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Warning through Extrapolation

On the Practical Aims of Dystopia

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Abstract

This paper contributes to a better understanding of dystopia's practical aims by offering a critical defence of what Gregory Claeys calls the "Atwood Principle". The Atwood Principle, derived from the writings of the Canadian author, establishes a yardstick for separating speculative fiction from science fiction. I argue that, rather than elevating it to the status of a genre definer, the Atwood Principle should be vindicated in terms of a heuristic device for contextually identifying the central mechanism underpinning dystopias: warning through extrapolation. The real challenge, then, is how to make sense of the complex functioning of extrapolation. Instead of viewing it in mechanistic terms, my suggestion is to envisage extrapolation as a dynamic process involving both realism and estrangement. I illustrate this through a contrast between two kinds of stories about the current climate emergency: cautionary and post-cautionary tales of the Anthropocene.

Setting out the Problem

What is the ultimate purpose of dystopian thinking? A possible answer, widely shared in utopian studies, is that a dystopia performs an "extrapolation from the present that involves a warning" (Sargent 1994, 8; See also: Baccolini 2004; Moylan 2000; Parrinder 2005; Varsam 2003). In this definition, extrapolation and warning are logically dependent on each other. Dystopia's cautionary pedagogy can only gain traction insofar as its dark vision of the future is recognizable as an extension of lived experiences here and now. In order to decode a given text as delivering a warning, it must therefore be conceivable for the readers to imaginatively transport themselves into the bleak situation conjured by the dystopia and conclude: "This could be my life, if things keep on deteriorating. I must therefore urgently do something to stop this from happening."

Although this perspective is useful for illuminating the practical aims of dystopian thinking (its ambition to orient our action), it also leaves some questions open. The most fundamental of these relates to the precise functioning of extrapolation: What sort of projection is needed for dystopia's cautionary pedagogy to succeed? In his magisterial *Dystopia: A Natural History* (2017), Gregory Claeys elaborates on this issue and develops, amongst many other insights, an account of what he calls the "Atwood Principle" – a yardstick for separating speculative fiction from science fiction, by concentrating on the procedure of plausible extrapolation.

My objective in this paper is to use Claeys's seminal work as an entry point into the broader discussion around the goals of dystopianism, homing in more specifically on the nexus between extrapolation and warning. Despite promising efforts, such as William Hardesty's attempt to map the ways science and technology are part of any extrapolative imagining (1987), the existing scholarly literature has so far not managed to scrutinize this nexus with adequate care. This essay seeks to fill this lacuna.

As the name intimates, Claeys derives his idea from Margaret Atwood's writings and in particular from her stark distinction between speculative fiction and science fiction. According to this distinction, science fiction is premised on visions of the future that "are not possible today – that depend, for instance, on advanced space travel, time travel, the discovery of green monsters on other planets or galaxies, or that contain various technologies we have not yet developed" (Atwood 2005b, 92). Speculative fiction of the dystopian variety, by contrast, is grounded in projections from the present that are supposed to send warning signals about dangers that remain concealed from public purview. In its most succinct form, the Atwood Principle thus upholds a view of speculative fiction that "is meant to bring these problems home rather than to estrange us further from them" (Claeys 2017, 489).

While there are valuable lessons to be learnt from Claeys's reflections, I also contend that a narrow interpretation of the Atwood Principle as a genre definer is problematic. This is the case because, in any form of social dreaming, the issue of believability – what should count as a plausible extrapolation from the current moment – always remains up for debate. Despite Atwood's invective against science fiction's fascination with the "discovery of green monsters on other planets or galaxies", there simply is no steadfast criterion to establish a priori what depictions of the future can claim plausibility and what depictions will fail to do so.

Notwithstanding this objection, the Atwood Principle can still be vindicated – as a heuristic device for identifying the central mechanism underpinning dystopias. If the ultimate purpose of dystopias is indeed to warn us about impending dangers (and to orient our actions accordingly), then believability must surely play some role in their narrative development. But what that role entails more specifically needs to be assessed from one context to another. In the paper's final section, I illustrate this through a juxtaposition of two kinds of stories about our climate-changed world: cautionary and post-cautionary tales of the Anthropocene. The paper concludes by investigating the extent to which the very nature of dystopian thinking changes

once authors ostensibly abandon the hope that things can still be turned around. My claim here is that an analysis of their approach reveals the actual target of post-cautionary stories – not hope per se, but the false hopes peddled by those who are deeply enthralled by technological solutionism.

Before proceeding, a caveat: in my attempt to illuminate the critical qualities of extrapolation, I draw in equal measure on speculative fiction, the secondary literature, book reviews and inter-authorial debates around the relationship between dystopia and science fiction. This wide framing, in conjunction with the usual space constraints, means that close readings of specific texts will largely be absent from my argument. For this reason, the paper mainly wishes to theoretically elucidate a complex feature of dystopianism – its aspiration to warn through extrapolation – that has not yet received sufficient attention in utopian studies.

Challenging the Atwood Principle

In this section, my objective is to first provide a summary of the Atwood Principle and then subject it to critical scrutiny. It is relatively straightforward to unpack the main elements of the Atwood Principle. Claeys refers to it so as to highlight that at least some prominent exemplars of dystopian fiction, including most famously Orwell's, observe the genre conventions of literary realism (Claeys 2017, 287). In this context, realism denotes a commitment to tethering a narrative to imaginative projections from trends that already exist within the status quo.

Claeys's proposal is explicitly positioned against a prevailing view of science fiction as the master genre of which utopia is merely a sub-species (Suvin 1978, 61; Jameson 2000; For an overview see: Freedman 2000, 62–86). Insisting on this realistic dimension thus implies that the emphasis on cognitive estrangement as the key device of science fiction is misguided in the case of dystopian fiction (Suvin 1978, chap. 1: Estrangement and Cognition; On Suvin's

terminology see: Parrinder 2000; Renault 1980). Distilled into a succinct formula, we might conclude that dystopias do not operate through estrangement, but through extrapolation.

Claeys submits that it is Margaret Atwood's oeuvre that most vividly epitomizes this fact. In her fiction writing, the workings of the extrapolation process are not overly hard to discover. In *The Handmaid's Tale* (1986), for example, Atwood draws a long arc into the past, singling out the history of American Puritanism as one of the dormant milieus from which a theocratic regime could spring even today (Atwood 2005b, 96–97). The *MaddAddam* trilogy (2003; 2009; 2013) equally speaks of perils around genetic engineering that are already present in today's world. Her dystopian novels raise trenchant questions that are linked to a profound anxiety about the here and now: "What if we continue down the road we're already on? How slippery is the slope? What are our saving graces? Who's got the will to stop us?" (Atwood 2005a, 322)

Thinking through what it means to "continue down the road we're already on" is the crux of what Claeys dubs the Atwood Principle. On this account, not just any projection will do: What is actually required is an extrapolation from the present that is recognizably rooted in a deep concern about today's world. This calls for a prior judgment as to what the road we are taking right now looks like, before an extrapolation about its future direction can happen.

In a number of essays, Atwood has further outlined this basic mechanism, trying to substantiate why she rejects the label of "science fiction" for her novels. In a collection from the early 2000s, she first defined science fiction as writing "in which things happen that are not possible today – that depend, for instance, on advanced space travel, time travel, the discovery of green monsters on other planets or galaxies, or that contain various technologies we have not yet developed" (Atwood 2005b, 92). Instead of science fiction, Atwood prefers the label "specula-tive fiction" for her oeuvre. The proposal is thus to split her writing off from the broader cate-gory of science fiction, by excising from the category of speculative fiction all traces of a

defamiliarizing *novum*, in Darko Suvin's (and Ernst Bloch's) terminology: "no interstellar travel, no Martians" (Mancuso 2016).

Summing up, there are two sides to the Atwood Principle: first, it proffers a claim about the functioning of dystopia's cautionary pedagogy, via its foregrounding of extrapolation at the expense of estrangement; second, it sets a benchmark for holding apart speculative fiction from science fiction. While I believe that the former claim can be defended, albeit on grounds that Claeys has not explored, the latter strikes me as in need of rectification. What could possibly be wrong with Atwood's account of speculative fiction? *Prima facie*, her understanding of science fiction as the literature of estrangement, where "things happen that are not possible today", sounds eminently reasonable.

But matters are not as simple as they might appear. This becomes evident once we pay attention to a review of the second novel in the *MaddAddam* trilogy, the *Year of the Flood*, in which Ursula K. Le Guin takes Atwood's repudiation of the science fiction label to task. Le Guin's diagnosis is that Atwood's insistence on speculative fiction being a genre apart needs to be read as a symptom of intellectual snobbery: "This arbitrarily restrictive definition seems designed to protect her novels from being relegated to a genre still shunned by hidebound readers, reviewers and prize-awarders. She doesn't want the literary bigots to shove her into the literary ghetto." (Le Guin 2009)[1]

Endeavours of ringfencing an author's domain – or their "literary ghetto", in Le Guin's terminology – are endemic in controversies around utopian and dystopian writing. While one may endlessly quarrel over the precise semantics of specific descriptions, it is exceedingly hard to avoid the impression that disputes over the legitimate realm of science fiction are about more than just scholarly nomenclature. Accordingly, Atwood seems to miss one crucial aspect in her championing of "speculative fiction", namely that such designations are inexorably bound up with the powerful desire to locate an author within what Pierre Bourdieu calls a stratified

"field" (1993): a socially constructed network of meaning in which science fiction, put bluntly, yields less cultural capital than realistic writing, but slightly more than fantasy (Milner 2011; Wright 2006).[2]

As a genre definer, the Atwood Principle is thus less than convincing. Rather than erecting an ironclad border fence around science fiction and its neighbouring genres, it would be more prudent to employ the notion of speculative fiction in an ecumenical fashion to cover "all genres that deliberately depart from imitating 'consensus reality' of everyday experience. In this […] sense, speculative fiction includes fantasy, science fiction, and horror, but also their derivatives, hybrids, and cognate genres like the gothic, dystopia, weird fiction, post-apocalyptic fiction, ghost stories, superhero tales, alternate history, steampunk, slipstream, magic realism, fractured fairy tales, and more." (Oziewicz 2017, 1) The advantage of this wide definition, and its stress on otherness, is that it manages to capture a great variety of utopian and dystopian storytelling and theory-building, while still leaving sufficient space for meaningful variations as to how far from the real world a text of speculative fiction might be imaginatively situated.

Reconstructing the Atwood Principle

Whereas Atwood's account of speculative fiction thus raises concerns, the point about extrapolation, which forms the basis of Claeys's thought, warrants further scrutiny and can in fact be redeemed. Here is why. It seems intuitively right to assert that the stronger the readers' sense of estrangement gets, the more difficult it will be for them to make the prerequisite inference, which is central to dystopia's warning function, that this other world could be theirs, too. That is the reason why recent works of speculative fiction frequently utilize a "pseudo-documentary framing" (Murphy 1990) in their storytelling. Atwood's oeuvre is full of examples for such an approach: from the appendix to *The Handmaid's Tale* main plot (Grace 1998; Norris 1990) to the near-future eco-apocalypticism of the *MaddAddam* trilogy (Bouson 2016; Jergenson 2019).

The use of such pseudo-documentary tropes demonstrates that, insofar as dystopian narratives intend to have real-world impact, readers should be able to interpret the "new maps of hell" (Amis 2012) drafted by writers of dystopian fiction as reliable guides to a future that could await them rather sooner than later. Realism, of some kind, hence constitutes a generic feature of all dystopias that highlight which pathways need to be avoided as we move forward.

Where Atwood and, by implication, Claeys go wrong is in their supposition that we could detect a steadfast criterion of believability that would unequivocally cleave possible from impossible scenarios. The Atwood Principle makes it appear as if it were always feasible to draw a sharp line between scenarios that are plausible and those that are not, purely by gesturing at an objective standard of reality. The problem with this model is that it depends on a rather mechanistic view of extrapolation, primarily pointing to scientific discoveries that lie beyond our species' immediate grasp (such as intergalactic space travel and teleportation) as to outer limits of what should be imagined.

The true difficulty of extrapolation comes into view once we pivot away from a focus on fantastical technologies and engage with the political issues that animate much of dystopianism. In the domain of politics, what is at stake is precisely the contested delimitation of what seems possible or not at any given moment in time (On this point see: Geuss 2015, 15–16). To illustrate this, consider that the slogan *There is No Alternative* evidently does not comprise a factual report about the state of the world, but rather represents an ingenious speech act that arises from the ideology of "capitalist realism" (Fisher 2009).[3]

As this compressed example shows, we cannot simply take for granted that we always already know where the limits of the possible lie. Speculative fiction, in the wider sense endorsed above, is predicated on the wager that the boundaries of the imagination are permanently moveable and transgressable. This is why it must by necessity disrupt the "consensus reality" governing the perception of the status quo, thereby unlocking the potential for alternative ways of

being and living (Jameson 2005, 231–32). So, Claeys's point about the anchoring of dystopian fiction within the literary genre of realism seems slightly overdrawn. Although he is right to remark that we "worry less about poverty depicted on Mars than in Detroit" (Claeys 2017, 489), it does not ensue that depictions of scarcity and conflict on other planets cannot tell us anything of significance about solutions to social problems on Earth (Bould and Miéville 2009; D'Adamo 2015).

We thus need to think differently about extrapolation. Teasing out its meaning in terms of a straightforward procedure of extending trends that are in place right now paints too crude a picture. It is for this reason that, in the *Author's Note* to *The Left Hand of Darkness*, Le Guin vehemently objects to a restricted conception of extrapolation as the key to science fiction: "Fortunately, though extrapolation is an element in science fiction, it isn't the name of the game by any means. It is far too rationalist and simplistic to satisfy the imaginative mind, whether the writer's or the reader's. […] This book is not extrapolative. If you like you can read it, and a lot of other science fiction, as a thought-experiment." (Le Guin 2019, para. 20.2-20.4)[4]

Reconstructing the Atwood Principle beyond Claeys's original formulation uncovers that, as in any thought experiment, there is an inevitable trade-off between estrangement and realism, which needs to be carefully negotiated in the process of extrapolation. In determining what sort of projection is essential for the cautionary pedagogy of dystopias to succeed, Claeys's endorsement of realism falls short because it does not track the defamiliarizing tendencies at play in all types of speculative fiction.

Although it is true that a warning can only be deciphered as such if the dystopian portrayal of the future is somehow acknowledged as an extrapolation from the present, what counts as a believable projection is itself up for debate. This debate cannot be cut short through fatuous attempts at categorically separating some forms of storytelling from others. Therefore, the

actual effectiveness of a dystopian text needs to be gauged in a highly contextualized manner, by paying attention to the variable ways in which its cautionary pedagogy might unfold.

The Dystopian Remainders of Post-Cautionary Tales

Thus far, my analysis has stayed at a fairly high level of abstraction so as to flesh out which elements of the Atwood Principle are worth saving and which should be discarded. The paper's final section adds some concreteness by shedding light on the functioning of so-called post-cautionary tales – a concept developed by the founders of the *Dark Mountain* collective (Hine et al. 2013; On this group of thinkers, see: Adams 2014; Librová and Pelikán 2016). In recent years, a number of prominent authors have suggested that our planetary habitat is not only in serious danger but in some sense beyond rescuing. There is, in short, nothing we can do to prevent the collapse of our ecosphere. On this diagnosis, warnings would be useless, for it is already too late to change course.

Based on the reconstructed Atwood Principle, my proposal is that we should envisage these authors as partaking in the wider project of dystopianism – even though it might at first glance appear as if they completely jettisoned the cautionary pedagogy characteristic of all dystopian visions. To better understand this claim, we require some historical background on the uses of apocalyptic imaginaries in environmental thought. It is no exaggeration to say that modern environmentalism was borne out of a dystopian sensibility. This can be illustrated through a passage from the very start of *Silent Spring*. After describing the bucolic countryside surround-ing a town in the heart of rural America, Rachel Carson sketches a bleak picture of natural degradation that reminds one of the setting of a horror film:

> Then a strange blight crept over the area and everything began to change. Some evil spell had settled on the community: mysterious maladies swept the flocks of chickens; the cattle and sheep sickened and died. Everywhere was a shadow of death. The farmers spoke of much illness among their families. In the town the doctors had become more and more puzzled by new kinds of sickness appearing among their patients. There had been several sudden and unexplained deaths, not only among adults but even among

children, who would be stricken suddenly while at play and die within a few hours. There was a strange stillness. The birds, for example – where had they gone? (Carson 2002, para. 2.122-2.127)

Carson's narrative is clearly anchored in an apocalyptic imaginary. It contains a cautionary tale about the lethal consequences of chemical pollution, whose purpose it is to "question progress and challenge modern humanity to develop a new story" (Lewis 1993, 46). Frederick Buell has accordingly argued that Carson's seminal work, together with Paul Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb* ([1968] 1989) and Barry Commoner's *The Closing Circle* (1971), promoted an agenda of collective renewal, spurred by the looming sense that the world was going to collapse (Buell 2010).

The contemporary landscape looks rather different from the one in which modern environmentalism emerged. This can be intuited once we realize that today the prospect of environmental breakdown is not anymore projected into the near future but rather integrated into our quotidian lives. The contemporary "immanentization" of danger has widespread ramifications for how both the present and the future of our climate-changed world are imagined (Heise 2010, chap. 4: Narrative in the World Risk Society). Since many people now largely accept that they already "dwell in a steadily increasing condition of risk, uncertainty, and unpredictability" (Buell 2004, 95), it does not make sense anymore to draw on apocalyptic imaginaries to throw the current state of affairs into sharper relief. Another kind of social dreaming thus becomes necessary, one in which living through the end of the times turns into a central preoccupation (for an interesting Indigenous perspective on this issue, see: Whyte 2017; 2018).

Within this new paradigm of reflecting on the Anthropocene, we can distinguish between two directions that dystopian thinking might take. On the one hand, we find authors who, despite ringing the alarm bells about our species' planetary habitat, continue to stubbornly cling to the hope that we could still turn things around. David Wallace-Wells's recent bestseller *The Uninhabitable Earth* exemplifies this line of reasoning. The book begins with the remark that the

state of our climate-changed world, ravaged by global heating, "is worse, much worse, than you think" (Wallace-Wells 2019, para. 3.9). With the help of a vast array of data, Wallace-Wells impresses on his readers the observation that all our certainties about the natural world have by now dissolved. Humanity has entered a disconcerting stage of its existence on Earth that will soon feel immeasurably worse than prior eras.

And yet, Wallace-Wells is to some degree surprisingly optimistic when it comes to adaptative and mitigating climate action, suggesting that we already possess the tools to correct this self-destructive course of action: "a carbon tax and the political apparatus to aggressively phase out dirty energy; a new approach to agricultural practices and a shift away from beef and dairy in the global diet; and public investment in green energy and carbon capture" (Wallace-Wells 2019, para. 365.5-365.7).

Contrast this perspective with another one. Instead of warning about dangers that lie ahead, a rival group of authors commences with the assumption that we find ourselves not only on the road toward certain extinction, we have already reached its end point. To name but one illustrative proponent of this view, Roy Scranton's celebration of the art of perishing in the Anthropocene is explicitly pitted against the hope that we could still avert civilizational collapse: "The greatest challenge we face is a philosophical one: understanding that this civilization is already dead. The sooner we confront our situation and realize that there is nothing we can do to save ourselves, the sooner we can get down to the difficult task of adapting, with mortal humility, to our new reality" (Scranton 2015, para. 8.28). On this account, all that humanity might still accomplish is to produce shelter zones – "cultural arks" – wherein the memory of the already dead can be safely preserved.[5]

Taking the (unreconstructed) Atwood Principle as our model, it might be tempting to compare these two positions and conclude that the first one adheres to it whereas the second one violates it. On this reading, Wallace-Wells sketches an extrapolative image of the near future that is

purposefully bleak – the dark vision of where we are heading is supposed to mobilize people into transformative action. In that sense, *The Uninhabitable Earth* subscribes to the genre of the critical dystopia, which brings "utopian and dystopian tendencies to bear on their exposés of the present moment and their explorations of new forms of oppositional agency" (Moylan 2000, 198–99).

Based on this framework, Scranton's approach must not be classified as dystopian at all. Its extreme pessimism appears to completely renounce all hope, rendering the very idea of positive change unthinkable. Scranton's portrayal of a catastrophic present and future might hence be charged with paralyzing and debilitating its readers. This is so because "fear can hinder, rather than help […] attempts to halt the disaster" (Lilley 2012, 2). If there is nothing left for our species to do, then all we can still achieve, on a personal level, is the Stoical cultivation of a state of equanimity that would allow us to live through the end of the times with a modicum of humility and dignity.

I want to resist this interpretation because it rests, again, on too mechanistic a view of how dystopias actually operate. As argued above, extrapolation and estrangement are in fact caught up in a dialectical movement: one conditions and enables the other. This more nuanced picture has repercussions for how we envisage post-cautionary tales of the Anthropocene. Rather than putting Wallace-Wells and Scranton on two opposing sides of an unbridgeable divide, they should be located on the same spectrum of positions.

My vindication of the Atwood Principle as a heuristic device for contextually identifying the central mechanism underpinning dystopias lends support to this alternative reading. Consequently, Scranton's withdrawal from an activist type of environmentalism needs to be comprehended in terms similar to the pronouncements of the *Dark Mountain* collective: as engaging in a paradoxical process whereby "hope is sometimes gained not by promoting explicitly hopeful messages, but by ostensibly denying hope" (Cassegård and Thörn 2018, 571).

The real target of post-cautionary tales, then, is not hope per se, but rather the misguided hope of those invested in quick, techno-utopian solutions to the challenges of the Anthropocene. Despite appearances to the contrary, these messengers of doom do issue an admonition, albeit one that is not immediately decipherable as such: namely that "cruel optimism" (Berlant 2011) forms a barrier for a sober reckoning with our climate-changed world.[6] What Scranton wants to warn us about is committing to the wrong form of hope according to which things could get back to normal once the most devastating aspects of the climate emergency have been contained.

The cautionary pedagogy that this peculiar type of dystopian vision sets into motion therefore reflectively targets the unwarranted optimism of some ecological movements – perhaps most notoriously the so-called ecomodernist camp (See: Arias-Maldonado 2020; Symons 2019) – that put excessive faith in the redemptive capacities of current technological innovations. Scranton's death certificate of our civilization can therefore be decoded as an estrangement device that shakes its readers out of a complacent lethargy about the human species' direction of travel. Quick fixes will not save us; or rather, believing in quick fixes will only hasten our species' demise.

The case of post-cautionary narratives underscores why the Atwood Principle needs revising to become defensible. In spite of Claeys's theorization, it is insufficient to interpret the nexus between extrapolation and warning in mechanistic terms, solely by stressing the vital realism inherent in dystopian visions. Since there is no objective standard of reality against which the plausibility of any speculative exercise could be measured (notwithstanding weary talk of "green monsters on other planets or galaxies") we need a more granular analysis of the cautionary pedagogy that dystopias unfold.

In conclusion, probing the Atwood Principle is of great relevance for two interconnected reasons. First, it matters to our conception of dystopias more widely. In light of fresh worries

about the genre degenerating into the "fiction of submission, the fiction of an untrusting, lonely, and sullen twenty-first century, the fiction of fake news and infowars, the fiction of helplessness and hopelessness" (Lepore 2017), it is imperative to recuperate the cautionary pedagogy underpinning all types of dystopianism.

Second, examining the Atwood Principle is also important as we face the biggest challenge of our times: how to inhabit a climate-changed world raises immensely hard questions of collective action. Given the devastating effects of the climate emergency, it is vital to explore as much as possible the different mechanisms whereby environmental activism can be galvanized. As this paper hopes to have highlighted, dystopian thinking can play a crucial role in this process.

Endnotes

[1] In later essays, Atwood appears to have reconciled herself to the profound disagreement with Le Guin, despite accepting the porosity of all genre boundaries: "When it comes to genres, the borders are increasingly undefended, and things slip back and forth across them with insouciance" (Atwood 2011, 7).

[2] This observation chimes not only with Le Guin's rejoinder to Atwood, but also with China Miéville's apprehension about the "uncomfortably patrician and antidemocratic class politics" (2009, 240) undergirding all campaigns to police the canonical boundaries of science fiction.

[3] Naturally, opponents of neo-liberal governance have been fully aware of this. After all, the unofficial motto of the World Social Forum – *Another World is Possible* – was intended as a deliberate attack on the pronouncements and policies of the Thatcher/Reagan era (De Sousa Santos 2005).

[4] This passage forcefully reminds us that, if extrapolation is interpreted along mechanistic lines, it ends up mimicking predictive science. Speculative fiction, however, cannot be in the business of prediction thus understood. The reason for this is simple. As Kim Stanley Robinson contends in an interview, "no one can predict the future that will really come – that's impossible. But scenarios can be outlined as a kind of modelling exercise, to help us make decisions about what to do now to get to a future we want" (Kaufman 2018).

[5] For a powerful critique of this kind of eco-miserabilism, see: Malm (2021, chap. Fighting Despair).

[6] One of the best expressions of this sentiment actually stems from the current icon of global environmentalism, Greta Thunberg: "But I don't want your hope. I don't want you to be hopeful. I want you to panic. I want you to feel the fear I feel every day. And then I want you to act.

I want you to act as you would in a crisis. I want you to act as if our house is on fire. Because it is." (2019)

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