

# Review of: "[Commentary] Climate Change, Health, Ethics and the Sustainability of Civilization"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

First, I want to congratulate the author for composing a rather comprehensive and substantive review of the many crises and problems the world is facing today. The list of cited literature is impressive, and the historical reviews of what happened in the past decades are highly informative. Yet, I have several critical points that I would like to raise:

- a. The overall tone of the paper is highly pessimistic and even fatalistic. It is, of course, the right of each author to be more on the pessimistic than on the optimistic side, but I would expect at least a balanced review of the literature and a recognition that other scholars have developed a different interpretation of what is happening in the world. He could still come to the conclusion that, in balance, the world is in deep trouble, but without such a dialectical approach, including a respectful treatment of other viewpoints, the paper is highly one-sided and loses credibility.
- b. This impression is even strengthened when he attacks Maddox and Demeney for being optimistic. The argument is that they need to make money with their publications and are therefore "bribed" by mega-capitalism. This accusation violates in my view the integrity of both individuals and is not justified. The fact that scholars share an optimistic view is not an argument for him to label them as compliant slaves to the establishment. A critical review might give good arguments why their optimism is not justified, but speculating about sinister motives is not something that I would tolerate.
- c. In line with these arguments, I would recommend to at least acknowledge the positive developments of the last three decades: until 2019, life expectancy has increased in almost all countries of the world, including the Global South. Absolute poverty has been significantly reduced, as have major diseases. There are plenty of examples in the books by Pinter or Rosling, and even if one does not share their optimism, it would be good to deal with their collected statistical evidence.
- d. The strong criticism towards the academic publishing corporations is also, in my mind, overdone. First, there are many publishing houses that are truly dedicated to their mandate to produce high-quality academic papers. Secondly, doomsday visions pay off at least as well as optimistic scenarios. You can earn a lot of money by predicting the world is at the brink of extinction. I fully agree that the new predator publishers are only on the market for making money, but there is no evidence that this suppresses pessimistic or skeptical papers.
- e. The list of world problems is rather arbitrary, and it would be good if the author would explain in the beginning why he chose the topics that he has written about. Was there any rationale for choosing the ones that he selected?
- f. As many other commentators have remarked, the paper is rather redundant, particularly when it comes to conveying the pessimistic scenario for the future of the world. Repeating it over and over again does not make it more likely.

Despite all the critical points, I think the comprehensiveness of this collection of concerns is impressive and deserves further dissemination.