

Moral Inversion and the Degrowth Manifesto
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The objective of this essay is to start a convivial conversation about a taboo topic: personal responses to climate tragedy. I begin with reflections on Michael Polanyi's "Sense-Giving and Sense-Reading," and then report on some of my Polanyian meditations on two analogies: (1) an analogy between the meaning I create and attribute to what Michael Polanyi wrote about "moral inversion" and the meaning I create and attribute to what Kohei Saito wrote about "capitalism," and (2) an analogy between the meaning I create and attribute to what Polanyi wrote about his "fiduciary programme" and the meaning I create and attribute to what Saito wrote about his "degrowth manifesto."

Keywords: climate change, analogy, moral inversion, fiduciary program, capitalism, degrowth manifesto, degrowth communism, sense-giving, sense-reading, ideal-type, anti-ideal type, attempted control, convivial conversation.

In "Inversions and Conversion, Moral and Otherwise," Andrew Grosso (2024: 269) said that Tihamér Margitay, in "Moral Inversion: A Social Diagnosis" (2016), and I, in "Confronting or Denying the Minotaur: Moral Inversion Today" (2022), used moral inversion "as an interpretive rubric for engaging contemporary social issues." Margitay used the meaning he created and attributed to "moral inversion" as a conceptual tool for thinking and writing about consumerism. I used the meaning I created and attributed to "moral inversion" as a conceptual tool for thinking and writing about climate change. More specifically, I used that tool for thinking and writing about Jem Bendell's article "Deep Adaptation: A Map for Navigating Climate Tragedy" (2018). I indwelt that tool as if it were an extension of my mindbody (Poteat 1885). In this paper, I use the meaning I create and attribute to what Polanyi wrote about "moral inversion" and "the fiduciary programme" as conceptual tools for thinking and writing about what Kohei Saito wrote about "capitalism" and "the degrowth manifesto."

My objective in writing this is to stimulate a convivial discussion among Polanyians about climate tragedy. In his recent book, *Breaking Together: A Freedom-Loving Response to Collapse* (2023), Bendell reflects on the contradictory responses to his earlier article. A year after its online publication it had been downloaded over a million times, reaching a much larger audience than it would have had it been accepted by the print journal to which he had submitted it. There has been a flood of books and articles about climate tragedy, But it still remains a taboo topic of conversation. I understand why – it's a bit like the rule against discussing religion or politics at dinner parties. But I agree with Saito and Bendell that having more of these kinds of conversations increases the probabilities (1) that our species will survive and (2) that our future societies will be more democratic than totalitarian. Conversely, the more people observe the

taboo, the more likely it will be that (1) the humans will join many other species in the *Sixth Extinction* (Kolbert 2014) and (2) our future societies, for as long as they last, will be totalitarian or chaotic rather than democratic.

On Sunday, August 8, 2018, the cover of the *The New York Times Magazine* was all black, with white letters spelling out “Thirty years ago, we could have saved the planet.” The only article in that issue was Nathaniel Rich’s “Losing Earth: The decade we almost stopped climate change. A tragedy in two acts.” The first act – “Apprehension” – is Rich’s account of events from 1979 to 1982, a time in which there was (1) a growing scientific consensus about the seriousness of anthropogenic climate change and (2) effective communication of that consensus to governmental and corporate leaders, including officials in fossil-fuel corporations. The second act – “The Reckoning” – is about the years from 1983 to 1989, in which there was a growing, and unfortunately effective, propaganda campaign, led by agents of fossil-fuel companies, in denial that anthropogenic climate change was a serious or short-term threat. According to Rich, and others who have written about that campaign, the CEOs and boards of directors of those companies *knew* that the effects of the continued burning of fossil fuels would be catastrophic, but approved of lying about it in the interest of maintaining short-term corporate profits. It’s analogous to the way tobacco companies lied about the health effects of smoking.

I decided to write about Kohei Saito’s *Slow Down: The Degrowth Manifesto* (2024) for several reasons. The first is that Saito is a little bit more optimistic than Bendell, who, at least as I interpret him, is convinced that the collapse of human civilization is inevitable. Bendell seems to agree with writers such as Jeff Goodell, *The Heat Will Kill You First: Life and Death on a Scorched Planet* (2023). Saito wrote: “The point of no return is approaching – the point at which a series of rapid changes will occur that will make it impossible to return to how things were” (2024: 3). Bendell, Rich, Goodell, and many others, are convinced that we have already passed the point of no return. Second, Saito is Japanese, and I think it’s helpful to pay attention to what thinkers who aren’t European or American have to say. Finally, Saito’s ideal type of future society, degrowth communism, adds something that I haven’t found in Bendell’s book.

This isn’t, however, a review or comprehensive summary of Saito’s book, but a “Polanyian meditation” (Poteat 1985) on two analogies:

1. an analogy between the meaning I create and attribute to what Micheal Polanyi wrote about “moral inversion” and the meaning I create and attribute to what Kohei Saito wrote about “capitalism,” and
2. an analogy between the meaning I create and attribute to what Polanyi wrote about his “fiduciary programme” and the meaning I create and attribute to what Saito wrote about his “degrowth manifesto.”

I formulated the analogs by writing – repetitiously – “the meaning I create and attribute to ‘x’.” I did this because of how important Polanyi’s late essay “Sense-Giving and Sense-Reading” (KB 181-207) has become to me. The meaning I create and attribute to that essay is that sense-givers and sense-readers *always create* the skin-in, imperceptible meanings they attribute to skin-out, perceptible things. Visible written texts and audible spoken messages are the prototypes for the

perceptible things to which persons attribute meanings. *Each individual person* creates a meaning by integrating an indeterminate number of tacit subsidiaries to form a *focal object*. Focal objects *are* the skin-in, imperceptible meanings individual persons attribute to the skin-out, perceptible objects in their external environments. The written terms, “moral inversion,” “capitalism,” “fiduciary programme,” and “degrowth manifesto” are skin-out, perceptible things. My analogies aren’t between those perceptible things, but to the meanings I have created and attributed to them. As Polanyi had argued earlier in *Personal Knowledge*, words never mean anything *in* or *by* themselves. It’s always a *person* who means something by a word or sentence (PK 251-252). I take full responsibility for being the person who has created and attributed meanings to the four analogs in my two analogies.

Saito is a Marxist, but I believe that he’s the kind of Marxist Polanyi praised in “The ‘The Message of the Hungarian Revolution.’” He’s a Marxist who affirms “that truth must be recognized as an independent power in public life” (KB 24). In the “Preface to the English Edition” of his book, Saito said this about his communism:

Don’t worry, it won’t be a repeat of the old Marxist dogmas. I was born in 1987 [11 years after Polanyi’s death], so I never got to experience so-called actually existing socialism. That might seem like a disadvantage, but it offered one surprising benefit. Because I didn’t reflexively impose Soviet history onto Marx’s thought, my research into the vast corpus of his unpublished writings was able to uncover an entirely new aspect of his vision of the postcapitalist world, one that was perfectly adapted to the Anthropocene. Instead of the undemocratic state socialism controlled by the state bureaucrats, a more democratic, egalitarian, and sustainable vision of a new steady-state economy proves compatible with Marx’s vision of the future society (2024: xii).

The meaning I create and attribute to the “degrowth communism” advocated by Saito is analogous to the communism of a good family, in which each contributes according to his, her, or their (s) ability, and receives according to his, her, or their (s) need. It’s also analogous to what I have imagined to be the communism of the earliest Christian communities.

I ask my fellow Polanyians to avoid automatically rejecting Saito because he’s a Marxist. I also ask you to avoid rejecting Saito because he, or perhaps his translator Brian Bergstrom, consistently made a big mistake in converting Celsius to Fahrenheit. He wrote, for example, that the average global temperatures “have already risen to around 33.8° F” above pre-industrial revolution levels. That assertion is false, because either Saito or Bergstrom failed to take into account that water freezes at 0° C and 32° F.” The actual increase is about 1° C and 1.8° F.

The First Analogy. The analogs are: (1) the meaning I create and attribute to what Polanyi wrote about “moral inversion,” and (2) the meaning I create and attribute to what Saito wrote about “capitalism.” Both terms are polysemantic. I create and attribute different, *but related* meanings to them. Polysemes differ from homonyms, such as “bank,” by which I can mean either the organization that keeps my money for me or the place where I can stand and look across a river or stream. Those two conventional meanings are *unrelated*. The two *related* meanings I create and attribute to what Polanyi wrote about “moral inversion” are:

1. an ideology – a configuration of cultural symbols (Geertz 1973: 211),¹ and
2. a personality trait – a configuration of dispositions (Campbell 1963).

The three meanings I create and attribute to what Saito wrote about “capitalism” are:

1. a type of economy as a configuration of economic institutions,
2. an ideology that legitimizes that type of economy, and
3. the personality traits that make individuals willing participants in a capitalist economy.

Prominent among the subsidiaries I integrate to create these meanings are many dispositions I have acquired throughout a long career in sociology. I habitually distinguish between:

1. social structures that include both established – “institutionalized” – ways of doing things and interrelated patterns of role relationships;
2. culture, including the skin-out aspects of material, symbolic, and behavioral culture, and
3. dispositions, the skin-in residues of the experiences of individual persons; these include the residues – dispositions – individual persons have of the experiences of creating and attributing meanings to items of material, symbolic, and behavioral culture.

I want to clarify a distinction that I frequently fail to make explicit. The subsidiaries in my tacit dimension are not the *meanings* I create and attribute to “social structure,” “culture,” and “disposition.” They are, rather, the dispositions that are the residues in my mindbody (Poteat 1985) of having created and attributed meanings to those terms. The meaning I create and attribute to “acquired disposition” is analogous to the meaning I create and attribute to “a memory.” A big difference is that many of my acquired dispositions are too deep in the tacit dimension of my mindbody for me to make them objects of my focal awareness.

The *meanings* I created and attributed to those terms *were* the focal objects that I created by integrating tacit subsidiaries. A focal object – meaning – endures in my mindbody only until I shift my focal awareness to something else. After such a shift, what had been a focal object is transformed into a tacit subsidiary, or a modification of one or more previously existing tacit subsidiaries. However, the alternation between *sense-reading* and *sense-giving* is a way of coping with the brief endurance of meanings as objects of focal awareness. As a *sense-giver* I can express the meanings I had created as a *sense-reader* in longer-lasting words, sentences, or other kinds of cultural symbols. Walter Gulick has modified Polanyi’s *from-to* model into a *from-via-to* model, in which the *via* term represents words or other kinds of cultural symbols (TAD 26, 3: 24-40).

The tacit background that contains the dispositions that are the tacit subsidiaries I integrate to create and attribute meanings to “moral inversion” and “capitalism” is continually changing. A human person is much more than a neural network, but, apart from that, I like the sense of continuous change in Paul Churchland’s connectionist definition of learning: “humans are multilayered neural networks that learn, under the continuing pressure of experience, by the gradual modification of the strengths or ‘weights’ of their myriad synaptic connections”

¹ Geertz (1973) defines an ideology as a *system* of cultural symbols. I prefer a *configuration* of cultural symbols because I’m uncomfortable with using the system metaphor in this context.

Churchland 2000: 151; quoted by Turner 2002: 1). But the written *products* of my human acts of sense-giving don't undergo continuous change. We still can read texts that were written thousands of years ago. When you sense-read an ancient text, however, the dispositions you integrate to create and attribute meanings to the words include the residues of your most recent experiences. Polanyi recognized this explicitly in "The Re-Interpretation of Language" (PK 104-117).

What I mean by formulating this first analogy as between (1) the meaning *I* create and attribute to what *Polanyi* wrote about "moral inversion" and (2) the meaning *I* create and attribute to what *Saito* wrote about "capitalism" differs from what I would have meant by saying that it's the analogy between (1) the meaning I create and attribute to "moral inversion" and (2) the meaning I create and attribute to "capitalism." There's a difference between trying to understand what *another person* meant by a term and trying to understand and clarify what *I* mean by that same term. This follows from "Precision" and "The Personal Mode of Meaning" (PK 251-252), where Polanyi argued (1) that we cannot escape from semantic indeterminacy and (2) that words don't mean anything *in or by themselves*, but that it's always a *person* who means something *by* a word. This is an important aspect of the meaning I create and attribute to "personal knowing" (KB 132). I deny that there's a *true impersonal* meaning of "moral inversion," "capitalism," or any other word or term, located in a place that's akin to Plato's heaven of eternally unchanging ideas.

One of the important differences between the meanings created and attributed to "capitalism" by Polanyi, Saito, and me are differences in the feelings that are constituent of the *felt meaning* (Gendlin 1982) each of us attributes to the word. My feelings are mixed. Perhaps this helps me to understand why Polanyi's feelings that were constitutive elements of what he meant by "capitalism" were largely positive, and why Saito's are almost totally negative. He dislikes capitalism as a set of economic institutions, dislikes the perpetual growth aspect of capitalist ideology, and dislikes the personality traits that make many individuals love capitalism.

Another set of conceptual tools I'm using comes from George Lakoff's *Moral Politics: How Liberals and Conservatives Think* (2002). He argues that most of our conceptual categories are *radial categories*, and that each of us will put a specific case into a radial category if it's similar enough to one of his, her, or their (s) central models or prototypes. He lists seven kinds:

1. The *central subcategory* of a radial category.
2. A *typical case* prototype.
3. An *ideal case* prototype.
4. An *anti-ideal* prototype.
5. A *social stereotype*.
6. A *salient exemplar*.
7. An *essential prototype* (Lakoff 2002: 9-10; Lakoff's italics).²

"All of these," Lakoff said (2002: 11), "are normal products of the human mind, and they are used in normal everyday discourse." They aren't descriptions of any observable case, but

² Henceforth all italics in quotations will be those of the original writer.

constructed types, conceptual tools that are widely recognized as important in social theory (Weber 1949; McKinney 1970).

The central subcategories Lakoff wrote about were “liberals” and “conservatives” as labels for subcategories of political ideologies and personality types. What are *ideal types* of government and citizens for a *typical* liberal are *anti-ideal types* for a *typical* conservative. And the *ideal types* for the *typical* conservative are the *anti-ideal types* for the *typical* liberal. I have italicized *typical* liberal and *typical* conservative to emphasize that I’m not talking about any actual configuration of cultural symbols (ideology) or any actual persons, but *constructed types*, conceptual tools we find *useful* for thinking, talking, and writing about actual persons and actual configurations of symbols.

Saito didn’t use the term “moral inversion,” so I can’t create and attribute a meaning to what he wrote about it. That’s one of the reasons why my analogy is between the meaning I create and attribute to what he wrote about “capitalism” and the meaning I create and attribute to what Polanyi wrote about “moral inversion.” In 1970, Polanyi published an essay, “Why Did We Destroy Europe?” (SEP 107-117). His answer wasn’t that Europe was a major battleground in two World Wars, but that moral inversion was a personality trait and ideology that had resulted in the rise of totalitarian governments and the decline of democratic governments. The question that Rich, Bendell, Saito, and a host of others have been asking *isn’t* “Why are we destroying the planet?” but “Why haven’t we taken the necessary steps to stop destroying the planet?”

There is widespread consensus that we are destroying the planet because we have been *politically* and *psychologically unable* to change the structure of our industrial and capitalist civilization. What Saito has added is his explanation for this inability: *capitalism* as (1) a set of economic institutions, (2) as an ideology, and (3) as the personality trait that makes so many people love the institutions and agree with the ideology. Polanyi used *moral inversion* analogously, to point to a personality trait that made so many people agree with moral inversion as an ideology and love totalitarian governments.

Polanyi’s *anti-ideal type* of government was totalitarian, and his *salient exemplars* were governments of his recent past – Italian Fascism and Nazism – and of his past and present – Soviet Communism. Saito (2024 67-68) has constructed three *anti-ideal types* of future societies:

1. “*Climate fascism*” will be the likely result of business as usual. A result of the accelerating rate of climate change will be increasing inequality between the rich elites and the increasingly poor and desperate underclass, and collaboration between economic and political elites to crack down on refugees and the homeless. The meaning I create and attribute to Saito’s “climate fascism” is analogous to the meaning I create and attribute to what Polanyi wrote about the fascist governments of the mid-twentieth century. The main difference is the climate change we are confronting in the twenty-first century.
2. “*Barbarism*” would be the consequence of a successful rebellion of the huge underclass against the numerically small rich elites. It’s analogous to what Hobbes called wars “of all against all.” This is also one of Polanyi’s anti-ideal types of societies. As Yeager puts it:

When tyrannical power is brought down by revolt, leaving authority dispersed among myriad individuals, the situation is, to Polanyi's mind, equally bad in a different way. While Polanyi has no doubts that tyrannies must be resisted, this potentially anarchic liberation from all actual forms of authority too often resolves into what Polanyi calls private freedom – the simple absence of constraints, but also of responsibility and shared purpose. The vacuum left by toppled authority is typically populated by private desire and pursuit of self-referencing, immediate goals (TAD 47, 2: 19-20).

3. "*Climate Maoism*" would result from a modification of climate fascism designed to prevent decline into barbarism. It might include: (a) reducing the inequality between the richest one percent and everyone else and (b) an authoritarian approach to combating climate change. The meaning I create and attribute to this type is analogous to the meaning I create and attribute to what Polanyi wrote about Soviet Communism. This difference is, again, the twenty-first century awareness of the terrible effects of climate change.

Saito constructed a fourth type of future society, his *ideal type*. I shall discuss this under the heading of "The Second Analogy."

The Second Analogy. The analogs are: (1) the meaning I have created and attributed to what Polanyi wrote about "the fiduciary programme," and (2) the meaning I have created and attributed to what Saito wrote about "the degrowth manifesto." Polanyi's fiduciary program was an interweaving of three threads: critical philosophizing, constructive philosophizing, and a philosophy of life, a *Lebensphilosophie* (Mullins 2008: 150). I interpret Saito's degrowth manifesto as an interweaving of the same three kinds of threads: criticism of the ideology of perpetual growth, constructive interpretation of the unpublished writings of the later Marx, and advocacy of a philosophy of life that would be the antithesis of "the imperial mode of living." Saito's first chapter is: "The Imperial Mode of Living and Climate Change."

Sometime between the publication of *Personal Knowledge* in 1958 and *The Tacit Dimension* in 1966, Polanyi stopped calling his alternative to moral inversion "the fiduciary programme." I believe that was the result of the change in his thinking he announced in the introduction to *The Tacit Dimension*:

Viewing the content of these pages from the position reached in *Personal Knowledge* and *The Study of Man* eight years ago, I see that my reliance on the necessity of commitment has been reduced by working out the structure of tacit knowing. This structure shows that all thought contains components of which we are subsidiarily aware in the focal content of our thinking, and that all thought dwells in its subsidiaries, as if they were parts of our body. Hence thinking is not only necessarily intentional, as Brentano has taught: it is also necessarily fraught with the roots that it embodies. It has a *from-to* structure (TD xviii [1966: x]).

Polanyi reduced the necessity of deliberate acts of commitment because he realized that most of each person's commitments result from his, her, or their (s) *indwelling* the tacit subsidiaries the person integrates each and every time he, she, or they (s) creates a meaning. All acts of knowing

and doing *embody* their tacit roots, and each and every act is a commitment, but not a deliberate commitment, to those metaphorical roots. During the eight years leading up to *The Tacit Dimension*, Polanyi had been moving away from his emphasis on deliberate acts of commitment to his emphasis on the tacit commitments implied by his *from-to* model of knowing and doing. Even though Polanyi dropped the term “fiduciary programme” I continue to use it, because I don’t know of a good term to replace it. But the meaning I create and attribute to it includes my integration of the tacit subsidiaries I have acquired by my sense-reading of *The Tacit Dimension*, and “Sense-Giving and Sense-Reading.”

Polanyi continued to write about moral inversion after 1966, and continued to advocate an alternative to moral inversion. In “Confronting the Minotaur: Moral Inversion and Polanyi’s Moral Philosophy,” D. M. Yeager wrote:

The exposure and critique of moral inversion is a project to which Polanyi reverts repeatedly between 1946 and 1975, and it can fairly be said that diagnosing this pathology, analyzing its causes, and devising a remedy constitute the social objective to which his philosophical work is ordered (TAD 29,1: 23).

Twelve years earlier, in *Michael Polanyi: A Critical Exposition*, Harry Prosch had written: “Our study will show that Polanyi in his role as a physician-philosopher was mainly concerned with trying to cure the modern mind of what ails it” (1986 7). The “ailment” was moral inversion. The “cure” was a moral orientation and ideology like the fiduciary program of *Personal Knowledge*, minus the emphasis on deliberate acts of commitment.³

In “Conviviality” Polanyi said, “The principal purpose of this book is to achieve a frame of mind in which I may hold firmly to what I believe to be true, even though I know that it might conceivably be false” (PK 214). At the end of “The Fiduciary Programme,” after characterizing moral inversion as “the scientific Minotaur,” he said, “The alternative to this, which I am seeking to restore here, is to restore to us once more the power for the deliberate holding of unproven beliefs” (PK 268).

This statement, however, can be misleading. Polanyi wanted to restore to us the power for the deliberate holding of *some* unproven beliefs, but not others. He wanted to restore to us the power to *deny* the unproven beliefs of nihilists and moral inverts. The nihilist holds the unproven belief: “Nothing is true!” The moral invert holds the unproven belief: “True moral righteousness requires speaking and acting contrary to traditional moral prescriptions with *intense moral passion*. It’s not enough just to break the rules. A moral invert is morally passionate about breaking moral rules.

I believe that Polanyi wanted to restore to us the power to believe that such things as truth, goodness, beauty, and justice are *real*, and that the love of truth, goodness, beauty, and justice are universal predispositions in human nature. The ways these beliefs are expressed

³The subsidiaries I integrate to create the meanings I attribute to “moral inversion” and to “the fiduciary programme” include the experiential residues – dispositions – of having read and reread Prosch’s book and several essays by Yeager (TAD 29, 1: 22-48; 2008; TAD 35, 2: 3-38; TAD 40, 2: 14-25; and TAD 47, 2: 20-22). However, the meanings I created and attributed to those texts as a sense *reader* have never been more than *analogous* to the meanings Prosch and Yeager intended as the sense *givers*.

symbolically are contingent. They vary from time-to-time and from place-to-place. But the deep *content* which is being expressed in these different ways is humanly universal. A characteristic Polanyian assertion is: “Science exists only to the extent to which there lives a passion for its beauty, a beauty believed to be universal and eternal” (PK 267). That statement is on the next-to-last page of “The Fiduciary Programme.” Even after 1966, Polanyi hoped to restore to us the power to hold *this kind of unproven belief* as the alternative to moral inversion.

An important aspect of the meaning I create and attribute to what Polanyi wrote about “the fiduciary programme” is that it increases the probability of democratic government, his ideal type, and decreases the probability of either totalitarian government or anarchy, his two anti-ideal types. Analogously, the meaning I create and attribute to what Saito wrote about “the degrowth manifesto” and “degrowth communism” is that they point to personality traits and an ideology that increase the probability of achieving his ideal type of future society, and decrease the probability of falling into one of his three anti-ideal types. After his descriptions of those anti-ideal types he wrote:

There must be a fourth way, a way to resist both a slide into barbarism and some form of autocratic nationalism. It’s not impossible to implement democratic forms of mutual aid that don’t rely on a strong nation to function, instead of relying on individuals to voluntarily develop strategies for combating climate change on their own. This would be a just, sustainable future society. . . . Out of all the possible futures, it’s the only one offering a chance of survival while preserving the ideals of freedom, equality, and democracy (2024: 68).

My Polanyian interpretation of this passage is that what Saito advocates is closely analogous to what Polanyi called “spontaneous” or “dynamic” social order, in contrast to “hierarchical” social order.

My language in the two previous paragraphs reflects conceptual tools I have acquired from reading Jack Gibbs’ *Control: Sociology’s Central Notion* (1989). He wrote that *attempted control* consists of *overt actions* taken either to increase the probability of a desired future state or to decrease the probability of an undesired future state. The meaning I create and attribute to what Saito wrote about his *desired* future state and his three *undesired* states of future society is analogous to the meaning I create and attribute to what Polanyi wrote about his *desired* and *undesired* states of society. The lecturing and writing of Polanyi, over his lengthy career as a philosopher and social theorist, consisted of repeated acts of attempted control, attempts to increase the probability that the governments of European societies would be democratic, and to decrease the probability that those governments would be totalitarian. The lecturing and writing of Saito, over his as yet much shorter career, consists of similar acts of attempted control, with similar ideal and anti-ideal types of societies. My writing of this essay is an analogous act of attempted control.

Conclusion. Although I hope to decrease the probability of near-term human extinction and the probability that more governments will become more totalitarian, my more immediate goal is to increase the probability that those of us attending this conference will engage in some

convivial discussions about our *personal responses* to climate change. I'm quite sure that all of us have read about, and worried about, climate change. Those of us who are very old worry about the prospects for our children and grandchildren. Those of us who are younger are more likely to worry about their own future prospects, as well as those of their immediate descendants. I suspect, but am less sure, that most of us have, more often than not, observed the taboo against talking about our personal responses to climate change. I have written this in the hope that we can, at this time and in this place, break that taboo.

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