

# Climate Philosophy Newsletter

Volume 4 (2010/2011)

---

“*The planet on which our civilization evolved no longer exists. The stability that produced it has vanished; epic changes have begun.*”

Bill McKibben *Eaarth: making a life on a tough new planet* (New York: Holt, 2010), 27

---

Editors Nathan Draluck (University of South Florida)  
Martin Schönfeld (University of South Florida)  
Contact: Department of Philosophy FAO 226  
University of South Florida  
Tampa, Florida 33620, USA  
Email: [ndraluck@gmail.com](mailto:ndraluck@gmail.com)  
[mschonfe@usf.edu](mailto:mschonfe@usf.edu)

---

## Contents

<a href="#">Welcome</a> (N. Draluck)	1
<a href="#">Research</a> (from “Robin Attfield” to “Holly Wilson”)	2
<a href="#">Blog Roll</a>	9
<a href="#">Calls for Papers</a> (T. Heyd, T. Lenssen-Erz, A. Pastoors)	10
<a href="#">Meetings 2010</a> (Potsdam, Liverpool, Uppsala I, La Laguna, Boston, Uppsala II)	11
<a href="#">Conference Review</a> (PIK Potsdam)	15
<a href="#">Meetings 2011</a> (Minneapolis, San Diego, Florianópolis, Prato)	17
<a href="#">Climate and Phenomenology</a> (graduate exam, University of South Florida 2010)	19
<a href="#">Seminar in Climate Philosophy</a> (syllabus, University of South Florida 2010)	20
<a href="#">From Climate Ethics to Climate Philosophy</a> (M. Schönfeld)	22

---

(back to [Contents](#))

## Welcome

In spring 2010, I prepared for another semester of teaching environmental ethics. As I began to work on a syllabus and assemble course readings, I reflected on how much our knowledge and understanding of the earth's system had changed since I had been an undergraduate student taking the course myself. It seemed to me that the most pronounced shift in the environmental paradigm had to be our realization of a rather pressing and dire environmental problem – global warming, or understood better still, anthropogenic climate change. Both as a student and as an instructor, I have enjoyed how environmental ethics remains an exercise in an adaptive and evolving study. Working with students through some of the very central essays in the field – spanning the historical roots of the environmental crisis, to the question of rights for non-human others, to the discussions of biocentric and ecocentric ethics, to deep ecology and ecological feminism – we could always find ways to keep this material both increasingly current and yet timelessly profound. As our empirical understanding of the earth's system progressed and developed from year to year, the central and core tenants of environmental ethics could find both resonance and expression.

And yet, as I leafed through the pages of a favorite and wonderfully comprehensive environmental ethics anthology – the same I had used as an undergraduate, only a few editions more current – I found myself at pains to find a core of climate change philosophy around which the classic material could find its orbit. In an attempt to find this core, I solicited a number of publishers, each of whom were happy to send me the latest editions of their current selection of environmental ethics primary text anthologies. After pages and pages, articles and articles, and books and books, I was left with a rather sobering list: out of these hundreds of articles, found across four of the more popularly ordered environmental ethics anthologies, I was left with about three articles explicitly dealing with climate change and its philosophical implications. Only one of these texts even had a section dedicated to “Climate Change.” *And that was it.*

But that was then, and it is now that I welcome you to our latest issue of the Climate Philosophy Newsletter. My lament from the beginning of 2010 is quickly vanishing as I was happy to receive such excellent contributions to our end-of-year collection of research news from all of our colleagues working in climate philosophy. Of all Climate Philosophy Newsletters assembled so far, this issue contains the longest and most substantial list of climate-related research in philosophy ever. 2010 has seen not only a number of articles and conferences, but also a number of books and anthologies that take climate change as the center of philosophical attention. It is startling how such an environmental crisis helps us to reorient, rethink, and revitalize some of the traditional questions of environmental ethics and mainstream philosophy. With climate change comes a new set of burgeoning climate concepts – climate forcing, climate fate, climate refugees – all of which demand a philosophical treatment. With new concepts come new questions, new issues, but they also come with new *answers*, new ways of thinking about debates left otherwise unsettled. The application of these new concepts to our old questions opens up exciting new terrain, one where the contributors here have already begun to blaze a trail.

--Nathan Draluck

(back to [Contents](#))

## Research

*Editorial Note: while this annual survey of research is the longest we've ever included in the Newsletter, we're keenly aware that even this list is incomplete. We could not check all journals and cross-reference contributions of authors to all handbooks listed here. Only some of the anthologies mentioned here were actually in our hands. We owe apologies to authors who should be included here and are in fact omitted. Mostly we worked with your responses to our listserv queries. Thank you all for your valuable input.*

--M.S & N.D.

**Robin Attfield** (CARDIFF UNIVERSITY) wrote "Mediated responsibilities, global warming, and the scope of ethics," in R. Irwin, *Climate Change and Philosophy* (Continuum, 2010), 183-196, and "Global warming, equity, and future generations," in a special issue on climate, ed. Thom Heydt, *Human Ecology Review* 17 (2010)

**Sigurd Bergmann** (NORWEGIAN UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY) edited, with Dieter Gerten, *Religion and Dangerous Environmental Change: Transdisciplinary Perspectives on the Ethics of Sustainability* (Lit Verlag, 2010); edited, with P. M. Scott (UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER), M. Jansdotter Samuelsson (KARLSTAD UNIVERSITY), and H. Bedford-Strohm (UNIVERSITY OF BAMBERG), *Nature, Space, and the Sacred: transdisciplinary perspectives* (Ashgate, 2010); is now editing, with D. Gerten, *Religion & Climate Change: Proceedings of the Potsdam Workshop 2010* (Continuum).

**Nick Brooks** (TYNDALL CENTRE FOR CLIMATE CHANGE RESEARCH/UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA) wrote, with Thom Heydt, an introduction to a special issue on climate of *Human Ecology Review* 17 (2010)

**Thom Brooks** (NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY) is working on *Global Justice: An Introduction* (Blackwell, forthcoming 2011), with a chapter on international environmental justice. Thom is currently working on "Why Save the Planet?" and sent the following abstract:

This paper is critical of environmental footprint and the polluter pays principle – approaches popular amongst political philosophers – to best address the problem of climate change. Several problems are highlighted, as well as new solutions suggesting an alternative approach that may be more successful.

**Philip Cafaro** (COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY) wrote "Economic Growth or the Flourishing of Life: The Ethical Choice Climate Change Puts to Humanity," published in the topic issue *Climate Ethics*, ed. M. Schönfeld, of *Essays in Philosophy* 11 (2010): 44-75

**Gideon Calder** (UNIVERSITY OF WALES) is currently editing, with Catriona McKinnon, a topic issue on *Climate Change and Liberal Priorities*, for *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* (also to appear as a book with Taylor & Francis)

**J Baird Callicott** (UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS) wrote "From the Land Ethic to the Earth Ethic: Aldo Leopold and the Gaia Hypothesis," in *Gaia in Turmoil: Climate Change, Biodepletion, and Earth Ethics*

*in a Time of Crisis*, eds. Eileen Crist and H. Bruce Rinker (MIT Press, 2009); “Sustainability: a Personal Account,” in *Sustainability and the Quality of Life*, ed. Jack Lee (Ria University Press, 2010): 19-34

**Simon Caney** (OXFORD UNIVERSITY) edited, with Stephen Gardiner, Dale Jamieson, and Henry Shue, *Climate Ethics: Essential Readings* (Oxford University Press, 2010); published “Climate Change and the Duties of the Advantaged”, *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* vol.13 no.1 (2010), pp.203-228; “Markets, Morality and Climate Change: What, if anything, is Wrong with Emissions Trading?” *New Political Economy* vol.16 no.2 (2010); “Climate Change, Human Rights and Moral Thresholds” in *Human Rights and Climate Change* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), ed. by Stephen Humphreys, pp.69-90; “Climate Change, Energy Rights and Equality” in *The Ethics of Global Climate Change*, ed. by Denis Arnold (Cambridge University Press, 2010); “Human Rights and Global Climate Change” in *Cosmopolitanism in Context: Perspectives from International Law and Political Theory*, ed. by Roland Pierik and Wouter Werner (Cambridge University Press, 2010); “Climate Change, Human Rights and Discounting” in *Climate Change, Ethics, and Human Security*, ed. by Karen O'Brien, Asunción Lera St. Clair and Berit Kristoffersen, (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

**Paula Casal** (UNIVERSITY OF READING) wrote “Global Tax on Natural Resources,” *Journal of Moral Philosophy* (in press).

**Abstract:** Thomas Pogge’s Global Resources Dividend relies on a flat tax on the use of natural resources to fund the eradication of world poverty. Hillel Steiner’s Global Fund taxes the full rental value of owned natural resources and distributes the proceeds equally. The paper compares de Dividend and the Fund and defends the Global Share, a novel proposal which taxes both use and ownership progressively, rather than regressively, and distributes the revenue according to prioritarian rather than sufficientarian or egalitarian principles.

**Chen Xia** (CHINESE ACADEMY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES), with **Kimberley Powers** (ÉCOLE PRATIQUE DES HAUTES ÉTUDES), wrote “A Daoist Response to Climate Change: respond in accordance with the nature of things, return to simplicity and genuineness,” invited for topic issue *Climate Ethics*, ed. M. Schönfeld, *Journal of Global Ethics*, 2011

**James Connelly** (UNIVERSITY OF HULL) is currently working, with Graham Smith and David Benson, on the third edition of *Politics of the Environment: From Theory to Practice* (Routledge, forthcoming). He is writing *Sustainability and The Virtues of Environmental Citizenship* (Routledge, forthcoming), and is preparing an edited collection, with Rudi Wurzel (UNIVERSITY OF HULL), *The European Union as a Leader in Climate Change Policy* (Routledge, forthcoming).

**Nathan Draluck** (UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA) is writing his PHD DISSERTATION on the relationship between organisms and their environments, attempting to link the insights of environmental philosophy to contemporary debates on embodied cognition and the extended mind thesis. Leopold and Lovelock turn out to be helpful. He is also working on a project that explores how the concepts of climate and climate change can serve as a heuristic for reimagining core debates in philosophy and environmental ethics.

**Leo Elshof** (ACADIA UNIVERSITY) wrote “Changing Worldviews to Cope with a Changing Climate,” in R. Irwin, ed., *Climate Change and Philosophy* (Continuum, 2010): 75-107

**Stephen Gardiner** (UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON) edited, with Simon Caney, Dale Jamieson and Henry Shue, *Climate Ethics: Essential Readings* (Oxford University Press, 2010); wrote “Is ‘Arming the Future’

with Geoengineering Really the Lesser Evil? Some Doubts About the Ethics of Intentionally Manipulating the Climate System,” *ibid.* 284-312; “Climate Change as a Global Test for Contemporary Political Institutions and Theories,” in Karen O’Brien, Asuncion Lera St. Clair, and Berit Kristoffersen, eds., *Climate Change, Ethics and Human Security* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 131-153; “Ethics and Climate Change: An Introduction,” in Michael Hulme, ed., *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change*, Volume 1.1 (January/February 2010): 54-66. In press is *A Perfect Moral Storm: The Ethical Challenge of Climate Change* (Oxford University Press, due spring 2011). Forthcoming are, “Are We the Scum of the Earth?” in Allen Thompson and Jeremy Bendik-Keymer, *The Virtues of the Future* (MIT Press); “Climate Justice,” in John Dryzek, David Schlosberg and Richard Norgaard, eds. *Oxford Handbook of Climate Change and Society* (Oxford University Press); “Rawls and Climate Change: Does Rawlsian Political Philosophy Pass the Global Test?” in special issue on *Climate Change and Liberal Priorities*, eds. by Catriona McKinnon and Gideon Calder, for *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* (also to appear as a book with Taylor and Francis); “Is No One Responsible for Global Environmental Tragedy? Climate Change as a Challenge to Our Ethical Concepts,” in Denis Arnold, ed., *Ethics and Climate Change* (Cambridge University Press); “Some Early Ethics of Geoengineering: A Commentary on the Values of the Royal Society Report,” in *Environmental Values*.

**James Garvey** (ROYAL INSTITUTE OF PHILOSOPHY) contributed to *Moral Ground: Ethical Action for a Planet in Peril*, ed. Kathleen Moore and Michael Nelson (Trinity 2010); he also wrote “Climate Change and Moral Outrage,” special issue on climate, ed. Thom Heydt, *Human Ecology Review* 17 (2010).

Dr. Garvey adds: in this article I link the reasons one has for thinking that large countries are doing wrong when they do nothing much about the climate to local reasons one might have for thinking individuals do wrong too when they do nothing.

Some of Dr. Garvey’s mainstream media debates on climate policy can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

**Edgar J. González Gaudiano** (UNIVERSITY OF NUEVO LEÓN) wrote “Education against climate change: information and technological focus are not enough,” in R. Irwin, *Climate Change and Philosophy* (Continuum, 2010), 131-142

**Dieter Gerten** (POTSDAM INSTITUT FÜR KLIMAFORSCHUNG) edited, with Sigurd Bergmann, *Religion and Dangerous Environmental Change: Transdisciplinary Perspectives on the Ethics of Sustainability* (Lit Verlag, 2010); is currently editing, with Sigurd Bergmann, *Religion and Climate Change: Proceedings of the Potsdam Workshop 2010* (Continuum). Dieter’s climate research is mainly empirical (see [here](#)).

**Trish Glazebrook** (DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY) wrote “Myths of climate change: desk chairs and development,” in R. Irwin, *Climate Change and Philosophy* (Continuum, 2010), 162-179

**Lesley Le Grange** (STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY) wrote, with Heila Lotz-Sisitka (RHODES UNIVERSITY) “Climate change education in a context of risk and vulnerability,” in R. Irwin, *Climate Change and Philosophy* (London: Continuum, 2010), 147-161

**Marco Grasso** (UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA) wrote “The role of justice in the North-South conflict in climate change: the case of negotiations on the Adaptation Fund” (in press).

**Abstract:** Justice, by and large, implies greater legitimacy and can persuade parties with conflicting interests to cooperate more closely on collective actions. The aim of this article is to investigate the role that ethical arguments have played in restoring mutual trust between the developed and the developing countries in negotiations on the Kyoto Protocol Adaptation Fund, and in transforming the patent failure of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation Bonn May 2006 meetings on its management into the encouraging success of the Nairobi December 2006 round. These meetings are analyzed from the perspectives of procedural and distributive justice in order to interpret the negotiating dynamics and their outcomes. More specifically, procedural and distributive justice are, respectively, sought in the Bonn and Nairobi formal meetings through reference to, and the emergence of, principles and criteria of participation, recognition and distribution of power among Parties, and of Parties' responsibility for, and vulnerability to, climate impacts.

Forthcoming is also "Sharing the emission budget".

**Abstract:** Scientific evidence suggests that for having a 75% chance of limiting warming in 2100 to 2° C above pre-industrial level, 2010-50 CO<sub>2</sub> cumulative emissions should be capped at 657.1 Gt. The objective of this article is to examine the distribution of such emission budget obtained by applying different ethical perspectives.

Forthcoming is also "The ethics of climate change: with a little help from moral cognitive neuroscience".

**Abstract:** My approach to climate ethics here is based on the insights from moral cognitive neuroscience, a perspective that makes possible to distinguish, dissociate and attribute to different areas of the brain independent psychological processes that produce the basic fault lines (i.e. moral dilemmas) between moral theories. I assume that divergent moral theories/principles originate from human psychology, that cognitive neuroscientific methods are particularly useful for clarifying the consequent persistence of moral dilemmas, and that this understanding can prove philosophically significant and, in regard to the aim of my research, important for exploring and systematizing the ethics of climate change.

**William Grey** (THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND) wrote "Climate Change and Obligations to the Future," in *Sustainability and Quality of Life*, ed. Jack Lee (Ria University Press 2010): 157-169

**Simon Hailwood** (UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL) wrote "Disowning the Weather," *Critical Review of Social and Political Philosophy*, forthcoming 2011; "Bewildering Nussbaum: Capability Justice and Predation," *Journal of Political Philosophy*, forthcoming 2011.

Dr. Hailwood adds: "Disowning..." is in a special edition of the journal devoted to "climate change and liberal priorities," with contributions by Stephen Gardiner, Derek Bell, Ed Page, and others, edited by Catriona McKinnon and Gideon Calder (there will also be a Routledge Collection with the same title, articles and editors also in 2011). "Bewildering..." is a critique, from an environmental perspective, of Martha Nussbaum's extension of her capability theory of justice to non-human animals.

**Ernesto Hernandez** (UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA) wrote "Climate Change and Philosophy in Latin America," invited for topic issue *Climate Ethics*, ed. M. Schönfeld, *Journal of Global Ethics*, 2011. Ernesto is currently doing research for a PHD DISSERTATION on Latin American climate philosophy.

**Thom Heyd** (UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA) edited a topic issue on *Human Dimensions of Climate Change* for *Human Ecology Review*, with contributions by Robin Attfield, Nick Brooks, Rosalind L. Hunter-Anderson, James Garvey, Bernhard Glaeser, Marion Glaeser, Bruce Morito, Martin Schönfeld, Desley Louise Speck. Dr. Heyd also wrote "Climate Change, Individual Responsibilities, and Cultural Frameworks," *ibid.*; "Culture, Climate Change and Responsibilities" in O'Brien, K., Wolf, J. (eds.), *The Changing Environment for Human Security: New Agendas for Research, Policy, and Action* (Earthscan, in press); "Sentient Landscapes, Vulnerability to Rapid Natural Change, and Social Responsibility" in Bergmann, S. and Gerten, D. (eds.), *Religion and Dangerous Environmental Change Transdisciplinary Perspectives on the Ethics of Climate and Sustainability* (Lit Verlag, 2010); "Climate change: Prudential

and Ethical Responsibilities,” in Ved Nandas (ed.), *Facing Climate Change with a Renewed Environmental Ethic* (Continuum, forthcoming).

**Po-Keung Ip** (NATIONAL CENTRAL UNIVERSITY, TAIWAN) wrote “Toward an ethical climate regime,” in *Sustainability and Quality of Life*, ed. Jack Lee (Ria University Press, 2010), 137-156

**Ruth Irwin** (AUCKLAND UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY) edited *Climate Change and Philosophy: Transformational Possibilities* (Continuum, 2010), and wrote “Reflections on Modern Climate Change and Finitude,” in *ibid*, 48-77; “Climate Change and Heidegger’s Philosophy of Science,” for a special issue on *Climate Ethics*, ed. M. Schönfeld, *Essays in Philosophy* 11 (2010): 16-30

**Dale Jamieson** (NEW YORK UNIVERSITY) edited, with Stephen Gardiner, Simon Caney, and Henry Shue, *Climate Ethics: Essential Readings* (Oxford University Press, 2010)

**Bruce B. Janz** (UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA) is writing “Watsuji, *Fudo*, and Climate Change,” invited for a special issue on *Climate Ethics*, ed. M. Schönfeld, *Journal of Global Ethics*, 2011

**Nancy Kettle** (UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA) is writing her PHD DISSERTATION on the question of how the perspectives of classical Spinozism and modern Deep Ecology elucidate the cognitive and existential challenges of climate change.

**Berit Kristoffersen** (UNIVERSITY OF TROMSØ) edited, with Karen O’Brien and Asuncion Lera St. Clair, *Climate Change, Ethics and Human Security* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 131-153

**Shih-Yu Kuo** (ACADEMICA SINICA, Taipei) wrote “Confucian Climate Ethics: Confucius and his ecological intelligence,” for an issue on *Climate Ethics*, ed. M. Schönfeld, *Journal of Global Ethics*, 2011

**Heila Lotz-Sisitka** (RHODES UNIVERSITY), with Lesley le Grange (STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY), wrote “Climate change education in a context of risk and vulnerability,” in R. Irwin, *Climate Change and Philosophy* (Continuum, 2010), 147-161

**Jack Lee** (NATIONAL CENTRAL UNIVERSITY TAIWAN) edited *Sustainability and Quality of Life* (Palo Alto: Ria University Press, 2010), with contributions by Mac Kang Bai (Campbell), J Baird Callicott, William Grey, Po-Keung Ip, Shui Chuen Lee, Tsung-Tang Lee, Jui-Chu Lin, Yih-Ren Lin, Shiang-Yao Liu, A. T. Nuyen, Holmes Rolsten III, Martin Schönfeld, Edmund U. H. Sim, Charles Tandy, and Allen Yu. Dr Lee wrote “Intrinsic Value and Respect for the Natural Environment,” *ibid*. 35-49 (*Chapters in Lee 2010 that relate explicitly to climate change are listed elsewhere in this research update—M.S.*)

**Shui Chuen Lee** (NATIONAL CENTRAL UNIVERSITY TAIWAN): “The Possibility of a Global Environmental Ethics: A Confucian Proposal,” in *Sustainability and Quality of Life*, ed. Jack Lee (Ria University Press, 2010), 103-118

**Jui-Chu Lin** (NATIONAL TAIWAN UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY) wrote, with Tsung-Tang Lee (LLM, TAIPEI), “Taiwan’s Reform of Energy Law and Policy for Mitigation of Climate Change,” in *Sustainability and Quality of Life*, ed. Jack Lee (Ria University Press, 2010), 295-311

**Timothy W. Luke** (VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY) wrote “Education at the end of nature: learning to cope with climate change,” in R. Irwin, *Climate Change and Philosophy* (Continuum, 2010), 108-130

**Aaron Maltais** (UPPSALA UNIVERSITY): wrote “Failing international climate politics and the non-ideal duties of leadership” (under review).

Dr. Maltais includes as a summary: There is a debate over alternatives to the existing international climate regime that could set in motion the changes demanded by the threat of global warming. Some political theorists call for the introduction of a supranational arrangement that could provide the global public good of climate change mitigation. Political scientists and economists have focused their efforts on assessing alternative designs for the international climate regime. The former approach correctly sees the problem in terms of cosmopolitan and intergenerational justice but fails to appreciate the very short timeframe for action. The later approach correctly focuses on short-term policy prescriptions but exaggerates the potential effectiveness of regime design change. One of the few ways available over the short-term to improve the prospects for international cooperation is to reduce uncertainties about restructuring our economies to radically reduce GHG emissions. In this regard, wealthy states are specially positioned to improve the prospects for effective international cooperation through domestic policy, technology, and infrastructure leadership. I show that this assessment raises a novel version of a familiar question in non-ideal theory: can a political community have duties of justice to do more than their ideal fair-share of the global mitigation burden to make it more likely that others will cooperate on fair terms? I argue that wealthy political communities have non-ideal duties of leadership because of the responsibilities they have for the conditions that make meaningful international cooperation so hard to realize.

**Catriona McKinnon** (UNIVERSITY OF READING) is editing, with Gideon Calder, a special issue on *Climate Change and Liberal Priorities*, for *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* (also to appear as a book with Taylor and Francis). Dr. McKinnon wrote “Getting motivated in the last chance saloon,” in press *ibid*; and *Climate Change and Future Justice: Precaution, Compassion, and Triage* (Routledge, forthcoming 2011).

**Kathleen Dean Moore** (OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY), edited, with Michael P. Nelson, *Moral Ground: Ethical Action for a Planet in Peril* (Trinity University Press, 2010), with contributions by E. O. Wilson, Dale Jamieson, Barbara Kingsolver, the Dalai Lama, Thomas Friedman, Terry Tempest Williams, and many others, as well as a foreword by Nobel Peace Prize winner Desmond Tutu.

**Abstract:** Although climate disruption and environmental degradation are technological and economic issues, they are fundamentally moral issues. In *Moral Ground*, Kathleen Dean Moore and Michael Nelson call for a national conversation about our moral responsibility to the future to leave a world as rich in possibility as the present. In support of that project, they have collected short essays from 83 of the world’s moral leaders – scientists, religious leaders, poets, activists, indigenous elders, and philosophers – each affirming our obligations. Do we have a duty to avert the worst effects of the environmental emergencies? Yes, for the sake of the children. Yes, because justice demands it. Yes, because we are called to steward God’s creation. Yes, to honor the Earth. Yes, for the sake of human survival. The essays are grouped into fourteen reasons, each with a useful, short argument summary and suggestions for actions that follow from that reason.

(There’s a website about *Moral Ground* at URL <http://moralground.com/> – MS)

**Bruce Morito** (ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY) wrote “Ethics of Climate Change: Adopting an Empirical Approach to Moral Concern,” for a special issue on climate, ed. Th. Heydt, *Human Ecology Review* 17 (2010)

**Michael P. Nelson** (UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA) edited, with Kathleen Deen Moore, *Moral Ground: Ethical Action for a Planet in Peril* (Trinity University Press, 2010). For details, see Moore, above.

**A. T. Nuyen** (NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE) wrote “Confucian Filial Piety and Environmental Sustainability,” in *Sustainability and the quality of Life*, ed. Jack Lee (Ria University, 2010), 119-135

**Karen O’Brien** (UNIVERSITY OF OSLO) edited, with Asuncion Lera St. Clair and Berit Kristoffersen, *Climate Change, Ethics and Human Security* (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

**Val Plumwood’s** “Nature in the active voice” appeared posthumously in R. Irwin, ed., *Climate Change and Philosophy* (Continuum, 2010), 32-47

**Rupert Read** (UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA) wrote “Is it utopian for us to aim to be loving, and not merely just, toward future people?”, *Colloquy* (forthcoming).

Dr. Read adds: This paper focuses on our responsibilities toward future people in the light of the threat posed to their existence and well-being by dangerous climate change.

**Matthew Rendall** (UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM) wrote “Nonidentity, Sufficiency and Exploitation” *The Journal of Political Philosophy* (in press), and “Climate Change and the Threat of Disaster: The Moral Case for Taking Out Insurance at Our Grandchildren’s Expense” *Political Studies* (in press). Pre-refereed drafts of the papers are at <http://eprints.nottingham.ac.uk/1383/> and <http://eprints.nottingham.ac.uk/1386/>

**Casey Rentmeester** (UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA) wrote “A Kantian Look at Climate Change,” for a topic issue *Climate Ethics*, ed. M. Schönfeld, *Essays in Philosophy* 11 (2010): 76-86. Casey Rentmeester is currently writing his PHD DISSERTATION on the metaphysical underpinnings of our environmental and climatic crisis (viz. the subject-object distinction) and how to respond through Heidegger and Daoism.

**Carol S. Robb** (SAN FRANCISCO THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY) wrote *Wind, Sun, Soil, Spirit: Biblical Ethics and Climate Change* (Fortress Press, 2010).

Abstract: Climate change, an overarching issue of our lifetimes, brings together ecological ethics, theological perspectives, economic theory, environmental policy, and, most distinctively, New Testament studies.

**Holmes Rolston III** (COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY) wrote “Sustainable Development vs. Sustainable Biosphere,” in *Sustainability and Quality of Life*, ed. Jack Lee (Ria University Press 2010), 91-101

**Martin Schönfeld** (UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA) edited a topic issue on *Climate Ethics* for *Essays in Philosophy: A Biannual Journal* 11 (2010), with contributions by Philip Cafaro, Ruth Irwin, Bellarmine Nneji, Casey Rentmeester, and Holly Wilson. Dr. Schönfeld wrote “Field, Being, Climate—Climate Philosophy and Cognitive Evolution,” *Climate Change and Philosophy: Transformational Possibilities*, ed. Ruth Irwin (Continuum, 2010), 21-31; “Metaphysics of Sustainability—Kant’s Categorical Imperative,” in *Sustainability and the Quality of Life*, ed. Jack Lee (Ria University Press, 2010), 1-18; “Amerigenic Climate Change—an Indictment of Normalcy,” for a special issue on climate, ed. Thom Heydt, *Human Ecology Review* 17 (2010): 117-124 (the even-handed, courteous version, that is; the polemic version is forthcoming in *Environmental Ethics for Canadians*, ed. Byron Williston, Oxford University Press). He is currently editing a topic issue on *Climate Ethics* for *Journal of Global Ethics*.

**Murray Sheard** (TIRI NGO LONDON/JERUSALEM) wrote “Transforming Resource Use in the Light of Climate Change,” in *Climate Change and Philosophy*, ed. Ruth Irwin (Continuum, 2010), 197-210

**Henry Shue** (OXFORD UNIVERSITY), edited, with Stephen Gardiner, Simon Caney, and Dali Jamieson, *Climate Ethics: Essential Readings* (Oxford University Press, 2010)

**Desley Louise Speck** (AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY) wrote “A hot topic? Climate change mitigation policies, politics, and the media in Australia,” for a special issue on climate, ed. Th. Heydt, *Human Ecology Review* 17 (2010)

**Asuncion Lera St. Clair** (UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN) edited, with Karen O’Brien and Berit Kristoffersen, *Climate Change, Ethics and Human Security* (Cambridge University Press, 2010)

**Michael Thompson** (UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA) is writing “American Practice, Climate Change, and Imagination,” for an issue on *Climate Ethics*, ed. M. Schönfeld, *Journal of Global Ethics*, 2011

**Holly Wilson** (LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY, ret.) wrote “Divine Sovereignty and the Global Climate Change Debate,” in topic issue *Climate Ethics*, ed. M. Schönfeld, *Essays in Philosophy* 11 (2010): 8-15

---

(back to [Contents](#))

## Blog Roll

[Blistered Orb](#)

[Blister Data](#)

[Climate Ethics](#)

*Clearly this cannot be all. Kindly inform me of other philosophy blogs on climate, for inclusion in volume 5 of the newsletter. Thanks – M.S.*

---

(back to [Contents](#))

# Calls for Papers 2011

## Exploratory Symposium on Rock Art and Climate Change

XVI Congress of the UISPP / IUPPS Florianópolis, Brasil, 4-10 Sept. 2011

chairs: Thomas Heyd, Tilman Lenssen-Erz, Andreas Pastoors

Climate modelers are increasingly taking advantage of the rich record of climate variability that can be discerned in prehistoric times, as higher resolution of the chronology of climate events becomes available. Such precision certainly will be important in our understanding the bio-physical processes of climate change. However, insofar as there is a need to urgently address climate change through mitigation and adaptation, it may well be of equal importance that we make progress in understanding the human responses to drastically changed climate conditions that people had to face in the past.

Research on human responses to climate change, as experienced in prehistoric periods, generally has been conceived in terms of changes in hunting and gathering behaviours, evidenced in changes in diet, migration patterns, altered trade routes, and so on. Interestingly, throughout much of our species' existence, human beings have accompanied their lifeways with artistic expressions of ornament, mobile art and rock art. We propose that this record of relatively permanent, non-linguistic and often aesthetically appreciable, manifestations, may help us understand how climate changes in the past may have impacted people's lives. For this reason we invite researchers to help us in producing a first general overview of what we know about human responses to climate change as contained in the rock art and mobile art record.

### Symposium Participation

As soon as possible, please send titles, together with 100 word abstracts and information on affiliations, to all three chairs at the following e-addresses:

Dr. Thomas Heyd, [heydt@uvic.ca](mailto:heydt@uvic.ca)

Dr. Tilman Lenssen-Erz, [lenssen.ertz@uni-koeln.de](mailto:lenssen.ertz@uni-koeln.de)

Dr. Andreas Pastoors, [pastoors@neanderthal.de](mailto:pastoors@neanderthal.de).

---

(back to [Contents](#))

## Meetings 2010

### Religion and Climate Change

Potsdam Institute of Climate Impact Research (PIK), Potsdam, January 2010

Hosted by the Potsdam Institute of Climate Impact Research (PIK) and European Forum for the Study of Religion and the Environment in Potsdam-Berlin, Germany; 3<sup>rd</sup> workshop in a series.

Conference website at URL <http://www.hf.ntnu.no/relnateur/index.php?lenke=ridecc.php>

Proceedings forthcoming with Continuum 2011

See conference review below (page 14 in this issue)

---

### Alienation and the Environment

Workshop Conference, Liverpool University, February 2010

As part of an AHRC (arts and humanities research council, UK) - funded research networking project there was a workshop on environmental alienation at Liverpool University in February 2010.

Draft papers given at the workshop (by Alison Stone, Kate Soper, Simon Hailwood, Isis Brook, Steven Vogel and Ute Kruse-Ebeling) are available online via the [project website](#).

---

## The Uppsala Forum Workshop on Global Climate Change

Workshop Conference, Uppsala University, March 2010 and September 2010

The [Uppsala Forum](#) puts on small conferences with a lot of climate philosophy. The conveners are Jörgen Ödalen, Ed Page and Folke Tersman. There were two conferences/workshops in 2010 with John Broome and Simon Caney being some prominent invited guests (in addition to Ed Page who makes regular visits to Uppsala).

If you are interested about future planned meetings contact Jörgen at [Jorgen.Odalen@statsvet.uu.se](mailto:Jorgen.Odalen@statsvet.uu.se).

---

## Workshop on Human Dimensions of Climate Change

Centre for Eco-Social Studies, University of La Laguna, Spain, June 2010

This event took place at the University of La Laguna from 17 to 19 of June 2010, under the auspices of the Centre for Eco-Social Studies (Centro de estudios ecosociales), with special sessions held on 18 June at the Centre for Atmospheric Research of Izaña (Centro de Investigación Atmosférica de Izaña), and on 17 and 19 June at the Museum for History and Anthropology of La Laguna (Museo de Historia y Antropología de La Laguna). Activities were jointly organised by Thomas Heyd, University of Victoria, Canada, and José Manuel de Cózar, University of La Laguna, Tenerife, Spain.

For information on the Workshop available on the internet see:

[http://www.izana.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=175%3Adimensiones-culturales-del-cambio-climatico-buscando-marcos-para-la-accion&catid=10%3Anews&Itemid=49&lang=en](http://www.izana.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=175%3Adimensiones-culturales-del-cambio-climatico-buscando-marcos-para-la-accion&catid=10%3Anews&Itemid=49&lang=en)

and <http://webpages.ull.es/users/ceecoso/home.html>

---

## APA Environmental Philosophy Sessions

American Philosophical Association, Eastern Division, Boston, December 2010

The American Philosophical Association has a series of environmental philosophy sessions at the Eastern Division Meeting held at the Marriot/Westin-Copley Connection, Boston, Massachusetts, December 27-30, 2010. Of climate philosophical interest, Andrew Light presented a paper entitled, "Moral Framing of Climate Equity" on 29 Dec 2010.

---

## Climate and Existence

Uppsala Centre for Sustainable Development, November 2010

What are the existential aspects of the climate crisis? What have our values and visions to do with the current crisis? Who are we as humans in this age of environmental crisis and what is our responsibility? Do we need to change the way we perceive nature and our role in society?

On November 1-3, 2010, Cemus - The Centre for Environment and Development studies as part of CSD - Uppsala Centre for Sustainable Development - along with The Sigtuna Foundation welcomed participants to a conference dealing with the underlying moral, existential and psychological aspects of human and societal responses to climate change. This is a follow up Conference to a similar successful venture held in Sigtuna in 2008. The 2010 conference in Uppsala ran for three days and included inspiring keynote speeches, rewarding workshops, as well as poetry, music, and social events.

Keynote speakers: author and philosopher David Abram and poet and writer Andri Snaer Magnasson

Also participating were cultural anthropologist Mikael Kurkiala, researchers David Kronlid, Sigurd Bergmann, Petra Hansson and many others...

See our webpage for further information at URL <http://www.climateexistence.se>

Contact: Malin Östman

---

(back to [Contents](#))

## Conference Review

### PIK Workshop Religion and Climate Change

European Forum for the Study of Religion and the Environment  
11-13 January 2010 PIK Potsdam Institute of Climate Impact Research

(review first posted at the [blistered orb blog](#))

The [Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research](#) (PIK) hosted a workshop-conference on climate and the humanities. Organizers were Dieter Gerten (PIK), Sigurd Bergmann (Norwegian University of Science and Technology), and Konrad Ott (Universität Greifswald). The theme was "Religion in Climate Change--Sufferings, Values, and Lifestyles".

The meeting had encouraging vibes. When I planned the Climate Philosophy conference at the University of South Florida four years ago, all the submissions from religious quarters I received then were based on climate change denial. This time denial wasn't even an issue. What a difference a few years can make. Of course, the difference in space matters, too, and over civil evolution, Berlin comes out ahead. In Florida, in 2006, religion-related submissions had been sent in only from US American fundamentalists, while the participants at the Potsdam conference were largely from Europe. Still, the religious gestalt shift is a pleasure, and it's nice to see Christians transforming from foes to friends.

I was delighted seeing so many young scholars and researchers. Being in the mid-forties pegged me as a senior participant. That's a sign of the paradigm shift: the young ones are surfing the wave. A new term I learned in Berlin, as a non-ethnologist and non-anthropologist, was "**LOCAL KNOWLEDGE**". That's native wisdom, know-how, and spirituality. It's an object of scientific research, but by itself isn't regarded as scientifically relevant information. Not yet! My hunch is that the disregard for local knowledge will end. On the first day, I sensed a prevailing opinion that local knowledge (native traditions in particular) is under threat by climate change. On the second day I talked about the evolution of faith and opposed this perception. I suspect that climate change is the best possible news for a resurgence of planetary paganism, because the narratives about nature-human interplays embedded in these creeds will enjoy vindication. At the same time it was heartening to see European theologians, of the Lutheran and the Catholic creeds, to think ahead and to re-interpret their faith in recognition of the changes ahead. While this will shore up Christianity, it will do so only in the enlightened continental version. I imagine that climate change is the worst possible news for the US evangelical movement, because that perspective, representative of the American Disenlightenment, will be associated with the perpetration of the new bad realities.

Here are some highlights of papers I listened to. (I missed the beginning of the conference because of Munich snow chaos, and the end of the meeting because of classes in Florida starting.)

**Undine Froemming** and **Christian Reichel** (both ETHNOLOGY, FU BERLIN) summarized field work in Java, Sulawesi, and Flores. In their description of indigenous creeds, I was once again struck by the mirror-like identity of native views around the planet. Sometimes you get the impression that there are really only two basic religions: the Judeo-Christian-Islamic faiths aka the sibling monotheisms of the West, and the paganisms everywhere else, with webs of beliefs that are formally identical in different places. James Cameron, in his recent Avatar, captures the pagan memplex perfectly. The Na'vi faith is the quintessence of the great pagan alternative.

And we'll need this alternative. As Froemming and Reichel point out, that the Indonesian villagers worship locally placed souls and deities protects the areas from incursion and preserves biodiversity.

**Gulnara Aitpaeva** (AIGINE RESEARCH CENTER BISHKEK) talked about climate change and Kyrgyz spirituality. She cited a native impression of the emerging reality:

**"SUMMER IS NOT SUMMER, AND WINTER IS NOT WINTER."**

Instability, unpredictability, and excessiveness are the three faces of climate change in local perception, and they may well be applicable globally now.

According to Aitpaeva, the basic points of Kyrgyz cosmology are holism and reciprocity. Indeed. Once again, these points may well be applicable to quasi-N'avi creeds everywhere. And I personally like it because it reminds me of my Tao of Koenigsberg studies.

**Susan Crate** (ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE & POLICY, GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY) gave a terrific paper about climate change in Yakutia. Helpful, also for philosophers trying to come to terms with the sheer phenomenology of climate change, is the empirical list of transformations she identified. The Siberians are observing nine changes in particular, she said:

**WINTERS ARE WARM ...  
LAND IS WATER ...  
LOTS OF RAIN ...  
SUMMERS ARE COLD ...  
MORE FLOODS ...  
SEASONS ARRIVE LATE ...  
LOTS OF SNOW ...  
TEMPS CHANGE SUDDENLY ...  
AND LESS ANIMALS.**

No birds sing. The coldest time, referred to as a mythical bull by the indigenous, is not arriving anymore. The bull is gone. The climate has gotten spikier--there is freak weather and sudden changes. Interesting about these greater swings is that the freak weather doesn't show up in meteorological statistics. Wild weather, which swings either way, doesn't register in the balanced-out annual averages.

**Tim Leduc** (CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENT, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO) gave a striking summary of a Canadian perspective. Tim pointed out, citing G. Monbiot (Nov 20, 2009), the tar sand exploitation, which amounts to 2.5 more greenhouse gas emissions than conventional oil use, makes Canada into a planetary bad ass, almost as bad as the United States. Tim's case for an intercultural IPCC was challenged in the discussion. Rightly so, in that the IPCC doesn't care about non-scientific information. Still, Tim had a point. We need an intercultural agency to help civil evolution along. Science alone won't cut it. A transnational executive entity must steer the re-evaluation of values away from the American Dream responsible for the current malaise, for such re-evaluation is the sine qua non of civil evolution.

**Markus Vogt** (LMU MUNICH) talked about "Climate justice--an ethical analysis of the conflicts, rights and incentives surrounding CO2", a well thought-out paper on environmental justice that I want my climate seminar students to read this term. (Mental note: get the paper from Markus!) Michael Reder (Munich School for Philosophy) made a point that supported Tim's case: religions need to move to the public sphere, for they can make vital contributions to the impending civil evolution.

That's it. Kudos to the organizers, and more power to the PIK!

The papers will hopefully be printed as a collection.

--Martin Schönfeld

---

(back to [Contents](#))

## Meetings 2011

### APA Environmental Philosophy Sessions

#### International Society of Environmental Ethics, Central & Pacific Div., April 2011

The ISEE will be holding sessions at the Pacific and Central Division Meetings of the American Philosophical Association (APA). The Central Division Meeting will be held in 2011 from March 30 through April 2 at the Hilton Minneapolis Hotel, Minneapolis, Minn., and will feature a session on “Frameworks for Environmental Policy and Practice” with papers on climate change policy. The Pacific Division Meeting will be held from April 20-23, 2011 at the Hilton San Diego Bayfront, San Diego, California; of climate philosophical interest, John Nolt will be presenting a paper entitled “Why Climate Ethics Must Be Non-Anthropocentric” on 20 Apr 2011.

---

### Exploratory Symposium on Rock Art and Climate Change

XVI Congress of the UISPP / IUPPS Florianópolis, Brasil, 4-10 Sept. 2011

See [call for papers](#) above (page 10 in this issue)

---

## Gender and Climate Change: Women, Research and Action

Prato, Tuscany, 15-16 September 2011

“Gender and Climate Change” is an international conference that will seek to bring together the latest research in key areas of gender and climate change, to highlight impacts of climate change on women, and to draw together a body of knowledge for input into the 2011 United Nations Framework Convention (COP 17) and the Earth Summit 2012 (<http://www.med.monash.edu/glass/conference-2011>).

The conference organisers are the Gender Leadership and Social Sustainability (GLASS) Research Unit at Monash University, Australia, in collaboration with the Worldwide Universities Network, and Gender Justice and Global Climate Change (G2C2). The conference aims to bring together researchers, advocates, and policy makers, to form a coherent picture of the differential impacts of climate change and to convey that knowledge in formats that assist in policy development. The conference will highlight links to global poverty, sustainability, policy, and change. The complex couplings between human and natural systems that must be understood to respond to climate change demands a robustly multi and interdisciplinary approach to research. Furthermore, attention to the differential gendered impacts and opportunities of climate change require a deeply intersectional approach in which the relevance of factors such as class and race are considered alongside gender. For this reason, the theme of this conference recognizes the importance of engaging experts from multiple disciplines and engaging local and indigenous knowledges to address critical gender and climate change issues. Strong partnerships among researchers, policy-makers, and community stakeholders are essential for identifying and implementing promising, sustainable solutions that are relevant to the people who are most affected.

Please visit the conference website at:

<http://www.med.monash.edu/glass/conference-2011>.

---

(back to [Contents](#))

# Climate and Phenomenology

Select exam questions, Seminar in Climate and Philosophy, University of South Florida 2010

The [syllabus](#) of the Climate Philosophy seminar 2010 is below (page 20 in this issue)

--Martin Schönfeld

1. RAINER MARIA RILKE: what is the phenomenology of exposure (*Ausgesetztsein*)?  
How does it relate to Dasein?
  2. MARTIN HEIDEGGER: how do features ascribed to the phenomenological essence of technology elucidate the causality of climate change?  
What do such features suggest about potential and pitfalls of mitigation?
  3. MARTIN HEIDEGGER: how does climate change disclose itself in light of the fourfold?
  4. MARTIN HEIDEGGER: how can humanism be both problem and solution of the current crisis?  
How can we move towards a post-humanism without falling prey to pre-humanism?
  5. WATSUJI TETSURO: how does climate wield causal power over culture, as a gestalt?
  6. NO THINKER YET: Is climate fundamental to ontology, and if so, how?
-

(back to [Contents](#))

# Seminar in the Philosophy of Climate

University of South Florida, Spring 2010

Formal Title: USF PHI 6405 *Seminar in the Philosophy of Natural Science: Climate and Wisdom*

## I EMPIRICAL ORIENTATION: THE EMERGING REALITY, BRUTE FACTS, AND CLIMATIC PROSPECTS

*Heat: how to stop the Planet from Burning*, George Monbiot, (Cambridge: South End, 2009)

*2009 State of the World Report: into a Warming World*, Linda Starke, ed., a Worldwatch Institute Report on progress toward a sustainable society (New York/London: Norton, 2009)

*Earth's Climate: Past and Future*, William F. Ruddiman, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (New York: Freeman, 2008)

## II PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY: ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS, CLIMATE ETHICS, FUTURE GENERATIONS

“Ethics and Global Climate Change,” Stephen M. Gardiner, *Ethics* 114 (2004): 555-600

*The Ethics of Climate Change: right and wrong in a warming world*, James Garvey (New York/London: Continuum, 2008)

“Obligations to Future Generations,” Martin Golding, *The Monist* 56 (1972): 85-99

“Who cares for Posterity?” in Garrett Hardin, *The Limits of Altruism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977)

“Tragedy of the Commons,” Garrett Hardin, *Science* (1986): 1243-1248

“The Futurity Problem,” in Gregory Kavka, *Obligations to Future Generations*, ed. R. I. Sikora & B. Barry, ed., (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1978)

“Energy Policy and the Further Future: the Identity Problem,” Derek Parfit, in L. Pojman, ed., *Environmental Ethics: Theory and Applications* 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Belmont: Wadsworth, 2001): 289-296

“Climate Justice from a Christian Point of View,” Markus Vogt, in S. Bergmann & D. Gerten, eds., *Religion and Dangerous Climate Change* (London: Continuum, in press)

“Moral Progress and Canada’s Climate Failure,” Byron Williston, in M. Schönfeld, ed., special issue on *Climate Ethics*, *Journal of Global Ethics*, forthcoming 2011

III PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY AND CULTURAL CRITIQUE: THE CHANGING PARADIGM

*The Geography of Nowhere: the rise and decline of America's man-made landscape*, James Kunstler (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993)

*To Have or to Be* (1976), Erich Fromm (New York: Continuum, 1996)

“Introduction to Climate Ethics,” Martin Schönfeld, *Essays in Philosophy* 11 (2010): 1-5

“Amerigenic Climate Change: an Indictment of Normalcy,” Martin Schönfeld, *Human Ecology Review* 17 (2010): 117-124

“Field, Being, Climate: Climate Philosophy and Cognitive Evolution,” Martin Schönfeld, in *Climate Change and Philosophy*, ed. R. Irwin (London/New York: Continuum, 2009), 21-31

IV THEORETICAL PHILOSOPHY: CLIMATE AND ONTOLOGY

*Climate and Culture: A Philosophical Study* (jap. *Fudo* 1935), Watsuji Tetsuro, trans. G. Bownas (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988)

“Letter on Humanism” (1946), Martin Heidegger, trans. D. F. Krell, in *Basic Writings* (San Francisco: Harper 1992), 213-266

“Building Dwelling Thinking” (1941), Martin Heidegger, trans. D. F. Krell, in *Basic Writings* (San Francisco: Harper 1992), 343-365

“The Question concerning Technology” (1953), Martin Heidegger, trans. D. F. Krell, in *Basic Writings* (San Francisco: Harper 1992), 307-342

(back to [Contents](#))

## From Climate Ethics to Climate Philosophy

The flow of data on climate is now a torrent, and I try to handle incoming information with blogs. One blog (blistered orb) is a log of events, a place to parse news, and a way of trying out responses. It's also an anger-management technique. The U.S. American gap between science and politics, between biospherical reality and social mentality, is maddening and in many ways just plain evil. The blog lets me vent my spleen. By penning diatribes against the data onslaught, I regain a modicum of emotional control over the events, however illusory. Karl Marx, a master of polemics, is my muse. Over time the rants pile up, a haystack of tirades about the scandal of climate change.

As the flow never stops and one can fling polemics only so much, I file away incoming information in another blog, as a data base useful for writing. Blogging in this way (blister data) is a technique for managing factoids. There I itemize facts and findings, from weather to policy, and from engineering to climatology. One series of entries, called *CLIMATE EVENTS*, contains folders about weather, trends, mitigation, and basically about whether things move forward or backward. *GLOBAL ENLIGHTENMENT* is a folder for hope and evolution. *AMERICAN DISENLIGHTENMENT* is a folder for retardation and denial.

*CLIMATE FINDINGS*, another series of entries, contains folders for climate science. Information is filed into 'unfolding changes,' 'global heating,' 'mitigation issues,' and 'civil evolution.' Sometimes a single publication dominates an entry. In December 2010, instance, the proceedings of 'Four Degrees and Beyond' (Oxford, 2009) came out in *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A*. The papers are startling. They concern the destabilization timeframe, the expected causal cascades, the mounting mitigation tasks, and overall, the twin questions, one theoretical, another practical, of how bad it is going to get, and what cultural changes will be needed to keep civilization together.

Piling up and filing away, by referencing author and title, isn't good enough; conceptual tags are needed too—keywords or a catchphrase to find stuff quickly again. The word processing program at blogspot.com lets me type sixty to seventy characters with spaces before a sentence wraps over to a new line. One line is perfect; two lines are the limit. Any longer and the typed gist would defeat the purpose of a tag. For the entry, say, of K Anderson A Bows "Beyond 'dangerous' climate change: emission scenarios for a new world," *Phil Trans R Soc A* 369 (2011): 20-44, one could think of the tag THE +2 C WINDOW IS LIKELY CLOSED, SO WE MIGHT AS WELL GET ON WITH IT. For the paper by R Betts et al "When could global warming reach +4 C?" *ibid* 67-84, the tag points to the argued result: THE ORB WILL LIKELY BLISTER IN FIFTY YEARS' TIME. The conclusion of F Fung et al., "Water availability in +2 C and +4 C worlds," *ibid* 117-136, is a differentiated point and warrants a two-line tag, namely: POPULATION DOMINATES WATER STRESS IN A +2 C WORLD; CLIMATE DOMINATES WATER STRESS IN A +4 WORLD.

When events surge and history speeds up, neologisms remain as drift lines on the cultural beach as the waves recede. For me, that's another use of the blogs—to keep track and learn the neologisms. Perhaps the first terms to radiate from technical niches into public discourse were **GREENHOUSE GAS**

and GREENHOUSE EFFECT. Soon came GLOBAL WARMING, followed by CLIMATE CHANGE, and the qualifier ANTHROPOGENIC climate change. Since that qualifier isn't fair, and it's really mostly the Americans' fault, I suggest AMERIGENIC climate change instead. Other now popular niche-terms are HOCKEY STICK, CARBON FOOTPRINT, FEEDBACK LOOP, TIPPING POINT, and DIEBACK.

In the humanities, critics have been busy coining concepts as well. In British English, there's now CLIMATE PARIAH, as a sobriquet coined by *The Guardian* for the USA. There are CLIMATE CRUNCH, CLIMATE DENIAL, and EPISTEMIC CLOSURE. There's GREENHOUSE EXTINCTION and FART APOCALYPSE. Now we can build phrases with the new lingo: "as ECOCIDE is the reason for the ANTHROPOCENE, we're the GRASSHOPPER GENERATION, living in the LOCUST YEARS, blind to PEAK OIL, and heading into the BOTTLENECK CENTURY.

Of course such 'reality-management' is amateurish. Still, blistered orb and blister data are useful to me. They are a virtual workbench for organizing, conceptualizing, and critiquing material. This is humble work, a proto-scholarly warm-up to doing Philosophy of Climate. At the same time—and I find this strange and interesting—these blogs are probably a waste of time for doing Climate Ethics.

When it comes to Climate Ethics, we have pretty much all the empirical information we'll ever need. Additional factoid-management (and anger-management) tools are redundant. Regarding the data flow, Climate Ethics is an inquiry of a similar sort as philosophizing about abortion—one should know the difference between a zygote and a fetus, but more subtle medical information hardly seems vital; the ethics of abortion is *ethics* first, thus demanding mainly expertise in ethical theory.

Ethics is about actions, their causes and consequences. We know the etiology of climate change. The cause is our activity. The consequences are bad all around. We also know that the link from cause to consequence is transitive. Climate-changing activity doesn't readily boomerang back to the agents. Those who carry a greater share of the blame face fewer of its consequences (or are more resilient to riding them out), while those least responsible are suffering the worst impacts. And to the extent climate change does double back on the perpetrators, geographically speaking, a time lag can separate cause and consequence by as much as a generation. It will take a while before things in Wyoming and Texas will be as bad as they are, say, in Vietnam, Mexico, or Mozambique (for the case studies, see the January 2011 issue of *Scientific American*). For the perpetrators, the worst is yet to come. When the change rebounds to US Americans and PR Chinese, it may well do so with a biblical twist, via Exodus 34:7, by visiting the iniquities of the fathers on the children.

Schadenfreude à la "they had it coming" is thus misplaced. There's no fairness in it. And that makes it a topic for Ethicists. Climate change has been perpetrated freely. Its consequences are harmful. Its victims are innocent. It is the perfect crime, and thus a target of inquiry. In terms of facts, that's pretty much all the Climate Ethicist needs. Further information, about weather events, biospherical trends, climatological discoveries, and policy news, may be grist on the mill, but isn't really vital. If it doesn't serve to illustrate a philosophical point, it's probably a distraction. Climate Ethicists don't need topical data clusters; their work is done on a different and arguably higher intellectual level. Hence why bother compiling more empirical information and framing more polemical responses?

And yet, the reason of the filing-and-piling is that such tasks are useful for Philosophy of Climate. So the blogs are subjectively useful for one job but collectively useless for another, and this suggests a distinction between Climate Ethics and Climate Philosophy. Of course Climate Ethics and Climate Philosophy are different already as narrow and broad studies are different, the one a specific moral inquiry and the other a general rational investigation. But another evident difference between the two studies is that Climate Ethics is thriving while Climate Philosophy is barely germinating.

In 2010 Climate Ethics is a known quantity. Two years ago James Garvey's *The Ethics of Climate Change* (London 2008) came out. Six years ago Stephen M. Gardiner's "Ethics and Global Climate Change" appeared in *Ethics* 114 (2004): 555-600. Eighteen years ago John Broome's *Counting the Cost of Global Warming* (Isle of Harris 1992) was published. These are milestones, and partly as a result of this pioneering effort, Climate Ethics is now a hot new field, attracting ever more workers.

Climate Philosophy, though, as a broader philosophical engagement with the emerging reality, beyond its normative dimension, hasn't even left the starting line. It's still an unknown variable. I suspect this is not a coincidence. Climate Ethics has one big advantage. It pushes the heuristic envelope—but at the same time agreeably fits within the boundaries of traditional examinations. By way of illustration, consider the call for papers of *The Monist* for an issue forthcoming July 2011:

What criteria should we use to assess the impacts of climate change? Can cost benefit analysis capture all the ethically significant impacts? Do current generations have an obligation to future generations not to bring about long-term dangerous climate change? Is discounting the well-being of future generations obligatory or permissible or indefensible? Some potential impacts of climate change are not known with certainty and this raises the question of how we should respond to risky or uncertain impacts on the earth's climate. For example, should current generations adopt a version of the 'precautionary principle' when considering whether to engage in activities which produce high levels of greenhouse gases? Who should bear the burdens of dealing with global climate change? How should the right to engage in activities which emit carbon dioxide be distributed? Is carbon trading just and, if so, under what conditions? Are some entitled to compensation or reparations for the harmful effects of anthropogenic climate change? In addition to the above, we face ethical question pertaining to how decisions about climate policy should be taken.

These are all the right questions about climate in a normative context. They are about utilitarian and economic calculations, such as cost-benefit analysis and discounting. They are about rules such as the precautionary principle, puzzles such as future generations, and problems such as emissions rights. The questions are vital, the principles are helpful, and the issues are here to stay. And with the exception of the novelty of carbon trading, all the questions, principles, and concepts of *The Monist's* call had been familiar to us before climate change made a blip on the radar screen. And this makes sense, because Climate Ethics represents a successful linear progression of mainstream inquiry. It is an application of standard moral theory and the next step in environmental ethics.

The same cannot be said about Climate Philosophy. Engaging with climate, as a topic, means to ask new questions, frame new principles, and coin new concepts. In Ethics, we're not so much dealing with the topic of climate *directly*. In Climate Ethics, climate as such is stuffed in a black box;

ethically relevant is only what happens outside the box, the causal inputs and the consequential outputs. What's happening in the box is not the Ethicist's concern—which is why the blogs, in this research context, are useless. In Climate Philosophy, however, the black box is the target. It must be unlocked, opened, and illuminated. Here we would have to deal with climate itself, as a type of being, as well as with its unfolding changes, as an emerging reality. Of course, climatologists are doing this already. As scientists are wont to do, they deal with climate quantitatively and empirically. Philosophers need to recognize that there remains a lacuna, namely to engage with climate qualitatively and conceptually. This will be the eventual target of Climate Philosophy.

Climate can be defined as 'average weather over a finite interval' (J Hansen 2009). It's not weather. It's nothing specific in particular. It's a general way of how weather plays out over the long run. The Greek root of the term, *klima*, denotes a region or an area. In ontological terms, climate is a field of being. One might be tempted to think of such fields, quantitatively, as a sum, or a mean, in the sense of adding up or averaging out meteorological data points. But this would not capture the phenomenon. Weather, surely, is a bunch of such data points, and we can comfortably understand such phenomena as concrete events; like rain falling, or a storm moving in. Climate, the contents of the black box, amounts to more than this. Climate is a timeline of weather events, embedding meteorological moments in a temporal continuum. And it is a spatial field of weather, integrating weather phenomena such as rain or storms in a spatial continuum, with sunshine or insolation on top, planetary surface on the bottom, and other geographic regions affecting the field on all sides.

The Earth system consists of air, water, land, and ice, as well as life. In geometric and dynamic terms, we can think of them as spheres (atmosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere, cryosphere, and biosphere). To the extent these spheres are parts, the Earth system is their sum. Climate is the resulting interplay of the parts within their sum; that is, *a whole*.

Climate is a whole. And wholes escape conventional thought. Now we can see why Climate Philosophy has not yet left the starting line, and why the philosophical reaction to climate as a phenomenon has been so muted. In philosophy of science, for instance, reductionism is pretty much dead, but this doesn't mean that teleology has celebrated a comeback. In psychology, excellent work has been done on the cultural differences of cognition, perception, and conceptions of reality—but in Philosophy we really don't like to talk about cultural *gestalts*; attending graduate school and earning a PhD conditions us with a deep aversion to making sweeping claims. The ones who make sweeping claims in the seminar room tend to be those who later drop out. The ones who make ever more fine-grained distinctions tend to get fellowships.

In Philosophy *we really don't like wholes*.

This dislike is the symptom of a blind spot. Our methodology is ill-equipped to deal with wholes. Analytic philosophy is called so for a reason; its practitioners take things apart, break them down, and dismantle their subject-matter. Continental Philosophy, or Postmodernity, is not an alternative either, since its proponents like analysis just like everyone else; only they call it deconstruction.

Whether you dismantle or deconstruct, wholes will escape you. Aggregate sums disclose their additive structure by such scrutiny, but wholes just quietly slip away.

We're good with parts, and we're okay with sums, but wholes, on the whole, are foreign—like *gestalt* or *ambience*; *zeitgeist* or *milieu*. Or, well, *klima*. Philosophy, to date, has little patience with such slippery beasts, but they are what Climate Philosophers need to capture and domesticate. That's why there's Climate Ethics, and why little else. Heidegger might have said we're suffering from *klimaverگessenheit*, a forgetfulness of climate. It's no one's fault. We don't have the tools.

In this way Climate Philosophy poses a challenge to the establishment. And if this challenge is successful, Climate Philosophy will likely trigger a paradigm shift. This is nothing to brag about, because this circumstance, if true, will make conceptual research rather difficult. But this may well be the reason for the odd delay. Climate Philosophy has not yet left the starting line because this line is the limit of the current paradigm. The inquiry must break through it before it can get going.

But this isn't supposed to mean that Climate Ethics and Climate Philosophy must be at odds with one another. To the extent they oppose one another they're rather like abutments of a bridge span on opposite shores. Climate Ethics is where the bridge begins, at the shore of the old paradigm. Going to the other side means to change one's ways. But this transformation is not a rejection of the atomistic old for the sake of the holistic new. Such rejection would misread the paradigm shift.

A political revolution throws out the old regime to let in the new rulers. But a paradigm shift in science and philosophy is seldom like that. Usually, scientific and philosophical revolutions *integrate the old in the new*. Engineers use classical mechanics every day even though physics has moved way beyond Galileo and Newton. Good stuff has a way of sticking around. Analysis is trivially useful but becomes arguably harmful when it hamstring philosophical imagination and narrows the minds. By stepping on the bridge that leads from Climate Ethics to Climate Philosophy, we cannot leave dismantling and deconstructing behind, but we will have to learn to put analysis in its place, as a set of means that all serve the end of rational synthesis. We won't leave values behind either, but we'll learn to ask more radical questions. Should perhaps the economic rationality of *The Monist* be enfolded in an existential rationality? And why do only English ghosts, such as Adam Smith, haunt the halls of *The Monist*—aren't there also good ideas on the other side of the Channel? Last, but not least, the biological and neurological evidence for naturalism—the new science of right and wrong—eventually needs to be factored in as well; we cannot keep doing ethics in the unsound theoretical framework of David Hume and G. E. Moore.

What will lead from here to there, from paradigmatic Ethics to post-paradigmatic Philosophy, is the courage to open the box and to begin the interrogation of climate change. Climate change is a biospherical transformation and a cultural challenge. Both are captured by recent titles outside Philosophy. The transformation is, perhaps, the **VANISHING FACE OF GAIA, UNDER GREEN SKIES, THE LONG THAW**, or simply **EAARTH**. The challenge may well be **THE REVENGE OF GAIA, WITH SPEED AND VIOLENCE, HOT, FLAT, AND CROWDED, WHEN THE RIVERS RUN DRY, OR THE LONG EMERGENCY**. If Philosophy can be understood as a rational examination of being in the world, and if a changing climate transforms that world, then

being in the world will change too. Life in this new world, with sour seas and arid lands, is bound to shift the parameters of existence, not just in mundane, visceral ways, but also, and arguably, in a fundamental sort: over what we do know, and what we should do, and what we may hope. In short, over *what it actually might mean to be human*.

In the end, thinking about climate concerns Philosophy's core. The paradigm shift, induced by climate change, may well be a turn away from the Socratic model of doing philosophy that focuses on questions, cultivates doubt, and pines for wisdom as something elusive. It would be a turn toward the burden of answers and the cultivation of insight. The far side of the bridge suggests a twenty-first century appropriation of the Confucian and Leibnizian models of conceptual inquiry: Philosophy as the study—not love—of wisdom (zhéxué; 哲學) and as world-wisdom (*Weltweisheit*).

And yes, walking across that bridge is hard. It's easier to question, to critique, to litigate. It's not so easy to answer, to create, and to suggest. But a look over the fence helps. Physics, in the past century, by its exemplary style, informed much of the old paradigm; the need for rigor, the desire for analysis, and the focus on mechanisms. Physics, in this century, is not quite the same anymore. Today physicists are studying fuzzy events; they string units of information together; and they are on a quest, as they say, for a Final Theory. This quest strives for a new ideal—synthetic rationality. I trust Climate Philosophy will be off to a running start as soon as it joins this post-Socratic quest.

Martin Schönfeld

---

Climate Philosophy Newsletter 4 (2010/2011)—that's all folks! 😊