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Introduction

On 23 September 2019, the young climate activist Greta Thunberg delivered a historic speech to an audience of world leaders at the UN Climate Action Summit. Not mincing any words, she called out the political leaders of the world for their complacency in the face of the ongoing and escalating climate crisis. “People are suffering. People are dying. Entire ecosystems are collapsing... and all you can talk about is money and fairytales of eternal economic growth. How dare you?” she thundered in a surprisingly bold address (“Greta Thunberg to world leaders” 0:38 – 0:57). The address represents the frustration of a young generation growing up with the fear of the afore-mentioned climate crisis.

Thunberg is neither the first nor the last person to draw attention to the climate crisis. In recent years, increasing attention has been paid to the ongoing climate change fueled largely by human activities. While industrialization has brought immense benefits to human civilization in the form of longer lifespans, higher standards of living, and immense reduction in poverty, it has also resulted in increased carbon emissions which are causing changes in the world’s climate pattern and leading to increase water levels, the destruction of natural ecosystems, and an increase in the severity of natural disasters. In his book on the topic, the environmental activist and former American Vice President Al Gore contends that fighting the climate crisis boils down to three basic questions (Gore 10):

1. Must we change?

2. Can we change?
3. Will we change?

Gore writes that the answer to all three questions is “yes”. His exploration of the answer to the second question is the most interesting. With increasing attention being paid to the climate crisis, it is quite easy to fall into despair and believe that humans cannot change the way they organize their economy and everyday lives in time. However, Gore reminds his readers that there has been a tremendous improvement in the development of environment-friendly technology in the past few decades.

In order to provide practical solutions to the crisis, he gives examples of renewable energy and electric transport, stating that both have witnessed a continuous decrease in costs along with a corresponding increase in popularity. In his exploration of the answer to the third question, he argues that as it is becoming increasingly clear to many people that our current production and consumption patterns are unsustainable, everyone from consumers to businesses to investors is showing more interest in sustainable solutions. Furthermore, he gives importance to the grassroots climate justice movement which is growing around the world, stating that this movement is holding political leaders accountable and encouraging them to take the much-needed steps to combat the climate crisis (Gore 10). Gore’s outlook, therefore, is an optimistic one.

Ultimately, whether or not humans are able to deal with the climate crisis successfully remains to be seen. However, as Gore demonstrates in his book, we equip the tools and techniques to develop solutions in the form of sustainable patterns of production and consumption. What is needed is the political will to enact these solutions.

## Works Cited

Gore, Al. *An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power*. Rodale Books, 2017.

“Greta Thunberg to world leaders: 'How dare you? You have stolen my dreams and my childhood’”. *YouTube*, uploaded by Guardian News, 23 Sep. 2019.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TMrtLsQbaok>



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