

# **Last words or first thoughts? exposing climate change to the Arts and Humanities**

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**7 April 2009**

**AHRC Workshop on *Landscape and Environmental Change*  
Royal Horticultural Society, London**

# How are we telling the story of climate change?



THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR Bennett



## Warm Words

How are we telling the climate story  
and can we tell it better?

Gill Ereaut and Nat Segnit

AUGUST 2006

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**1901**

*'It is too early to judge of how far Man might be capable of regulating the future climate. But already the view of such a possibility seems to me so grand that I cannot help thinking that it will afford to Mankind hitherto unforeseen means of evolution.'*

*... intervention in atmospheric and climatic matters will come in a few decades and will unfold on a scale difficult to imagine at present ... what power over our environment, over all nature, is implied!'*



**1955**

*'Curtailing climate change must ... become the project we put before all others. If we fail in this task, we fail in everything else'*



**2006**



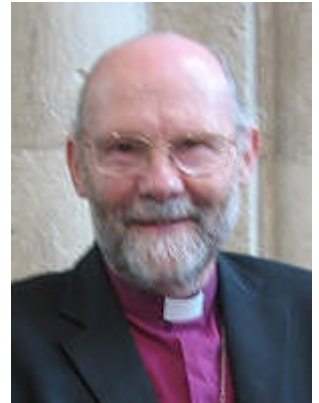
***The Independent, 2 January 2009***



**1998**

***'No matter if the science of global warming is all phony...climate change provides the greatest opportunity to bring about justice and equality in the world'***

***'Climate change is ... opening up for us ... questions about human life and destiny, about our relationship to the planet and to each other, about altruism and selfishness, about the place of a technological mind-set in our attitude to the world, about our values hopes and goals, and about our obligations for the present and for the future. These are moral and spiritual questions and therefore theological ones.'***



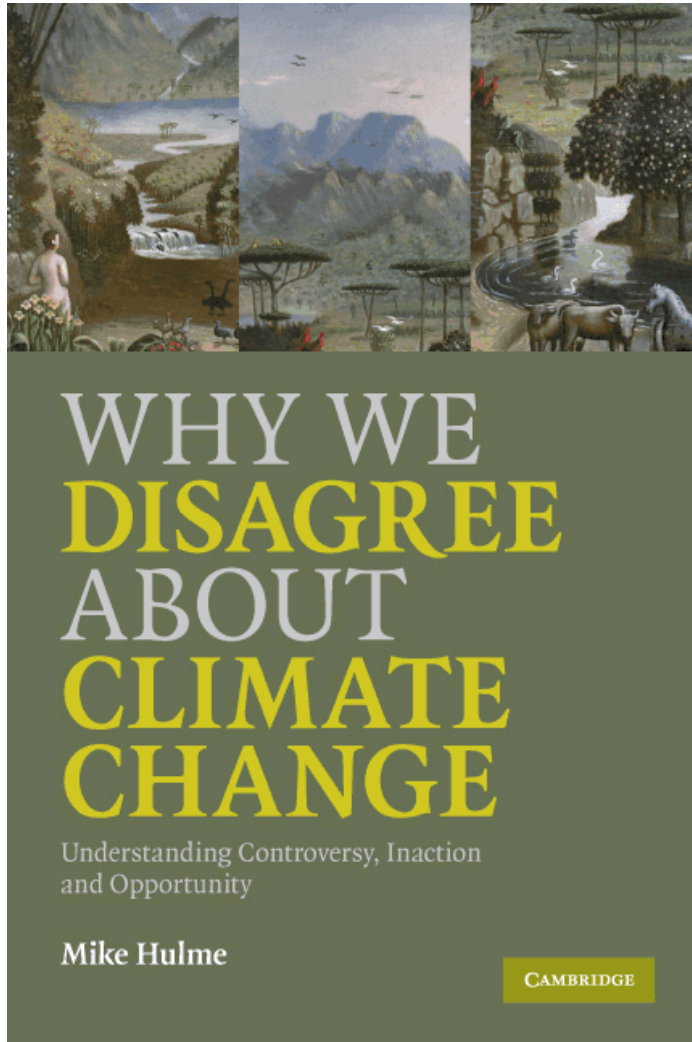
**2008**



**2008**

***'I perversely hold out hope for humanity, not in spite of global warming, but precisely because it confronts us with a wake-up call to consciousness.'***

# Last words ...



**Knowledge and modelling**  
**Economics and values**  
**Policy-making**



# Knowledge and modelling

THE INDEPENDENT  
Newspaper of the Year

5,723 www.independent.co.uk SATURDAY 19 FEBRUARY 2005 (Republ

## The final proof: global warming is a man-made disaster

STEVE CONNOR  
Science Editor  
Washington

SCIENTISTS HAVE found the unequivocal link between man-made greenhouse gases and a dramatic heating of the world's oceans. The researchers – many funded by the government – have seen what they describe as a “stunning” correlation between a rise in ocean temperature over the past 40 years and pollution in the atmosphere. The study destroys a central argument of global warming sceptics within the Bush administration – that climate change could be a natural phenomenon. It should convince George Bush to drop his objections to the Kyoto treaty on climate change, the scientists say. Tim Barnett, a marine physicist at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in San Diego and leading member of the team, said: “We’ve got a serious problem. The debate is no longer: ‘Is there a global warming signal?’ The debate now is what are we going to do about it?” The findings are crucial because much of the evidence of a warmer world has until now come from air temperatures, but

### How ocean currents work

“A satellite image of the Pacific, showing the wide variation in temperatures created by the current El Niño. The white areas show warmer waters, contrasting with colder areas (blues and pinks). Heat and salinity are inextricably linked in ocean circulation. In the North Atlantic warm water from the Gulf Stream is pulled by a “conveyor belt” driven by the sinking of cold, salty and dense water off eastern Greenland.”  
Time Life/Getty Images

no longer tenable.” Typical ocean temperatures have increased since 1960 by between 0.5C and 1C, depending largely on depth. Dr Barnett said: “The real key is the amount of energy that has gone into the oceans. If we could mine the energy that has gone in over the past 40 years we could run the state of California for 200,000 years... It’s come from greenhouse warming.”  
Because the global climate is largely driven by the heat locked up in the oceans, a rise

February 2005

## LWEC Science as Policy Saviour

Department for Innovation, Universities & Skills

### The Allocations of the Science Budget

2008/09 to 2010/11

December 2007

LWEC will “provide the knowledge, tools and **predictions**” needed for climate policy

--DIUS (2007)

“**risk-based predictions** of environmental changes and their effects on ecosystem services, economies and communities on local-to-regional, and seasonal-to-decadal time scales”

--LWEC Prospectus (2007)

Courtesy David Demeritt

# Different ways of knowing ...



Roni Horn – *'Weather reports you' ...* The beginning of a collective self-portrait

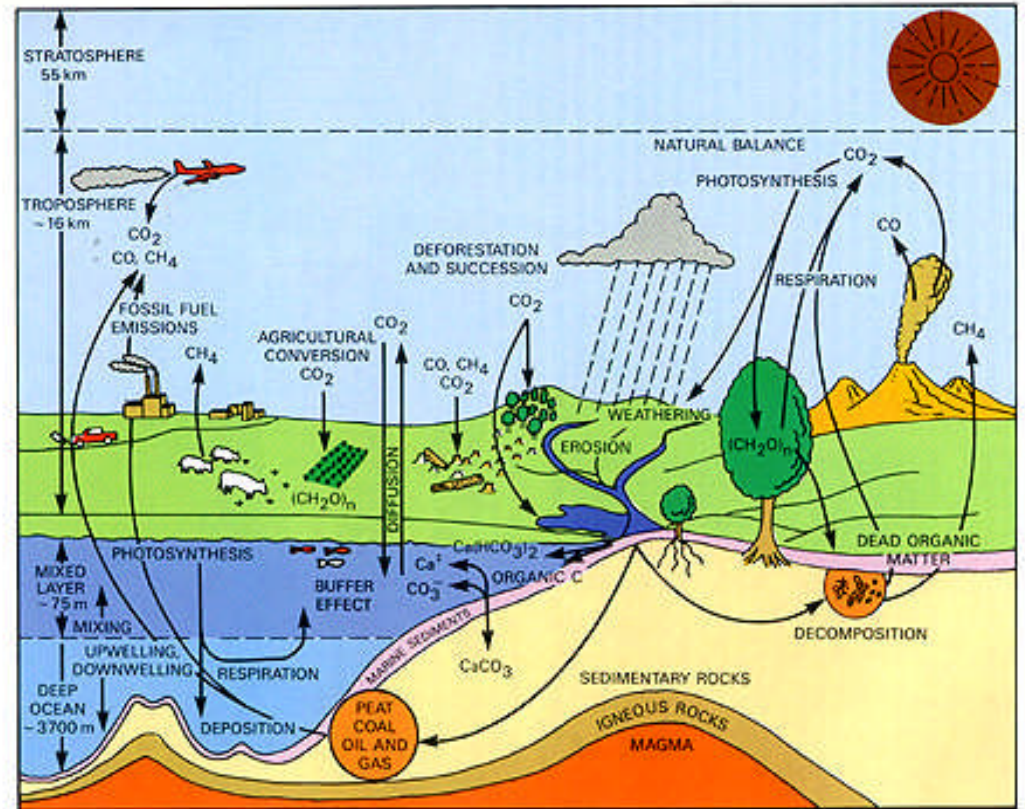
*"... the climate change 'activist' world and indeed the environmental world has all too often sought refuges in random use of apocalyptic imagery without seeking to harness the power of narrative. Without narrative, few people are ever moved to change or adapt. The faiths have been masters of this for centuries."*



Alliance of Religions and Conservation (2007) ARC/UNDP Programme  
Statement on Climate Change



# Different ways of knowing ...

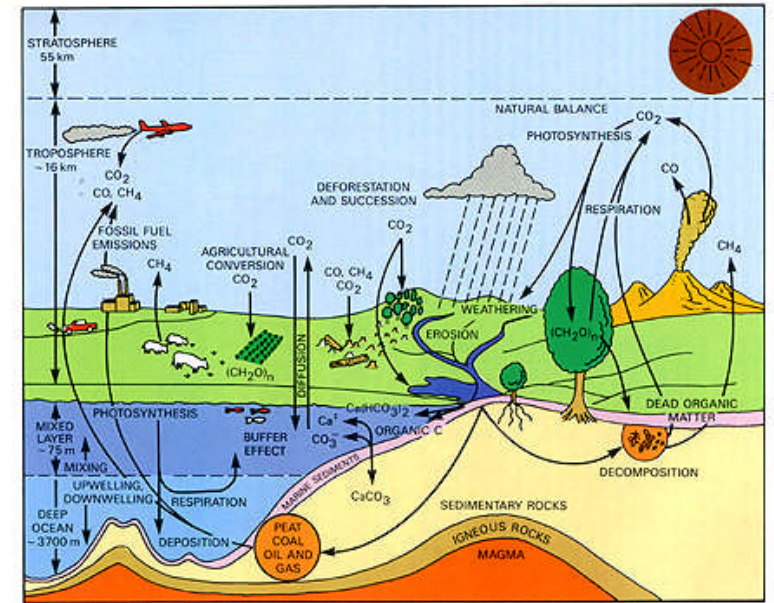




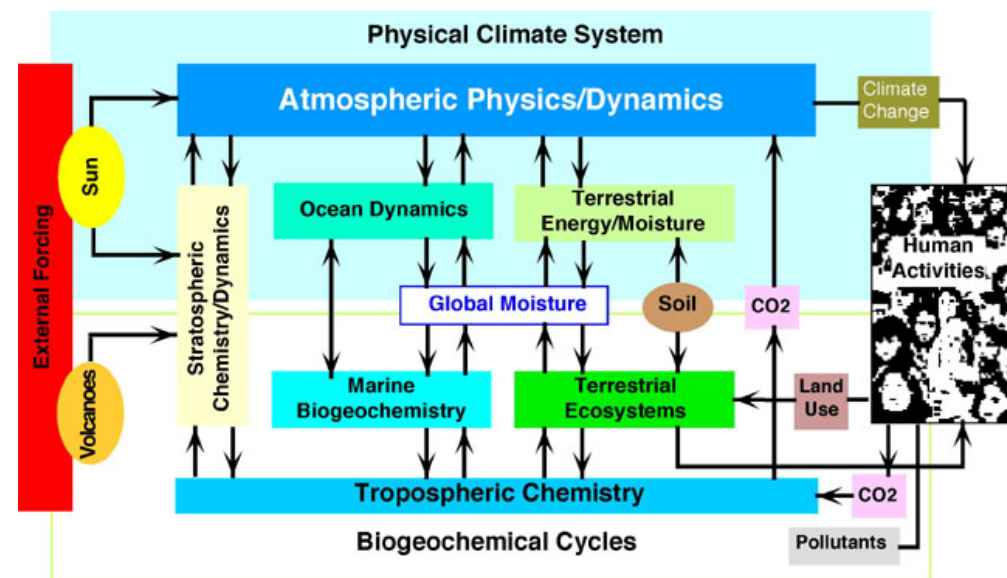
# Different ways of knowing ...



Erastus Salisbury Field, 1805-1900, a so-called "primitive" painter from rural New England



The Bretherton diagram of the Earth system



(from Earth System Science: An Overview, NASA, 1988)

# Economics and values

- “The Stern Report should be seen across the globe as the *final word* on why the world must act now to limit the damage we are doing to our planet.” – Tony Blair (2006)



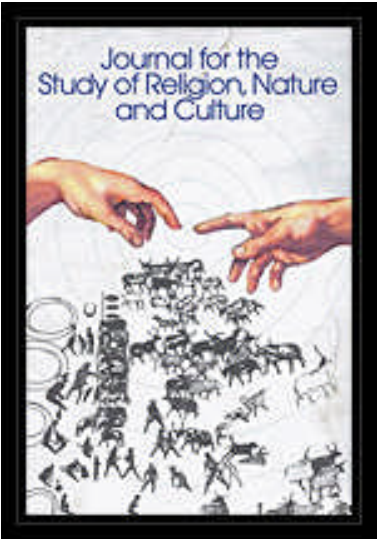
Courtesy David Demeritt



# Different value systems ...



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*Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture*



# Policy-making



*The Guardian, February 2007*



**The linear, or technocratic, model**

# Policy-making

CLIMATE CHANGE  
Global Risks, Challenges & Decisions

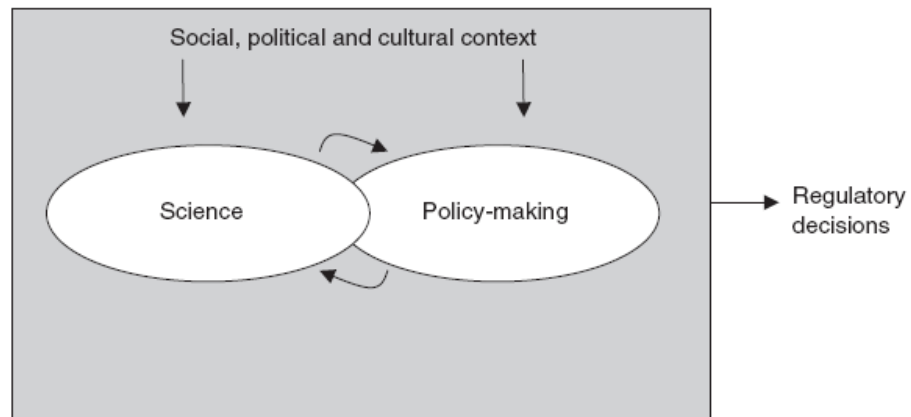
COPENHAGEN 2009  
10-12 March

*“And I think science should be the basis for decision-making in this field. **Politicians can only act on what we know**, and therefore your contribution is central ... And I would give you this piece of advice: not to provide us with too many moving targets, because it is already a very, very complicated process. And I need your assistance to push this process in the right direction, **and in that respect I need fixed targets and certain figures**, and not too many considerations on uncertainty and risk and things like that.”*



Mr Anders Fogh Rasmussen (Danish PM), 12 March 2009 Final plenary session of the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference

# Different modes of policy-making ...



## Co-production model

***“Experts can never provide anything but more or less uncertain knowledge and information on the probabilities of events ... all statements on risk contain built-in standards of tolerance and acceptance relying on morality, cultural standards and perceptions, which ultimately come down to the question: how do we want to live? This is a question that can never be answered by experts alone.”***

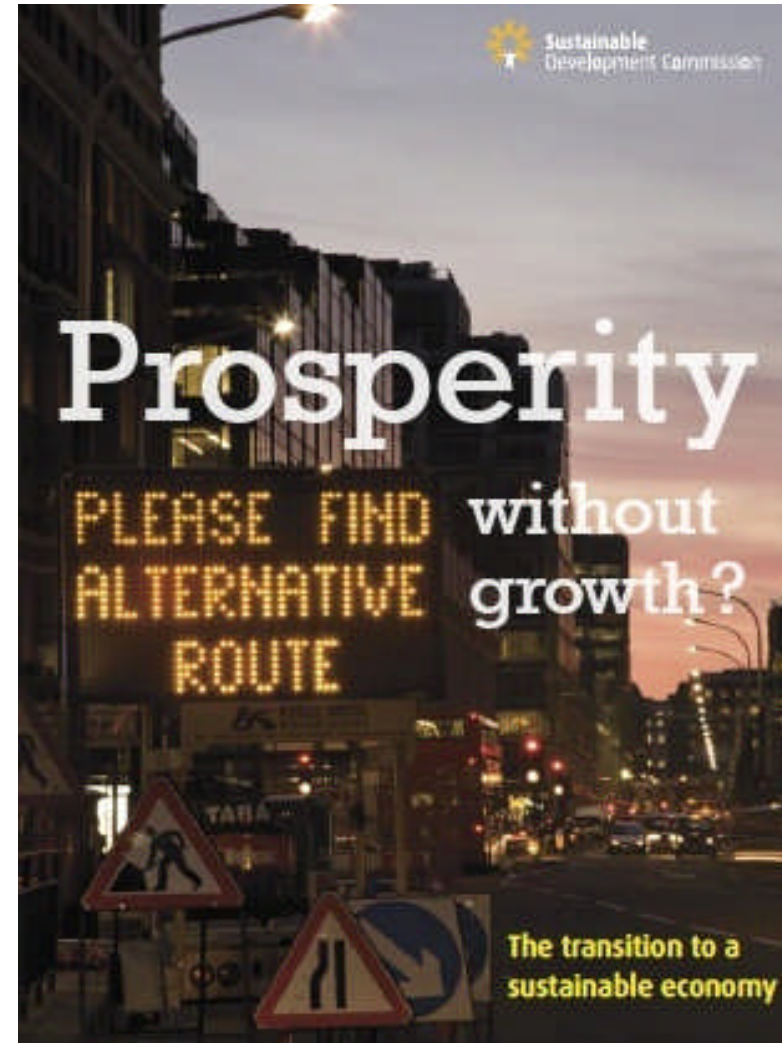


Ulrich Beck, 1997 pp.23-24 'Global risk politics' in Jacobs, M. (ed.) Greening the millennium



# Different modes of policy-making ...

*The emphasis on consumption, economics and policy usually fails to engage people at any deep level because it does not address the narrative, the mythological, the metaphorical or the existence of memories of past disasters and the way out. The faiths are the holders of these areas and **without them, policies will have very few real roots ...***



**Knowledge and modelling  
Economics and values  
Policy-making**

**Rather than last word pronouncements ...  
we need some first thoughts thinking**