* crisis, despite the fact that we have decades of science apprising us of its implications, sustained attention to it tends to be eclipsed by emergencies experienced as more immediate, urgent, and visceral: food insecurity, gun violence, human migration, human trafficking, the opioid crisis, pollution, terrorism, viral outbreaks. In one way, it's not hard to see why: compared to the sheer terror evoked by the Covid-19 pandemic, the climate crisis feels like a problem that can safely be put off to the future.

We often hear the common refrain that we have always had fires, hurricanes, tsunamis; that climate "alarmists" are simply using weather as a rhetorical tool to argue for more restrictive "one-world" government whose aim is to control what we eat, how we live, where we travel. Or, as this line of thinking has begun to fade in the face of more frequent and more extreme weather events, we're invited to replace outright denial with the idea that, just as we put a man on the moon, brought back the Kihansi Spray Toad from the brink of extinction, and developed a highly effective vaccine for SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19) at warp speed, we can "techno-wizard" our way out of the climate crisis. For too many, of course, climate change isn't a future crisis but a daily confrontation with drought, water shortage, food insecurity, and disease—a confrontation whose message is clear: to put off to the future what demands action in the now is *nihilistic*. That is, insofar as we know that today's emergencies are a harbinger of tomorrow's, and that tomorrow's can only be mitigated, if they can be, by what we do today, failure to act is effectively a concession to death for every living thing on the planet. Ecological nihilism is neither hyperbole nor reck-

less speculation. It's reality can be made gut-wrenching in the obliteration of towns like Greenville or Paradise California, charred beyond recognition by drought-fueled firenados. Its impacts are inescapable to any objective survey of the capitalist endeavor to monetize human and nonhuman life. Consider the slaughter of Sumatran Elephants for their tusks, toxic chemical dumping by industry to avoid more costly pollution statutes, or outsourcing human labor to the developing world's lower wages and lax safety and environmental regulations.

The Time Is Now

If this assessment of our current planetary state of affairs seems dark, it's because the necessity for a robust, courageous, inclusive, and deeply self-reflective ethic could not be more urgent. Consider a rough analogy: we know that left untreated cancer will metastasize and become calamitous for the patient. Treatment may not eradicate the disease, but early aggressive attention can mitigate against damage to tissues and organs. Imagine, however, that early on in a treatment regimen a patient tests positive for Covid-19, becomes sick, decides to suspend the cancer treatment, recovers from the virus, and then, feeling better, doesn't return to the chemotherapy. Will the patient live? No; and we rightly regard her behavior as self-defeating. Indeed, we'd urge her to return to chemotherapy, pointing out that her struggle with coronavirus may well have been made worse by the fact that she smokes and that the cancer had begun to metastasize to her lungs. We'd remind her that the root cause, if not of contracting the virus, but of its severity in her case is likely the smoking responsible for her cancer diagnosis. The patient is, of course, different from a planet that can't decide for itself to suspend "cancerous" emissions of greenhouse gases. That is the moral burden we bear to recognize that environmental conditions are existential conditions, that in having the planet "smoke" we are imperiling it and every living thing that lives within its "body." We know that human activities produce the "carcinogens" that generate "malignancy" for the planet's atmosphere. Like a smoker whose battle with Covid-19 is made worse by lung cancer, we know that a compromised climate will only add to every other environmental crisis. Yet, insofar as we ignore the intersection of the climate crisis and the planetary dilemmas made more volatile or even deadly by it, we're like a patient who, recovered from the virus, returns to the cigarettes; except the planet is the patient, and we're forcing her to smoke. Or, more precisely: life on planet Earth *is* the intimate relationship between the planet, its atmosphere, and the evolutionary history of its species.

To appoint ourselves to the status of unbeholden to these facts is the essence of *human chauvinism*: the presumptive view that planet Earth exists *for* us, that

we are entitled to its resources and treasures, and that self-interest—including its commercial incarnations—are the irrefutably rightful domain of human domination. Human chauvinism is not human-centeredness; whereas the former seeks primarily its own advantage, the latter takes "centered" to be a call to moral and epistemic responsibility. Whereas human chauvinism is an outrage to virtually any ethic that would seek to impose conscience on human activity, human-centeredness can offer a point of departure for deep-going reflection on our ideas of rightness or wrongness. Put simply: whereas human chauvinism is characterized by arrogance, entitlement, and little concern for the future of others, human-centeredness can be re-imagined as a practice of epistemic responsibility, thoughtful humility, and a commitment to a baseline incarnation of the *precautionary principle*: first, do not harm. The difference between chauvinism and centeredness is the difference between the contemporary nihilism of the Anthropocene and whether what comes next turns out to be livable and for whom.

The Covid-19 pandemic illustrates this difference in a number of ways. There's one aspect of viral outbreak, for example, that makes it more hazardous than cancer: the virus is contagious, and it's in just this respect that it offers another window into the climate crisis. Part of what makes a virus, especially one capable of asymptomatic spread, so terrifying, is that it's not contained to a single individual. SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19) spreads primarily in aerosolized droplets like coughing, sneezing, or singing from people who may or may not know they're infected, many of whom ignore *Center for Disease Control* (CDC) guidelines like mask-wearing that are designed to protect others from infection.[6] Feeling fine, the asymptomatic behave as if nothing has changed, spread the virus, infect, and potentially cause fatal illness in others who (or whose family) may never be able to identify the source of transmission. The virus-variants perfect this form of spread even among the vaccinated. Climate change denial spreads in similar fashion. We know the climate is warming; we see reports of extreme weather events, flooding, drought, disrupted animal migration patterns, extinctions. Yet we behave as if Earth and its atmosphere are not "infected" with this anthropogenic blight, going about our lives as if the planet really were an endless fount of clean water, hydrocarbons, and healthy soils, the atmosphere a boundless receptacle for greenhouse gases and other toxins. We set the example for everyone around us, especially our children. This is denial, and is its own kind of contagion.

Sometimes climate change denial is, however, more deliberate. Thinly veiled behind appeals to freedom or individual rights, denial of the climate crisis spreads as surely as do calls to antimasking rallies. The grandma who drives her gas-guzzler to Thanksgiving dinner, refusing to wear a mask or socially distance, manifests not only a faulty notion of freedom, but disregard for the future of her family's health and the planet's upon which it

depends. The dad who shows up at a schoolboard meeting to decry "oppressive" vaccination requirements and circulate misinformation about the nature of mRNA vaccine technology jeopardizes not only his own children's health, but an entire community's. The point, however, of comparing the climate crisis to a pandemic is not simply that what's significant about a pandemic is reducible to the ways it can shed light on the impacts of climate change (or vice versa). It's that many of the behavioral dynamics at work in denial of the climate crisis have analogues in other domains. Understanding what drives denial, the tendency to minimize, the pretense that there is no crisis, the resort to conspiracy explanation and other forms of cognitive dissonance can help us to see similarities and differences, to weigh their moral relevance, and to make more consistent and rational judgments about our own actions and those of others. Appeal to a distorted notion of "freedom," for example, is not all that different for those who refuse to wear a mask during a pandemic than it is for those who refuse to consider driving more fuel-efficient vehicles. Both fail to acknowledge that "freedom" is not the freedom to cause harm to others, and both effectively ignore that aspect of freedom that entails responsibility.[7]

Although caution is always warranted, drawing analogies to other kinds of crises—cancer, pandemic disease—can serve to remind us that these same forms of cognitive dissonance have very real, often measurable, impacts on the way that, for example, zoonotic transmission, habitat encroachment and loss, extreme weather events, deforestation, the interaction of co-morbidities and viral outbreaks, human and nonhuman migration, and even geopolitical conflict become mutually fertilizing crises. It's a critical charge of the sciences to decipher these layers of connection in order to develop strategies to combat the climate crisis *and* the prospect of future pandemic, inequitable vaccine access *and* food insecurity, the extinction of polar megafauna *and* accelerated oil exploration in Arctic waters. We can no more afford to ignore these mutually fertilizing volatile relationships than we can assign California fire-nadoes merely to poor forest management, or the significantly higher rate of infection, hospitalization, and mortality among African Americans from coronavirus merely to poor diet.[8] What we'll discover are the limits of our systems of moral judgment and the roles that forms of social domination and structural inequality play in our actions and evaluations. In many ways, it's the limits that tell the real story behind the crises that imperil our future and the futures of all the others with whom we share the planet. Both the climate crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic have the feel of a Mother Nature striking back at her wayward, wasteful, selfish children. But an apology and a promise to do better will not suffice. We have much work to do. Still, that doesn't mean—doesn't have to mean—that we cannot do better. Seeing where we are is a point of departure. It's a "canary in the coal mine" call for an environmental ethic that takes it as

vital to orient itself not only in ethics, but in the world as we find it. The time is now because where we find the planet and its many worlds is in trouble.

Environmental Ethics Is about the Present and the Future

We have a tall order. The environmental ethic we need must not merely be grounded in the recognition that we live in an era of crisis, but that the crises we face make talk of the *future* critically important. Whether and what human agents owe to the future is its own difficult question. But insofar as crises and our responses to them mirror human interests and priorities, the fact that we know that the intersection of climate change and viral outbreak can generate potentially apocalyptic consequences implies that there are still too many of us that don't take the future very seriously. For some, preventing and mitigating crisis is a life's work. The epidemiologists, virologists, and public health experts, as well as the heroic doctors, nurses, and healthcare workers, who save our lives from infection are of necessity thinking primarily about the crisis right in front of them.[9] But this doesn't mean that the future won't inform public health policy, therapeutic intervention, vaccine development, the management of viral variants, evolving diagnostic strategies, and comprehension of the prognosis for "long haul" patients in vital ways. Likewise, climate scientists, meteorologists, ecologists, zoologists, geneticists, chemists, and geologists, along with environmental activists, organizations, and policymakers have been working to alert us to the effects of climate change across a range of patterns—weather, ecology, migration, crop losses, deforestation, and genetic alteration for decades.[10] Understandably, patterns may not evoke the same visceral urgency as do images of gasping patients waiting for ventilators. But as we know from the science, less directly evocative does not mean less urgent; instead, it suggests that an environmental ethic relevant to the twenty-first century must be able to show not only that "crisis" can mean as much applied to a slower moving catastrophe as it does to the sick patient who can't breathe, but that morality is as much about the future as it is the present. Measured in terms of sheer scale, the climate crisis may well suffocate far more.

Acclaimed climate scientist Michael Mann argues in *The Madhouse Effect* that our reluctance to confront the climate crisis is telling, that it exposes a deep-going hypocrisy at the heart of our capacity for moral decision-making.[11] On the one hand, we insist that morality is outward-looking; it's not merely about rationalizing self-interest, cost/benefit analyses, or risk avoidance. Morality is not merely prudence; rather it's about the *moral considerability* of others, the world beyond ourselves, the present and the future. On the other hand, Mann points out that our expressions of environmental commitment

often fail to align with the actions necessary to realize the values they encompass. We can and should debate what moral considerability means and to whom/what it applies, though it's difficult to exaggerate the urgency of action right now.[12] Yet, without this key idea—that there exist features of things such as being a living thing or a necessary condition for living things, or having the capacity for sentience, or being endangered, or occupying an ecological role as predator or prey, or being beautiful—that make such things morally considerable and therefore something worth the effort to preserve to the future, it's hard to see what could act as an impetus to action. One difficulty is that what counts as morally considerable isn't a given in any ethic; it's rather a product or a consequence of the ethic we decide to adopt. If, for instance, sentience—awareness and the capacity to suffer—is a value of that ethic, nonhuman animals become morally considerable in very definite ways that might preclude eating them; if beauty, a concerted effort to preserve wilderness; if biotic diversity, policies and laws to protect endangered species from extinction. And, of course, there will be conflicts. What is more worth moral consideration, the individual sentient creature or the species? Does a forest still qualify as a beautiful wilderness if there's a road carved through it? Who's moral worth is greater in a dispute over grazing range, the rancher and her livelihood, or the endangered grey wolf? The aim of an environmental ethic is not necessarily to make these questions easy, but to make them *thinkable*.

The climate crisis bears on all of these questions, and the reason is because climate change is *anthropogenic*. It's *caused* by human activities, personal, industrial, geopolitical.[13] To be sure, some capitalist ventures and industries are more culpable than others for greenhouse gas emissions.[14] But insofar as consumption is the driver of industrial activities such as mining for fossil fuels, the mass manufacture of products, and industrial scale agriculture and animal agriculture, responsibility for addressing the climate crisis cannot be limited only to those who compete for our dollars.[15] Crises themselves affect consumption in environmentally relevant ways. Consider, for example, the increased demand for wood pulp in the form of toilet paper, carboard boxes, and packaging during a pandemic,[16] the negative impacts for biodiversity of rising disinfectant use,[17] or the drivers of climate refugeeism.[18] Or, consider the complex relationship between the Covid-19 pandemic, differing forms of consumption, and the emission of greenhouse gases. *National Institutes of Health* (NIH) researchers Tanjena Rume and S.M Didar-UL Islam report an unexpected positive environmental consequence owed to the lockdowns imposed in many countries: "due to movement restriction and a significant slowdown of social and economic activities, air quality has improved in many cities with a reduction in water pollution in different parts of the world." These indirect, but nonetheless welcome effects of the pandemic are, however, quickly overshadowed by the negative: "increased use of PPE (e.g., face mask, hand gloves

etc.), their haphazard disposal, and generation of a huge amount of hospital waste has negative impacts on the environment."[19] Both are about the consumption of hydrocarbons; using less gas but consuming more disposable plastics—all during a lockdown. We might be tempted to think of PPE (personal protective equipment) as something other than consumption because its use is a matter of necessity, but the atmosphere neither knows nor cares whether the greenhouse gases emitted in its production and use are PPE, plastic water bottles, car exhaust, or children's toys. As Mann would likely observe, however vital to combatting Covid-19 is the manufacture, use, and disposal of PPE, our life-saving activities contribute to the conditions that will make the next pandemic more possible. Insofar as the manufacture, use, and disposal of PPE adds to the climate crisis, it increases the likelihood of ecological impacts like habitat loss that, in turn, increases the potential for interaction between virus-carrying nonhuman animals and human beings. In effect, we're robbing Peter to pay Paul. Or, more specifically: we're robbing the planet's future capacity to recover from a rapidly warming atmosphere in order to combat a present menace—owing a debt to the future we're insuring we'll be in no position to pay.

The cost of the mutually fortifying relationship between the climate crisis and the pandemic could in fact be devastating if we fail to act aggressively, decisively, and now. Rume and Islam make several suggestions to mitigate against the increase in greenhouse gas emissions including the use of public transportation, renewable energy, and improved wastewater treatment, but difficult questions remain about how to entice (or compel) corporations beholden to their mining leases, (or poised to make windfall profits manufacturing plastic face shields, disposable gowns, or ventilator tubing),[20] to engage in more environmentally friendly forms of production, transportation, and distribution. For capitalism, the primary objective is profits, not human welfare.[21] Given that objective, as well as the long history of environmental destruction perpetrated in the name of profit, it's no surprise that from the point of view of the creative entrepreneur, a pandemic is no different than discovering a new coal seam, inventing a new microchip, or finding new fodder for an advertising campaign. As Matthew Limb, writer for BMJ (*British Medical Journal*) reports, fear of infection is a commodity too valuable to waste:

Firms trading in alcohol, tobacco, junk foods, gambling, infant milk formula, and fossil fuels are "leveraging" the coronavirus crisis to burnish their brands, build influence, and advance their strategic interests, often to the detriment of wider public health and sustainability goals, shows the research from the NCD Alliance and a multi-university and multi-agency consortium of researchers known as SPECTRUM, based at Edinburgh University, that focuses on the commercial determinants of health and health inequalities… The analysis found that companies have adopted four broad approaches: tai-

lored marketing campaigns and stunts tailored to the pandemic; corporate social responsibility and philanthropy programmes; pursuit of partnerships and collaborations, such as with governments, international agencies, and non-governmental organisations; and attempts to shape favourable policy environments.[22]

That many of the costs of the pandemic, including the ways it will be exploited, and the contribution these capitalist ventures will in turn make to the climate crisis, will be borne by those who can least afford them is also not surprising. Covid-19 outbreaks have ravaged Native American reservations already blighted by drought.[23] Ramped-up meat production by companies looking to cash-in on stay-at-home orders endangers already poorly paid workers, brutalizes "food" animals, and disgorges mammoth loads of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.[24] Struggling front line and gig economy workers are more likely not only to be exposed to the virus, but to go home to food desert communities exploited by "alcohol, tobacco, junk food, gambling, infant milk formula, and fossil fuels" corporations seeking to build their social responsibility portfolios off the pandemic.[25] The issue here is not only that by putting the profits of greenhouse gas polluting industries ahead of human welfare and environmental integrity we've turned a blind eye to the future that will pay for it, but that having done so it seems like rank hypocrisy to then pretend that a McDonalds who offers free "Thank you" meals to healthcare workers during a pandemic signals compassion.[26] It doesn't; it is advertising for a company whose meat supply comes partly from illegal deforestation in the lungs of the world—Brazil's vanishing rain forests.[27]

The Climate Crisis Is the Greatest Moral Challenge Humanity Has Ever Faced

Even if human beings were the only species on the planet that mattered, it's hard to reconcile our evinced devotion to moral principle with our plainly self-interested and reckless behavior, especially with respect to the implications of the climate crisis for vulnerable human populations in virtue of race, sex, gender, economic wherewithal, and geography. And, of course, many would argue that human beings are not the only species that matter.[28] But in whatever way we see that important question, the upshot's clear: any ethic that seeks merely to expand on the moral values we currently espouse in hopes of making them fit the crises we now face is in danger of failing its most vital *moral* responsibility: to ask whether our systems of moral decision and judgment have served us well. What we'll discover is a mixed bag. True; Nazi fascism

was defeated, at least for a time, in WWII. True; SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19) can likely be controlled by an effective vaccine—if enough people take it. But, also true: white nationalist fascism is on the rise in many Western countries. Five hundred thousand Americans died by February, 2021 from Covid-19, 4.2 million worldwide by July. True: the climate crisis has already left wide swaths of the planet more scorched than every battlefield of every war in human history.

Some argue that the implications of climate change have been exaggerated, and that decision-making about how to mitigate its effects has become too saddled with emotion, even "delusional."[29] Images of polar bears searching for ice, Puerto Rican citizens bracing for the next hurricane season, or farmers confronted by drought like a scene from *Grapes of Wrath*, they argue, make for ill-advised points of departure for cool-headed policy. Becoming better stewards of the planet surely doesn't mean abandoning capitalism, just regulating against some if its more egregious excesses. We've already seen "sustainability" become part and parcel of many a marketing platform, from Amazon's fleet of electric delivery trucks to the creation of the Impossible Burger, each a piece of techno-wizardry that portends a brighter future.[30] Perhaps what we need is an *Operation Sustainability* that, can achieve for the climate what *Operation Warp Speed* achieved in the development of a vaccine to combat the Coronavirus Pandemic.[31] We've successfully addressed issues like the ozone crisis, DDT, or air pollution in the past. The climate crisis needn't be any different.

This all seems reasonable—rising to a great moral and civilizational challenge with great ideas and innovation. The problem is that climate change *is* different—*very* different. Like previous environmental crises, climate change is the product of human, all too human activities—but not just any. The carbon footprint of the villager who walks an ever-greater distance to secure potable water is far fainter than the suburb-dweller who drives a gas-guzzling SUV to the local Super Walmart for milk and eggs. The extractive industries that mine hydrocarbons, precious minerals, soil nutrients, human labor, and manufactured animal bodies, generate both mammoth profits and mammoth greenhouse gas emissions. They bear a great deal of the blame for our current environmental dilemma. But the role of consumers cannot be ignored either, especially as economies in countries with large and growing human populations such as China and India expand, creating their own burgeoning contribution to ecological deterioration.[32] Insofar as capitalist enterprise is rooted in the idea that economic growth is a limitless proposition, and thus in its false correlate that the planet is a bottomless reservoir of extractible resources, its atmosphere an inexhaustible vault for the release of greenhouse gases, our behavior is not adequately captured merely by the idea that it's *human-centered*. The Anthropocene is not merely the age of run-away self-interest but of a human chauvinism characterized by the revolutionary idea that all value is exchange value—that all things can be effectively exhausted by a cost and a

price. According to this ethos of capital, the planet exists *for* human beings, at least some of us are *entitled* to exploit, despoil, and dispose of it, and what counts as progress is the accumulation of wealth.

The Sun around which worthwhile labor revolves in the capitalist worldview is economic growth fueled by the production and consumption of goods and services. But what endless production and consumption require are endless resources for raw materials, labor, and waste disposal. The capitalist ethos captures the idea that the only interests worth valuing are interests that can be quantified and monetized. Since only human beings can act as *agents* of capitalist exchange, all other things, living and nonliving, organic and inorganic, are assigned to the status of resource, instrument, commodity, or obstacle to growth. Yet even this sketch of the operational premises of capitalist exchange doesn't go far enough. What the histories of particular forms of commodification, for example, slavery, sex-trafficking, animal agriculture, or labor outsourcing illustrate is that, from the point of view of capitalist enterprise, human beings are as likely to be understood as commodities as are oil wells or wood lots. Many are in fact made especially vulnerable to industry's rapacious need for labor by institutions and practices that take full advantage of existing structural inequalities premised on race, sex, gender, indigenous status, and geography.[33] Like the Covid-19 pandemic, the climate crisis offers a window into these inequalities, exposing the many ways in which capitalism exploits the competition created by poverty to get some of its most onerous and dangerous work done at the lowest possible wage. The pandemic merely widens that window—exposing, for example, how low-wage meat-packing plant workers, many from indigenous or immigrant communities, become disposable "essential workers" during an outbreak; or how women are emblematic of "last hired, first fired" when corporate profits are threatened by a lockdown.

In one sense the climate crisis presents us with something brand new—a genie out of a bottle that no regulatory regime, political will, global governance, or social justice movement is prepared to contain; mitigate perhaps, but not halt. In another sense, the climate crisis simply clarifies the fact that the face of human chauvinism is predominantly white, male, Western(ized), wealthy, kleptocratic, and nihilistic in its breathtaking capacity for the denial of fact. Or better: what our arrival at the climate crisis shows us is that our behavior toward Earth is nihilistic. A finite planet cannot support a myth of endless resources, and therefore cannot support the prospect of endless opportunity to convert resource into exchange value, commodity into profit. To pretend that all of this "endless" is the case is kleptocratic: the theft of what is not ours on the falsehood that everything is property because the value of everything is reducible to exchange. Not everything is replaceable; for example, the atmosphere. While Al Gore's 2006 *An Inconvenient Truth* gave voice to this fact we're really just beginning to wrestle with what a future radically altered by the capitalist

ethos might mean: more frequent and calamitous firenados, tsunamis, earthquakes, volcanoes, snow bomb-cyclones, more virulent disease outbreaks, more ancillary effects like mass migrations, starvation, and war over existential necessities like clean water.[34]

The kleptocratic nature of the capitalist ethos has thus another meaning: the translation of disaster, even as it threatens the conditions of a particular industry's own survival, into profit-opportunity. Fully consistent with this ethos is that Northern California firenados present an opportunity to profit on private fire services, that hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico offer a bonanza for insurance companies, that a new market for "preppers," folks ready to "bug out" when civil unrest over access to basic necessities reaches a boiling point, are booming industries. *Disaster capitalism just is capitalism in the display of its kleptocratic character*. It's nihilism because, as *An Inconvenient Truth* showed us back in 2006, the planet cannot sustain this sort of brutality. The climate crisis is thus a dilemma of moral foresight that cannot be blamed solely on the chauvinism of human individuals. It's also not a crisis merely due to lack of relevant knowledge or technology.[35] The climate crisis is a creation of an economic ideology that is inconsistent with planetary facts, whose realization comes at immense cost to those who can least afford it even as it rewards handsomely those in a position to promote the myths on which it depends.[36]

Still, these observations aren't really news. As such, it remains a mystery why we have not acted more aggressively to mitigate at least some of the worst effects of glabal warming. much suffering could have been avoided.[37] Some theorize that the human psyche is not well-built to fully appreciate crises that stretch over long periods of time and extend far into the future. They argue that while we can see tsunamis and fires, we can't see climate change *per se*, so it feels like something we can put off. We acknowledge the crisis, as if that somehow counts as a mitigating action.[38] It doesn't, of course. This too bears comparison with the Covid-19 pandemic. Just as some keep driving their gas-guzzlers, eat out at steakhouses—or, comfortably quarantine and turn to ZOOM meetings, having steak dinners delivered by GIG economy workers, others enjoy no such entitled economic or social luxury. Driving for Uber to deliver for GrubHub to supplement a job as a frontline worker at a meat-packing plant contributes to greenhouse gas emissions, but few would hold the wage laborer to the same standard of culpability as the ExxonMobil CEO for the climate crisis. Still, the Earth is no more in a position to assign blame than it's a magically renewable bastion of resources and commodities. Earth is home to a complex, evolving, and diverse array of living and nonliving things, including us, including bacteria, including viruses. But the planet can no more reconstitute rapidly calving polar ice shelves than our very best scientists can bring the 4.2 million Covid-19 dead back to life. We can't bring back species driven to extinction during the Anthopocene. Species like the Golden Toad

were driven to extinction by climate change–enhanced drought.[39] We can't fix the lives of Syrian refugees driven by dry water wells into the hands of Islamic State terrorist recruiters.[40] We can't undo the damage done to babies infected by the Zika virus whose mosquito-borne vector widens as the planet warms.[41] Once the planet's coral reefs are gone, they're gone.[42]

The difference, then, between an "ordinary" environmental crises and climate change isn't that "ordinary" may not mean "devastating." It often does mean exactly that. As Rachel Carson lays out in *Silent Spring*, the impacts of chemical pollutants on the shells of bird's eggs reverberates across entire ecosystems. The difference is that the climate crisis poses an existential threat for every living thing on the planet because it jeopardizes the very atmosphere upon which all life on Earth depends. Crises like pollution, habitat for endangered species, or coal mine acid run-off can be addressed through clean-up efforts, regulation, education, and conservation, but climate is not a thing we can simply "clean," and even if it was, its magnitude reaches beyond any mitigating effort not global in scale and international commitment.[43] In short, we can stop disgorging hydrocarbons into the atmosphere, but there's no reset button for the atmospheric conditions we've already created. We can try to rescue the countless species endangered by the crisis, but we can't fully predict what their loss will mean for other animal and plant species.[44] Indeed, we cannot predict with any precision the complex interaction between, for example, the preservation of nation-state borders, the migration patterns of climate refugees, exposure to viral outbreak, or the potential for border conflicts that can lead to war—all exacerbated by the climate crisis.

We Can Change

Put differently: we are not helpless, but the need for deliberate, well-informed moral action could not be more urgent. We must think much more seriously about how the planet is going to support a *world*, or better, the many *worlds* human beings have come to value. And we must think about these worlds as not merely sustainable, but in what a just and desirable world(s) might consist for those who come after us. Some, perhaps much, of what we have come to value we may not be able to sustain, and while ecological sustainability is necessary to the future, it's not sufficient to a future worth wanting. The post zombie apocalypse world is sustainable, but hardly desirable, and not every "world" is either just or morally defensible. But who decides these truly difficult issues, and on what criteria? Some decisions are more self-evident than others. For example, we can and should move decisively to write laws compelling industry to stop spewing CO_2 and methane into the atmosphere. Educating people about things over which we do have at least some control, for example, the impacts of what

we eat, wear, to whom we are responsible on the planet's ecosystems should be a priority for every nation and culture. And there are some concrete examples that at least should be noncontroversial. Once we knew that plastic grocery bags suffocate seabirds, we saw a flurry of policy change aimed at persuading us to switch to reusable cloth containers.[45] When public transportation is made widely accessible, safe, clean, and reliable, people use it. The realization that methane is an even more potent greenhouse gas than CO_2 has moved many to demand alternatives to natural gas.[46] We know that mask-wearing goes a long way toward protecting others from viral infection.

We *can* change. But enduring positive change is often slow and unpredictable. For many, the climate crisis is at once too abstract to fuel a sense of crisis and too immense to calculate with any confidence what to do about it.[47] Climate science, moreover, is not reserved to a single discipline like climatology. An ideally informed public would then have some understanding of chemistry, physics, meteorology, geology, biology, zoology, genetics, ecology, botany, oncology, toxicology, neurology, among other sciences. Hence, it's not surprising that a scientifically undereducated public finds it easy to ignore the warning signs or deny the evidence of climate change altogether. Climate change, of course, is not the only issue where we can see that science is crucial to ethics. But it's hard to imagine a crisis where knowledge is more important—even if other crises like the Covid-19 pandemic seem more immediate. Ethics isn't merely about getting to the right policies or laws; it's about coming to a more acute picture of the conditions under which law and policy can claim a moral foundation. The climate crisis could not make this point more succinctly: it's not something we can just foist onto elected lawmakers and policy wonks. Laws aimed at regulating greenhouse gas emissions may help us *adapt* to climate change, but none are going to put the brakes on it, any more than the development of vaccines for viral outbreaks can prevent future pandemics unless we take them. Among the many jobs of an ethic is thus the provision of sound reasons to act. The questions we must ask are about big things like national and global policies, laws, and treaties—like the Paris Climate Accord[48]—but they're also about personal responsibility. What should *I* do? What difference can *I* make? It's on these latter questions that ethics is the toughest and the most critically important. We could, for example, stop driving cars, burning coal, and leave every remaining fossil fuel droplet in the ground. But unless we end industrial animal agriculture, we're unlikely even to slow the pace of greenhouse emissions in any meaningful way. Some decisions are, however, easier at least in the affluent West, than others: many of us *can* stop eating meat.[49] That's a choice possible for at least most healthy Americans, and if enough of us made that call, it could curb the impact of one industry whose contribution to the climate crisis is massive. Plus, going vegan comes with the morally reaffirming bonus that we're no longer party to at least one form of unnecessary suffering, animal agriculture. Difficult decision? Perhaps. But if

this seems a more difficult *moral* decision than is wearing masks to protect others from viral infection, that may be a prime opportunity for self-reflection.

Personal choice thus forms one crucial axis of a realistic environmental ethic. But the careful examination and criticism of industry, its capitalist world-view, and its relentless drive for profit forms another. If animal agriculture treats the planet itself like a sewer for the industrial animal body waste pits, big oil and gas treat the earth's atmosphere as a limitless celestial landfill. [50] That factory farm waste pits are called "lagoons" makes them no less atmospherically hazardous than recent technology for drilling deep below the Earth's surface makes natural gas less perilous. [51] Besides the obvious environmental harms and hazards posed to human and nonhuman health, these are industries who externalize the costs of mitigating against pollution, restoring resources, and treating health consequences to taxpayers who foot the bill to clean up waterways, reclaim habitat, and support hospital emergency rooms where possible. And it's rarely fully possible. After all, 100-year-old trees require 100 years to grow, dilution is rarely a good solution,[52] and extinction is forever. Add the climate crisis to this toxic brew and it's hardly surprising that these industries have begun to fuel something more than cars and planes, appetites and expanding waistlines, namely, righteous outrage and protest. As Naomi Klein says, "climate change changes everything."

One good example of growing public outrage is the response to the advent of hydraulic fracturing, "fracking," a method of natural gas extraction whose drill-bit to pipeline to offshore transport infrastructure does lasting damage to large swaths of land, creates the necessity for ozone-producing compressor stations, and requires a chilling number "deep-well injection" toxic waste disposal sites.[53] A fairly new technology, the aim is to break up shale deposits deep under the earth through a horizontal drilling process combined with the use of a chemical cocktail of "slickwater" explosives that generate small earthquakes, releasing the gas. The process requires millions of gallons of water for each "frack" to create pressure that, once exposed to the chemical cocktail, becomes "produced," water permanently made toxic via carcinogens like benzene. Such water can never be returned to use for consumption, and some of it also becomes radioactive in the drilling process.[54] While industry proponents argue that fracking is "environmentally friendly" in virtue of the fact that natural gas burns more completely than coal, methane, a byproduct of the hydraulic fracturing process, is—on the long term—a more potent greenhouse gas than CO_2.

It's easy to see why, from many different points of view, fracking has become controversial. It opens a Pandora's box of issues ranging from violations of property rights,[55] the personhood of corporations,[56] the pollution of waterways, or injuries to well-pad workers.[57] These are all important issues, and each has its place at the intersection of environmental, economic, and social ethics. Yet, what connects them all is climate change for this simple reason: hydrocarbons

not left in the ground will contribute warming to the atmosphere, and whether it's natural gas, oil, tar sands, or coal the more we extract, the more we'll consume; the more we consume, the greater the acceleration of greenhouse gases disgorged into the atmosphere; the greater that acceleration, the more devastating the implications, such as future pandemic. It might seem that issues revolving around property rights aren't really connected to climate change, but we need only look as far as the devaluation of property that's deforested, a water source that's contaminated, or soil depleted to see that rights to property only matter when the property is itself worth preserving.

Seven Basic Premises

Fortunately, developing an environmental ethic capable of helping us through the age of crisis doesn't mean we have to start over from scratch. What it requires is courage enough to adopt a critical attitude toward investigating how far our moral principles can take us and with what limitations. Can they be modified in ways that retain their character *as* moral principles, and yet be more responsive to the implications of the kinds of environmental dilemma we now face? We'll see that some principles, suitably re-tooled, fare better than others, but some will reveal themselves as more moral-sounding than moral-doing. Some are deployed, or even weaponized, as cover-stories designed to advance self-interest, often at irrecoverable cost to the planet's capacity to support life, and sometimes by the disaster capitalists. The right moral compass, however, can help us gain a more objective, critically well-informed understanding of the institutions—economic, social, educational, health-related, social, religious, and cultural—that are central to our lives and decisions. One of the most immediately valuable lessons that we can learn from the crises we face is that we can no longer afford to treat the planet's ecosystems and their inhabitants as mere background or fodder for human projects. What affects them affects us, and even on the most chauvinistic construal of why that matters, we can no more ignore it than we can pretend that California fires are not more ferocious and more frequent, or that we have had a hand in the viral outbreaks that kill our families and friends. Instead, our grounding presupposition is that nonhuman nature is a dynamic evolving actor whose body, incarnated as trees and rivers, vertebrates and invertebrates, living and nonliving things, interacts in countless ways with the bodies of human beings incarnated as individuals, families, and communities. Nonhuman nature affects and is affected by what human beings do; we're living things whose existential conditions are as dependent on nonhuman nature as are other living things. We do a good job of denying this fact by appeal to cultural tradition, technological know-how,

or the capacity for inertia. But we age, deteriorate, and die as surely as do Walt Whitman's blades of grass.

This more critical approach to environmental ethics can be laid out along the rails of *seven basic premises*, each of which will govern our evaluation of the arguments we'll consider:

- First, *we're not alone on the planet*; we share it with a vast number of other people, nonhuman animal species, and biota upon whom we're existentially dependent, some of whom pose substantive danger to the future of human life.
- Second, *our actions can have consequences well beyond the immediate or near-term*. Although the complexity of the planet's ecosystems, atmosphere, species relationships, cultures, and histories can make prediction difficult, that doesn't relieve us the responsibility to consider the future—especially since it's the planet's future habitability that's endangered by the crises we have created.
- Third, *science must play a role as an essential partner at every level of decision-making*. This is true not only with respect to technological innovation, but for understanding biodiversity, our interdependent relationships with other peoples and species, the impact of human activities for human and nonhuman populations, and the capacities of human and nonhuman actors to adapt to a changing climate.
- Fourth, *other living things, human and nonhuman, aren't merely commodities*. Despite its increasingly apparent contribution to the conditions that produce famine, food insecurity, and disease, we continue to justify our consumption of animal bodies as key to "development" or "progress." We can no longer afford to exempt what we eat or wear from evaluating the environmental impact of its production. While many factors contribute to human hunger, the land required for animal agriculture, its production of greenhouse emissions, and the example that commodifying nonhuman animals sets for disvaluing some human populations only reinforces the human chauvinism responsible for the climate crisis.
- Fifth, we can't defend treating nonhuman animals and systems as commodities merely by appeal to the preservation of culture or tradition—however difficult a pill this is to swallow. This follows for at least two reasons;
    - Economic development disrupts and displaces culture, yet we endorse it as progress—risking hypocrisy concerning our efforts to justify, for example, eating nonhuman animal bodies.
    - Traditions aren't self-justifying. Just because a practice has a history does not by itself confer moral legitimacy on it. Many practices, for example, spousal battery, the abuse of animals as circus spectacles, or human slavery have "traditions" we now regard as indefensible.

>   To deny that climate change is anthropogenic (or deny it entirely) in the interest of preserving a particular tradition ignores the possibility the tradition is complicit—a defense both morally suspect and likely self-defeating.

- Sixth, *the planet's resources are limited*; contrary to what economist Herman Daly called "the myth of endless resources," the earth is not an inexhaustible storehouse of hydrocarbons, clean water, precious metals, or arable soil. The planet's atmosphere is not an infinite repository for industrial waste and greenhouse gases. While confronting the twin myths of endless resource and bottomless dumpsite is challenging—it *will* require a profound and sustained transformation of human behavior—no ethic stands a chance of saving us from our chauvinism without this operational premise. Until we take it as a given of decision-making that the shift to renewable forms of energy won't be enough without a sustained commitment to re-use, conservation, ecological restoration, and the strict regulation of pollutants, and that this commitment must act as the centerpiece of international agreements, national policy, community organization, and personal agency, we're unlikely to find ourselves able to confront the consequences of that failure.

- Lastly, although human chauvinism is the root cause of environmental crisis, this doesn't necessarily imply that a *rational human-centeredness* has no defensible place in an environmental ethic. Indeed, it does and it must if we're to articulate an ethic sufficiently persuasive to the only creatures on the planet equipped to make the kinds of dramatic changes necessary to sustain it into the future, namely, *us*. Whales aren't going to draft the next Paris Climate Accord. Chimpanzees aren't going to put a halt to diamond mining. One sparrow does not a Summer make. It's up to us, *all of us*, to reinvent a *human-centeredness* that takes what we now *know* about the planet and its denizens and translate that into an ethic that can see its way to a future worth the hard work to realize it. But this critical task cannot be left solely to those who currently benefit from the status quo. Hence one important part of articulating such as ethic must be to listen astutely and with humility to those who have borne the negative impacts of the myth of endless resources, those whose geographies, resources, labor, and bodies have fueled quite literally the voracious appetites of the Global North.

In short: we're not alone; actions have consequences; science is critical; non-human animals and ecosystems must be part of the moral equation; culture is important, but so is the planet's capacity to support life; planetary resources are limited; human-centeredness isn't necessarily chauvinistic, human interests do matter, and listening forms a crucial component of any ethic worth advancing. To some, these seven premises are obvious. To others, they seem radically out

of step with what we've long taken for granted, namely, that we human beings are special and thereby exempt from the interdependencies and vulnerabilities that characterize other creatures. If the Covid-19 pandemic doesn't clarify for us that our sense of entitlement is misplaced, a planetary future driven by war over clean water will. It's not difficult philosophical concepts or complicated arguments that makes ethics "hard." it's that we have to change our ways—personally, collectively, economically, and politically.

Seven Key Objectives

One very old idea worth recuperating in our search for a point of departure takes us all the way back to the Ancient Greeks, namely to Socrates' claim that *the unexamined life is not worth living*. Much, of course, has changed. The world Socrates could take for granted as essentially eternal is an idea long shattered by the reality of a richer and more diverse, yet more fragile, planetary ecology. A life worth living in the age of environmental crisis will require the kind of courageous self-examination that can produce change in the way many of us live as well as the recognition of the enormous impact the climate crisis has already had. A life examined can mean changing the way "we" eat, what "we" wear, where "we" travel, how "we" get there, whether and how many children "we" have, where "we" live—*everything*. It can prod us to ask what we mean by "we." It will compel us to look more closely at what we mean by "worth," for whom, and under what conditions. If the point of adopting an ethic is to realize a life worth living, seeing what are our central questions is actually pretty straightforward, if hard to answer: what does "worth living" look like? Whose voices does it sound like? For whom? What should "worth living" be able to *do*?

The following seven criteria aim at helping us critically evaluate what's worth keeping as we examine some of the major theories in environmental ethics. Our goal will be to decide whether each of these can be met in light of the premises articulated above. Just as important, these are criteria that will help us decide what of those theories to let go, what has become antiquated, and what might undermine our quest for a life worth living in the age of the climate crisis. Here's what a contemporary environmental ethic must be able to *do* as part and parcel of such a life:

- First, it must *offer ways of thinking* about nonhuman nature, human and nonhuman animals, the future, and the planet that
  - Reach beyond the "mere" extension of moral principles intended for human use and application to other living things, ecological systems, and the planet as a whole.

- o Take as a governing premise species interdependence, their ecologies, and whatever endangers their survival, understanding these relations as central to "worth."

- Second, an environmentally oriented ethic must be able to *shine a bright, if not always flattering, light on the successes and failures of ethics* both as a branch of philosophy and as a human practice. Some would argue that our "moralities" have no more prevented us from spewing hydrocarbons into the atmosphere than they helped to prevent the rise of Nazi fascism, or are now offering us a way out of the Covid-19 pandemic. Others would hasten to point out that without moral principle to guide judgment we'd have no way to know what deserves praise or blame, no grounds for condemning bad decisions or policies and implementing good ones. Both are right, and neither *quite* right. But understanding how we arrived at this point, and how it might have been worse, or better, are key to understanding in what a sustainably desirable future consists.

- Third, a viable environmental ethic must help us *articulate strategies for imagining in what a desirable, ethically defensible, future consists* not merely for the few who are able to weather the environmental and geopolitical implications of our current dilemmas, but for the many, human and nonhuman. Such strategies are more important now than ever. Although there remain those who'd deny the climate crisis jeopardizes the capacity of the planet to support life, the science is as clear as are the facts of a warming planet for any number of other social, economic, and geopolitical issues.

- Fourth, an environmentally grounded ethic can help to *illumine a number of important issues human societies face* in a world whose interdependencies, relationships, conflicts, and crises intersect with specific ecologies and species, that is, *everywhere*. We cannot see this more clearly than through the lens of a rapidly spreading pandemic, the devastation left of whole communities by firenadoes and hurricanes, or the struggle for food and clean water. We can't simply add "environment" to moral judgment; issues like poverty, terrorism, human migration, food and water insecurity, demand serious consideration of precisely what roles are played by the causes of drought, disease, or food insecurity.

- Fifth, an environmental ethic must *help us see how the climate crisis forms a central component of moral judgment* for anyone committed to the idea that a life worth living for human beings includes access to basic goods like food and water security, access to medical care, education, national security. While we tend to overlook its significance, an environmental ethic must help us to rehabilitate other values, particularly the value of opportunities for aesthetic experience, for fun, and wonder. We can debate over what the aesthetic *in* experience might consist, but to ignore the value of the aesthetic is to ignore a critical aspect of what makes life desirable.