

CM402 ASSIGNMENT 1

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How To Avoid A Climate Disaster : The solutions we have and the breakthroughs we need ~ Bill Gates

There is a looming possibility of an uninhabitable planet Earth in the distant future owing to anthropogenic influence on the intricate balance of natural processes. It has been all the essential to educate the cynical mind about the more worse consequences of a perturbed climate system which may or may not be stable in the long run and to maybe even alleviate panic by making us believe that our actions will indeed matter. It is notable that in a TED talk, Gates had previously warned us that a deadly pandemic was more likely to kill us all than war, and we all know how that aged.

In this book, Gates explores the possibility of an expanding “Green economy” from an engineer’s perspective, rather than a from a political scientist’s- He admits in the book that he does not have a solution to the “politics” of climate change. He advocates investments in a plethora of technologies that may replace the primary source of power and incidentally, carbon emissions- Nuclear, Solar, Geothermal, Wind, and so on. He asserts that greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced; for this is the only active step humans can take rather than waiting for natural processes to clear up the earth. The solutions he provides range from solar power to nuclear power, and from decentralised to a public spectrum power distribution. He discusses the pros and cons of each, and projects their usefulness in the future. It becomes clear that he wants to “weaken” the fossil fuel industry by diverting his investments from them, and aims to “decarbonize” the world economy.

His elite stand on the subject has had an enormous reach, and “activists” around the world have jumped right into the “campaign”. He has almost ignored the role that the fossil fuel industry has played, and continues to play in the global economy, therefore preventing directed action. He blames politics as the standing reason why we are not able to progress faster than we should; think about the anarchy that would result when power is cut off from hundreds of millions of households. Gates does not provide a fool-proof path to transition from a carbonized economy to a decarbonized one, but explains the incentives for us to do so very well. He may deserve an A+ in reading the IPCC reports and looking up nuclear power, which he advocates heavy investments in; but ignores the psychology of the people involved in taking such powerful decisions. I think politics is a very important factor, and one that is not to be ignored;

I would prefer to read a book on climate change by an ex-president of a large economy, or someone who had the power to say, “shut down all carbon plants in a nation” over the night, rather than the CEO of a multinational company. However, Gates is someone who can capture scientific minds and those who fear an apocalypse- and he does it well, by presenting facts and figures in a streamlined manner. But insights into theories of power and authority involved in the dynamics of such a worldwide effort are what I would consider much more enlightening.