

Danny Roberts

Honors Assignment #4

11/22/16

Global Challenges: Response to Prompt #1

I see climate change as the greatest threat that has faced humanity since the threat of nuclear destruction present during the 1960s. As such, I feel guilty that as a privileged American with the capability to combat and study climate change professionally for the people of the world, I selfishly intend to pursue a career in an area of science that personally entices me. But apart from making a career out of sustainable infrastructure and other anti-warming ventures, I believe I can make personal choices that benefit the fight against climate change.

One of the most striking moments of the discussion for me was when David Battisti addressed the potential mass-deregulation that the oncoming presidential administration has vowed to enact. Not only did his words express horrible possibilities, but his tone and body language expressed a feeling of helplessness and uncertainty. In a time when it is necessary to take the issue of climate change head on, our government (and therefore massive numbers of American citizens) would rather ignore the issue and abolish legislature that aids progressive efforts so as to exploit the economic benefits of fossil fuel reserves. Our government has exceptional influence over the fight against climate change, and because of this I see voting as the most effective way for me to impact the fight. I find it essential to vote in every election, but voting in elections that will elect proponents and enact legislature that combat climate change is particularly important, as it affects the entire globe.

Because I feel voting is the most influential thing one can do to counter climate change, I think the second best way to do so after personally voting is attempting to educate the electorate to influence their votes. I could do this overtly in a variety of ways, ranging from promoting businesses and products that are eco-friendly, to simply sharing scientific information online that demonstrates the potential consequences of climate change. I could also demonstrate the importance of the climate issue to others through my actions, such as going out of my way to conserve energy and avoid consuming products that are extraneous and energy-costly to manufacture. Doing this would not only lessen my part in global warming, but it would also show others that I am not partaking in what Hanson Hosein called the “tragedy of the commons,” a scenario in which neighbors cannot trust each other in terms of abusing established rules for a community. Setting an example for others can influence them immensely, especially if the example is set with confidence, if not righteousness.

A main impediment to my contributing to climate change efforts is the mentality I sometimes have of consuming as much as what I can use, or being economically efficient even if it is not necessary. For instance, I will take as long of a shower as I see fit because I do not pay for water by the gallon. I choose to be more comfortable in exchange for increasing my consumption because it has no extra-cost for me. Although I think efficiency is a virtue, in ways such as these it does more harm than good, and I must work on weighing efficiency and impact.