

From Greta to the Great Reset: Making Emergencies Work

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ABSTRACT. This article examines the continuity of incidents linking Greta Thunberg to an ongoing stream of political shifts. It first takes us back to 1992 to her preteen predecessor, Severn Suzuki, and then forward to the COVID-19 period and its consequences. The connecting thread that runs from 1992 to the present is the use of rhetoric to inspire terror in the population. Terror is used to promote acceptance of censorship and authoritarian restrictions that ironically interfere with the capacity of democracies to solve the problems confronting the world, such as climate change and pandemics. Elite actors create anxiety and terror to retain legitimacy in their control of narratives that preserve their power. This article shows how the World Economic Forum is transforming the acerbic language of Greta Thunberg into the basis for what is called the Great Reset, a set of policies that will enable the state and select businesses and NGOs to monitor and track the population and eliminate dissent. In short, when children are put in the world spotlight with a message, those who shine the light are the ones preventing real progress in solving problems.

Introduction: Generational Angst

In June 1992, 12-year-old Severn Suzuki approached the dais at the plenary session of the U.N. Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro to deliver her historic speech about climate change and human responsibility. With a pointed but measured tone, she leaned in. Speaking on behalf of the Environmental Children's Organization, she opened:

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We are a group of 12 and 13 year-olds trying to make a difference: Vanessa Suttie, Morgan Geisler, Michelle Quigg, and me. We've raised all the money to come here ourselves—to come 5,000 miles to tell you adults you must change your ways. Coming up here today, I have no hidden agenda. I am fighting for my future. Losing my future is not like losing an election, or a few points on the stock market. (Suzuki 1992)

Severn's father is David Suzuki, a biologist, environmental activist, long-running host of the popular PBS series *The Nature of Things*, and, until 2012, board director and titular head of the David Suzuki Foundation (founded two years before Severn's speech at the UNCED). By 2000, the Suzuki Foundation was receiving 52 percent of its funding support from major U.S. sources, close connections with which date to the founding of the organization. For many years, those sources were only vaguely specified, according to records obtained by *Financial Post* writer Vivian Krause (2012). While direct funding of the Suzuki Foundation by U.S. foundations dropped considerably from 2000 to 2010, its annual revenues more than doubled, from \$5 to \$10.6 million.

Suzuki resigned his position on the Suzuki Foundation board a week before the *Financial Post* article referenced here was published, citing continuous media and politically motivated attacks on the foundation bearing his name. At the center of contention was the Suzuki Foundation's promotion of the Great Bear Rainforest, a 21-million hectare (about the area of Switzerland) "no trade zone" on the north coast of British Columbia. According to Krause's review of Suzuki Foundation donor support records, 29 of 30 U.S.-sourced grants were earmarked for the project in British Columbia. The political and economic meaning of this funding eventually became clear. Support for a "no trade zone" along the export-strategic north coast of British Columbia effectively prevented the construction of a tanker port in the region that oil tankers would need to transport Canadian oil to Asia. This disguised embargo of Canadian oil exports to Asia provided a windfall to U.S. interests who wanted Canadian oil to flow south to the United States.

Interviewed just days after the 2019 U.N. Climate Action Summit in New York City, Severn Cullis-Suzuki noted that several environmental

accords were signed in Rio that, in retrospect, seemed to her radical, as if world leaders were really paying attention. “But then we went into some of the worst decades in terms of environmental degradation and the disparity of wealth and power. So I think we were heard, but the question is why then did we go in the other direction” (quoted in Crawford 2019). This was also the year 16-year-old Greta Thunberg spoke to world leaders.

The disparity between words and actions noted by Cullis-Suzuki is not an accident, no more accidental than the coincidence of economic interests that supported a no trade zone under the banner of conservation in British Columbia. Again and again, pledges are made to take bold action, but they fall woefully short. At the same time, shadowy corporate actors find ways to cash in on environmental agreements that consolidate their economic and political dominance.

Thus, for the last 30 years, since the UNCED conference, world leaders have declared goals to end poverty or to improve the environment, but the goals are never attained. During the same period, repeated emergencies have been declared that have encroached steadily on democracy: from the War on Terrorism to the rise of the surveillance state to the lockdowns associated with COVID-19. The media have dutifully reported each transition to greater state power as a separate event, without seeking to identify their linkages, much less the matrix they share with economic “opportunities” that continually arise for global elites. From Severn Suzuki to Greta Thunberg, onward to the World Economic Forum and the COVID period, this article identifies intergenerational continuities and contingencies noteworthy for their convergence, if not active coordination.

Let There Be Scorn

On the closing day of the 2019 U.N. Climate Action Summit in New York City, 16-year-old Greta Thunberg took to the stage. Like her predecessor Severn Suzuki, Thunberg issued a generational castigation for climate action failures. Perhaps geared by her to underline the continuous abrogation of such responsibility, Thunberg’s address struck a denunciatory, shrill, and bitter tone. Here was a Cassandra

not to be dismissed. Where Severn Suzuki had been pointed but measured, Thunberg (2019) hissed:

You have stolen my dreams and my childhood with your empty words. And yet I'm one of the lucky ones. People are suffering. People are dying. Entire ecosystems are collapsing. We are in the beginning of a mass extinction, and all you can talk about is money and fairy tales of eternal economic growth. How dare you!

For more than 30 years, the science has been crystal clear. How dare you continue to look away and come here saying that you're doing enough, when the politics and solutions needed are still nowhere in sight.

You say you hear us and that you understand the urgency. But no matter how sad and angry I am, I do not want to believe that. Because if you really understood the situation and still kept on failing to act, then you would be evil. And that I refuse to believe.

As we listen to Greta, we need to pay attention to what she is not saying. As with Severn Suzuki, she may be an unwitting pawn in a game that is much older than she is. What is noteworthy is that her words are addressed solely to political leaders, completely ignoring the racial and economic hierarchies that regulate the agendas that determine which political discourse is considered acceptable. As acerbic as her tone may be, Greta does not cross the boundaries that also limit the ways in which elected officials address issues. To look into Greta's background, we begin with her immediate family, then her ancestors, and then the currents of social and economic thought that have influenced generations of scientists, intellectuals, and world leaders.

While the storied media account of their daughter's ascent to global phenomenon assigns her parents only supporting and reluctant roles, the path to Greta's stardom indicates a choreographed sequence incorporating a network of global actors with powerful influences and agendas. Like her preteen forbearer, Thunberg, too, has a pedigreed legacy, in Thunberg's case dating at least as far back as her (thrice) great-grandfather, Svante August Arrhenius who was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1903 at least in part for his research establishing links

between atmospheric CO₂ and climate effects. Thunberg's mother, Malena Ernman, is an opera singer and member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Music. In 2010, Ernman was appointed Royal Court Singer by King Carl XVI Gustav of Sweden, and, in 2017, she was named by the World Wildlife Foundation the Environmental Hero of the Year for Sweden. Thunberg's father, Svante Thunberg, is an actor and producer who has had small roles on Swedish television.

Six years after receiving the Nobel Prize, Svante August Arrhenius (1859–1927) became board member for the Swedish Society for Racial Hygiene (formed in 1909), a group focused on researching and promoting the benefits of controlled reproduction in humans (Broberg and Roll-Hansen 2005). The society sought to popularize eugenics and encourage policy changes to promote racial hygiene (Björkman and Widmalm 2010). The society hosted public lectures and distributed pro-eugenics pamphlets, but because it was illegal for them to discuss any method of birth control, the group was thought to have limited influence overall (Broberg and Roll-Hansen 2005).

Eugenics theory and practice were common in Scandinavian countries prior to WWII, with Sweden taking a leading position (Kurbegovic 2013). The Swedish State Institute for Race Biology (SIRB) was founded in 1921, immediately becoming the most important institution for racial science in Sweden. According to Swedish historian Martin Ericsson (2021), a great deal is known about the origins and workings of the SIRB until 1935, when Herman Lundborg, right-wing director of SIRB and champion of its founding, retired. Lundborg was replaced by left-wing, anti-fascist Gunnar Dahlberg, and from 1935 to 1960, it continued much as before.

SIRB scientists engaged in theoretical debates on the concept of race and conducted racial surveys of the Swedish population, using anthropometry and later serology as research methods. The results support the international hypothesis that racial science underwent important changes from the 1930s and onwards but did not really cease to exist. (Ericsson 2021: 125)

Beginning in the 1880s with the formation of American institutional history as a distinct branch of study, Johns Hopkins University

commenced a decades-long preoccupation with American institutional forms of governance in terms of their Aryan influences. According to historian Edward Norton Saveth (1939):

The belief that American institutions were peculiarly racial products made the disciples of the new historical school especially conscious of supposed racial differences between the old immigration from Northern and Western Europe, and the newer immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe. American institutions, they reasoned, were designed by and for Teutonic peoples, and it was doubtful whether others could carry on in the traditional conception of freedom, individual liberty, local self-government and federalism. (Saveth 1939: 434–435)

After WWII, southern and eastern Europeans would achieve “whiteness” largely by comparison to and continuous residential and educational segregation from Black Americans (and, to a lesser extent, from Hispanic residents and Asian immigrants). That shift occurred during the second Swedish movement on eugenics, with which Gunnar Myrdal (with his wife, Alva) was closely affiliated. Myrdal was a member of the Swedish Parliament twice (1934–1938, 1942–1947). In 1938, he was made research fellow by the Carnegie Foundation for purposes of leading “a comprehensive study of the Negro in the United States, to be undertaken in a wholly objective and dispassionate way as a social phenomenon” (Myrdal [1944] 1962: li). Heralded, still, as a landmark investigation into race and racism in the United States, the inquiry is noteworthy for what it elides from view. Myrdal’s study finds race (a categorical designation based on the presumption of meaningfully heritable and immutable traits), not social class and its depredations (indexed by access to the means of production), to be the central conundrum facing the United States. Labor unionization and standing to negotiate under the 1935 National Labor Relations Act needed to overcome the parochial exclusions of Black labor in order for the capital accumulation priorities of the New Deal to be actualized. This was the central motivation for the Carnegie Foundation’s sponsorship of Myrdal’s study.

Considering all of this background, we may now call attention to the fact that Greta says nothing about racial or economic disparities when she casts aspersions on those who have failed to take action.

Greta speaks only in the most general terms about those “not as lucky” as she. In matters of segmented power and capital accumulation processes, Greta is constrained by discursive rules that the powerful have hermetically sealed against further investigation.

Greta’s Ascent

The first print media image of Greta Thunberg appeared August 23, 2018, three days after her school strike began, published in the Swedish national daily, *Dagens Nyheter*. The news piece was published the same day by We Don’t Have Time under the heading: “This 15-Year-Old Girl Breaks Swedish Law for the Climate” (Anonymous 2015). At the top is Greta seated alone against an exterior wall of the Swedish Parliament next to her placard, “School Strike for the Climate.” As the article progresses, images appear showing a group coalescing around her. The article gives no author attribution, but was very likely written by David Olsson, chief operating officer for We Don’t Have Time. Essentially a preamble for what was to come, the piece debuts “this 15-year-old” as if with remarkable prescience. In fact, the event had been staged with extensive media savvy across a highly coordinated network of Swedish influentials. From the piece (formatted below as appearing online):

Greta became a climate champion and tried to influence those closest to her. Her father now writes articles and gives lectures on the climate crisis, whereas her mother, a famous Swedish opera singer, has stopped flying. All thanks to Greta.

And clearly, she has stepped up her game, influencing the national conversation on the climate crisis—two weeks before the election. **We Don’t Have Time** reported on Greta’s strike on its first day and in less than 24 hours our Facebook posts and tweets received over twenty thousand likes, shares and comments. It didn’t take long for national media to catch on. As of the first week of the strike, at least six major daily newspapers, as well as Swedish and Danish national TV, have interviewed Greta. Two Swedish party leaders have stopped by to talk to her as well. ...

Is there something big going on here? This **one kid** immediately got twenty supporters who now sit next to her. This **one kid** created numerous news

stories in national newspapers and on TV. This **one kid** has received thousands of messages of love and support on social media. What if **ten kids** did like Greta and went on school strike? **100 kids? A million kids? What if ten million kids showed the world that school is pointless if there is no future?**

On the day of Greta's strike, Ingmar Rentzhog, co-founder of We Don't Have Time (launched the same month), tweeted the image of Greta seated alone outside the Swedish Parliament, tagging five other Twitter accounts, including Greta herself, Zero Hour (the youth movement), Jamie Margolin (teenage founder of Zero Hour), Al Gore's Climate Reality Project, and the People's Climate Strike. Rentzhog had founded Laika, a Swedish communications consultancy firm specializing in financial firms, acquired August 18, 2018 (two days before Greta's sit-down strike) by Fundedby.me, for which he had been a board member. Rentzhog is a member of Climate Reality Organization Leaders, closely affiliated with Al Gore, serving there as part of the European Climate Policy Task Force.

Cory Morningstar points out that the 20 supporters swiftly coming to Greta's side were from a Swedish network for sustainable business. "What is going on is the launch of a global campaign to usher in a required consensus for the Paris Agreement, the Green New Deal and all climate-related policies and legislation written by the power elite—for the power elite" (Morningstar 2019).

The key policy framework in this power grab is carbon pricing, which involves national rules that impose a price on carbon emissions combined with subsidies for carbon capture. In some limited contexts, pricing can lead to lower total emissions of CO₂. But when questionable carbon capture schemes become involved, the whole system becomes a way for a few companies to profit from ownership of carbon rights that are based on speculative reductions in carbon. Historically, carbon pricing has led to rules by which companies may reap profits by showing paper transactions that purport to represent the removal of atmospheric carbon, even when no carbon reduction occurs.

Carbon pricing now plays a central role in the global economic restructuring dreams of a supra-national global consortium network: the New Climate Economy (NCE). According to NCE (2018), carbon

pricing “offers a significant economic prize” for those nations getting an early jump on adoption. The key to this prize is global adoption of energy reform modeling, such as E3ME (Energy-Environment-Economy Global Macro-Economic) modeling, which is based on the carbon pricing model established by the 2017 High-Level Commission on Carbon Prices. The primary policy instrument of such modeling is financial auditing metrics that will standardize reporting and data capture. Widespread adoption will help normalize reporting requirements established, first as recommended best practices, then incrementally adopted and eventually mandated across the globe. According to Cambridge Econometrics, the global economic consultancy firm that developed and owns the trademark, the E3ME model promises “integrated treatment of the world’s economies, energy systems, emissions and material demands. This enables E3ME to capture two-way linkages and feedbacks between each of these components” (E3ME 2022). According to NCE (2018), Sweden has led the world in carbon pricing, adopting this modeling in 1991. The price of carbon in Sweden in 2018 was USD \$150/ton of CO₂, producing a lucrative venue for investment in carbon offsets markets.

What will drive nations to adopt carbon pricing and use that as the rationale for detailed monitoring of every business practice that might be construed as generating emissions? Influence and adoption will be key to these ambitions. This is where We Don’t Have Time enters the picture. According to its most recent financial prospectus, We Don’t Have Time imagines the TripAdvisor rating system as a template for its own business model:

Imagine if all the people who are worried about climate change could join together in a social network focusing on climate action? Such a network would comprise a climate-oriented community that could propose measures, draw public attention to good and bad examples, voice opinions on climate issues and hold companies, organizations, politicians and other decision-makers accountable. Just as TripAdvisor’s over 450 million users are now a force to be reckoned with in the travel industry, this network would be a powerful force in the transition towards an environmentally sustainable, zero-emissions society. This network would also have significant commercial potential due to its role as a digital meeting place for climate-aware and environmentally conscious individuals and organizations. (We Don’t Have Time 2018)

In the case of TripAdvisor, gaming the system can damage the reputation of a hotel chain, causing loss of business. Applying the same methodology to monitoring the environmental behavior of every company in a nation will pave the way to much more pervasive control of small business by social media.

At its Fundedby.me (2017) page online, We Don't Have Time lists the following as its product use cases (formatted below as appearing online):

- Help platform users find the most climate friendly choice of products and services.
- Give users a voice and empower them in ways beyond their voting rights and consumer choices.
- Offer users the possibility to get good deals on climate friendly products and services.
- Encourage corporations to stop using certain packages and production methods, force them to think smarter and be more brave.
- Expose cheating and so called “green washing.”
- Encourage organizations to disclose their climate impact in a more transparent way.
- Highlight players who manage to reach ambitious goals as role models.

This concept of monitoring and controlling the behavior of others through social media is simply authoritarianism in the guise of environmentalism. We have already begun to see this play out in China.

In 2014, five years before Greta's break-out performance, the Chinese government released plans for a social credit system, “an important component part of the Socialist market economy system and the social governance system.” It aims to reinforce the idea that “keeping trust is glorious and breaking trust is disgraceful.” The system is “based on a complete network covering the credit records of members of society and credit infrastructure” with the intention of “carrying forward sincerity and traditional virtues” (Creemers 2014). Lee (2020) explains how it will work: “A good rating could offer priority health care or deposit-free renting of public housing, while a negative rating could see individuals banned from flights and trains.” While the nominal aim of the system is to improve transparency of state actions for the public, the system justifies the central

government in imposing control on almost all aspects of citizens' lives. From a recent report in *Business Insider*: "The exact methodology is a secret—but examples of infractions include bad driving, smoking in non-smoking zones, buying too many video games, and posting fake news online, specifically about terrorist attacks or airport security" (Canales 2021).

We Don't Have Time's business plan is based on the consumer plebiscite model of online rating systems like TripAdvisor (or Yelp, or any number of others). It claims it will use that model to establish a consensus system for transparently authenticating environmental action across a vast host of industries, separating the noble and effective initiative from "green washed" hustles and cheats. As such, We Don't Have Time has profiled itself, perhaps deliberately, as the Western counterpart to China's social credit rating system. Whereas China's model is authoritarian and centralized, We Don't Have Time espouses radical decentralization according to standardized rating protocols. But Facebook is a distributed system with enormous potential for centralized control. We Don't Have Time is a replica of Facebook, but with an explicit mission. Yet to be determined is how the felicitous rating systems, based on "likes and dislikes," will index winners and losers. Presumably, it will use the sorts of algorithms that Facebook has mastered.

Thus far, we have discovered the puppet masters who transformed Greta from a solo protester in Sweden to a global icon. Now, we need to look deeper to find out the larger pattern that more adequately explains the behavior of agents like We Don't Have Time. The actions of this group and thus the implications of Greta's speeches, on which the group has built its growing network, reveal a desire to create a new social framework in which the individual will eventually disappear. To understand that, we need to look at the World Economic Forum and its plans for humanity.

Stakeholders Everywhere: The Antidote to "Misinformation"

Based on his reading of *The Plague*, Albert Camus's classic parable on public service paralysis, Metcalf (2020) anticipates the coming of another "universal reset." The last one happened, in

Metcalf's account, just after WWII. From Camus: "What's natural is the microbe. All the rest—health, integrity, purity (if you like)—is a product of the human will, of a vigilance that must never falter" (Camus [1947] 1991: 253). To avoid the failure of vigilance, societies have designed institutions that are designed to protect the public. For Metcalf (2020: ¶11):

The market, it turns out, is a virtual synonym for lack of public vigilance. In response to our plague, there will be yet more tax cuts; already there are reports of insider trading among lawmakers; our healthcare system is in shambles. The machinery of global capital has gone quiet, and we find ourselves half-abandoned, each to our own little mindful solaces.

In this reading, the reset we face this time is a continuous attack on the institutions that protect the public. Due to a slackening of collective attention, nations have become derelict in their vigilance. While our collective attention has wavered, moneyed interests have been growing more powerful and virulent and now seek to dismantle virtually all of the advances made to protect the public against the plague of capitalism unleashed into every precinct of our lives.

Metcalf's concerns about a new reset is not a private nightmare. In September 2020, the World Economic Forum hosted its first virtual conference under the heading "The Great Reset," with the preamble:

There is an urgent need for global stakeholders to cooperate in simultaneously managing the direct consequences of the COVID-19 crisis. To improve the state of the world, the World Economic Forum is starting the Great Reset Initiative. (WEF 2020)

At the same conference, Greta Thunberg issued a blistering address with her trademark denunciations. Her intense rhetoric was timed perfectly for the "Great Reset."

Davos was ready for her. A year earlier, on June 13, 2019, the WEF had signed a partnership Memorandum of Understanding with the United Nations (Tedenike 2019). The memorandum specified that the partnership would "outline areas of cooperation to deepen institutional engagement and jointly accelerate the implementation of the

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.” Topping the agreement is a commitment for “Financing the 2030 Agenda.” Item 4 of the agreement, “Digital Cooperation,” specifies how WEF will help the United Nations “meet the needs of the Fourth Industrial Revolution to advance global analysis, dialogue and standards for digital governance and digital inclusiveness” (WEF 2019). Along the left panel of the web page featuring Greta’s 2020 address at Davos there were initially two featured links keyed to youth empowerment: 1) “Young Global Leaders Empowered to Tackle the World’s Most Pressing Challenges” (since inactivated) and 2) “Explore in Context: Youth Perspectives.” The latter still links with an intricate, hyperlinked interface of major themes tied to “Youth Perspectives” (Conscious Consumerism, Young People and Work, and A Youthful Take on the Future of Politics) with a thematic map keyed to dozens of world governance themes (Green New Deal, Corporate Governance, Future of the Environment, and Climate Change). The self-referential character of this interactive modality furnishes the appearance of an integrated portal. But the integrity is really just reflexivity; it perpetually circles back on itself.

The origins of the “Great Reset” tie in with WEF’s titular head, Klaus Schwab. Although Schwab has never disavowed the storied origins of the WEF, there is evidence that the idea was incubated by a CIA-funded Harvard program headed by Henry Kissinger and handed off for implementation to John Kenneth Galbraith and Herman Kahn (Vedmore 2022). The idea of a reset appeared in Schwab and Hein (1971), in which they argued the modern enterprise must serve *all* stakeholders, acting as their trustee, charged with achieving the long-term sustained growth and prosperity of the company. This approach was codified as “The Davos Manifesto” in 1973 (Schwab 2019). The manifesto has undergone multiple iterations since then, but its early versions remain foundational. Closing the 1973 manifesto is this:

The management can achieve the above objectives through the economic enterprise for which it is responsible. For this reason, it is important to ensure the long-term existence of the enterprise. The long-term existence cannot be ensured without sufficient profitability. Thus, profitability is the necessary means to enable the management to serve its clients, shareholders, employees and society.

It is odd that the signatories of the manifesto exhibit no awareness that it proposes to replace governments with a network of private monopolies, each guaranteed sufficient profitability to operate in perpetuity. Given the difficulty of directing elected governments to preserve the common good, the idea that private corporations will spontaneously consider all relevant stakeholder interests in decision-making is quite astonishing.

World events in 1973, including the collapse of fixed exchange rates, the Arab-Israeli War, the faltering of the Nixon presidency, and the Vietnam War, spurred the Davos Forum to expand from its primary focus on management to include broader social and economic issues. In 1974, political leaders were invited to the annual meeting in Davos for the first time. (At that time, it was called the “Economic Management Forum.”) In 1976, the organization adopted a system of funding it dubbed “the one thousand leading companies of the world.” It also established contact with China’s economic development commissions. Reflecting its growing reach and aspirations, it became the World Economic Forum in 1987 (Garsten and Sörbom 2018).

Literary critic Michael Rechtenwald (2021) finds the general circulation of the term “the Great Reset” to originate with the 2010 book by that title, written by urban studies scholar Richard Florida in the wake of the 2008 financial markets collapse. Florida’s thesis is that great economic collapses always usher in commensurately “great resets” of policy and cultural adaptations and innovations. At the 2014 meeting of the WEF, Schwab declared: “What we want to do in Davos this year ... is to push the reset button” (Rechtenwald 2021). This was the same year China announced the launch of its social credit rating system.

In 2018, the WEF collaborated with the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security to simulate a national pandemic response. Dubbed “CLADE X,” this exercise staged the outbreak of a novel strain of a human para-influenza virus. The simulation concluded with the dramatic staging of a news report announcing that, without effective vaccines, “experts tell us that we could eventually see 30 to 40 million deaths in the U.S. and more than 900 million around

the world—twelve percent of the global population” (Rechtenwald 2021). In October 2019, the WEF again joined with Johns Hopkins, this time including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, for another pandemic exercise, calling it “Event 201.” Occurring just two months before the announced outbreak of a novel coronavirus in Wuhan, China, Event 201 simulated an international response to the outbreak of just such a virus. In January 2017, one year before the 2018 exercise, speaking just days before the inauguration of President Donald Trump, Anthony Fauci made the (then) ominous pronouncement in a speech at Georgetown University Medical Center: “There is no question that there will be a challenge to the coming administration in the arena of infectious diseases” (Zambon 2017).

Rechtenwald (2021) sums up the repercussions of the COVID simulation events in relation to events that followed:

The CLADE X and Event 201 simulations anticipated almost every eventuality of the actual COVID crisis, most notably the responses by governments, health agencies, the media, tech companies, and elements of the public. The responses and their effects included worldwide lockdowns, the collapse of businesses and industries, the adoption of biometric surveillance technologies, an emphasis on social media censorship to combat “misinformation,” the flooding of social and legacy media with “authoritative sources,” widespread riots, and mass unemployment.

Rechtenwald concludes that WEF was a partner in planning the pandemic as part of the larger plan to create the conditions for public acceptance of the “Great Reset.”

A major influence behind the debut of the WEF was the Club of Rome, whose 1972 book, *The Limits to Growth*, issued a grave warning about world consumption patterns and population growth. The club was founded in 1968 by Italian industrialist Aurelio Peccei and Scottish chemist Alexander King during a private meeting at a residence owned by the Rockefeller family in Bellagio, Italy. At the third meeting of the WEF, Peccei delivered a speech summarizing the ideas in the book. The club also issued a confidential report by Mesarovic and Pestel (1973) that partitioned the globe into 10 groupings and specified a process for introducing supra-national governance. In

1991, the club published “The First Global Revolution,” making this assertion:

In searching for a common enemy against whom we can unite, we came up with the idea that pollution, the threat of global warming, water shortages, famine and the like, would fit the bill. In their totality and their interactions these phenomena do constitute a common threat which must be confronted by everyone together. But in designating these dangers as the enemy, we fall into the trap, which we have already warned readers about, namely mistaking symptoms for causes. All these dangers are caused by human intervention in natural processes, and it is only through changed attitudes and behavior that they can be overcome. The real enemy then is humanity itself. (King and Schneider 1991: 75)

Rather than identifying capitalism as the primary cause of the destruction of ecosystems and the continuous increase in fossil fuel consumption, the authors imply that the average low-income household (“humanity”) is to blame for our present condition. Thus, the “global revolution” amounts to a declaration of war on the poor and the middle class. This has been the focus of population control theories for over 200 years, ever since Malthus blamed the poor for famines, not the landowners who limited access to the land by the poor.

The 1991 report caught substantial ire. Groups wary of the club’s legacy of concerns with population management viewed the report as a doubling down on that commitment. Still, the club’s affiliation with the WEF persists, even to this day. At the WEF 2020 meeting, the club co-president Sandrine Dixson-Declève participated in numerous events and introduced the club’s “Planetary Emergency Plan.” It seems that WEF also wishes to declare war on humanity.

It’s the *Emergency*, Stupid!

Appearing at a women’s night town hall in November 2013, then-leader of Canada’s Liberal Party Justin Trudeau was asked from the crowd (and on video), “Which nation, besides Canada, which nation’s administration do you most admire and why?” Trudeau responded:

There's a level of admiration I actually have for China. Because their basic dictatorship is allowing them to actually turn their economy around on a dime and saying, "We need to go greenest fastest, we need to start, you know, investing in solar." ... There is a flexibility that I know [former Conservative Prime Minister] Stephen Harper must dream about of having a dictatorship that he can do everything he wanted, that I find quite interesting. (Thies 2022)

Trudeau's invocation in 2022 of his nation's Emergency Act in response to a mass protest against COVID lockdowns and restrictions, a protest noteworthy for its decorum and peacefulness, has renewed interest in his family's long and strong ties to China. Pierre Trudeau, for example, expressed adulation for Mao Zedong during the Great Leap Forward, an "error" that cost around 30 million lives—a number that exceeds the Stalinist regime's murderous purges. Justin Trudeau is also an alumnus, among over 600 others, of the WEF's "Young Global Leaders" academy.

The increase in the envy expressed by democratic leaders for the power of authoritarian governments reveals a deep-seated desire by political leaders of all stripes for a level of control that contradicts the principle of citizen sovereignty. In the United States, both President Trump and President Biden have revealed a tendency toward closing off democratic debate by declaring opponents to be purveyors of falsehoods. On February 7, 2022, the National Terrorism Advisory System posted the following bulletin:

The United States remains in a heightened threat environment fueled by several factors, including an online environment filled with false or misleading narratives and conspiracy theories, and other forms of mis- and mal-information (MDM) introduced and/or amplified by foreign and domestic threat actors. These threat actors seek to exacerbate societal friction to sow discord and undermine public trust in government institutions to encourage unrest, which could potentially inspire acts of violence.

The announcement designates "the proliferation of false or misleading narratives, which sow discord or undermine public trust in U.S. government institutions" as the primary factor increasing "the volatility, unpredictability, and complexity of the threat environment." Widespread doubt about the severity of COVID-19 and about the

legitimacy of the 2020 presidential election are given as the prime examples of “false and misleading narratives.” Yet, election fraud throughout U.S. history by both major parties has been well documented (Gumbel 2005). Electronic voting irregularities constitute only the latest, and in some ways most egregious, threats to electoral integrity. Voter suppression tactics have also been common. Thus, any effort to shut off investigation of and debate about practices that skew election results is an attack on democracy.

Efforts by governments, social media, and NGOs to eliminate debate about COVID-19 also constituted a serious breach of democratic norms. Dissenting views contradicted the authorized narrative about the origins, epidemiology, and proper treatment of SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19. That dissent was based on double-blind, scientific studies and clinical evidence accumulated by leading scientists and medical professionals (FLCCC 2020). In France, the work of renowned virologist Didier Raoult was attacked, and he faced disciplinary action for recommending the use of low-cost generic drugs to treat COVID-19 (Mucchielli 2020; France24 2021). In the United States, the most egregious censorship took the form of silencing Dr. Robert Malone, the research scientist whose work made possible mRNA therapies (Dickson 2022). Whistle-blowers at the major pharmaceutical companies were also restricted in their access to social media. The attacks on dissenting doctors and scientists began after a sizable consensus emerged around the effectiveness of off-label medicinal treatments. From that point onward, the voices of critics were de-platformed from social media venues. The obvious motive for all of this was the desire of pharmaceutical interests to sustain their monopoly in defining appropriate remedies, not only for COVID-19, but for all illnesses.

Unlike dictatorships, democracies require a process for designating “emergencies” in order to authorize state agents to carry out by force or decree measures that otherwise they are forbidden to do. Findings of fact must be established and some measure of consent by elected representatives, such as authorization, is required for issuing executive orders. In 1992 a 12-year-old heralded an emergency for which

debate was considered by many to be nonsensical: the emergency was, for her and many others, self-evident. In 2012, the U.S. Congress passed the Smith-Mundt Modernization Act, removing all meaningful restrictions on domestic broadcast of “government-produced programming.” This gave the U.S. State Department and the Broadcasting Board of Governors “enormous power to anonymously disseminate their programming within the United States” (Sager 2015: 514–515). In 2019, another youth issued a kindred plea on the same stage as her predecessor. In each instance, a clear generational divide was proclaimed. In each instance, the spectacle was clear: adults were to be blamed, shamed, and (paradoxically) stunned into submission and action. For how is anyone to gainsay such plaintive (and young) voices? Sandwiched between these episodes, the U.S. government loosened restrictions that had previously curbed the use of state propaganda. The power of the state could now be used to propagate an emergency by flooding social media and other venues on the Internet with a single narrative.

With the COVID-19 crisis, the cellular level of life is now forefront in global consciousness as another realm of precariousness. It is another dominion into which state authority must be interposed on the acclaimed grounds of the anticipatory security of all, a global ecosystem for the greater good. Pressed by system logic to its imminent telos, such an ecosystem must extend to *all* life precincts: from *demos* to *bios*. Retinal scans, total grid surveillance, subcutaneous digital identity chips, vaccinations, and “green” passports—the instruments at the forefront of emerging state control of all biological aspects of human action—all press state authority ever deeper and irrevocably *beneath* the will of the people. These intrusive measures undermine the legacy of basic human rights that form the foundation of most democracies in the world. Such authority is now ushered in as a seamless response to an always incipient emergency or system exigency. When such an emergency is questioned, that dissent becomes just another risk to manage. As Foucault (2003: 36) limned, management and control now come to us via “a closely meshed grid of material coercions rather than the physical existence of a sovereign.”

Conclusion

There is no question that human activities have created threats on a new scale: the threat of possibly catastrophic climate change and the threat of a global pandemic as deadly as the 1918 flu. The existence of such threats does not, however, mean that the optimal response is to increase the powers of government to limit dissent and to control the behavior of citizens. A basic premise of democracy is that knowledge is distributed broadly throughout a population and that institutions need to be designed to promote diverse responses to a crisis in order to determine which ones are most effective. Top-down methods of control that are managed by experts are not only damaging to democracy, but they are also less effective than more open systems of public debate.

Since 1992, young activists have been put in front of a world audience to activate public acceptance of policies that displace democratic processes with authoritarian actions. Although Greta Thunberg claims to speak solely on behalf of science, her political position is far from neutral. By calling upon “leaders,” not publics, to take charge and fix a broken system, she is effectively calling for more state control in response to a climate emergency. That is precisely what the dark forces who launched Greta to stardom want the public to hear. Yet, if we leave the response to climate change in the hands of elites, we will continue to get rhetoric without action, the very condition she decries.

The period from 2020 to 2022 has been a replay of the politics of elitism in relation to another global crisis: the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the pattern of surveillance, management, and control of private behavior is now becoming clearer. For example, Gavi CEO Seth Berkley (2017) announced the necessity and imminent emergence of a global digital identification grid devoted to the monitoring of the poorest and those most vulnerable to pestilence and disease. Gavi is part of the consortium alliance “ID2020,” which also includes the Rockefeller Foundation and Microsoft. The group’s manifesto opens: “Alliance partners share the belief that identity is a human right and that individuals must have ‘ownership’ over their own identity” (ID 2020 2020: ¶1). As Berkley (2017: ¶6) emphasizes:

Many relevant technologies are largely in place already. Big data, for example, can help public-health officials to anticipate the spread of disease and hone vaccination campaigns. Geospatial mapping and drones are already being used in Nigeria to identify communities that have not received polio vaccines, and in Rwanda to deliver blood needed for transfusions for mothers who hemorrhage after giving birth.

The concept of “ownership” in this context is noteworthy since it is the inverse of the usual meaning. Here, it means that having an identity will allow others to own you. The existing use of electronic identity as the basis of surveillance in Africa provides evidence that states and large NGOs are gaining the power to monitor and control our lives. We are now witnessing a symbiotic convergence between pandemic abatement, vaccines, and digital ID. Bill Gates has been instrumental in kick-starting and funding research into digital certificates for vaccination, a policy he has been espousing since 2021. Certificates of vaccination status may very well be utilized for broader, more integrated biometric ID in the near future. This upgrade in state monitoring of individual health practices is taken up in a July 2020 briefing paper issued by the World Economic Forum:

Recent technological advancements have ushered in a new era of the “internet of bodies” (IoB), with an unprecedented number of connected devices and sensors being affixed to or even implanted and ingested into the human body. ... The IoB generates tremendous amounts of biometric and human behavioral data. This is, in turn, fueling the transformation of health research and industry, as well as other aspects of social life, such as the adoption of IoB in work settings, or the provision of new options for entertainment—all with remarkable data-driven innovations and social benefits. (Liu and Merritt 2020: 7)

While recognizing that this development “raises new challenges for data governance that concern not only individual privacy and autonomy,” the briefing paper makes clear that IoB will deliver inestimable benefits for the very reason that it coordinates with state surveillance of individual health (Liu and Merritt 2020: 7). Drawing from the work of author Patrick Zyberman (2013) in historical epidemiology, which is reviewed in Keck (2020), Italian political

theorist Giorgio Agamben (2020) blogged at the beginning of the COVID-19 quarantines:

At issue is nothing less than the creation of a sort of “health terror” as an instrument for governing what are called “worst case scenarios.” It is according to this logic of the worst that already in 2005 the World Health Organization announced “2 to 150 million deaths from bird flu approaching,” suggesting a political strategy that states were not yet ready to accept at the time. Zylberman shows that the apparatus being suggested was articulated in three points: 1) the construction, on the basis of a possible risk, of a fictitious scenario in which data are presented in such a way as to promote behaviors that allow for governing an extreme situation; 2) the adoption of the logic of the worst as a regime of political rationality; 3) the total organization of the body of citizens in a way that strengthens maximum adherence to institutions of government, producing a sort of superlative good citizenship in which imposed obligations are presented as evidence of altruism and the citizen no longer has a right to health (health safety) but becomes juridically obliged to health (biosecurity). (Agamben 2020: ¶1)

Seven years after publishing *The Plague*, Camus authored *The Rebel: An Essay on Man in Revolt*. In these essays, the great writer of existential democratic dread glimpsed what Giorgio Agamben and many others have observed. For example, Broudy and Arakaki (2020) offer a scholarly, but frightening, assessment of elite, technocratic-driven influence of global electronic media. These critics now understand that a global, epochal transformation is under way into a world governed according to the logic of a closely meshed grid. Camus ([1947] 1991: 183) warned us of the consequences of following that path:

Irrational terror transforms men into objects, “planetary bacilli,” according to Hitler’s formula. It proposes the destruction, not only of the individual, but of the universal possibilities of the individual, of reflection, solidarity, and the urge to absolute love.

Was such terror what Justin Trudeau had in mind in February 2022 or what his cohort of WEF alumni have had in mind with lockdowns and censorship from New Zealand to Austria? To raise questions publicly about the potentially authoritarian motives of public figures amounts to inference and speculation. Those questions are now classified as

dangerous speech, even in the United States. Was Camus prescient or impertinent? Now is the time for those with tenure privileges to start asking.

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