

Global burning: Rising antidemocracy and the climate crisis. By Eve Darian-Smith. Stanford: Stanford University press, 2022. 230 pp. \$22.00 paperback

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“[O]ur planet is literally and metaphorically on fire,” writes Eve Darian-Smith (p. 137). Wildfires burn throughout California. Bushfires rage in Australia. The Amazon smolders. In *Global Burning: Rising Antidemocracy And The Climate Crisis*, Darian-Smith investigates the origins of these catastrophic wildfires and their disproportionate impacts on Indigenous and minority communities. She argues that wildfires illuminate the ways that neoliberalism and rising authoritarianism dismantle environmental protections and reproduce environmental racism. The book also urges readers to think *with* fire and each chapter advances a metaphor of fire to explain the contemporary climate crisis.

Chapter 1 (“Fire as Omen”) explores fire as a prophetic signal of impending ecological collapse. Why are destructive wildfires occurring? And who is to blame? Darian-Smith faults human-driven climate change and particularly extreme-right, ultranationalist politicians who deny climate science and privilege corporate profits over environmental conservation. She compares devastating fires in Australia, Brazil, and the United States to showcase how far-right leaders collaborate with large corporations to resist environmental regulations.

Chapter 2 (“Fire as Profit”) addresses the relationship between capitalism and climate change. Darian-Smith argues that extractive capitalism has caused serious environmental degradation. Democratic backsliding, she contends, has shifted power to corporations and enabled the expansion of industrial mining and agribusiness projects in many parts of the world. In Brazil, for example, President Jair Bolsonaro endorsed agribusiness exploitation in the Amazon even as deforestation reached record highs. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Scott Morrison adamantly denied any connection between massive industrial mining projects and an upsurge in out-of-control bushfires in Australia. These actions, Darian-Smith argues, demonstrate how antidemocratic politicians shield corporations from responsibility for their destructive environmental practices.

Chapter 3 (“Fire as Weapon”) focuses on the rise of what Darian-Smith labels *free-market authoritarianism*. She argues that free-market authoritarians aggressively promote nationalism, often defined in nativist and racial terms. They advocate for isolationism, standing against political agendas that support multilateral cooperation and governance. And they openly tolerate corporate irresponsibility and environmental destruction. Darian-Smith argues that this confluence of ultranationalism, isolationism, and anti-environmentalism shores up extractive industries and undermines social movements to address the climate crisis.

Chapter 4 (“Fire as Death”) examines the tragic and unequal impacts of wildfires. Darian-Smith illustrates how poor and racialized communities have been disproportionately burdened by fires. She argues that Indigenous people, rural farmers, and immigrants confront unique risks from smoke inhalation and the loss of cultural heritage sites. “These disproportionate impacts,” writes Darian-Smith, “cannot be disentangled from long histories of colonialism that continue to underpin systemic racism and racial capitalism occurring on a global scale” (122). Darian-Smith further argues that far-right leaders have increasingly relied on militarized police forces to perpetuate this environmental racism.

Chapter 5 (“Fire as Disruption”) concludes the book with a hopeful message about the disruptive capacity of fire. Wildfires will continue to disrupt ordinary life, Darian-Smith notes, but this may

force people to reassess their relationship with nature and adopt more ecocentric politics. “Wildfires,” she writes, “show us that every one of us—rich or poor alike—must embrace a relational positionality with the natural world that is bound by respect and interconnection if we want to avoid our own extinction” (134).

Global Burning is a manifesto against extreme-right politics and a resolute call to save our planet before it is too late. Eve Darian-Smith makes an impassioned plea for more democratic politics to regulate extractive industries and mitigate wildfire impacts. She offers familiar critiques of neoliberalism, patriarchy, anthropocentrism, and environmental racism. However, the book also makes at least three novel contributions.

First, Darian-Smith warns that rising authoritarianism will exacerbate the climate crisis and result in more catastrophic wildfires. Other scholars have shown that antidemocratic leaders use law pragmatically to cooperate with other state leaders in both democracies and autocratic regimes (Ginsburg, 2020; Scheppele, 2018). But *Global Burning* suggests that authoritarian cooperation on climate will never happen. Antidemocratic partiality for ultranationalism and complicity with extractive industries will inevitably hamper struggles to address the climate crisis. Mitigating climate change requires cooperation and governance beyond borders. *Global Burning* clarifies that it also requires democracy.

Second, Darian-Smith makes a compelling case that antienvironmentalism has become a signature policy of the extreme-right. Comparing the policies and public statements of Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, and U.S. President Donald Trump, she convincingly argues that far-right politicians routinely endorse disinformation campaigns to deny environmental science and work against national and global conservation efforts.

Finally, Darian-Smith encourages readers to think *with* fire. Her chapter metaphors expose fundamental relations shaping the climate crisis, including relations between human activities and climate change, between profit-maximizing logics and environmental harms, between far-right politicians and corporate recklessness, and between tragic wildfires and racialized suffering. Thinking *with* fire offers a valuable conceptual framework for scholars and policymakers alike.

REFERENCES

- Ginsburg, Tom. 2020. “Authoritarian International Law?” *American Journal of International Law* 114(2): 221–260.
Scheppele, Kim Lane. 2018. “Autocratic Legalism.” *University of Chicago Law Review* 85(2): 545–584.

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The myth of the community fix: Inequality and the politics of youth punishment. By Sarah D. Cate. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023. 268 pp. \$99.00 hardcover

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In March 2023, the suicide of 16-year-old Joshua Keith Beasley at the Travis County State Jail in Austin, TX, joined a tragically long list of preventable deaths in American youth prisons. Incarcerated at age 11 for kicking a school safety officer, Beasley over a multiyear period was bullied, beaten, placed in restraints, pepper sprayed, and placed in excessive isolation, before finally being transferred to adult jail. Within 6 months, he was dead.

Beasley’s case exemplifies the horrors of youth incarceration that have fueled a national movement in recent years to replace state-run youth prisons with smaller facilities or noninstitutional programs located nearer to the home communities of adjudicated youth. This “community-based reform movement” forms the subject of *The Myth of the Community Fix*, which examines juvenile justice