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Procrastination in climate policy: Metaphysics vs. decisions in the wild

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S57.14**Procrastination in climate policy: metaphysics vs. decisions in the wild**Bertrand G Guillaume*University of Technology of Troyes, ICD-CREIDD (FRE CNRS 2848) , Troyes, France*

Jean-Pierre Dupuy's Enlightened Catastrophism provides a stimulating framework for the important issue of climate change ethics. It is also an original charge against the Precautionary Principle. I think Dupuy has highlighted critical issues, but I am not sure that he has found the solution to cope with the "Perfect Storm" of global climate change.

I am first going to discuss his framework. I will sketch it by focusing on three especially salient issues, namely objective uncertainty, retroactive effect on judgment, and what could be labelled as "impossible necessity". These three features make Dupuy deny that the precautionary principle can face the catastrophic consequences of the hubris of massive technology development on an industrial scale. This is a surprising claim, especially since opposing charges have often been put forward, criticizing the precautionary principle as being too restrictive and absolutist. Drawing on Ivan Illich and Hans Jonas, Dupuy offers a new philosophical attitude to take seriously the possibility of catastrophes and better face global threats such as environmental ones. His so-called Enlightened Catastrophism will imply that we are not facing risk, but fate, the latter being nonetheless avoidable. In one sense, this theory implies that we should not talk about "risk" (something that has to be managed and controlled) but about "evil" (something that opens to metaphysical thinking).

I shall then discuss two points in the context of global climate change. The first point regards prudence as a consequentialist argument for non-regret action. I will claim that the recommendations of mere prudence coincide with those of Dupuy's radical ethics and that they do not need to be opposed. That is to say that both approaches of rationality urged to cut carbon emissions and call for other non-regret strategies. The second point regards our incredulity regarding the occurrence of hyperbolic catastrophes as a consequence of more pragmatic causes than metaphysics. That is not to say that Dupuy's reference to metaphysics is wrong or irrelevant, but that we can adopt a lower level of analysis, with doubtless more operationalisation. Indeed, it seems that focusing on cognitive, organisational, political and cultural reasons allows more practical recommendations that I will review.