

Contents

Preface xi

Acknowledgments xv

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction: The Global Environmental Tragedy | 3 |
| I. My Approach | 3 |
| II. Introducing the Perfect Storm Metaphor | 6 |
| III. Climate Change | 8 |
| IV. The Wider Relevance of the Model | 11 |
| V. Outline of the Book | 13 |

PART A: OVERVIEW

Chapter 1: A Perfect Moral Storm 19

| | |
|------------------------------------|----|
| I. Why Ethics? | 19 |
| II. The Global Storm | 24 |
| III. The Intergenerational Storm | 32 |
| IV. The Theoretical Storm | 41 |
| V. The Problem of Moral Corruption | 45 |

Chapter 2: The Consumption Tragedy 49

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| I. What's the Point of Game Theory? | 50 |
| II. Motivating the Models | 52 |
| III. A Green Energy Revolution? | 63 |
| IV. Consumption and Happiness | 69 |
| V. Conclusion | 71 |

PART B: THE GLOBAL STORM

Chapter 3: Somebody Else's Problem? 75

| | |
|------------------------|----|
| I. Past Climate Policy | 77 |
|------------------------|----|

- II. Somebody Else's Burden? 83
- III. Against Optimism 93
- IV. Conclusion 102

Chapter 4: A Shadowy and Evolving Tragedy 103

- I. Climate Prisoners? 104
- II. An Evolving Tragedy 108
- III. Beyond Pessimism 114
- IV. Lingering Tragedy 124
- V. Climate Policy in the Shadows 128
- VI. Conclusion 140

PART C: THE INTERGENERATIONAL STORM

Chapter 5: The Tyranny of the Contemporary 143

- I. Problems With "Generations" 145
- II. Intergenerational Buck-Passing 148
- III. Intergenerational Buck-Passing vs. The Prisoner's Dilemma 160
- IV. The Features of the Pure Intergenerational Problem 164
- V. Applications and Complications 169
- VI. Mitigating Factors 174
- VII. Conclusion 183

Chapter 6: An Intergenerational Arms Race? 185

- I. Abrupt Climate Change 186
- II. Three Causes of Political Inertia 191
- III. Against Undermining 197
- IV. Conclusion 207

PART D: THE THEORETICAL STORM

Chapter 7: A Global Test for Contemporary Political Institutions and Theories 213

- I. The Global Test 215
- II. Scenarios 220
- III. A Conjecture 224
- IV. Theoretical Vices 230
- V. An Illustration: Utilitarianism 235

- VI. The Status of the Complaint 242
- VII. Conclusion 244

Chapter 8: Cost-Benefit Paralysis 247

- I. Cost-Benefit Analysis in Normal Contexts 249
- II. CBA for Climate Change 256
- III. The Presumption Against Discounting 265
- IV. The Basic Economics of the Discount Rate 270
- V. Discounting the Rich? 281
- VI. Declining Discount Rates 286
- VII. Two Objections to Not Discounting 291
- VIII. The “Anything Goes” Argument 295
- IX. Conclusion 297

PART E: MORAL CORRUPTION

Chapter 9: Jane Austen vs. Climate Economics 301

- I. Corruption 302
- II. The Dubious Dashwoods: Initial Parallels 309
- III. The Opening Assault on the Status of the Moral Claim 314
- IV. The Assault on Content 321
- V. Indirect Attacks 326
- VI. The Moral of the Story 336

Chapter 10: Geoengineering in an Atmosphere of Evil 339

- I. An Idea that is Changing the World 340
- II. Political Inertia Revisited 346
- III. Two Preliminary Arguments 347
- IV. Arming the Future 352
- V. Arm the Present? 370
- VI. Evolving Shadows 373
- VII. Underestimating Evil 379
- VIII. An Atmosphere of Evil 390
- IX. “But . . . Should We Do It?” 394

PART F: WHAT NOW?

Chapter 11: Some Initial Ethics for the Transition 399

- I. An Ethical Framing 404
- II. The Ethics of Skepticism 405
- III. Past Emissions 414

| | |
|---|------------|
| IV. Future Emissions | 420 |
| V. Responsibility | 431 |
| VI. Ideal Theory | 434 |
| VII. Conclusion | 436 |
| Chapter 12: The Immediate Future | 439 |
| Appendix 1: The Population Tragedy | 443 |
| I. Hardin's Analysis | 444 |
| II. Population as a Tragedy of the Commons | 448 |
| III. Total Environmental Impact | 453 |
| IV. Conclusion | 455 |
| Appendix 2: Epistemic Corruption and Scientific Uncertainty in Michael Crichton's <i>State of Fear</i> | 457 |
| I. What the Scientists Know | 458 |
| II. Certainty, Guesswork, and the Missing Middle | 460 |
| III. Conclusion | 463 |
| <i>Afterword</i> | 465 |
| <i>References</i> | 469 |
| <i>Index</i> | 489 |