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## Dear True Environmentalists: Fight Corporate Criminality, not Atmospheric Gases

by Denis Rancourt / October 3rd, 2019

Dear true environmentalists: I am with you.<sup>1</sup>

Corporate pollution and releasing of toxic substances should be treated as a criminal act, with full power to seize assets for reparations, actual reparations, not just punitive fines.

I would apply the same standard of prosecution to the “medical”/pharma<sup>2</sup> and agri-food industries,<sup>3</sup> also.

However, the planet and biosphere are not at risk of imminent collapse, and certainly not from CO<sub>2</sub>.

The “imminent collapse” fabrication serves powerful manipulators, and necessarily diverts us away from attaining actual democracy and fairness. In the words of Chomsky:<sup>4</sup>

“ For example, suppose it was discovered tomorrow that the greenhouse effect has been way underestimated, and that the catastrophic effects are actually going to set in 10 years from now, and not 100 years from now or something. Well, given the state of the popular movements we have today, we’d probably have a fascist takeover—with everybody agreeing to it, because that would be the only method for survival that anyone could think of. I’d even agree to it, because there just are no other alternatives around right now.

Rather than accept fascism or totalitarianism, corporate and finance criminality can best be fought from a position of realistic perspective regarding the end of the world, sober analysis of means regarding leverage for change, and focused political targeting against corporate rule without accountability.

### History of imbedded doomsday narratives

All societies are dominance hierarchies, and all large, human dominance hierarchies have hired high-priests that construct and maintain the State doomsday narrative. These high-priests constantly instruct us on required beliefs and behaviours that minimize the deleterious effects of the alleged impending catastrophe. The behavioural instructions fan everything from diet, to hygiene, to dress code, to physical activity, to work ethics, to attitudes and morals, to child rearing, to political positions, to deference to experts, and so on.

It would be delusional to believe that this structural feature of society is any different than it ever was. In present Western society, the high-priests are the “scientists”, which include the medical doctors and all the “experts”.

This does not mean that science itself is not a valid and rigorous method to test and eliminate hypotheses and theories. It only means that establishment scientists are hired high-priests, notwithstanding the rare exceptions that prove the rule. It also does not mean that scientists never tell the truth. It only means that establishment scientists never harm or rebel against the dominance hierarchy, except by accident or solely in appearance.

These days, there is an industry of scientists that indulge in generating, testing and ameliorating ever more creative doomsday predictions, which are hoped to be of utility to the bosses. The said utility is often termed “societal relevance”. As an eminent example, we have the theory of a “tipping point” towards irreversible total collapse of the ecosphere, often referred to as a “species mass extinction”. The notion of a tipping point has also been advanced for planetary climate, wherein, in the absence of any non-human cause, one crosses into a global climate regime of constant extreme weather and flooded continents.

Whereas past planetary transformations have been related to game-changers, such as the advent of photosynthesis, the calming of tectonic (volcanic) activity, and so forth, and whereas the known recurring climate catastrophe of ice ages is believed to be driven by variations in solar insolation, the new “tipping points” spontaneously occur from the gradual changes of increased modern human or industrial activity, including: habitat destruction, burning of fossil fuel, population growth, and dispersal of toxic substances.

The new “tipping point” theory is not unlike the deluge of the Old Testament, which followed an accumulation of human depravity, except that no god is postulated, and building the Ark requires a centralized and globally restructured economy, handled by overarching elite private institutions, of course. War, disease, hunger ... are all defeated under the same umbrella, death itself eventually.

The accompanying calls from establishment icons are often shrill. In the words of Prince Charles, in 2009:<sup>5,6</sup>

“ If we do nothing, the consequences for every person on this earth will be severe and unprecedented – with vast numbers of environmental refugees, social instability and decimated economies: far worse than anything which we are seeing today ... We have 100 months left to act.

While the leader of the most warring nation on earth, President Barack Obama, concluded in his 2015 State of the Union speech:<sup>7</sup>

“ No challenge poses a greater threat to future generations than climate change.

## **The role of scientists**

The scientists follow and are often not more contained than Prince Charles or President Obama:

“ Earth is rapidly approaching a tipping point. Human impacts are causing alarming levels of harm to our planet. As scientists who study the interaction of people with the rest of the biosphere using a wide range of approaches, we agree that the evidence that humans are damaging their ecological life support systems is overwhelming. We further agree that, based on the best scientific information available, human quality of life will suffer substantial degradation by the year 2050 if we continue on our current path. Science unequivocally demonstrates the

human impacts of key concern: Climate disruption – more, faster climate change than since humans first became a species. ...<sup>8</sup>

We maintain that humanity's grand challenge is solving the intertwined problems of human population growth and overconsumption, climate change, pollution, ecosystem destruction, disease spillovers, and extinction, in order to avoid environmental tipping points that would make human life more difficult and would irrevocably damage planetary life support systems.<sup>9</sup>

But today, for the first time, humanity's global civilization—the worldwide, increasingly interconnected, highly technological society in which we all are to one degree or another, embedded—is threatened with collapse by an array of environmental problems. Humankind finds itself engaged in what Prince Charles described as ‘an act of suicide on a grand scale’, facing what the UK's Chief Scientific Advisor John Beddington called a ‘perfect storm’ of environmental problems. The most serious of these problems show signs of rapidly escalating severity, especially climate disruption. But other elements could potentially also contribute to a collapse: an accelerating extinction of animal and plant populations and species, which could lead to a loss of ecosystem services essential for human survival; land degradation and land-use change; a pole-to-pole spread of toxic compounds; ...<sup>10</sup>

The loss of biodiversity is one of the most critical current environmental problems, threatening valuable ecosystem services and human wellbeing. A growing body of evidence indicates that current species extinction rates are higher than the pre-human background rate, with hundreds of anthropogenic vertebrate extinctions documented in prehistoric and historic times.<sup>11</sup>

In fact, there is no science of a “tipping point” for earth biodiversity or for earth climate. No such testable theory has been elaborated. The entire notion of “tipping point” is hypothetical and tenuous. It is a product of bias to presume that a large and complex system (planet) would be susceptible to “tipping” rather than extraordinarily stable against internal superficial changes. A recent paper describes how one might begin to define concepts or measures that would allow even discussing the topic of “tipping point” intelligently, for realistic ecological systems.<sup>12</sup>

Furthermore, even among scientists, still getting their bearings, there is persistent disagreement as to whether species extinction rates are higher in recent decades. A critical review concludes:<sup>13</sup>

“ Net species gains or losses should be assessed with respect to common baselines or reference communities. Ultimately, we need a globally coordinated effort to monitor biodiversity so that we can estimate and attribute human impacts as causes of biodiversity change. A combination of technologies will be needed to produce regularly updated global datasets of local biodiversity change to guide future policy. At this time the conclusion that there is no net change in local species richness is not the consensus state of knowledge.

## Reality check

There is a large structurally imbedded industry of doomsday narrative. In addition, individuals are reared in a dominance hierarchy and therefore constantly seek messaging about fitting in. The result is that we adopt the State religion. Even if the State is occupied by an exploitative elite, we continue to uphold and follow any State religion that has been sufficiently implanted.

In this case, the State religion is that we are cared-for by mother earth but that our bad behaviour is poisoning mother earth and that we are therefore all at risk, unless we adopt the new stringent conditions that should be imposed globally. Non-believers should be rooted out and isolated. We should demand that all our peers and our representatives do what is proscribed by the State religion.

Meanwhile corporate criminality, while dressed in the colours of the State religion, will continue at an accelerated rate, and our minds and bodies will continue to be occupied.<sup>3</sup>

I say no. To escape this trap, we must realize that the planet is, well, a planet, with huge response capabilities; that the planet is far more resilient and robust than we imagine.

Habitat destruction and industrial practices are grotesque, and these cause real and significant harm to human communities and ecosystems — more so even than actual wars in the present era ... although not more so than so-called economic sanctions and exploitative nation financing. In contrast, “warming” itself cannot hurt the biosphere or humans, nor is the planet at risk of “collapse” from all the criminal practices. That is fabricated nonsense.

Our joint efforts should be on justice, attaining actual democracy, the elimination of criminal behaviour, extortion and exploitation, enforcement of reparations, enforcement of corporate transparency and accountability...


The problem is human behaviour against humans and nature, organized by an occupied dominance hierarchy, and the solutions are political; nothing to do with CO<sub>2</sub>, methane or anything else in the atmosphere.

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