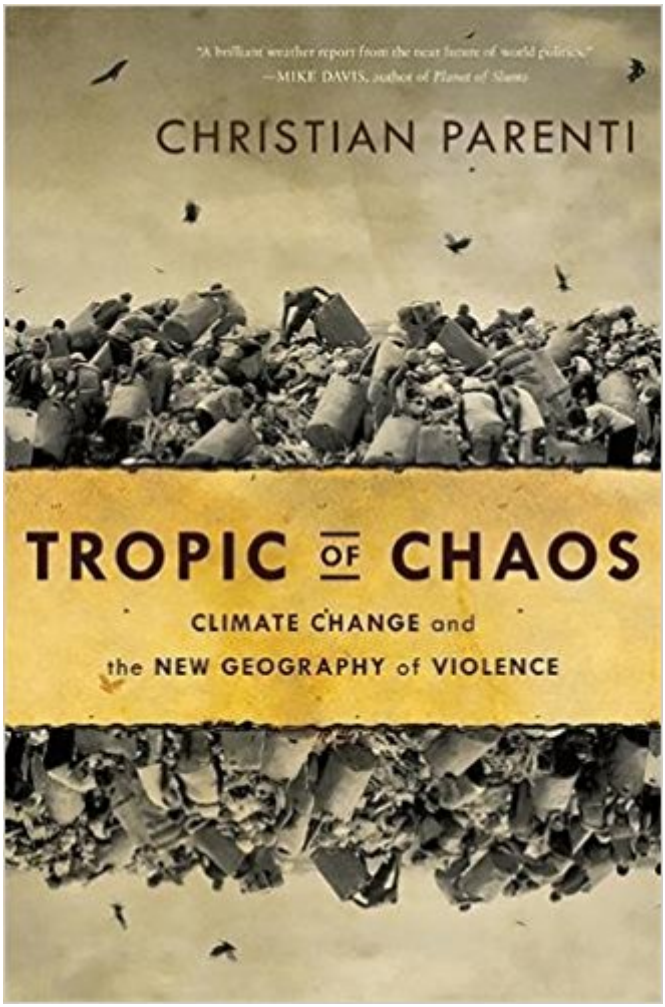
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Tropic Of Chaos: Climate Change And The New Geography Of Violence



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Synopsis

From Africa to Asia and Latin America, the era of climate wars has begun. Extreme weather is breeding banditry, humanitarian crisis, and state failure. In Tropic of Chaos, investigative journalist Christian Parenti travels along the front lines of this gathering catastrophe--the belt of economically and politically battered postcolonial nations and war zones girding the planet's midlatitudes. Here he finds failed states amid climatic disasters. But he also reveals the unsettling presence of Western military forces and explains how they see an opportunity in the crisis to prepare for open-ended global counterinsurgency. Parenti argues that this incipient "climate fascism"--a political hardening of wealthy states-- is bound to fail. The struggling states of the developing world cannot be allowed to collapse, as they will take other nations down as well. Instead, we must work to meet the challenge of climate-driven violence with a very different set of sustainable economic and development policies.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

San Francisco Bay GuardianÃ¢â ¬Å“Christian Parenti offers an unusual and compelling analysis of violence through the lens of the environmentÃ¢â ¬Â¦.Parenti also turns a sharp eye upon the repression, surveillance, and counterinsurgency that first-world nations have employed to combat growing violence in water-scarce, conflict-ridden regions, and calls for a more enlightened approach.Ã¢â ¬Â•Jan McGirk, ChinaDialogue.netÃ¢â ¬Å“Tropic of Chaos is a must-read. It telegraphs an urgent message of how quickly climate catastrophe is morphing around the

globe.Ã¢â ¬Â•Astra Taylor, Bookforum (online)Ã¢â ¬Å“[A] harrowing tour-de-forceÃ¢â ¬Â¦ if you read one book on climate change this year (and really, who can bear to read more than one?), Tropic of Chaos should be it. The way you understand the changing climate, and the resulting conflicts that serrate our world, will be transformed.Ã¢â ¬Â•Nomi Prins, TruthdigÃ¢â ¬Å“Tropic of ChaosÃ¢â ¬Â• is a wake-up call to humanity, particularly to the richest nations (with the U.S. at the top of that list) that produce the greatest amount of carbon that accelerates climate change. The detrimental effects of our environmental gluttony at the heart of our economic avarice are not blurry fatalistic hypothesesÃ¢â ¬â •they are here, today. As Ã¢â ¬Å“Tropic of ChaosÃ¢â ¬Â• illustrates so clearly, we canÃ¢â ¬â„¢t afford, morally or economically, to be lax about the impact of catastrophic convergence on the global population or allow private profit-motivated interests to ruin civilization.Ã¢â ¬Â•Foreign Policy In FocusÃ¢â ¬Å“[An] impressive new bookÃ¢â ¬Â¦ If Naomi Klein, Mike Davis, and James Howard Kunstler had teamed up to write a book, the result would read something like Tropic of ChaosÃ¢â ¬Â¦ Tropic of Chaos illustrates the strengths of merging climate projections with left historical analysis of the poverty and conflicts that define much of the Global South. The result is an important map key to the (possibly near) future, if not strictly a climate book. Viewing climate change as an amplifier of existing inequality and disorder results in a split-screen, one that deals as much with the last century as the currentÃ¢â ¬Â¦there is no denying the relevance and immediacy of the bookÃ¢â ¬â„¢s main thesis, powerfully illustrated by the current drought-related famine in SomaliaÃ¢â ¬Â¦ Tropic of Chaos not only asks the right questions. An argument could be made that it deals with the only questions currently worth asking. Climate change is the X Factor lurking behind every other conversation over the direction and shape of our civilization. If the temperature goes up by the predicted six degrees Fahrenheit, Parenti is correct to conclude that all bets will most certainly be off.Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Â•Socialist WorkerÃ¢â ¬Å“[Parenti] has written a sweeping discourse on the collision set in motion between the natural and the social worldÃ¢â ¬Â¦[ParentiÃ¢â ¬â„¢s] book remains an important and cogently written, if frightening, contribution to our understanding of the planetary crisis and how we got here.Ã¢â ¬Â•Social FundsÃ¢â ¬Å“Tropic of Chaos: Climate Change and the New Geography of Violence, by Christian Parenti, is a rarity among nominally popular books, in that it seeks to describe what the world will look like if climate change is left unchecked. Exceedingly well-researchedÃ¢â ¬Â¦it nevertheless lays out a narrative all the more frightening for those living in a world whose leaders seem increasingly resistant to doing anything about climate change.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •BooklistÃ¢â ¬Å“Parenti takes readers from the drought-afflicted savannas of Kenya, where armed farmers are killing each other over limited water supplies, to shantytowns in

Brazil, where scarce resources are driving desperate citizens into the deadly drug trade. . . . While the landscape he surveys is grim, Parenti offers several tactics to encourage better resolution of its problem, including raising awareness among political leaders and recognizing that progress will come only through creative compassion.Ã¢â ¬Â•The Georgia Straight, Vancouver, CanadaÃ¢â ¬Å“ThereÃ¢â ¬â„¢s much to admire in Tropic of Chaos, notably the breadth of ParentiÃ¢â ¬â„¢s research and how he ties it into a coherent, big-picture view of the world. The book also offers timely insights into the origins of this monthÃ¢â ¬â„¢s famine in East Africa.Ã¢â ¬Â•Washington City PaperÃ¢â ¬Å“ParentiÃ¢â ¬â„¢s exploration of how, say, a water shortage in equatorial Africa causes nomadic herdsmen to roam far afieldÃ¢â ¬â •only to be met by a rival tribe that raids their animals and kills their men to protect fertile landÃ¢â ¬â •illustrates the domino effect extreme weather can cause anywhere in the world.Ã¢â ¬Â•The DailyÃ¢â ¬Å“Like the climate scientists he invokes in his analysis, Christian Parenti seeks to understand a dizzyingly complex problem. . . . His book embarks on a tour of the so-called Ã¢â ¬Ëœtropic of chaos,Ã¢â ¬â„¢ the equatorial belt where much of the worldÃ¢â ¬â„¢s population lives, and where changing weather patterns have led to conflict and destitution.Ã Â At each stop, Parenti draws connections between violence and global warming.Ã¢â ¬Â•Publishers WeeklyÃ¢â ¬Å“Scathing. . . . ParentiÃ¢â ¬â„¢s careful reporting and grasp of politics and economics support the bookÃ¢â ¬â„¢s urgent messageÃ¢â ¬â •that impending global chaos is all but assured unless the developed world finds the political will to imagine a better future.Ã¢â ¬Â•Kirkus ReviewsÃ¢â ¬Å“An investigative journalistÃ¢â ¬â„¢s tough analysis of how some of the worldÃ¢â ¬â„¢s most vulnerable statesÃ¢â ¬â •those with a history of economic and political disastersÃ¢â ¬â •are confronting the new crisis of climate change. . . . A dark look at a looming world crisis.Ã¢â ¬Â•Mike Davis, author of Planet of SlumsÃ¢â ¬Å“A brilliant weather report from the near future of world politics.Ã¢â ¬Â•Naomi Klein, author The Shock DoctrineÃ¢â ¬Å“A richly investigated and original account of the role climate change is already playing in contemporary conflicts. This glimpse of the future we most fear arrives just in time to change course.Ã¢â ¬Â•Andrew J. Bacevich, author of Washington Rules:Ã Â AmericaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Path to Permanent WarÃ¢â ¬Å“To read this disturbing, indeed frightening book is to appreciate fully the fix weÃ¢â ¬â„¢re in. Ã Â On the one hand is a looming planetary crisis, the product of climate change, resource scarcity, and widespread poverty. Ã Â On the other hand is the misguided conviction, to which Americans in particular cling, that military power, deftly employed, will insulate the developed world from these problems. Ã Â It wonÃ¢â ¬â„¢t, Christian Parenti argues. Ã Â HeÃ¢â ¬â„¢s right. Ã Â Ã Â We canÃ¢â ¬â„¢t say we weren’t warned.Ã¢â ¬Â•Pablo SolÃƒÂ n,Ã Â Chief Climate Negotiator andÃ Â Ambassador of

Bolivia to the United NationsÃ¢â ¬Å“This important book highlights a new dimension of climate change. ItÃ¢â ¬â„¢s not only about the loss of biodiversity, glaciers, and island states but also about a new era of conflict, violence and chaos.Ã Â Parenti shows us how climate change already produces war and aggression.Ã Â But he alsoÃ Â invites us to think about real and structural alternatives toÃ Â unbridled capitalism and runawayÃ Â climate change.Ã¢â ¬Â•SudhirÃ Â Venkatesh, author ofÃ Â Gang Leader for a DayÃ¢â ¬Å“Tropic of Chaos is a penetrating look at natural disasters and the humans that make them happen.Ã Â This engrossing, deeply researched account takes us on a journey around the globe to uncover the social production of catastrophe.Ã Â A book thatÃ¢â ¬â„¢s hard to ignore, and difficult to put down.Ã¢â ¬Â•Michael Brune, Executive Director, Sierra ClubÃ Â Ã¢â ¬Å“Christian ParentiÃ¢â ¬â„¢s exhaustively researchedÃ Â Tropic of ChaosÃ Â presents a disturbing idea: that the species which caused the climate crisis will be the oneÃ Â most affected by it. Ã Â This powerful book charts how climate-driven violence is already taking hold.Ã Â If we donÃ¢â ¬â„¢t act with urgency, a troubled future awaits us.Ã¢â ¬Â•Saskia Sassen, Professor, Columbia University and author of Territory,Ã Â Authority, RightsÃ¢â ¬Å“We know we confront multiple catastrophic events.Ã Â They have been analyzed and debated.Ã Â Like no other book I know of, Parenti gives us the vortex itself.Ã Â He does so through knowledge and facts in aÃ Â mannerÃ Â that brings it all to life.Ã Â What a great book, reallyÃ Â extraordinary.Ã¢â ¬Â•Rethinking SchoolsÃ¢â ¬Å“Tropic of ChaosÃ Â is an important book for teachers, especially because of the wretched treatment of the climate crisis in mandated corporate-produced curriculum materials. . . . [W]e need to devise ways to incorporate [ParentiÃ¢â ¬â„¢s] analysis into our curriculum.Ã¢â ¬Â• --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Christian Parenti is a contributing editor at the Nation. The author of Lockdown America, The Soft Cage, and The Freedom, he has written for Fortune, Mother Jones, Conde Nast Traveler, Playboy, the New York Times, and the London Review of Books, among others. He lives in Brooklyn, New York.

Last week I bought a new book before my flight to San Francisco, " Tropic of Chaos: Climate Change and the New Geography of Violence.", by Christian Parenti. Indeed, this book is well written, well researched and is deserving of the 5-stars by two reviewers on . More to the point though, Parenti presents a history of many regions of the world framed through the climate of the

area with an eye on how the climate may change in the near future (the next 50 years). Unfortunately, in areas like Somalia, the near future is today.Somalia presents a tragic case study of the violence of climate change. As I write this, hundreds of thousands of refugees are fleeing Somalia for Kenya to find relief from intense drought and the resulting famine. The Miami Herald (10 Aug 2011, AP article) printed an Associated Press article reporting the rape of many women refugees once they reached the Kenyan boarder by groups of armed men. "One 30-year-old woman who watched two of her five children die as they trekked through Somalia was raped after reaching what she hoped would be the safety of Kenyan soil." (AP, 09 Aug 2011) According to the report, some of these armed men would order the woman's brother to rape her. If he refused, he or she or both would then be killed. Once these people manage to cross the border, their future does not get much better. Kenya does not have the resources to protect or feed the 400,000 refugees that are already staying in a camp built for 90,000. "Officials here say they are being overwhelmed by the influx of tens of thousands of Somali refugees, and can't stem the attacks. " (AP, 2011)Parenti's book is certainly an important book for anyone interested in looking at a brief history of how many societies have changed when the climate changes - Somalia, Afghanistan, Brazil, Mexico and others are discussed - especially during a drought. More important is the understanding of the dynamics at play right now, today, during many of our debates in this country: The war in Afghanistan, immigration across our border with Mexico, and our current debt criss.I highly recommend this book

As an avid reader of sustainability/environmental literature -- with my own discipline expertise in eco-history -- I felt this was among the very best books on the climate crisis I have ever encountered anywhere. Parenti's perspective is chilling, but convincing. The reporting is genuinely courageous, skilled, dispassionate, detailed, revelatory, and deeply frightening. Parenti's ability to weave a compelling human story (and detect convincing patterns) from the confusing "chaos" of global events and data sets is an intellectual tour de force of the first order. Given its focus on military and global security repercussions, there's even some hope that those still (somewhat) skeptical of climate change would find Parenti's rigorous, non-sentimental world-view more convincing than other competing books on the topic. That said, his analysis does offer realistic yet hopeful opportunities to the doomed "armed life-boat" strategies we are currently locked into.

The great writer Walter Benjamin once pointed out (and here I a going to greatly paraphrase) that us modern humans are unique amongst species in our inability as a large group to plan out multiple

escape routes; that is to say that us humans can march blindly into certain disaster, whereas any other animal sensing danger would beat a hasty retreat. Mr. Parenti's book is a revelation as it takes a clear eyed glimpse into our undeniable climate crisis; and with that glimpse he illustrates the real threats that crisis represents to both human life and to the democratic ideals that we cherish as American citizens; and finally Parenti maps out at least some possibilities of an exit strategy from this crisis. That these ideas are presented are of utmost importance. Fortunately Mr. Parenti goes beyond just stating abstract notions -- he brings these ideas to life with some generally exciting first hand reporting that takes us from the hardest hit crisis zones of Africa, Afghanistan to our own backyard border zones of Texas and Arizona. In effect he personalizes the overwhelming concepts of global warming by introducing us to the goat herder, the Indian logger, the DEA agent whose lives have been totally turned around by the steady increase in temperature and erratic weather patterns.Most books about the climate crisis can overwhelm us with negativity and a sort of end-of-days mentality. Mr. Parenti's book is the opposite. It is a book that virtually pulses with a love for democracy and belief in the power of human beings to finally do the right thing. And it is a great read as well. What could be better?

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