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Rejecting Machin's Complacent Democracy (and Defending the Importance of Truth, Consistency and Moral Argument)

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Abstract

Amanda Machin defends a new approach to climate change, which some claim is an "original" and "lucid" contribution that will "revitalise" the debate. Drawing on Slavoj Žižek's interpretation of parallax and Chantal Mouffe's radical democracy, Machin focuses on negotiation rather than moral argument, arguing that we should embrace disagreement. In the process of defending her view, Machin dismisses Naomi Klein, and various moral philosophers, arguing that framing the debate in terms of moral argument will be ineffective, divisive and ultimately lead to extremism and climate change denial.

However, Machin does not challenge, or engage with, the extensive empirical evidence that suggests that the growth in climate change denial was the result of

“Merchants of Doubt” coordinating campaigns of misinformation, and Machin’s rejection of other views is often based on misrepresentations. Furthermore, (I argue) Machin’s arguments commit her to an implausible relativism, and the view she defends is morally bereft, and would leave corruption and corporate influence unchecked. Contrary to Machin’s assertions, the history of the abolition of slavery demonstrates that moral argument has a crucial role to play in social change and progress, and should be a crucial part of any democracy, as should a commitment to truth, consistency and scientific knowledge.

1 - Introduction

Mike Hulme refers to Amanda Machin’s *Negotiating Climate Change* as a “lucid intervention”, and Andrew Dobson calls it a “highly original treatment” while Jon Pugh claims that “Amanda Machin... will surely revitalise debate surrounding one of the key challenges of our time.”¹

It is reasonable, therefore, to worry that Machin’s work could be influential. I say “worry” because I believe – and will argue – that the impact of her ideas would be extremely negative, if they became influential. Her recommendations, I will argue, are a recipe for inaction, permitting the climate change deniers and “merchants of doubt”² to continue spreading misinformation, and permitting corporations to use their influence to protect *their* self-interest. Machin’s views threaten to undermine the most effective arguments in support of the regulations and infrastructure necessary to reduce our CO₂e³ emissions, or to adapt to a changing climate. For this reason, it is important to highlight the many flaws in

Machin’s arguments (or indeed, in places, to highlight the complete *lack* of argument).

Machin calls her approach “the radical democratic approach”.⁴ I will argue that Machin’s position is radical only in the sense that it is implausible and morally unpalatable. The view of democracy at the heart of Machin’s arguments would be better described as complacent democracy.

In section 2, I will offer a brief summary of Machin’s view. In section 3, I will consider a number of key concepts in more detail, also highlighting flaws and emphasising the lack of argument or evidence for many of her claims. In section 4, I will focus in more detail on Machin’s discussion of democracy – and most importantly, her omissions. In section 5, I will consider in more detail Machin’s claim that climate change should not be addressed in moral terms, and in section 6, I will consider the approach that an eighteenth century Amanda Machin would have advocated in relation to the abolition of slavery.

Ultimately, I will conclude that Machin’s approach is morally bereft, and – if influential – would only undermine the positive contributions of those who are aiming to combat misinformation and misunderstanding, and who are aiming to motivate action on climate change.

2 – Machin’s View

One can get a good sense of Machin’s position from the title of her book – *Negotiating Climate Change* – and from the title of the key chapter in which she presents her own view – “Celebrating Disagreement: The Radical Democratic Approach”.

Machin claims that disagreement is not only inevitable, but also welcome. She claims that we should welcome disagreement not only because disagreement encourages political engagement, but because disagreement is actually *necessary* to make a decision. Machin argues that “it is not agreement that should be searched for, but disagreement”, that “Decisive action is underpinned not by consensus but by disagreement”⁵, and ultimately:

To make a political decision, then, it is not just that there will be disagreement, but that there must.⁶

Similarly, she argues that we should not be seeking consensus, as “The myth of consensus on climate change stifles collective decision and action on the issue.”⁷

Machin also argues that there is another reason why we should not be seeking consensus, because this leads to the exclusion of those outside the consensus, and this – in turn – can lead to extremism. Machin speculates about the reasons for the growth of climate change denial, and offers her own suggestion:

Perhaps the growth of climate change denial... is not an unfortunate exception that has arisen contingently from a swamp of misinformation and irrationality, but rather an outcome of the very framing... The incessant emphasis on consensus gives only two alternatives: agree or reject. There is no room for multiplicity of values and voices, no room for disagreement within politics, but rather only exclusion from it.⁸

She asserts:

This sort of extremism... appears as the only alternative left to consensus.⁹

Instead, therefore, Machin argues we should celebrate disagreement, and focus on negotiation.

Many of the claims above sound like empirical claims, which would be best supported by empirical evidence. Indeed, if compelling evidence for these claims was presented, we would have to take these claims seriously. However, these claims do not seem to be based on empirical evidence, but rather on non-empirical arguments, appealing to parallax and incommensurability.

She claims that:

Climate change is an object of parallax of which X and Y have incommensurable perspectives.¹⁰

I will present my own, more detailed account of parallax later, but Machin herself refers to parallax as an astronomical term referring to “the apparent displacement of an object due to different positions from which it can be observed.”¹¹ She then endorses Slavoj Žižek’s account, according to which “a parallax involves a ‘constantly shifting perspective between two points between which no synthesis or mediation is possible. There is no rapport between the two levels, no shared space. ...’”¹²

Discussing incommensurability, she writes:

For example, a rainforest has scientific, aesthetic, economic and spiritual values that compete and *cannot be weighed against each other*.¹³

I will discuss incommensurability in more detail later in this paper. Now though, it is also important to appreciate the nature of the radical democracy that Machin advocates. Machin rejects the ideals of deliberative democracy, arguing that it is overly idealistic and unrealistic. Machin also rejects appeals to moral arguments, and suggests that we should see climate change as a political issue,

and *not* a moral issue. Instead, Machin suggests that we should focus instead on negotiation. Again, this will be discussed in more detail below.

3 – Key Concepts in Machin’s *Negotiating Climate Change*

In the above, I offered a brief overview of Machin’s view. In the following, I will critique key concepts in Machin’s book.

Incommensurability

As highlighted above, an appeal to incommensurability plays a central role in many of Machin’s arguments.

However, it is not clear that Machin recognises the implications of this commitment. Claims of incommensurability are often more radical than people realise. To recognise how radical claims of incommensurable can be, we need to consider the implications of the claim. If we say, in the abstract, that A and B are incommensurable, this can sound plausible. If we go beyond the abstract, however, recognising what the claim commits us to, appeals to incommensurability become much less persuasive.¹⁴

To illustrate this, consider one of Machin’s own examples. Machin writes:

For example, a rainforest has scientific, aesthetic, economic and spiritual values that compete and *cannot be weighed against each other*.¹⁵

What are we committed to if we accept this claim? Suppose that I want to commission a piece of modern art, which would involve burning down all of the

rainforests simultaneously. Plausibly, one could argue that this would have at least *some* artistic and aesthetic value. The fact that it will look spectacular is part of the aesthetic value. In addition, it could be said to have artistic value because it would raise interesting questions about the value of art, and it would encourage debate about commensurability and competing values.

Even if only for the sake of argument, assume that there would be at least some aesthetic and artistic value. On this assumption, does it follow that I should commission this piece of art? Surely, the only plausible answer is no. Not because it would *not* be spectacular, but because there are *other considerations* and these considerations (individually or in combination) *outweigh* the aesthetic and artistic value.

This answer, however, is not available to Machin. She is committed to the claim that these different incommensurable considerations are, “cannot be weighed against each other.”

Parallax

In defence of this incommensurability, Machin appeals to the concept of parallax:

An astronomical term referring to the difficulties of directly observing the stars, a parallax is the apparent displacement of an object due to different positions from which it can be observed.¹⁶

Machin then continues:

For some, a parallax... exists when an object can be seen in both a direct and a distorted way. But another way of understanding a parallax is of

the inevitability of observing a certain object only indirectly, and when the different observations are incommensurable.¹⁷

Beyond this, however, Machin says very little to help us to understand what parallax is, or why we should accept Machin's claim that

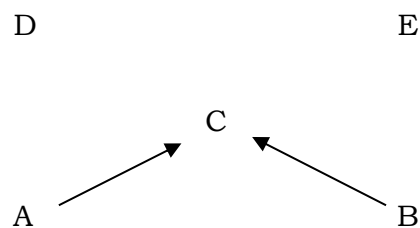
Climate change is an object of parallax of which X and Y have incommensurable perspectives.¹⁸

I will return to the question of whether climate change should be considered an object of parallax later. First though, let us try to clarify the basic concept.

Here, an example or two may be illustrative. Consider the example of a camera which has a viewfinder separate from the lens, such that what the photographer sees through the viewfinder is not quite identical to what the lens sees. When taking photographs of an object close to the camera, this will often result in photographs that do not capture exactly what the photographer wanted to capture, because of the different perspectives.

This is an example of parallax that would seem to fit the first of Machin's interpretations – “when an object can be seen in both a direct and a distorted way.”¹⁹ The perspective seen through the view finder is *wrong*, in the sense that it doesn't accurately represent what will be photographed.

In contrast, consider the picture below:



Imagine that this is a bird's eye view of 5 people. A is looking in the direction of E, and B is looking in the direction D. From A's perspective, E is behind C. From B's perspective, D is behind C. In this case, it does not make sense to say that one is right, and one is wrong. B's view is not a *distortion* of A's view, or vice versa. They simply have different perspectives. In contrast to the camera example, we might think that this is *closer* to Machin's second interpretation. Nevertheless, we should not describe this in terms of "the inevitability of observing a certain object *only indirectly*" or in terms of the impossibility of "synthesis or mediation".²⁰

There is no reason to suggest that A is only seeing C and E *indirectly*, and the fact that the situation can be captured in a single diagram suggests that some kind of synthesis is possible. And if A and B were arguing, with A insisting "D is behind C" and B insisting "E is behind C", one could *mediate* by insisting that they were both confused: their claims are necessarily relative to their perspectives.

Indeed, an anonymous referee for this journal pointed out that there is something especially problematic about Machin's appeal to the analogy with parallax in astronomy, because the "parallax in astronomy – the apparent displacement of celestial objects against the background of the 'fixed' stars when observed from different positions in the earth's orbit – enables astronomers to determine their distance from the sun by employing careful measurement of angles and some trigonometry: there is nothing incommensurable here."²¹

In addition, I would also challenge Machin's idea that we have different *interpretations* of parallax. Rather, parallax is the same thing in all of these cases, but the *implications* are different.

So how does this relate to climate change?

Suppose I claim that the economic considerations in favour of continuing to use fossil fuels are outweighed by the fact that, “if there is extreme warming, the earth will not be able to sustain anything approaching our present population” and the resulting collapse “will be brutal and violent.”²²

This claim – whether you agree with it or not – poses problems for Machin. This claim is quite different from the claim that E is behind C. “Behind” – like “left” and “right” – is a perspectival concept. The fact that A and B are not actually disagreeing, and that neither is wrong, is clear from the diagram above: they are *both* making claims that cohere with reality.

In contrast, though, the concept of weighing is not a perspectival concept. Regardless of my perspective, one side simply *is* heavier than the other.

Machin claims that:

Climate change is an object of parallax of which X and Y have incommensurable perspectives.²³

Thus, Machin might suggest that X might consider the economic interests to be more important than, and outweighs, the interests of future generations. In contrast, Y might consider the interests of future generations to be more important than X considers them to be. But this much is uncontroversial. People clearly do reach different conclusions. But we must not confuse the empirical and the normative.

What Machin has to do is argue that the *apparent* disagreement between X and Y is like the apparent disagreement between A and B in the picture above, in the sense that we cannot say that one is right and one is wrong. They just have different perspectives. And Machin has to be able to do this despite the fact that – unlike “behind” – “outweigh” is not a perspectival concept. In addition, she also has

to argue that – unlike the example of A and B, and unlike the astronomy example – these perspectives are incommensurable.

One way to argue that people just have different perspectives, which are neither right nor wrong, is to argue that moral claims are subjective or relative, and the only moral weight that considerations have is the weight that an individual *gives* to them – such that they are essentially like preferences. If this is the claim, though, Machin’s claims are about morality, not about climate change in particular. As such, Machin would have to accept that her appeals to parallax and incommensurable perspectives would apply to slavery, murder, rape, and genocide – not just climate change. Alternatively, the claim could be specifically about climate change, rather than morality, but it is not clear why we would think climate change, in particular, was “an object of parallax”, but not (for example) slavery or genocide. So what argument does Machin provide for the radical conclusion that different considerations cannot be weighed against each other and that, on the contrary, we just have different perspectives?

Essentially, there are just two elements to Machin’s argument, and neither is convincing. The first is essentially an appeal to authority. She writes:

For Slavoj Zizek, for example, a parallax involves a ‘constantly shifting perspective between two points between which no synthesis or mediation is possible. There is no rapport between the two levels, no shared space...’²⁴

The second element is simply an assertion – or, more accurately, a tentative suggestion:

*Perhaps climate change is a parallax in this sense...*²⁵

At this point, it is a mere suggestion – “Perhaps”. Some might argue that I cannot complain about someone making a tentative suggestion. Two points should be emphasised, however.

First, Machin does not go on to give an account of how we would decide whether climate change is an object of parallax or not. She does not, for example, give us any criteria which would allow us to justify the claim that climate change is an object of parallax but that slavery for example is not.

Second, the uncertainty and the merely speculative nature of the suggestion, as it appears here, seems to disappear in the arguments that follow. Machin’s arguments rely heavily on this idea, but Machin does not qualify her conclusions, emphasising that they are based on a speculative suggestion and such that her conclusions should be rejected if it turns out that climate change is *not* a parallax.

In addition to this failure to acknowledge the shaky foundations of her core argument, there is a further, and even more substantial problem. Ultimately, there is a contradiction at the heart of Machin’s position.

The Core Contradiction

Machin seems to be responding to a perceived lack of progress on climate change. Machin suggests that, “Perhaps we should reconsider... whether focusing on achieving [consensus] obstructs the possibility of effective action”.²⁶ She states that “The myth of consensus on climate change stifles collective decision and action on the issue.”²⁷ And, more positively, she suggests, “we could move towards a decision, a decision that will never be final but one that might be able to tackle climate change, whatever it is decided this means.”²⁸

This implies that she thinks we can judge some decisions to be better than others, and implies that we *ought* to be doing something about climate change, and that we are *failing* to act. She believes that, if we follow her recommendations, we can do *better*.

It is not clear, however, that Machin can say these things, given her commitment to parallax, and the view that there are incommensurable perspectives, and that “we can never claim to have made the ‘right’ decision...”²⁹ and that “What climate change means, and... whether we should address it depends upon where we live...”³⁰

As a nation, with a representative democracy, we³¹ are making decisions all the time. Mostly, we are making decisions to continue using fossil fuels, and to do very little to change our lifestyles or our energy supply in response to climate change. But, if there are just different perspectives and if it is legitimate for us (as a nation) to decide that climate change is not a priority for us,³² I cannot see how Machin can suggest that we have made the *wrong* decisions, or that we are *failing* to do what we ought to do.

Here, my argument is draws on Bernard Williams’ objection to vulgar relativism,³³ where the problem is that the relativist rejects objective/non-relative claims in ethics, suggesting that what is right or wrong depends on one’s society (or one’s *perspective* for Machin), but then – despite that relativist commitment – the relativist offers a non-relativist conclusion, suggesting that one must not impose one’s values onto others. Williams states, “To draw these consequences is the characteristic (and inconsistent) step of vulgar relativism”.³⁴ Given the similar contradiction noted above, and given her dismissal of moral argument, and her emphasis on different incommensurable perspectives, it is reasonable to suggest that Machin is committed to vulgar relativism, or (at least) something very similar.

Parallax and Climate Change Deniers (and Relativism about Science)

Furthermore, Machin's claim that there is no right or wrong answer, but only incommensurable perspectives, doesn't seem to be limited to moral claims about what we ought to do. Machin also appeals to parallax and incommensurability when considering scientific claims. After all, Machin suggest that it is climate change itself that is an object of parallax.

This leads to another problem. Machin is far too inclusive in terms of what should be included. Imagine, for example, that I am driving, and you are in the passenger seat. If you look at the needle on my speedometer, from your position, you will have a different perspective, and it may look like I am going faster (or slower)³⁵ than I am. This would be an example of parallax. However, if you don't even look at the speedometer, but just guess the speed, this is *not* an example of parallax. Parallax occurs when people look at the same object from different perspectives. If you don't even look at the object, this is not an example of parallax.

To be blunt, making stuff up is not just another perspective, another way of seeing, or *another way* of doing the science! So if scientists do sophisticated scientific research, addressing a plurality of different issues that relate to climate change while climate change deniers watch television and ignore the scientific research, we cannot plausibly consider this to be an example of parallax. Similarly, if some people work on the science, while others deliberately aim to *distort* the science and spread doubt and confusion,³⁶ this is not an example of parallax.

As such, my concern is that Machin is far too reluctant to criticise particular groups, and is far too relativistic in suggesting that people simply have different

perspectives, suggesting that we cannot say that one perspective is better than another.

4 – Amanda Machin on Democracy

Machin endorses a view she calls radical democracy, which she defends as an alternative to the eco-authoritarian alternative to democracy on the one hand, and deliberative democracy on the other. As such, it may be helpful to say something about Machin’s rejection of these two alternatives before offering a critique of radical democracy.

The Rejection of Eco-authoritarian Alternatives to Democracy

Machin characterises Garrett Hardin’s “The Tragedy of The Commons” as an example of the *eco-authoritarian alternative* to democracy.³⁷

When characterising Hardin’s view as one which sees democracy as “an impediment to ensuring collective decisive action”,³⁸ Machin focuses on the fact that Hardin advocates “coercion”, but she fails to mention that he advocates “*Mutual Coercion, Mutually Agreed Upon*”,³⁹ And she also fails to mention that the example that Hardin uses to emphasise the importance of coercion is robbery:

When men *mutually* agreed to pass laws against robbing, mankind became more free, not less so.⁴⁰

Of course, when we make it clear that this is what Hardin has in mind when he advocates coercion it is much more difficult to see how this could be considered undemocratic. Furthermore, it is also worth noting that Machin herself appeals to

the importance of coercion, stating that we cannot rely on an appeal to individual ethics “without any political policy to coordinate and *coerce* them.”⁴¹ Machin herself claims that “the actions and policies required to reduce the size of ecological footprints and to tackle climate change require the decisive action of a political collective”⁴², and cannot be achieved with “individual gestures”⁴³ in the “personal sphere”.⁴⁴ This is essentially the position Hardin was defending.

Deliberative Democracy

Machin’s commitment to radical democracy is largely based on her view that deliberative democracy is overly idealistic and therefore unrealistic. Machin comments that, “The participants within a deliberative democracy are regarded as free and equal...”⁴⁵ and she considers this to be unrealistic, arguing that it “ignores the *inevitability* of power relations in political discussion.”⁴⁶ But this is philosophically confused. It confuses empirical claims with normative claims. Those arguing for deliberative democracy present the idea of a democracy involving participants who are free and equal as *an ideal to aim for*. It is not meant to be an empirical claim. The normative claim “murder is wrong” is not undermined by the empirical claim that no society has ever managed to eradicate murder, nor by the claim that no society ever will. Likewise, the normative claim that a democracy should involve participants who are free and equal is not undermined by pointing out that it has not been achieved – or even by the claim that it *cannot* be achieved.

Also, inequality and undue influence come in degrees. It is absurd to think that, if we cannot eradicate them completely, we should not even try to do what we can to *reduce* corruption, undue influence and inequality.

Thus, it seems absurd for Machin to worry that equality is not possible, but to show no indication at all of being concerned about corruption, financial donations, distortion, or the role of corporate lobbying. Ha-Joon Chang writes:

Politicians and bureaucrats are lobbied by all sorts of groups... But corporations exert the greatest influences. In some countries, such as the US, with weak restrictions on corporate lobbying, corporate influences are enormous. Jim Hightower... was certainly exaggerating, but not by much, when he said, “The corporations don’t have to lobby the government any more. They are the government.”⁴⁷

In relation to climate change in particular, John Farrell suggests that the approach of fossil fuel companies is to “take the money that we make from selling fossil fuels, and use it to lobby as hard as we can against any change to the way that we do business.”⁴⁸ Mulvey et al give an indication of the extent of corporate lobbying. For example, they discuss the Western States Petroleum Association (WSPA), whose members include “BP, Chevron, ExxonMobil, Shell, Occidental, and other major fossil fuel companies”. They state:

Between January 2009 and September 2014, oil companies spent more than \$26.9 million through WSPA directly lobbying in California ... ⁴⁹

In addition to lobbying, corporations can also influence politicians through financial donations. Joel Bakan highlights the extent of political donations from fossil fuel companies, and indicates the possible benefits that can result. Bakan states,

“Heavy contributors received other kinds of benefits as well. Chevron, for example, proposed relaxation of regulations governing the granting of federal permits to develop energy projects and those relating to fuel supply. Its proposals were adopted in their entirety.”⁵⁰

More generally, Frank Vogl writes:

As a result of a 2010 US supreme court ruling, the scale of interest group funding of US elections is rising substantially. The court asserted that as part of the constitutions right to free speech, organizations and individuals could use their money as they wish, privately and anonymously, in support of whatever political views they might hold. This is a huge blow to transparency and an invitation to corrupt practices.⁵¹

Not only does Machin fail to address these issues, it is not clear that she would be able to object to these activities even if she wanted to. Presumably, on her view, the corporations are simply negotiating, presenting their perspective. And given her rejection of the ideal that all participants should be free and equal, it is far from clear what Machin could say to object to such practices. Again, Machin's so-called radical democracy looks extremely complacent, refusing to challenge the status quo.

Furthermore, lobbying and donations are not the only concerns. Oreskes and Conway have provided extensive evidence of how corporations have used their money and influence, not only to influence politics through lobbying and donations to election funds, but also by deliberately spreading misinformation.⁵² And, at this point, it is important to remember that Machin rejects the claim that the growth of climate change denial has arisen from a swamp of misinformation – and crucially she rejects that explanation without challenging the evidence. Oreskes and Conway have provided extensive evidence and Machin is aware of this (*Merchants of Doubt* is included in her bibliography), but yet she does not engage with their explanation, or challenge (or even acknowledge) the evidence they provide. She simply suggests that

Perhaps the growth of climate change denial... is not an unfortunate exception that has arisen contingently from a swamp of misinformation and irrationality, but rather an outcome of the very framing... The incessant emphasis on consensus gives only two alternatives: agree or reject.⁵³

Democracy and Climate Change (Machin in the Nineteenth Century)

Given that Machin focuses so much on *democracy*, it is striking that she does not talk more about the specific challenges that democracy faces, in relation to climate change.

In particular, I have in mind the difficulties relating to future generations, the international nature of the problem, and also concerns about corruption and the influence of corporations lobbying against regulation etc.

To put this in perspective, imagine that Machin was writing in the nineteenth century. I can imagine the nineteenth-century Amanda Machin engaging with a nineteenth-century Habermas, arguing about whether democracy should focus on deliberation or negotiation, while completely ignoring the basic fact that women do not have the vote.

Of course, many will complain that this analogy is unfair. In particular, people will emphasise the obvious point that, in the nineteenth-century, women actually existed, so it was possible to give women the vote. The same is not true of future generations. We are simply not able to give them the vote. This is, of course, a significant disanalogy. But I will argue that this is not sufficient to let Machin off the hook. I will return to the intergenerational problem shortly, but let me first consider the other concerns.

Future people do not exist, but people in other countries do, and they are affected by our actions, and vice versa – although of course the impacts are rarely symmetrical. It is not unreasonable, therefore, to ask whether our global political system is truly democratic, and whether it can be justified. For example, would a global democracy be more democratic, or more just?

Although Machin does acknowledge the issue of power and undue influence, and appeals to these issues in her rejection of deliberative democracy, Machin does not consider these issues in a more applied sense. She does not express any concerns about current power relations, corruption or inequality, and given her acceptance of inequality and undue influence, and her rejection of the ideal that all participants should be free and equal, it is far from clear what Machin could say to object to such practices. Again, Machin's so-called radical democracy looks extremely complacent, refusing to challenge the status quo.

Based on the above, you might think that my concern about a lack of attention to future generations must be the weakest of all my objections to Machin. After all, there is nothing we can do about this. None of us can give the vote to future generations. It would be natural, therefore, to conclude that this is no more a problem for Machin than it is for anyone else.

On the contrary, I will argue that the intergenerational problem is much more of a problem for Machin than it is for others, despite the fact that we all have to acknowledge the obvious fact that there is no way in which we can give the vote to future generations.

To understand why this is such a significant problem for Machin, we must remember the importance of negotiation in Machin's position. For Machin,

democracy is all about negotiation. It is not about people *deliberating* together in order to reach a decision that is *right*, or morally *justifiable*.

If democracy is based on negotiation, and if future generations are unable to represent themselves, this leaves a gaping hole in the negotiations. While it may not be a perfect solution, one option is to fill that gap with moral considerations. We should acknowledge that future generations are unable to represent themselves, and we should recognise the moral requirement to consider their interests, and to aim for decisions that are morally justifiable.⁵⁴

In contrast, Machin's view of democracy based on individuals and groups negotiating, based on their own self-interest, using whatever leverage they have, is morally bereft. This objection leads naturally to a discussion of Machin's opposition to moral argument.

5 - Radical Democracy and the Rejection of Moral Argument

Machin has two main concerns about approaches that see climate change as an ethical (or moral) issue. I characterise these objections as follows:

- 1) Focusing on the individual sphere will be ineffective.
- 2) Treating climate change as an ethical issue results in depicting individuals as "morally bad", and "excludes" them (or even "destroys" them).

I will comment briefly on the first objection. If Machin appears to have discredited ethics in an earlier chapter, this will make it easier for her to persuade readers that they should accept her rejection of moral arguments later, when it

becomes clear that this rejection of moral argument is a necessary part of her own view. For these reasons, the error *must* be exposed.

Machin complains that the approach of moral philosophers “focuses upon individuals and their personal choices”, and she insists that “The problem here is the assumption that individuals, acting independently, can agree on how to tackle climate change and will accordingly act harmoniously, without any political policy to coordinate and coerce them.”⁵⁵

To say that this misrepresents many of the authors that Machin focuses on is an understatement. Very few moral philosophers defend anything like the ethical-individual approach that Machin rejects

To pick just one example, Machin suggests that Stephen Gardiner’s claim that ethics should “dominate the discussion is deeply problematic”.⁵⁶ It is problematic, Machin thinks, because “these decisions are more usefully understood as political decisions.”⁵⁷

But Gardiner *does* consider them to be political decisions – and we know that Machin is aware of this, because she quotes Gardiner saying “ethical questions are fundamental to the main *policy* decisions...”⁵⁸

From this line alone, it is clear that Gardiner is focused on policy, not on individual ethical choices in the personal sphere. Furthermore, this quote continues:

ethical questions are fundamental to the main policy decisions that must be made, such as where to set a global ceiling for greenhouse gas emissions.⁵⁹

What could be further from a focus on the personal decisions of individuals?

Ultimately, however, Machin's objections to the ethical-individual approach do not seem to play a significant role in Machin's own view. For this reason, I will focus primarily on Machin's second objection. Machin claims that:

It is crucial to frame climate change as a *political* issue rather than a *moral* question. For in politics we can see opponents as legitimate adversaries rather than enemies to be destroyed.⁶⁰

And, while discussing Naomi Klein, Machin writes:

If the us/them relations aren't seen in political terms, Mouffe warns, then there is a danger that they come to be captured in moral terms instead. "They" are seen as morally bad, the carrier of some "moral disease", and therefore to be regarded as unworthy of agonistic respect: "instead of being formulated as a political confrontation between adversaries, the we/they confrontation is visualised as a moral one between good and evil, the opponent can be perceived as an enemy to be destroyed". Those that disagree with the dominant description of climate change become tarred with the stigma of irrationality and moral badness and their claims have been regarded as socially unacceptable.⁶¹

Klein focuses on capitalism and large scale political and economic systems. Consequently, Klein's view couldn't be further from the focus on individual conscience and Machin's objections to Klein do not focus on the *ineffectiveness* of focusing on individual actions in the personal sphere. So something else is going on here.

The objection seems to be that the moral approach treats certain views as "socially unacceptable", and excludes people, or even views them as "an enemy to be destroyed". Ultimately, this is the objection that seems to carry the most weight

for Machin. But why should we accept this negative view of moral argument? And is this argument based on empirical observation or on philosophical argument?

In fact, there is very little argument or evidence in support of Machin's claim that treating climate change as an ethical issue will 1) result in labelling people as morally bad, and 2) exclude these people. And, similarly, there is little argument to support the claim that these things – if they did happen – would necessarily be bad (all things considered). Essentially, the claims are simply asserted, backed up only by another appeal to authority, this time the authority being Chantal Mouffe.

There is no discussion of the possibility that we might be able to separate actions from individuals, to argue that certain actions are morally wrong without arguing that those who perform those actions should be condemned as morally bad people. Machin does not seem to recognise the possibility of the approach taken by Atticus Finch in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*:

He put his arms around me and rocked me gently. 'It's different this time,' he said. 'This time we aren't fighting the Yankees, we're fighting our friends. But remember this, no matter how things get, they're still our friends and this is still our home.'⁶²

(And we might add, this is still *their* home: perhaps we can argue with people without excluding them.)

Similarly, Machin does not consider the possibility that people on both sides of a moral debate could be uncertain of their own moral view, and could see argument as a process that takes both parties closer to the truth, trying to work out what ought to be done.

Finally, even if we accept the claim that treating climate change as an ethical issue will result in the exclusion of some people, labelling them as morally bad, why should we assume that this must *always* be a bad thing?

6 – Slavery and Climate Change (Machin in the Eighteenth Century)

Appealing to parallels between the abolition of slavery and the challenge to address climate change, Naomi Klein quotes the historian David Brion Davis:

The abolition of New World slavery depended in large measure on a major transformation in *moral* perception – on the emergence of writers, speakers, and reformers... who were willing to *condemn* an institution that had been sanctioned for thousands of years and who also strove to make human society something more than an endless contest of greed and power.⁶³

In this section, I will imagine what an eighteenth century Amanda Machin would have said, if she had applied her arguments to debates around the abolition of slavery, rather than the mitigation of climate change. Before I explore this issue, though, I will first respond to an important challenge.

A Fair Analogy?

Many are likely to argue that this analogy is uncharitable, for two reasons. First, and most obviously, slaves did not have the vote. Given that Machin's suggested response to climate change is one that focuses on democracy, she might insist that the slaves should have had the vote, and presumably this would have led to the abolition of slavery. Thus, Machin can claim that her approach doesn't commit

her to unpalatable conclusions when applied to slavery. She has the tools necessary to condemn slavery and to support its abolition. Second, Machin claimed that climate change was a parallax. She did not claim that slavery was.

Taking the second objection first, it is not clear that this is a strong defence. Machin's defence of parallax, and her claim that we should focus on disagreement rather than consensus, both come primarily from her analysis of political engagement and her defence of "radical democracy", rather than from an analysis of climate change in particular.⁶⁴ Similarly, Machin did not tell us why climate change *in particular* is "an object of parallax", and she did not give us any criteria for determining what is an object of parallax and what is not.⁶⁵

In relation to the first objection, it is crucial to recognise that I am not accusing Machin of endorsing slavery. Machin's arguments are not about whether climate change is bad or not. The main question for Machin is not, "is it bad?", but, "what should we do about it?"

Furthermore, the question of what we should do is understood in terms of the actual circumstances, considering what is viable, and what is not. Once we make this explicit, the parallels between slavery and climate change become clearer, particularly in relation to the role of democracy in each case.

In relation to democracy and climate change, we simply cannot give future generations the vote. We could, *in principle*, introduce global democracy – such that citizens of Burundi and Eritrea⁶⁶ would have some say in the policies and actions of, for example, the United Kingdom and the United States of America – but in practice, a global democracy is not on the agenda. What is on the political agenda is the question of what, if anything, we should do to reduce our emissions and to limit the harms to future generations and individuals in other countries.

Similarly, it is plausible to suggest that, if we gave the vote to slaves, they would vote against slavery and this would lead to the abolition of slavery. However, just as a global democracy is not currently on the political agenda, giving the vote to slaves was not on the political agenda in the eighteenth century.

Here, and elsewhere in this paper, I am primarily talking about slavery in America and the UK. In the UK, only those who *owned* property were allowed to vote, right up until 1918. It is safe to say that giving the vote to those who were *themselves considered property* was not on the political agenda in the eighteenth century. Similarly, in America, the issue of votes for African-Americans (who made up the majority of the slave population) remained a political issue right up to the 1950s and 60s.

In this context, it is not realistic to suggest that the way to achieve the abolition of slavery is to *first* ensure that slaves have the vote.

In addition to the points above, there are other similarities between slavery and climate change. Abolishing slavery involved great economic costs, and many countries were reluctant to abolish slavery unless other nations were willing to do the same. Furthermore, those who opposed the abolition of slavery appealed to free market ideology:

...any radical attack on slavery challenged the basic American premise that any institution is justified and in harmony with natural law if it is the result of a free market and the free competition of individual self-interest.⁶⁷

In addition to these parallels, I appeal to the example of the abolition of slavery for two further reasons. First, slavery is the text book example used to challenge the moral relativist. It is natural, therefore, to use this example to highlight the relativism implicit in Machin's position. Second, and more importantly, there are important

lessons that we can take from the history of the abolition of slavery, particularly in relation to the importance of moral argument, and also in relation to the possibility of radical change, and progress, both in politics and in moral values.

Parallax and Slavery

Given the point, highlighted above, that Machin's appeal to parallax is based primarily on her views about political engagement and her defence of "radical democracy", I suggest that it is fair to assume that an eighteenth-century Machin would claim that "we can never claim to have made the 'right' decision..."⁶⁸ and that:

[Slavery] is an object of parallax of which X and Y have incommensurable perspectives.⁶⁹

Likewise, she would claim that

What [slavery] means, and how and whether we should address it depends upon where we live...⁷⁰

(For example, in the slave quarters or in the plantation mansion.)

Similarly, she will point out that it is natural that people will have different perspectives and different priorities:

For some... [slavery] is a threat and by voicing their concerns collectively they can draw attention to them. For others, [slavery] may be less of a priority or contain new possibilities. What 'we' should do depends on who 'we' are.⁷¹

Some may complain, again, that I am being unfair, because in this case those who were threatened did not have a voice. But this is my point. Those who

have an interest in business as usual have more of a voice than those who are threatened by climate change, and many do not have a voice at all (because they do not even exist yet).

On Machin's view, these would just be different, and incommensurable, perspectives. Machin, however, would not be concerned by this conclusion. She would insist that "we can celebrate disagreement and put it to work for us."⁷² Machin claims that "democratic disagreement is key to securing decisive action", and states that "Radical democrats argue that differences cannot and *should not* be overcome".⁷³

What I am claiming is that we should be prepared for some differences to be insurmountable... Indeed, what I am claiming is that we should welcome such clashes.⁷⁴

Ultimately, however, Machin's claims are even more radical than this.

To make a political decision, then, it is not just that there will be disagreement, but that there *must*.⁷⁵

But this is clearly false.

Today, there is virtually no disagreement about slavery. Certainly there are no mainstream political parties arguing that the abolition of slavery was a mistake, and that we should bring back slavery. Should we lament the lack of disagreement about the permissibility of slavery? Clearly not. Similarly, Machin claims that consensus *hinders* action. Again though, the view is clearly absurd, and is in conflict with the empirical evidence.

In the eighteenth century, there was significant disagreement about slavery, and a lack of consensus. It is true that, despite this lack of consensus, decisive action was taken and slavery was abolished – but at a cost.

In Britain,

£20m (equivalent to 40% of state expenditure in 1834) was paid in compensation by the British government to the slave owners to *secure their agreement* to the loss of "their" property – despite the fact that the moral basis of the campaign against slavery was that it was wrong to hold property in people.⁷⁶

(And what better example could there be of Machin's approach – that is, of democracy as negotiation, without any moral ideals and without any concerns about unequal power and influence.)

And in America, a civil war was required to successfully abolish slavery. (Many claim that the American Civil War was not about slavery. Responding to these people, Davis discusses the thirteenth amendment (which abolished slavery), and comments: "Lincoln remarked that this document rooted out 'the original disturbing cause' of the great rebellion and civil war – a definitive response to all those who later insisted that slavery was not the cause or major issue of the Civil War."⁷⁷)

In contrast, in both countries today, there is a clear consensus that slavery is wrong. Illegal slavery still remains a problem to some extent (the abolition of slavery is not the same as the eradication of slavery) but the consensus against slavery is clearly *not* a barrier to the continued prohibition, nor to the continued attempts to clamp down on illegal slavery.

Consensus and Extremists

Machin also suggests that it is the focus on reaching a consensus that leads to extremism, and suggests that this means that we should not aim for consensus.

Here, we need to be careful to make a distinction between the empirical claim and the normative claim.

The empirical claim states that, where there is a majority consensus, the outcome is a kind of radicalisation of those left on the margins. The normative claim is that, because of this, we should not seek mainstream consensus. I will challenge both claims.

The eighteenth-century Machin might suggest that, if we develop a strong consensus against slavery, and if we abolish slavery, the white supremacists, who oppose the abolition, will form into a radical group and will start lynching blacks and attacking those in favour of abolition.

In summary, she might insist:

This sort of extremism... appears as the only alternative left to consensus.⁷⁸

Judged purely as an *empirical* claim, it could be tempting to argue that the actual history does fit with Machin's claims about the causes of extremism. Whites in the southern states of America who opposed the abolition of slavery, and opposed the emerging consensus, *did* form the Ku Klux Klan, and did resort to violence. Davis states that, "numerous Southern whites and some Northerners adopted the view that if it had not been for the presence of blacks, there would have been no devastating war"⁷⁹ and he states that this conviction contributed to "the eruption of antiblack mob violence and the dramatic increase and acceptance... of the lynching of blacks as a form of 'populist justice.'"⁸⁰

On the face of it, this could be seen to support Machin's empirical claim. However, we should challenge the idea that this was the *start* of this extremism. The racism was already present, and institutionalised slavery was itself extreme.

Once we highlight this obvious fact, we can recognise that abolition of slavery was not the beginning of extremism. Rather, the abolition of slavery ended this widespread institutionalised extremism, leaving a different extremism in its place.

Now consider the normative claim. Even if we accept the interpretation of history which would seem to support Machin's empirical claim, the normative claim does not obviously follow from the empirical claim. Of course, there is no denying that it was a bad thing that the abolition of slavery was accompanied by this extremism and violence. It does not follow, however, that it was wrong to abolish slavery, or that it was wrong to aim for the consensus that we have today. Ultimately, when considering the issue of slavery, it is not clear that we should regret the fact that "Those that disagree[d] with the [newly] dominant description of [slavery] [were] tarred with the stigma of irrationality and moral badness". And we certainly should not be concerned if their views are now "regarded as socially unacceptable."⁸¹ We should not be aiming to *accommodate* these views into contemporary mainstream politics. We should not feel, for example, that what we really need, today, is a political party to represent the white supremacists who complain that none of the mainstream parties advocate a return to slavery or "the lynching of blacks as a form of 'populist justice.'" In contrast, as Davis suggests, "it is crucially important to remind ourselves that some struggles for greater fairness and justice have succeeded; they are part of our past and thus open possibilities in our future."⁸²

Furthermore, this isn't the only important lesson to take from the history of slavery.

Another Lesson from History

We must also reflect on the *type* of argument that contributed to this radical shift in beliefs and in the law. For the abolitionists, and the slaves themselves, *consistency* was a powerful weapon. Davis states that slaves in the northern states appealed to the

same natural-rights language that the whites employed against so-called British tyranny. It was this contradiction that helped the reformers to pass laws for very gradual slave emancipation... (Davis, 2006, p. 7)

Similarly, discussing the case of La Amistad, Davis claims that

The central issue, for key leaders like Lewis Tappan, the wealthy silk merchant who with his brother, Arthur, largely financed the American Anti-Slavery Society, was the *glaring discrepancy* between American positive law – that is, the explicitly enacted statutes that recognized slaves as legitimate private property – and the fundamental doctrine of natural rights embodied in the declaration of Independence. (Davis, 2006, p. 16. My italics.)

Ultimately, therefore, I stress three conclusions:

1. In the absence of giving all affected parties the vote, moral argument is crucial.
2. We should not treat all perspectives as equally worthy of respect.
3. We should focus on logic and consistency (and science) highlighting the extent to which certain views are untenable.

In these ways, we should aim to make it as *hard as possible* for people to hold on to beliefs that cannot be justified.

Perhaps the closest parallel to the simple inconsistencies highlighted by the abolitionists is Bill McKibben's focus on three numbers, 565, 2 and 2795: "we can

emit 565 more gigatons of carbon dioxide and stay below 2°C of warming... Burning the fossil fuel that corporations now have in their reserves would result in emitting 2,795 gigatons of carbon dioxide – five times the safe amount.”⁸³

Contrast this with Machin’s discussion of the “right-wingers” who “identify with climate change denial”. She writes:

Their identification is not a matter of rejecting scientific fact, but of regarding it as an issue that is key to their collective self.⁸⁴

This confuses “not” with “not only”. Perhaps they are not considering the science impartially. Maybe their motivation for rejecting these facts is primarily political. Nevertheless, we should not ignore the simple fact that, if they do identify with climate change denial, then they *are* rejecting the science. It is perfectly sensible, therefore, to make it clear to people how compelling the evidence is for certain key facts (such as the basic science behind the greenhouse effect), in order to make it as hard as possible for people to continue to hold onto false beliefs.

Similarly, we should do what we can to highlight inconsistencies or errors in the views they hold, or the ideologies they identify with. We should be aiming to highlight the inaccurate history,⁸⁵ the flawed arguments, or the inconsistencies, in order to challenge people’s beliefs, whether we are talking about the question of whether or not there is a scientific consensus⁸⁶ or about free market ideology.⁸⁷

We should *not* be suggesting that these people simply have a different perspective, and that the different perspectives are incommensurable, and that their views are no worse than other views. And we should not be holding back, refusing to appeal to moral arguments, especially when individuals are *deliberately and knowingly* spreading misinformation.⁸⁸

Machin suggests that we should not be optimistic about our ability to change people's beliefs if those beliefs are central to their identity, but the history of the abolition of slavery shows that basic logic is hard to resist, even when it challenges ideas that are key to a person's self-identification.

7 - Conclusion

Machin's work has been endorsed as "highly original" and "wonderful", and a "lucid intervention." In the light of these endorsements, I consider it important to highlight the many flaws, because the impact of Machin's arguments would be extremely negative, if they became influential. In short, I have argued that Machin's position is radical only in the sense that it is implausible and morally unpalatable. The view of democracy at the heart of Machin's arguments would be better described as complacent democracy. And I have highlighted numerous flaws and shown that many of the key claims are based on assertion or appeal to authority, rather than sound argument or empirical evidence.

Ultimately, if I wanted to write a book that would give academic credibility to an approach that, if adopted, would leave corporations free to pursue their interests free from scrutiny and moral criticism, and would leave corruption unchecked, *Negotiating Climate Change* is the book I would write. As the history of the abolition of slavery demonstrates, moral argument has a crucial role to play in social change and progress, and should be a crucial part of any democracy, as should a commitment to truth, consistency and scientific knowledge.

¹ See the back cover of Amanda Machin, *Negotiating Climate Change: Radical Democracy and the Illusion of Consensus* (London: Zed Books, 2013). Also see Yara Evans, “Book Review: ‘Negotiating Climate Change: Radical Democracy and the Illusion of Consensus’, Amanda Machin,” *Journal of Environmental Assessment Policy and Management* 15, no. 4 (December 1, 2013) and Mike Childs “Book Review - Politics and Climate Change,” *Friends of the Earth*, December 5, 2013, <https://www.foe.co.uk/blog/book-review-politics-climate-change>. (Accessed 4th November 2017).

² See Naomi Oreskes and Eric M. Conway, *Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming* (Bloomsbury Press: New York, 2010). Also see Kathy Mulvey et al., “The Climate Deception Dossiers: Internal Fossil Fuel Industry Memos Reveal Decades of Corporate Disinformation” (Union of Concerned Scientists, July 2015), <http://www.ucsusa.org/sites/default/files/attach/2015/07/The-Climate-Deception-Dossiers.pdf>. Accessed 4th November 2017.

³ Carbon dioxide *equivalent* emissions.

⁴ Amanda Machin, *Negotiating Climate Change: Radical Democracy and the Illusion of Consensus* (London: Zed Books, 2013), p. 87.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 88.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 98. My italics.

¹⁴ I discuss these issues in more detail in *Shades of Goodness: Gradability, Demandingness and the Structure of Moral Theories* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), particularly chapter 7 and section 13.7. Also see Ruth Chang, 'Introduction', in *Incommensurability, Incomparability, and Practical Reason*, ed. by Ruth Chang (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1997).

¹⁵ Machin, *Negotiating Climate Change*, p. 98. My italics.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

¹⁹ Machin, *Negotiating Climate Change*, p. 88.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

²¹ This is a direct quote from the referee’s comments on the originally submitted version of this paper.

²² John Broome, “The Most Important Thing About Climate Change”, in *Public Policy: Why Ethics Matters*, ed. by Jonathan Boston, Andrew Bradstock and David Eng (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2010), pp. 101-16 (p. 107).

²³ Machin, *Negotiating Climate Change*, p. 100.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 88. (My italics)

²⁶ Machin, *Negotiating Climate Change*, p. 86.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

³¹ I believe Machin is British, as am I. If she is not, this doesn't change my argument – it would just make the expression of the argument more wordy.

³² See Machin, *Negotiating Climate Change*, p. 125. This will be discussed in more detail later.

³³ Bernard Williams, *Morality: An Introduction to Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). In addition, there are also problems associated relating to the question of what counts as a society, and therefore how we separate “us” from “them” in order to identify which morality applies to us. Machin doesn't talk about this in terms of a relativism between different societies, but she does talk about “intersecting identities” (p. 113), “Political identifications”, (p. 123), “their collective self”, (p. 125), “us and them”, (p. 126), and she states that “To identify is to differentiate” (p. 124). Therefore, the problems that relativists have drawing sharp divisions between different societies also apply to Machin here too.

³⁴ Williams, *Morality: An Introduction to Ethics*, p. 24.

³⁵ Depending on whether the car is left or right hand drive.

³⁶ See Oreskes and Conway, *Merchants of Doubt*.

³⁷ Machin, *Negotiating Climate Change*, p. 70.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

³⁹ Garrett Hardin, “The Tragedy of the Commons”, *Science*, 162 (1968), 1243-48. My italics.

⁴⁰ Hardin, “The Tragedy of the Commons”. My italics.

⁴¹ Machin, *Negotiating Climate Change*, p. 3. My italics.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 40.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 80. My italics.

⁴⁷ Ha-Joon Chang, *Economics: The User's Guide: A Pelican Introduction* (Pelican, 2014), 188–89.

⁴⁸ Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014), p. 99.

⁴⁹ Kathy Mulvey et al., “The Climate Deception Dossiers: Internal Fossil Fuel Industry Memos Reveal Decades of Corporate Disinformation” (Union of Concerned Scientists, July 2015), p. 13, <http://www.ucsusa.org/sites/default/files/attach/2015/07/The-Climate-Deception-Dossiers.pdf>.

⁵⁰ Joel Bakan, *The Corporation: The Pathological Pursuit of Profit and Power*, New Ed edition (London: Constable, 2005), 104. (Bakan also quotes figures, which I have not included here.)

⁵¹ Frank Vogl, *Waging War on Corruption: Inside the Movement Fighting the Abuse of Power* (Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2012), p. 48.

⁵² Oreskes and Conway, *Merchants of Doubt*, pp. 10-65, 169-215, 240-65. Also see Frank Vogl, *Waging War on Corruption*, pp. 48, 141-57, and Joel Bakan, *The Corporation: The Pathological Pursuit of Profit and Power*, pp. 75, 85-110, esp. 102-4.

⁵³ Machin, *Negotiating Climate Change*, p. 97.

⁵⁴ Others have suggested that particular individuals could represent the interests of future generations. Ultimately, however, this is based on the same idea. The aim would be for those representing future generations to block decisions that would be harmful to future generations and could not be morally justified. Essentially, this is *one* way of considering their interests.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 44. My italics.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 97-98.

⁶² Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, 50th edn (London: Arrow Books, 2010), pp. 84-85.

⁶³ David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 1. My italics. Quoted in Klein, *This Changes Everything*, p. 463. 37

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- ⁶⁴ Machin, *Negotiating Climate Change*, pp. 87-108.
- ⁶⁵ She does challenge the common “framing” that suggests that climate change will “render us all victims regardless of our specificities” (p. 110), and she points out that it will not be a “priority” for everyone. (p. 125) But this is true of slavery too. Slavery did not render everyone a victim, and the abolition of slavery certainly was not a priority for the slave owners.
- ⁶⁶ See the University of Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative (ND-GAIN), *Country Rankings*, 2015. [Online] Available at: <http://index.gain.org/ranking> [Accessed 8 March 2015].
- ⁶⁷ Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*, p. 262.
- ⁶⁸ Machin, *Negotiating Climate Change*, p. 102.
- ⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 100.
- ⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 109.
- ⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 125.
- ⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 125.
- ⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 86. My italics.
- ⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 100.
- ⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 103. My italics
- ⁷⁶ Catherine Hall, “Britain’s Massive Debt to Slavery,” *The Guardian*, February 27, 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/feb/27/britain-debt-slavery-made-public>. My italics.
- ⁷⁷ Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*, p. 322. Also see pp. 10-11, 297-322.
- ⁷⁸ Machin, *Negotiating Climate Change*, p. 97.
- ⁷⁹ Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*, p. 300.
- ⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 300.
- ⁸¹ Machin, *Negotiating Climate Change*, p. 98.
- ⁸² Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*, p. 322. Also see pages 298, 304 and 305.
- ⁸³ Bill McKibben, *Do the Math*. 2015 [Online] Available at: <http://math.350.org/> [Accessed 25 May 2015]. Also see Bill McKibben, “Foreword,” in *The Burning Question: We Can’t Burn Half the World’s Oil, Coal and Gas. So How Do We Quit?*, (London: Profile Books Ltd, 2013).
- ⁸⁴ Machin, *Negotiating Climate Change*, p. 124.
- ⁸⁵ See Ha-Joon Chang, *Kicking Away the Ladder: Development Strategy in Historical Perspective: Policies and Institutions for Economic Development in Historical Perspective* (London: Anthem Press, 2003).
- ⁸⁶ Naomi Oreskes, “The Scientific Consensus on Climate Change,” *Science* 306, no. 5702 (December 3, 2004): 1686–1686, <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1103618>.
- ⁸⁷ Ha-Joon Chang, *Kicking Away the Ladder*.
- ⁸⁸ Oreskes and Conway, *Merchants of Doubt*