

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Editorial Letter, Issue 3.1

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Welcome to issue 3.1 of *Community Change*. In this third issue, the contributors explore questions, setbacks, and possibilities for hope in addressing one of the preeminent global challenges of the 21st century: anthropogenic climate change, a human-caused phenomenon described in scholarly publications and studied by experts in the field.

Keywords: Environment; Climate Change

This issue opens with an interview of Dr. Bill Hopkins, Professor in the Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation in the College of Natural Resources and Environment and Director of the Global Change Center (at the Fralin Life Science Institute) at Virginia Tech by *Community Change* editors Garland Mason and Patrick Salmons. In a wide-ranging discussion, Dr. Hopkins provides insights into the issue of climate change, approaches to environmental ethics, the types of radical action needed in the face of climate disaster, and environmental activism in and beyond academia. To the question of how best can we meet the challenges of human-created destruction of the vital ecosystems needed to sustain life, Dr. Hopkins is hopeful:

[W]e have shown, historically, that we are capable of making big changes. Big policy changes. Big societal changes. We have seen the positive outcomes that can come from that. We passed things like the Clean Air Act. We banned big pesticides like D.D.T. that were decimating wildlife populations. We have confronted huge challenges, enormous challenges, in the past. We have done radical things to address those. We have shown that they can work. To me, that is hopeful. It is hopeful that we do have a record of accomplishment of stepping up to the plate when we really needed to. The problem that we face now is that carbon is not going to go away in the atmosphere. We are facing a greater challenge now than any of those in the past. Which means we are going to have to make bigger changes than we have ever had to make in the past.

He suggests that massive and radical change is necessary and that:

[N]obody, especially any middle-class to upper-class citizen would be exempt from that. Everybody has a role to play. No matter what your expertise. No matter what your profession. No matter what your hobby. Everyone has to be involved. ... That really gets down to society-wide change, society-wide awareness. At the end of the day, we all have a responsibility to understand some of the basics of these issues, and some of the things that we're all going to have to do in order to institute broad-scale change. And I think that is where our educational system, and where our academic institutions need to do a better job of equipping people to understand that information, but also of communicating that information outside of the ivory towers of our universities.

In his article "The Monsters of Nature: Representation of Environmental Ethics in Cinema," author Seyedreza Fateminasab explores the contrasting and perhaps contradictory environmentalist ethics at play in two

animated films: *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* (1984) and *Missing Link* (2019). Fateminasab demonstrates how both films present as ecologically conscious and dedicated to preserving the natural environment. However, the latter film maintains and reproduces an anthropocentric view of nature as existing primarily as an instrument for the uses and sustenance of human societies. Fateminasab concludes that the non-anthropocentric ethics contained within the older film *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*, viewing nature as intrinsically valuable, presents a stronger ethic to adopt in the face of anthropogenic climate change.

Closing the issue, are two book reviews of recent works exploring these and similar issues. First, Lara Nagle reviews Daegan Miller's *This Radical Land: A Natural History of American Dissent* (2018), a work that examines the sometimes-contradictory examples from the American experience of conservation, dissident movements and "countermoderns" against the expansion of the American state across the continent and the attendant subjugation of nature this entailed. Nagle engages with Daegan's provocative assertion that so-called modern, capitalist progress is a "cancer" on the environment and presses activists to be clear-eyed and serious about the types of collective action that will be necessary to remedy this situation.

Finally, Robert Hodges examines William Connolly's *Facing the Planetary: Entangled Humanism and The Politics of Swarming* (2017). Hodges lays out the essential concepts and questions in this work of political theory and, like Fateminasab's article, explores the deep anthropocentrism that may be under-critiqued in Connolly's book. According to Hodges, Connolly suggests that in order to address the ecological damage caused by human societies, a global politics of "swarming" is necessary. Such politics entail massive, collective action and multiple strategies and tactics that are cross and transborder.

Each of the authors who contributed to this issue suggests in various ways that much more than individual action is required to address human-caused climate change and forestall disaster. Massive mobilizations and global actions will be necessary as well as marshaling state power to enact policies to protect the remaining crucial natural resources and reverse, wherever possible, the damage that has been caused by two centuries of global, capitalist extraction and consumption patterns.

We hope that you find the pieces in this issue to be thought-provoking and inspiring toward action. Thank you,

Competing Interests

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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