



The Future: Six Drivers of Global Change

Al Gore

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NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

From the former vice president and #1 *New York Times* bestselling author comes *An Inconvenient Truth* for everything—a frank and clear-eyed assessment of six critical drivers of global change in the decades to come.

Ours is a time of revolutionary change that has no precedent in history. With the same passion he brought to the challenge of climate change, and with his decades of experience on the front lines of global policy, Al Gore surveys our planet's beclouded horizon and offers a sober, learned, and ultimately hopeful forecast in the visionary tradition of Alvin Toffler's *Future Shock* and John Naisbitt's *Megatrends*. In *The Future*, Gore identifies the emerging forces that are reshaping our world:

- Ever-increasing economic globalization has led to the emergence of what he labels “Earth Inc.”—an integrated holistic entity with a new and different relationship to capital, labor, consumer markets, and national governments than in the past.
- The worldwide digital communications, Internet, and computer revolutions have led to the emergence of “the Global Mind,” which links the thoughts and feelings of billions of people and connects intelligent machines, robots, ubiquitous sensors, and databases.
- The balance of global political, economic, and military power is shifting more profoundly than at any time in the last five hundred years—from a U.S.-centered system to one with multiple emerging centers of power, from nation-states to private actors, and from political systems to markets.
- A deeply flawed economic compass is leading us to unsustainable growth in consumption, pollution flows, and depletion of the planet's strategic resources of topsoil, freshwater, and living species.
- Genomic, biotechnology, neuroscience, and life sciences revolutions are radically transforming the fields of medicine, agriculture, and molecular science—and are putting control of evolution in human hands.
- There has been a radical disruption of the relationship between human beings and the earth's ecosystems, along with the beginning of a revolutionary transformation of energy systems, agriculture, transportation, and construction worldwide.

From his earliest days in public life, Al Gore has been warning us of the promise and peril of emergent truths—no matter how “inconvenient” they may seem to be. As absorbing as it is visionary, *The Future* is a map of the world to come, from a man who has looked ahead before and been proven all too right.

Praise for *The Future*

“Magisterial . . . The passion is unmistakable. So is the knowledge. Practically every page offers an illumination.”—Bloomberg

“In *The Future* . . . Gore takes on a subject whose scale matches that of his achievements and ambition.”—*The New York Times Book Review*

“Historically grounded . . . Gore's strengths lie in his passion for the subject and in his ability to take the long view by putting current events and trends in historical context.”—*Publishers Weekly*

“Provocative, smart, densely argued . . . a tour de force of Big Picture thinking.”—*Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)

“A luminously intelligent analysis that is packed with arresting ideas and facts.”—*The Guardian*

The Future: Six Drivers of Global Change Details

Date : Published January 29th 2013 by Random House (first published January 1st 2013)

ISBN : 9780812992946

Author : Al Gore

Format : Hardcover 592 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, Politics, Science, Environment, Economics, Technology, History



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From Reader Review The Future: Six Drivers of Global Change for online ebook

H Wesselius says

When a person of a certain status - athletes, actors, and even authors - writes a book, book editors tend to give him/her a pass. This is essentially what occurred with Al Gore and The Future; nobody told him when to quit, when to rewrite and when to focus.

Proofreading one's work is a near impossible chore as one tends to fall in love with their own prose. Gore leaves us with sentences the length of a paragraph and paragraphs the length of a page. Coupled with awkward phrasing, a reader is left with a book that at certain sections is a chore to read.

When the reader isn't struggle with the prose, the lack of focus or purpose leaves one drifting aimlessly. The subtitle tells us there is six drivers of global change. Six topics could possibly be unified but instead we are treated to a multitude of topics with Gore rambling aimlessly from one to the next and then back again. Sometimes it seemed Gore was intent on demonstrating his varied knowledge or even more so treat us to a final summation of his ideas but the lack of coherent thought made any attempt at reading a message a futile task.

At times, its possible to settle back and enjoy the book but then the problems resurface. With its lack of purpose, there's really no purpose for the reader to continue.

Lisa says

I wonder if I had felt the impact of this eloquent study in human inventiveness and failure as strongly if I had read it just a few years ago, at the moment when it was first published?

When Al Gore wrote this account of the uncharted waters that humanity is blindly exploring at the moment, he still had hope in a reformed democracy and capitalism under American leadership. Even though he saw that it was deeply flawed, and rotten in its intertwining of ethical decisions and financial benefits for corporative power, he didn't write with Brexit and Trump as a status quo. He wrote to the world of reason, expressing concerns that have just got worse and worse since then. He called for solutions regarding climate change, corporate capitalism and inequality based on flawed democratic processes exploited by super-biased lobbies with the hope that the United States would lead the way to a sustainable future. Instead, we have ... the present.

Underpinned with both his own vast experience in global politics and a huge body of scientific studies cited in an extensive appendix, Al Gore brings together into one volume of reflective criticism our present issues as a global, interconnected and growing species, facing our own destructive power. His conclusion is more urgently valid now than it was a few years ago:

"Human civilization has reached a fork in the road we have long traveled. One of two paths must be chosen. Both lead us into the unknown. But one leads us into the destruction of the climate balance on which we depend, the depletion of irreplaceable resources that sustain us, the degradation of uniquely human values, and the possibility that civilization as we know it would come to an end. The other leads to the future."

I choose the future.

And that pretty much means that the civilisation I grew up with, the one where people in my part of the world could consume ridiculously without any shame or guilt, has come to an end.

Let us say that we have taken a bite of the apple and know the difference between good and evil now. And with knowledge comes guilt and shame if we do not act according to our deeper understanding. We are not innocent anymore. We know. We are grown-ups. Not children of Eden playing under God's malevolently watching eyes. We are in charge.

From now on, I will have to justify in front of myself whether or not it is responsible to travel across the globe just to enjoy hotel buffets in warmer climates, whether or not it is justifiable to buy more clothes, gadgets and food than we need, whether or not I am entitled to my share in the traffic jams in my town each day, and whether or not my private financial benefit is the way to measure my political decisions for the future. It can't be delegated to others. It has to start at home.

To the future. It is on us.

Richard says

In an ambitious, far-reaching investigative argument, Gore lays out what he sees as the six key drivers of global change shaping the future: a fully-globalized market; a digitally-interconnected global civilization; power shifts from nation-states to multinational corporations and from West to East; depletion of essential natural resources (water, topsoil, oceans, and species) due to overpopulation and rampant consumerism; humans' increasing mastery over the biological organism; and, of course, terrifyingly fast-moving global warming-induced climate change, caused by humans burning fossil fuels into the atmosphere.

Global humanity faces exciting developments and moral quandaries, the promise of remarkable innovation with the peril of forces moving beyond the control of individuals and their governments. Apparently, no one is steering the ship.

At the heart of it all is the United States' current and calamitous inability to lead because, in Gore's phrasing, American democracy has been "hacked." Corporations write their interests into law at the expense of citizens, abetted by members of Congress who spend five hours a day dialing for dollars to buy television ads from corporate television networks which are, at best, inept at informing the electorate, and at worst, complicit in its disinformation. He makes no bones about it: it's a corporate coup d'etat. The contention is nothing new -- but coming from someone who spent a twenty-three year career in the House, the Senate, and the White House, it is chilling.

Gore may be forever driven by the disastrous consequences of his failure to seal the deal in 2000. He lost the White House in part because Ralph Nader drew the votes of those who cared most deeply about the environment; accountable, transparent government; and the government's role as protector of the people against corporate greed and malfeasance.

The great irony is that Gore has taken on Nader's mantle as the public intellectual most willing to tell these truths.

A very important book.

Hadrian says

This is the broadest of future predictions. Instead of six drivers of global change, Mr. Gore has included some dozens of new rapidly changing factors, neatly categorized in spidery charts. They file under the broad topics of economic globalization, the interconnectivity of modern communications technology, a re-examination of the traditional balance of power in the American world-system, technological innovation, and Mr. Gore's favorite: climate change.

The far-right's criticism of Mr. Gore is as loud as it is baseless. It is some feeble attempt to distract from the hideous alternative of 2000 and their own catastrophes. Perhaps the one thing that is closest to having a bit of truth is that of his being a pedantic bore. As stiff as his speech may have been, he has an agile and quick mind to make up for it. This is not the case here. He seems almost overexcited with his discussion on everything from Goethe to 3-D printing to genetic modification to coal production. His best moments, owing from his experience, are more concrete policy suggestions. He is almost vicious in attacking the excessive corporate influence in modern democracy, its overwhelming corruption, and emphasis on short-term profit over long-term benefit.

Predicting the future is by definition a hazardous trade. No doubt not all of the many predictions Mr. Gore makes will come true. But he has enough facts on his side to understand the bigger picture, and no doubt will continue to fight the eternal fight for the world of our children.

Bill Pardi says

Al Gore spoke at the Microsoft campus recently while on his book tour for "The Future." I thoroughly enjoyed his talk and decided to pick up the book. In it, Gore details what he sees are the "six drivers of global change" that are impacting and will continue to influence the future of our civilization. At a hefty, though not overwhelming 592 pages, the book is ambitious, wide ranging and exceptionally well documented.

Gore delves into topics such as the globalization of economics, the linking of human thought through the internet and global communications, the impact of governmental dysfunction, the impact of advances in biotech, and of course, the effects of climate change. While the book offers a wealth of facts and some interesting insights, overall I thought the book didn't work and found that I was disappointed at the end of it.

It suffered from several problems in my opinion:

While Gore's speaking style is thoughtful and engaging, he is a remarkably bad story teller in print. He was rarely able to provide a narrative on any of his key topics that was either engaging or illuminating. Most of the main sections were random anecdotes strung together with myriad facts and statistics. The result was a rather boring mix of history and opinion that felt messy and often incoherent.

He repeatedly switched personalities between observer and activist. While it was clear that there were certain topics he was more personally passionate about, and on which he has a clear public record of activism, his constant back and forth was disruptive and muddled his role as writer.

Finally, in just about every section he found a way to tie in his favorite topic, climate change. While that certainly made sense in some cases, in others it was blatantly forced and I sometimes felt he was being condescending and manipulative.

Gore is a smart guy who is very clearly plugged in to the issues and trends of the day. "The Future" was a great idea that, in my opinion, was just poorly executed.

Lolita says

I loved the book. I can't be more grateful to the person that recommended it to me.

It is not the first book I am reading on the issue but I definitely liked the way every point was presented and treated. Every driver/issue was presented with the right level of details and the proper framework for anyone to go and study more to complete the picture.

I can't agree more on what he said. We have to change the way we considered the impact of human life and prosperity in planet Earth. It is time we admit the wrong done and move towards the solutions, the improvements.

I am not American but what Mr Gore says about democracy in the U.S is the same everywhere. The voice of the people has become just a tool others use to get more. It is strange that we lost faith in the fact that together we can do great things and instead transfer all our power with our votes to a selected few. We do believe our vote for a candidate (parliament, prime minister, president, senate, congress... Whatever the role is within democracy) means that we stand for what he said, means we approve the way they promise to act but we fail miserably to make them accountable for it. We do not follow up on their promises, we do not require timelines and clear goals. We don't ask of our elected to act towards us as our bosses require us to act. I wonder if we would still have our jobs if we constantly promised one thing and failed to deliver it time after time.

I liked very much his proposals on taxes reforms. His "pay for what we burn not what we earn" was fantastic. There are many new business being build on entirely unsustainable environmental models but they get founded and move on to profit because the environment is not part of the equation. Taxes are.

There are many things on the book for everyone, for the students that want to know how can they fit in the world, for the businesses that want to do better, for the people concerned with the bigger picture, for the scientists and their relentless researches and passion on their pursuits, for the new policy makers...for everyone that feels deep inside that something needs to be done.

Glen Stott says

When Al Gore was VP, I had no opinion about him, except that he and his wife looked good together. When he ran for President in 2000 my opinion of him was negative because it seemed to me that truth was unimportant to him. Most politicians suffer from this malady, but Al seemed more afflicted than most. When the movie, "An Inconvenient Truth," came out, I was neutral on the global warming issue. I was still trying to get a handle on the 1970s when scientists were telling us the world was heading into an ice age, the world oil supplies would be all used up by the middle of the 1990s, and over population would surpass the world's food supply by 2000. In fact, it seemed like global warming would be a relief. However, I will admit to a negative bias against Al going into the movie. I have taken university science courses (chemistry/physics) and statistical analysis. After seeing the movie and how Al misinformed, lied, and misused statistical analysis, I was strongly leaning against global warming, and my low opinion of Al dropped. The people looking for big foot would be rolled back on their haunches if they took a look at Al's carbon footprint – this from a man who claims to be trying to save the planet. His personal "carbon offset" claim is just so much misleading balderdash that when carried to its logical conclusion simply states that the rich can live their lives however they want while the middle class has to give up SUVs, air conditioning, etc. According to Obama's senior advisor on science and technology, John Holdren, the US needs to be "de-developed." That means for the middle class and poor, not for the rich and government officials. De-developed means, we need to live more third world-ish.

I set aside time in my studies to read liberal biased books, because I want to get their point of view directly rather than through what conservatives say about them. I was fully prepared to give this book zero stars, but you will notice I gave it two. In spite of my bias against Al Gore, and now Global Warming, I found some interesting and useful things in the book. As far as specifics go, I have no trust in Al, so if he says it; I doubt it — almost knee-jerk. There is a lot to think about in the generalities that he tackles. What are the impacts of a global economy, the global communication power of the internet, the undemocratic influence of money in democratic politics to name a few. His answer is always more government control. I believe government should draw back, but not withdraw. Government involvement is necessary, but it needs to be smarter and more controlled rather than more controlling.

John Behle says

It did not work for me. It was like dozens of his political speeches stapled together. I kept thinking "Am I am reading a teleprompter of scanned in speech writer material?" I tried, but did not finish this heavy tome.

Richard Reese says

Al Gore's book, *The Future*, is fascinating and perplexing. The world is being pummeled by enormous waves of change, and most are destructive and unsustainable. What should we do? To envision wise plans, it's important to know the past, and understand how the present mess evolved. The book presents a substantial discussion of six megatrends that are influencing the future:

EARTH INC is the global economy, dominated by a mob of ruthless multinational corporations. It's pushing radical changes in the way we live, work, and think. Many leaders in the world have become its hand

puppets, shamelessly selling influence in exchange for treasure and power. Earth Inc. is the monster that's killing the ecosystem.

GLOBAL MIND is the worldwide web that enables communication between people everywhere. Two billion now have access to it. It provides access to a cornucopia of fresh information — knowledge from sources outside the walls of culture and propaganda. The Global Mind is our single hope for inspiring rapid, intelligent, revolutionary change.

BALANCE OF POWER is changing. Following World War II, the world was happy, as America provided virtuous leadership that helped maintain stability in the world. Today, the U.S. is no longer respected. Power is shifting away from Western nations to new powerhouses, and from national governments to corporate interests.

OUTGROWTH is the explosion of unsustainable growth in almost everything — population, pollution, consumption, soil mining, water mining, extinctions, and on and on. Earth Inc. is fanatically obsessed with perpetual growth, and aggressively flattens anything that stands in its path. Bummer growth must be replaced with the benevolent growth of Sustainable Capitalism.

LIFE SCIENCE is providing us with technology to manipulate biological processes in new ways. We'll cure more diseases and live much longer. Our ability to deliberately alter the genes of any living organism allows us to play a significant role in controlling the planet's evolutionary journey. Of course, evolution must be manipulated cautiously, to avoid embarrassing calamities.

THE EDGE is the catastrophically dysfunctional relationship between humankind and the ecosystem. On the down side, trashing the atmosphere and climate has created a monster we cannot control. On the plus side, it's inspiring many enlightened efforts to guide civilization back into balance with the ecosystem.

Al Gore is a charming lad with a good sense of humor. The son of a senator, Gore has spent much of his life amidst the barbarian tribes of Washington. He eventually became the vice president and a wealthy tycoon. While at Harvard, one of his professors was a pioneer in climate change research, a big juju subject, and a primary influence on Gore's career path. Gore is a senior advisor to Google, and a board member at Apple. He is exceptionally well informed about the digital world, climate change, ecological challenges, global politics, and the shenanigans of the rich and powerful.

In the book, Gore sometimes jabbars like a politician giddy with optimism. Yes, things are a big mess, and the status quo is in need of speedy, intelligent, radical reform. We can fix it! Politicians rarely win elections when their objective is damage control (Jimmy Carter's mistake). The way to win is to wear a big smile and promise hope, solutions, and better days ahead. I sometimes wonder if damage control might accomplish more.

Much of the book is impressive, but its optimism for the future is not well supported by compelling arguments and evidence. Readers learn that it's not too late to nip climate change in the bud. We simply need to reduce greenhouse emissions by 80 to 90 percent. But how could we do this without blindsiding the system that enables the existence of seven-point-something billion people? Easy! Create a carbon tax. Shift subsidies from fossil energy to renewables. Require utilities to use more alternative energy. Create a cap and trade system. If every nation eagerly did this next week, our worries would be over.

Population continues to grow exponentially. Gore recommends that we "stabilize" population. It would be risky to actually reduce population, because this might trigger a "fertility trap," a terrible downward spiral of

population free-fall. When there are too many seniors, and not enough taxpayers, pension systems collapse.

But stabilizing an enormous population raises serious questions about how much longer we can continue to feed so many people. Agriculture is currently engaged in “strip-mining topsoil” on a staggering scale. Each kilogram of Iowa corn costs 1.5 kilograms of topsoil, a precious nonrenewable resource.

Gore asserts that this can be corrected by a transition to crop rotation, and to organic low-till technology. But low-till cropping is designed for conventional agriculture, and works well with heavy applications of herbicide. Organic low-till is still in the experimental phase, and is extremely difficult to do successfully, because weeds are not wimps.

While water usage is increasing, water resources are declining, because underground aquifers are being depleted in many highly productive farming regions. Gore recommends drip irrigation, wastewater recycling, and cisterns for rainwater storage. Considering the current scale of water mining, and the cost of high tech irrigation, it’s hard to see these options as effective solutions. When the water is used up, farm productivity drops sharply, or completely.

Meanwhile, another monster is rising on the horizon — global phosphorus reserves are moving toward a crisis. Because phosphorus is an essential plant nutrient, this will have huge effects on conventional agriculture. Oh, we also need to get the nations united behind reversing deforestation, fish mining, and mass extinction.

Gore says that it would be insane to burn the fossil energy we’ve already discovered, because this would worsen the effects of climate change. But we’re unlikely to stop. Experts aren’t sure when Peak Oil will arrive, but it will, and it will be followed by an era of increasing turbulence, as industrial civilization is painfully weaned. Most of the easy oil has already gone up in smoke, and what remains is far more difficult to extract. Expensive oil means expensive food, and many poor people can barely afford food today. Spikes in food prices led to food riots in 2008 and 2011.

Gore adores civilization’s two magnificent achievements, democracy and capitalism, but he laments that both have been “hacked” by the evil slime balls of Earth Inc. If we don’t fix this, we’re doomed. It’s time to fetch our pitchforks and chase the slime balls away. The solution to our problems is to restore dynamic democracy, and then create a utopia of Sustainable Capitalism, which will allow Sustainable Growth to continue forever! The best is yet to come!

The book provides an impressive discussion how we got into this mess. It’s unique in that it comes from a card-carrying member of the global elite, not a hungry dirty radical. Readers are given a rare opportunity to enjoy the view from the top of the pyramid. I hope that the second edition clarifies some questionable assumptions in this otherwise fascinating book.

Everyday eBook says

In the introduction to Al Gore’s *The Future*, Gore credits a mysterious person for the inspiration behind his new book. This unnamed muse asks the former vice president a standard loaded question, the kind so impossible to answer succinctly that it becomes treated like a 1950s prom date, where the responder awkwardly dances with the answer a ruler’s length apart. “What are the drivers of global change?” the

person asks. After rattling off some conventional wisdom – technology, communications, democracy – Gore went home and reflected.

As the days passed, the seed of the question began to germinate in his mind. Being a man who can't bear to see a metaphorical – or literal – field lie fallow, Al Gore attended to the question with care. He explored it. He let it grow. It consumed his thoughts, and branched out into new questions demanding new concepts. Now, eight reflective years later, Gore pruned his answers to publish *The Future*, a book of such global importance you'd be neglecting your own future if you chose to ignore it.

Thankfully, Al Gore's book is as remarkable for what it isn't as for what it is. It isn't a fear-mongering tool. It wasn't forged in Mt. Doom with wicked political purposes. It isn't filled with naïve optimism or tail-wagged opinions. His rational approach to a better tomorrow is refreshing. The levelheaded foresight of *The Future* deserves all the attention those pesky Mayans commanded with all the attendant credibility they lacked. One is left wondering if the loss Gore took in the 2000 election was a blessing in disguise, whisking him away to a land of purpose over pandering.

To be fair, books and movies, such as "After Earth" and "The Day After Tomorrow," popularize the notion of the unknown for a thrill's sake. While it's exciting stuff, it sadly cheapens the exploration of a worthy subject. But lest we forget, despite being denied the American Presidency in 2000, Al Gore won the Popular Vote by over 500,000 heads. Point being: The majority of us trusted this man to lead America into what was then our future. His book makes it abundantly clear that his singular vision hasn't changed. In fact, since he flew the political coop and embraced environmental activism, he's only had time to hone it.

Even if you absorb just a fraction of Gore's philosophy, you can appreciate it for something else. *The Future*, at the end of the day, pays homage to the power of human curiosity lighted by a simple question: "What are the drivers of global change?" This simple premise is reminiscent of Robert Browning's eloquent ode to human curiosity: "Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's a Heaven for?" And one only needs to replace the words "a Heaven" with "Hope" to see the glorious potential in Al Gore's *The Future*.

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Mason says

I had the pleasure of seeing Al Gore during the promotional tour for this new book. In the course of his presentation, I had the feeling that he had a firehose of information to share but only an eyedropper with which to share it. *The Future* firms that perception.

This is a good ol', all-American data assault. With enough bibliography and endnotes to make a university press editor proud, Mr. Gore bludgeons the reader with fact after fact. Within the rapid-fire prose is a chilling picture of our culture's origins, the progress of history, and the penalties of rampant greed. After three hundred pages of explication, Mr. Gore quickly outlines common-sense measures to make an innovative, healthy future for the world. Sadly, those who most need to hear his message of rational action will be the last to grab the book from the shelves. I realize this was a book he needed to get off his chest, but I think we all would get more out of it with a honed, yet fully developed message.

Donnal Walter says

It is unfortunate that Al Gore is still a polarizing figure in American society, because his tour de force, *The Future*, deserves a wide reading by thoughtful individuals of all political persuasions. The premise, that "no prior period of change remotely resembles what humanity is about to experience", is unassailable. Although the massive collection of supporting material would be hard to come by any other way, any given item can be readily confirmed independently. All information is public. The author's progressive viewpoint is transparent, but his descriptions and discussions of this perspective are remarkably well-balanced, and his insight is instructive regardless of one's own views. Readers from all points on the political spectrum will find plenty with which to agree, and where you disagree you will find support for your own position.

Admittedly, this book is not a quick read, at least it was not for me. There is much to be digested, but it is well worth the effort. In the end, Mr. Gore offers suggestions for how we should proceed, but I view this book less as a prescription and more as a basis for conversation. I would love to discuss it with you.

Eric_W says

I'm usually reluctant to read political documents, but this was chosen for our reading club so I decided to slog through it. It's often interesting although I felt sometimes that he was just summarizing each of the myriad of research articles pulled together by his research assistants in some kind of coherent fashion.

There's no way in hell I could summarize everything in less than 50 pages but I've got some general comments below. It's a good book to use from the index, i.e., want to see about a certain issue, hit the index and then read the few pages devoted to that topic.

Positives:

- Very good at capturing generational angst by which I mean that each generation seems to have some issue of apocalyptic concern that MUST be solved or the world will come to an end. Depending where (when) you live (d) that concern may be different but it's always there and is of overwhelming importance to those concerned.
- Great summary of much of the information out there and the issues. See my comments re the index above.
- Nifty bibliography. A great resource.
- Good summary of conflicts on page 124
- Recognition that retired people are a huge problem. (Full disclosure: I'm retired) This is a point I make to my colleagues and students. It takes 4.2 workers between the ages of 16 and 60 to provide enough tax revenue to support one retired person. That means lots of jobs to be created or lots of retired people to die off.
- Very good summary of the problems in the financial industry

Negatives:

- Ignored the role of religion and religious extremism. Religion is barely mentioned yet it's a major source of conflict which has the more immediate potential to cause a lot of grief.

- Too US-centric, i.e. U.S. as moral force that needs to enforce that morality. If corporations are too multi-national how do you effect change in other countries. I just don't buy the idea that the United States has to be the moral (read military) savior of the planet. Gore does and states so explicitly.
- Is it fair to deprive developing countries of the opportunity to become wealthier? We set a certain standard which we need them to emulate in order to consume more goods and then tell them they can't because it's bad for the planet.
- Again, the favorite whipping boy is corporations. It's all their fault. Everything. And this person business, yet as a lawyer he should have known the idea of corporations having "personhood" status is a very old one. i.e., "Since at least *Trustees of Dartmouth College v. Woodward* – 17 U.S. 518 (1819), the U.S. Supreme Court has recognized corporations as having the same rights as natural persons to contract and to enforce contracts." That also increases their liability. "The basis for allowing corporations to assert protection under the U.S. Constitution is that they are organizations of people, and the people should not be deprived of their constitutional rights when they act collectively. (see the excellent Wikipedia entry for more.) In this view, treating corporations as "persons" is a convenient legal fiction which allows corporations to sue and to be sued, provides a single entity for easier taxation and regulation, simplifies complex transactions that would otherwise involve, in the case of large corporations, thousands of people, and protects the individual rights of the shareholders as well as the right of association. A larger issue is that all of us who have, or want to have, a pension, MUST support the success of these corporations since pension funds are their biggest investors. Gore should know better. He sits on Apple's board.
- Ignores the failure of the legislative. The Supreme Court gets blamed for everything yet they are forced into this position because the legislative branch has completely abrogated its responsibility. -Money in politics, which Gore handles nicely, is a big problem. He has few solutions of merit, however.
- Solutions all require an authoritarian form of government.
- Emphasis on "reason-based" thinking when what we are learning is that to make change one has to appeal to the emotional side
- He has a tendency to celebrate the technological and then focus on the problems of technology which leaves the reader unclear as to what he's demanding.
- No discussion of nuclear which is totally carbon-free. Reliance on solar and wind ignore storage issues. Energy experts say that as long as the storage issue remains unsolved, you have to build double the capacity if you build a lot of renewables so the grid remains stable. New nuclear technology such as low-pressure liquid sodium reactors hold a lot of promise.
- Ignores conservation and impact on standard of living, i.e. reduced consumption.

Issues:

- Gore serves on several corporate boards including Apple – what's his responsibility as an individual in the seats of power.
- He's a multi-millionaire. Gore got rich off his sale of the network: \$100 million.
- Rich v poor – when has it ever not been so? Solutions are a bit simplistic: Lots of ideas collected by his research assistants, but ultimately I found his book very unsatisfying - lacks a sense of history and assumes that problems he sees are unique to current generation
- How do you define and accomplish goals in a democracy where self-interest is the highest value?
- Does apocalypticism bring benefits or just ignoring the problem.
- How do you determine what's an opportunity vs a negative?

I couldn't help thinking if things would have been different had he been elected in 2000. It's unlikely he would have invaded Iraq, but he surely would have caved to pressure to invade Afghanistan. And how would he have handled Libya, Egypt, Israel, Syria, et al. The pressure on Democrats to use military might is always irresistible. I have a sneaky suspicion that we would be in precisely the same place we are today. That's discouraging.

Haydar Almaatee says

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<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1U...>

Steve says

Outstanding book! A must read for all Americans. I think Al's personal agenda is to educate and inform. I don't think he is part of the problem, he is part of the solution. He 'lays out' what we are facing as a culture with a much needed clarity. It is up to us. He likes to reapeat that our government has been 'hacked', and that is such a perfect description.
