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## Climate - A New Story by C. Eisenstein

Charles Eisenstein's latest book is a game-changer. **He reframes the whole climate issue** with the perspective that, perhaps even more than greenhouse gas emissions, **it's all the ecological degradation caused by all the ways we have used fossil fuels that's responsible for much of the "climate derangement" we have been experiencing**, "caused primarily by the degradation of ecosystems worldwide: the draining of wetlands, the clear-cutting of forests, the tillage and erosion of soil, the decimation of fish, the destruction of habitats for development, the poisoning of air, soil and water with chemicals, the damming of rivers, the extermination of predators, and so on. **Through disruption of the carbon cycle, the water cycle, and more mysterious Gaian processes, these activities degrade the resilience of the ecosphere, leaving it unable to cope with the additional greenhouse gases emitted through human activity.**"

His reframed priorities:

1. **Protect what's still intact**, like the rainforests in the Amazon and the Congo, where Gaia is still healthy, where ecological memory yet endures and from where it can still spread.
2. **Come back into relationship with Gaia** and all the plants and animals, plus regenerate and heal all the ecological wounds that have inflicted.
3. **Stop poisoning** everything with pesticides, herbicides, trash, plastic, etc.
4. **Cut GHG emissions** that are adding to Gaia's stress and trauma.

**"In other words, the land is dying before our eyes, as it has been doing since ancient times. We have to stop killing it. This is bigger than cutting greenhouse gas emissions. It is reversing a relationship to soil and sea that has been part of civilization for thousands of years. I am sorry, but merely switching to so-called renewable energy sources is not enough.**

We are called to visit deep questions like "What are we here for?" "What is humanity's right role on earth?" "What does Earth want?"

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To: California Air Resources Board  
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Re: Proposed Tropical Forest Standard (TFS)

**My comments are general and focused on future project decisions and implementation of the TFS, and other proposals to address climate change where money and fossil fuels are involved.** The TFS staff report which I reviewed represents much work and thought, which will doubtless continue going forward. The challenges of monitoring, verification and enforcement of TFS and similar transactions increase with distance and duration. At the same time, internet connectivity and drones and various other information avenues continue to evolve.

And given this very recent article, it seems they will have their work cut out for them:  
An Even More Inconvenient Truth: Why Carbon Credits for Forest Preservation May Be Worse Than Nothing, by Lisa Song with Paula Moura  
<https://features.propublica.org/brazil-carbon-offsets/inconvenient-truth-carbon-credits-dont-work-deforestation-redd-acre-cambodia/>

Recently I read Charles Eisenstein's book, "Climate – A New Story." **He makes a persuasive argument that the ecological degradation (such as deforestation) which humanity has used fossil fuels to inflict on our world rivals the degradation that's due directly to the various greenhouse gas emissions.** I urge board members to peruse and include this resource in their consideration of future Board proposals and decisions.

Whatever motivations have provoked and allowed such ecological degradation as Eisenstein describes must be at issue in the health of tropical forests.

It appears to me that the cultural and psychological relationship between fossil fuels and financial systems, both public and private, plays a key role in such degradation. In fact, it is **homo sapiens' fossil fuel addiction that is responsible for this degradation. Yet, our addiction is understandable, since the energy we get from gas at the pump is, for the USA now, about 300 times cheaper than humanpower energy.**

**Thus, price signals cannot be expected to give us accurate information about the most efficient and effective choices for meeting our needs.** In a business-oriented economic system which obsesses about production efficiency and capacity factor, **consumption efficiency has been undeservedly orphaned.** The definition of economic efficiency is somewhat at issue.

**Similarly, monetary price signals cannot be expected to provide accurate information about the real ecological costs and benefits of deforestation and reforestation.**

When the pricing linkages between the monetary and the real economy are so distorted, the conventional economic analysis positing money as the independent variable will also be distorted. **To the extent that needed resources are denominated as currency, any dollar amount or cost estimate should always be paired with the kwhr and GHG emissions** that are tied to whatever those dollars may be expended on. And productivity data should be completely (if not exclusively) accounted in units like kwhr rather than dollars.

Moreover, there is a **cultural and social tendency for the prospect of monetary costs to induce inertia and inaction**. For example, commercial and industrial interests regularly and assiduously lament the monetary costs of following environmental regulations, and use cost-benefit analyses to hobble regulations whenever possible.

Rather than falling into the trap of monetary cost analysis, we should all be focusing on:  
What is our goal?

**How can we achieve our goal with the real resources available to us?**

Defining our goal in monetary and financial terms is a mistake that will keep us trapped in addiction. **Similarly, analyzing land management in monetary and financial terms is the kind of mistake that continues to threaten indigenous belonging to their land.**

For an expanded and adept explanation and discussion of these hazards of cost-benefit analysis, permit me to recommend:

Can We Afford the Future? The Economics of a Warming World by Frank Ackerman  
<https://www.zedbooks.net/shop/book/can-we-afford-the-future/>

Value in Ethics and Economics  
<https://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?isbn=9780674931909&content=reviews>

Elizabeth Anderson

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2019/01/07/the-philosopher-redefining-equality>