



Greta Thunberg, PR and the "Climate Emergency"

by

Brian Davey

on

[Wrong Kind of Green](#)



Preliminary remarks -

Some notes on terminology:

Climate Emergency – a human-induced increase in atmospheric greenhouse gases like CO₂ and CH₄ leading to rising global temperatures with impacts such as droughts, floods and heatwaves, crop failures, rising sea levels etc

"Climate Emergency" (in inverted commas) – a declaration by politicians that they are taking the climate emergency seriously and that we can trust them to do something effective about it (which can be judged as being for real or as empty rhetoric depending on what happens.)

Because of comments about the first edition of this article I wish to make clear that I am not opposed to wind, solar and renewable energy generation. What I am opposed to is the illusion that wind, solar and other forms of renewable energy can sustain a growth economy and the continuance of the consumer lifestyle in rich countries.



Renewable energy can have a limited place in the future but the priority is degrowth – with energy and materials conservation by sharing more – because the global economy of the rich world has overshoot the carrying capacity of the planet and this is very dangerous. In any case there are currently no affordable ways to buffer fluctuations in renewable energy generation between seasons and nor are these likely for a long time, if ever. I am also very opposed to the financialisation of nature for the reasons that I describe here briefly, and at more length in my book Credo which is available for free download (see the references).

Finally, I learned a lot from the articles by Cory Morningstar but my politics and hers should not be taken as identical.

Brian

+++

I came across a linked [series of articles](#) one of which is mentioned on the Moon of Alabama website. They are titled "The Manufacturing of Greta Thunberg – for Consent" and written by an investigative journalist by the name of "Cory Morningstar". When I started reading them I was at first suspicious that this was another ad hominem attack on Greta Thunberg. However as I read further, to use the Biblical expression, "the scales fell from my eyes".

This is by far the best overview of global environmental and climate politics at this time – or what is behind the appearance that you will get if you only read and watch the mainstream media.

The articles show the main actors in the drama, how they are connected to, or part of, major factions of the global corporate elite – and how they are pursuing what is in effect a global public relations campaign to "lead the public into emergency mode" – an emergency where the public will call for action and this part of the global elite will then have a mass backing and be able to deliver.

But deliver what, exactly?

In fact the agenda is to sell the need for a fourth industrial revolution...

I repeat that again – part of the global elite will deliver a green new deal or, as it is sometimes described, "a fourth industrial revolution". This group of people are networked in organisations like the World Economic Forum, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Rockefeller Institute as well as 20 not for profit NGOs who are backing the idea like the World Resources Institute, Avaaz and its offshoot Team B, Greenpeace...and others.

To these should be added other organisations and movements like 350.org which are part of the influencing environment for the people who set up Extinction Rebellion, influencing XR's limited statement of its aims.

At first sight all of this seems great, really encouraging – but only if the way that this network intends to follow through to address "the emergency" would actually work.

Yet there are good reasons to believe that their approach won't work – although they will be an enormously generous gift to the corporate aristocracy and some NGOs – they won't solve the emergency. They will make it worse.

This is because they want to address the global climate and environmental crisis to "save nature" by turning it into a huge money spinner. The policies that have been developed are intended to be an engine for re-kindling failing economic growth by "financialising nature". Natural processes are to be designated as "natural capital" and natural capital is to be priced and tradable on financial markets.

The key idea here is that, in order to protect nature, you must incentivise nature protection with money. You must pay to protect so called "eco-system services". The idea is that if we want



to prevent extinction we need a system that makes it pay in money terms and we will need a system that will bring about a whole new set of technologies – so called "clean tech".

What's wrong with financialising nature?

Indigenous people often regard nature as kin – for example, people in the Andes refer to 'mother earth'. They protect mother earth just as they would protect their own mother because it gave them life, because they came from it. They know how nature works where they live because that is handed down to them from their ancestors and they hold it in trust for their children and descendants. They don't expect cash payments – it is a duty not to overuse the earth and that is an ethic they live by. That ethic has been maintained by people living and working on natural commons over centuries before they were stolen by an elite during the enclosures. In commons there is a collective responsibility not to over-use resources – or not to harm the lived in environment to which people feel loyalty and attachment.

Our society lives by different ethics. If we want something doing we must pay money – including not driving the entire ecological system to collective death. That's mainstream economics for you. In our society the rich see nature as a store of resources – trees are timber which has a money value but the untouched forests do not. If we want to protect the forest then the money junkies tell us that the forest must be given a money value too. Then if someone wishes to cut down trees for timber they have to pay for the loss of the forest too – the eco-system services that would be lost, like absorbing CO₂, like the role of the forest in rainfall and the water cycle. Indeed, the new argument is that whoever owns the eco-system services of the forest should get a payment for protecting.

If we are going to think of nature as being like your mother then think of it like this. Say your mother is under threat, the key thing is how much is she worth and how much money can you pull together to protect her? Well it's like that with nature. If your mother's not worth tuppence and you've got no money anyway, you might as well sell her into slavery. It's the same with nature. In this regard you sell into the financial markets, because banks can create any amount of money as loans to people who want to buy bits of nature, while other bits of the financial markets can make money organising the exchanges to trade on.

But there are problems with this. For example think of the protection of forests. Forest peoples have been protecting forests for centuries, only harvesting sustainably. They never had to be paid to do this – they understood how to live sustainably in the forests and were not greedy, so stopped forest resources being over-used. These kind of people will now be turfed out. They don't have certificates of ownership purchased on the financial markets. The new owners will be the people in the financial markets who make money decisions about ecological issues. Will they protect the forests better from their offices? This is the doubtful logic of this new kind of green colonialism.

This is the way the money junkies think. There is a reversal of means and ends in their minds. The ends of the players on the natural capital markets is to make money – and, supposedly, making money is achieved by means of protecting nature.

Yet the experience of schemes like this is that money-making wins over nature because there is no obvious price for eco-system services, or for biodiversity loss or for carbon emitted. There is far too much uncertainty and a real ethical and conceptual question about whether you can or should value the carbon emissions, or the lives of people, species or eco-systems (eco-system services). What's more there are all sorts of practical problems with coming up with prices – for example people are keen to protect pandas with a high price but less keen to pay a high price to protect creepy crawlers, snakes and spiders, even though they are an integral part of the ecosystem. Most people haven't a clue how eco-systems work, how the climate works – and nor could they have. So how can they "value them"?

Decisions about climate, vital ecosystem functions and species should not be market decisions, they should be political ones – taken democratically by those affected.

In any case, we know that what happens in such markets is that the actors game the systems



to make as much money as possible by scams and frauds. That has already happened on a massive scale during carbon trading. Everyone involved in carbon trading knew it was one massive scam. Nevertheless the religion of the modern world is economics, in the service of the great God money and so:

The development of the Natural Capital Protocol Project was made possible with generous funding from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, International Finance Corporation (World Bank) with the support of the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of Netherlands, The Rockefeller Foundation, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the UK Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). The Coalition is hosted by The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW). Other funders include; World Wildlife Fund, The Nature Conservancy, the Google Foundation, the Inter-American Development Bank, Unilever, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, U.S. Department of Defense and the World Bank.

World Resources Institute provided the technical insights and review for the Natural Capital Protocol. The protocol was developed by Conservation International, The B Team, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Sustain Value, ACTS, Management (ERM), Imperial College, ISS, Natural Capital Project, Synergiz, WWF, Accenture, Arcadis, eftec, Environmental Resources CDSB, Deloitte, Dow, eni, GIST Advisory, Kering, LafargeHolcim, Natura, Nestlé, Roche, Shell, and The Nature Conservancy. The protocol was led by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) consortium.

...but back to Greta Thunberg. How did she become an eco-star?

How the Greta Thunberg phenomenon was fostered - the "We Don't have time" consultancy

Please note that although the title of these articles is "The Manufacturing of Greta Thunberg", they are not saying that Greta Thunberg is a simple puppet doing what she is told. She's obviously a smart young woman. But she would not have got a place in the World Economic Forum and at the United Nations FCC COP in Katowice, had she not been very well connected and had her rise to eco-stardom not been stage-managed from early on. Her mother had an award from the corporate friendly environmentalists in the World Wide Fund for Nature and she was promoted by an organisation that works with Al Gore and important parts of the Silicon Valley elite.

Greta Thunberg was an adviser to a foundation established by a Swedish business called "We don't have time". So what is this business "We don't have time"?

We Don't Have Time is mainly active in three markets: social media, digital advertising and carbon offsets. ("In the US alone estimated market for carbon offsetting amount to over 82 billion USD of which voluntary carbon offset represents 191 million USD. The market is expected to increase in the future, in 2019 estimated 15% of all greenhouse gas emissions to be associated with any kind of cost for offsetting.") As the company is a niche organization, social networks are able to provide services tailored to platform users. The startup has identified such an opportunity by offering its users the ability to purchase carbon offsets through the platform's own certification. This option applies to both the individual user of the platform, as well as whole organizations/companies on the platform.

One incentive of many identified in the start-up investment section is that users will be encouraged to "communicate jointly and powerfully with influential actors." Such influencers are Greta Thunberg and Jamie Margolin who both have lucrative futures in the branding of "sustainable" industries and products, if they wish to pursue this path in utilizing their present celebrity for personal gain (a hallmark of the "grassroots" NGO movement). (Further reading [here](#).)



A nice little earner then...and that's the philosophy of the people at the top who are leading this process. In their world view you have to make it pay to protect nature.

If you are not paying attention this looks like a child doing it all herself and getting a fantastic amount of attention – starting a snowball. Indeed the process is snowballing with big support. That was the idea and it was very successful – but what actually is the agenda of the elite faction behind all of this?

Here's a quote from Cory Morningstar about how it started:

The 'one kid immediately got twenty supporters' – from a Swedish network for sustainable business. What is going on is the launch of a global campaign to usher in a required consensus for the Paris Agreement, the New Green Deal and all climate related policies and legislation written by the power elite – for the power elite. This is necessary in order to unlock the trillions of dollars in funding by way of massive public demand.

The industrial agenda

These agreements and policies include carbon capture storage (CCS), enhanced oil recovery (EOR), bio-energy with carbon capture and storage (BECCS), rapid total decarbonisation, payments for ecosystem services (referred to as "natural capital"), nuclear energy and fission, and a host of other "solutions" that are hostile to an already devastated planet. What is going on – is a rebooting of a stagnant capitalist economy, that needs new markets – new growth – in order to save itself. What is being created is a mechanism to unlock approximately 90 trillion dollars for new investments and infrastructure. What is going on is the creation of, and investment in, perhaps the biggest behavioural change experiment yet attempted, global in scale. And what are the deciding factors in what behaviours global society should adhere to? And more importantly, who decides? This is a rhetorical question as we know full well the answer: the same Western white male saviours and the capitalist economic system they have implemented globally that has been the cause of our planetary ecological nightmare. This crisis continues unabated as they appoint themselves (yet again) as the saviours for all humanity – a recurring problem for centuries...

When Thunberg goes off message

That does not mean that Greta Thunberg necessarily understands or believes the entire elite agenda. At Katowice she made a speech part of which was off-message – perhaps she got the ideas from Professor Kevin Anderson whom she met there. Anderson is a climate scientist who argues that the economy must contract to meet climate goals. He also argues that it is the rich who must bear most of the burden of this.

Here is a part of Thunberg's speech:

You only speak of the green eternal economic growth because you are too scared of being unpopular. You only talk about moving forward with the same bad ideas that got us into this mess, even when the only sensible thing to do is pull the emergency brake.

But I don't care about being popular. I care about climate justice and the living planet. Our civilisation is being sacrificed for the opportunity of a very small number of people to continue making enormous amounts of money.

Thunberg talked about making enormous amounts of money and she talked about growth – but this is the part of the message that Avaaz cut from their reporting of Thunberg. Cory Morningstar comments: "It is not surprising Avaaz would strike Greta's comments considering a primary function of Avaaz is to promote market solutions that accelerate "green" economic growth – in servitude to "a very small number of people to continue making enormous amounts of money.""

In conclusion



The series of articles linked to below shows how elite environmentalists want to revive the Paris Climate Agreement and how the Green New Deal in the USA is supposed to become a global process brought about by having the public clamouring to declare climate emergencies and that to achieve all of this strategic NGOs and campaign movements and new emerging celebrities like Greta Thunberg and Extinction Rebellion have been supported and their leaders partially co-opted.

By writing this piece I do not mean here to deny that there is an ecological crisis, and nor that there is a climate emergency and that urgent action is needed. Rather it is to show that there is a sophisticated PR campaign behind what is happening and the agenda is that of a major faction in the global elite. This agenda will not work – indeed it will complete the destruction of nature and the eco-system.

How can I claim that with complete conviction and certainty? Because this is an expansionary programme and ecological footprint analysis has already established that the biosphere is being consumed as if there were 1.7 planets. All serious approaches to resolving the ecological crisis recognise that the global economy must contract back to a one planet level. The economy must degrow.

What's more it is richest 5% of the planet that consume 50% of planetary carbon – so the very people who are promoting this campaign must cut back the most. Instead they want to expand the economy. But how is this to be made compatible with reducing carbon emissions?

It isn't – but a careful looks at the language of nature financialisation refers to carbon neutrality, not zero carbon. This is "convenient language when one of the main pillars of the business model is the sale of carbon offsets – rationalizing a continuance of the same carbon based lifestyle by constructing a faux fantasy one, that anyone with monetary wealth, can buy into."

To conclude this story with another quote from Cory Morningstar: in the quote below, she makes reference to Edward Bernays, the master of Public Relations and Marketing. In the 1920s he helped the tobacco industry achieve a massive new market – women.

Sensing the mood of many young women, Bernays got photos of young women smoking in prominent publications as an expression of their liberation and as an act of defiance and cultural rebellion. It was a fantastic success – for the tobacco industry, though not for women's health. By engineering a feeling of emergency and rebellion – and channelling public concern and anger to what is an elite agenda for the environment long in preparation, it is hoped to pull off support for a massive policy coup for a section of the elite.

The ten-year social engineering effort also led to a transition from environmentalism into full-blown yet undetected anthropocentrism. Over a ten year span, "environmentalism " moved from that of protecting nature, to demanding a roll-out of green technology, industrial in scale, that would further plunder nature. The natural world became irrelevant as the desire for green technology superceded environmental protection. Wind turbines and solar panels replaced images of trees and insects as the new symbols of our natural world. Saving the industrial civilization that is killing off all life became paramount to saving the ecosystems that all life depends on. These ideologies slowly took hold until "movements" become nothing more than lobby groups for green energy. Volunteers marching for capital, global in scale. To suggest that Edward Bernays would be impressed would be an understatement. Such is the beauty of social engineering and behavioural change.

Afterword

After finishing writing this article I read a very interesting article on the same blog – about the appearance of an "XR Business Blog" which revealed some of the business interests behind Extinction Rebellion. Given the controversy it caused this part of the XR blog rapidly disappeared. Several of the named individuals are venture capitalist funders – looking to make money from what they claim to be "sustainability" and very much within the green growth camp. I doubt that many of the companies named, including Unilever for example, would embrace degrowth, the revival



of the commons, co-operatives or other types of institutions for sharing so needed for economies which contracting back to the point of one planet living. Above all it seems to bear out the suspicion that for some of its leaders and initiators the XR Rebellion was seen as part of the planned PR offensive to build support for the phony Green New Deal...

For more details:

1. <http://www.wrongkindofgreen.org/2019/04/24/rebellion-extinction-a-capitalist-scam-to-hijack-our-resistance/>
2. <http://www.wrongkindofgreen.org/2019/01/17/the-manufacturing-of-greta-thunberg-for-consent-the-political-economy-of-the-non-profit-industrial-complex/>
3. <http://www.wrongkindofgreen.org/2019/01/21/the-manufacturing-of-greta-thunberg-for-consent-the-inconvenient-truth-behind-youth-cooptation/>
4. <http://www.wrongkindofgreen.org/2019/01/28/the-manufacturing-of-greta-thunberg-for-consent-the-most-inconvenient-truth-capitalism-is-in-danger-of-falling-apart/>
5. <http://www.wrongkindofgreen.org/2019/02/03/the-manufacturing-of-greta-thunberg-for-consent-the-house-is-on-fire-the-90-trillion-dollar-rescue/>
6. <http://www.wrongkindofgreen.org/2019/02/13/the-manufacturing-of-greta-thunberg-for-consent-the-new-green-deal-is-the-trojan-horse-for-the-financialization-of-nature/>
7. <http://www.wrongkindofgreen.org/2019/02/24/the-manufacturing-of-greta-thunberg-a-decade-of-social-manipulation-for-the-corporate-capture-of-nature-crescendo/>

For Reference - "This changes nothing: The Paris Agreement to Ignore Reality" - Clive Spash
<https://www.clivespash.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/2016-Spash-This-Changes-Nothing.pdf>