

Changing Climates, Changing Values, Changing Editors: 'All Change'

So, within the last six months climate change returned to the political stage, not that it ever left the planetary one. We must worry over the fickleness of humans that it ever went away. A drought of several years may soon be forgotten with relief at a few weeks of rain, as experienced recently in some parts of Australia. How now the predictions of 'experts' and their probabilities in the face of economic and political variability? Does human resolve change with the weather, let alone the seasons? Should we then be appealing to human preferences to determine the future of the planet? As Arias-Maldonado (2007) asks in this issue, can we really rely upon deliberative democracy to achieve a more environmentally benign, sustainable future?

At the same time humans are very adaptable creatures so their readiness to switch focus might then be taken as a sign of strength in a changing world. They accept new circumstances as a challenge and address problems as things to be solved. Rather than seeing change as a disaster there is something to be said for looking on the bright side of life.

Perhaps the report on climate change by Nicholas Stern, an ex-Chief Economist of the World Bank, and his 22 colleagues, should be seen from this perspective; a positive sign of economists becoming less gloomy. Heralded as an enlightened report, which at last points 'rationally' to the serious nature of human induced climatic change, its headline (20 per cent GDP loss) figure is already widely quoted by the environmentally concerned. Unusually for a government economic report, it talks of ethics, distributional inequity and catastrophic events. Dominant societal organisations have made numbers the obsession of our age and their contrivance is a fine art defended by élite guilds. So this report has been seen as a turning point by some.

Stern tells us that greenhouse gas control is a rosy opportunity for economic growth, with financial institutions set to make billions along with carbon traders, energy suppliers and other entrepreneurs quick off the mark. The headline hustlers immediately posted: 'Tackling climate change is the pro-growth strategy'. Articles followed along the lines that cost-benefit analysis shows this is a good investment with positive returns, a profitable macroeconomic enterprise. We may suspect and speculate as to hidden political agendas such as: supporting new investment in nuclear power for the UK, raising the issue as a problem with a traditional solution, fending off a Green vote, allowing the Treasury to justify a new tax. Yet, many environmental pragmatists argue this is the way in which environmental problems should be articulated, as investment opportunities.

However, such an approach seems to exclude more than it addresses. There is no issue of consumption being incommensurable with loss of life or harm of the innocent. Ethical issues are encapsulated in preference utilitarianism with

each generation treated as if an individual. There is scant attention to interregional inequity (see Zuindeau, 2007). There is no debate as to the reasons for more luxuries in North America, Europe and Australasia, because the cake can grow regardless of who gets to eat it or how. There is no stark contrast between deciding whether millions of people suffer and die rather than airplane, car, oil, coal and energy supply companies having to adjust their operations and rich consumers their consumption habits. There is no question as to precaution in the face of strong uncertainty. There is no moral storm (Gardiner, 2006). There is only a bottom line in monetary rates of return. Rather than asking why humanity should expect a positive rate of return on climatic disaster prevention, the only question is how large is the return?

The political economy, motives and values behind the Stern report may be a subject of future research, or perhaps it will soon be forgotten just like Cline's 20 per cent climate damage estimate 15 years earlier (e.g. Cline, 1992). What seems clear is that the removal by assumption of divergent viewpoints and value conflicts fails to remove them from reality. Readers of *Environmental Values* need go only a short distance to find how Trainor (2006) has described the economic as but one among many value realms, and Soma (2006) bounds the use of economic calculus. More specifically, MacCracken (2006) has noted that the USA faces several divided positions on human induced climate change with no sign of unification. In the same issue Toman (2006), as an ex-Washington think tank economist, argued for a dramatically modified perspective on the role of economics and experts, and a more participatory decision process.

Yet, despite recognition of different values, the anthropocentric, instrumental, consequential and utilitarian seem more readily acceptable to a range of orthodox organisations. Thus, in this issue, Butler and Acott (2007) report a divergence between respondents' individual beliefs and value expression within their professional organisations, something which is reminiscent of findings by Craig et al. (1993) for UN environmental professionals. Their carefully conducted in-depth interviews, with UK land managers, show how belief in intrinsic values is prevalent amongst the vast majority and consists of a basic underlying value.

For me this raises the question of institutional barriers to the articulation of values, as apparent in the climate change policy arena. Such barriers have been argued, on grounds of pragmatism, to be practically irrelevant if the same behaviours and actions are likely to result from instrumental and anthropocentric environmentalism as will result from alternative value systems and perspectives. McShane (2007) takes the specific case of nonanthropocentrism to show how emotions and feelings towards objects are constitutive of certain relationships which cannot be captured by the instrumentality of an exclusively human centred system, where value is entirely dependent upon satisfying self interest. Holding some feelings (e.g. love, respect, awe) is then seen as recognising 'other-centred'

emotions and recognising the 'other' as making a claim on your moral attention in their/its own right.

What constitutes a human's relationship with others can also be affected by the institutional setting. Market institutions impose a specific framing of our relationships which people may reject. This is evident in the work by Claro (2007) which shows individual monetary compensation for environmental degradation being more commonly turned down than in-kind community compensation. In contrast to economic approaches, monetary compensation is not a universally acceptable corrective, with just the amount being at issue, and may be rejected where communal sharing or equality are the norm. Indeed monetary compensation may be regarded as a bribe designed to undermine community values. Claro then points towards the need for research into the appropriate approaches by which values held within a given society may be protected.

This is very different from the approach of Leinhoop and Macmillan (2007) which tries to use institutional design to obtain a desired outcome, namely an economic exchange value. Here willingness to accept (or pay) monetary compensation is seen as something which can be achieved if people are placed in a more deliberative setting, ostensibly so that they have time to understand the environmental trade-off being requested. This type of approach is something I term 'deliberative monetary valuation' because it appeals to some ideals from deliberative democratic theory for its justification. However, the hybrid approach, as commonly applied, is far removed from small group deliberation as a political process, and still has problems handling refusals to trade and incommensurability, which were theorised to disappear. As Arias-Maldonado (2007) points out, the claims which have been made for deliberative democracy may themselves have been over stated so that, even in a purely political setting, faith in convergence on environmental ideals may be misplaced. Thus, the body politic cannot be relied upon to be either Green, desirous of sustainability, or self-interested traders, desirous of free-markets as the primary means of making decisions.

So we face the problem of recognising different values and observing different institutions for their expression. In struggling through this maze certain principles arise as guidance. Thus, equity appears as a guiding principle both for Claro's analysis of NIMBY behaviour and for the more general case of inter-regional environmental degradation discussed by Zuideau (2007). Of course general guidance is very different from detailed directions and we remain caught between the promise of economic growth (à la Stern) as the answer to all our inequities and directly addressing issues head-on. Thus, Zuideau points out the contrast between the environmentalism of the poor put forward by Joan Martinez-Alier (2002) and the mainstream economic approach of Summers (another ex-Chief Economist of the World Bank), who proposed locating waste and pollution of the rich amongst the poor on grounds of efficiency. What seems clear, at least to me, from reading the papers in this issue of *Environmental Values*, is that certain ways of relating to Nature and other humans can be either encouraged

or suppressed depending upon the values our institutions and organisational structures engender.

So we come to the last part of my reflection on changes and something a bit closer to home. Those of you who find themselves with nothing better to do, between measuring your performance for assessment exercises, than browse the preliminary pages (come now there must be a few) may have noted some alterations. The instructions to authors will now appear regularly, along with the forthcoming contents. More significantly you will note editorial role shuffling. Things are moving away from the initial base of the journal at Lancaster University, but not too far. Isis Brook is taking on the job of Managing Editor and her University, Central Lancashire, will host the editorial office.

Eileen Martin, Editorial Assistant since the inception of the journal, has been a kingpin in the operation, but as things change has taken the decision to retire from the journal. All authors and editors of the journal owe her a great deal of thanks for the smooth operation of the editorial process over a decade and a half. She has been the chief engineer keeping the engine running while Alan Holland has steered the journal through the initial stages of its voyage into open waters.

Alan has remained very active despite starting to step back, about two years ago, and initiating increased editorial participation of other editors. He now wishes, and deserves, to take more of a back seat role, and as a result a new overseer of operations has been sought. This position was offered to me, and after some serious reflection I agreed. I did so on the basis of maintaining both the team spirit Alan has built around him and the character and ethos of the journal. Indeed some may notice Alan himself lurking within the pages as he will continue to make positive input as an active editorial team member. We will also continue to cross disciplinary divides, bringing applied philosophy and economics into the same room, along with politics, geography, sociology, social psychology, anthropology, ecology and whatever discipline bears relevance to our subject matter.

The aim is for maintained quality in argument and debate across the disciplines concerned with addressing themselves to environment values. In this issue there is a good mix of quantitative and qualitative empirical evidence and theorising about the realms and relevance of different environmental values and their expression. This typifies need for a greater recognition of the range of values in society and attention to the means for their articulation.

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