

**SUBJECT LINE:** LOOK UP! The facts are in The HOPEFUL REALIST Newsletter, 4th issue

The HOPEFUL REALIST Newsletter

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## The HOPEFUL REALIST Newsletter: *Looking at the World Today as if Facts Matter*

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*Here we explore the latest facts, actions, and perspectives on the New Great Transformation of the Earth System. We apply the Hopeful Realism we all need to work through the greatest predicament in human history.*

### *Latest News from the Hopeful Realist*

**Survey Results Soon:** Awhile back, I posted a survey on climate change to Face Book. We had 376 responses. It took several attempts and tech support calls to get the data from FB, but now we have it. As soon as I analyze it, I will report the findings in this newsletter. The data is in some rather odd formatting, so it will take a bit of work to clean it up for analysis.

**New Feature:** Hopeful realism in this world depends on people striving for a better future. Many voices must be heard to make progress. So, I am inviting readers to submit their ideas on specific topics for the **LOOK UP! Biweekly Featured Commentary**.

To start that off, I am inviting your comments on the following question: What kind of social change is necessary to bring carbon emissions down to zero (not the 'net-zero' of the green-washers, but actual zero)? Keep it 300 or fewer words by getting right to the point. I will select the most creative, realistic, and thoughtful mini-essay and publish it as a **Featured Commentary** as soon as I've reviewed all I receive. Think Big!

My new eBook continues to be downloaded at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com), having hit the #1 spot multiple times in the New Releases category "Science and Math Short Reads," You can still download it **FREE** via Kindle Unlimited. Please [review and rate](#) it by clicking the button on the lower left of its Amazon page below "Customer Reviews," and say a few words about what you think about it. Several readers have complained that Amazon has blocked them from reviewing the eBook, citing 'unusual activity' on an account or that the reader's account did not 'qualify' to review. I wonder how many others...

**Note:** Past issues of The HOPEFUL REALIST Newsletter are now available on my web site:

<https://thehopefulrealist.com/hopeful-realist-newsletter/>

### **LOOK UP! A Bi-weekly Featured Commentary**

There will be no more revelatory hearings by the House Select Committee on the January 6 Insurrection until September. We yearn to learn all the facts of the Fake President's autocratic attempt to overthrow democracy in America. But we also grow weary of it all, and are relieved to contemplate a few weeks

break from hearings about all the outrageous behavior of people we were supposed to think of as 'public servants.' As the latest COVID variant surges, more infectious than the rest, we seek some respite from the chaos of modern existence. Those senators who, out of political spite, refused to pass the bill to help our veteran soldiers exposed to all those toxic fumes from the 'burn pits' in Iraq and Afghanistan, have no respect for those who actually do serve. War is not only hell, it is a huge polluter, yet the elites who send our young to fight have no shame when they fail to pay for the human costs. Widespread public outrage soon shamed them into passing the bill. Then the FBI raided Mar a Lago!

In a similar way, as climate chaos accelerates, little serious response from government or corporate elites is likely. For the mass media, the imminent destruction of the Earth System that has sustained humanity since the beginning of the Holocene geological epoch around 11,000 years ago, is just another story competing with police shootings and Putin's war of aggression on Ukraine. Every news item seems to have its own brief 'news cycle,' but climate catastrophe is not going away. The climate emergency, which necessitates massive global action to mitigate, is still treated as just another political issue among many others. The news anchors in the movie, "Don't Look Up!" were too prescient for our comfort. 'Ordinary Reality' rushes toward the cliff of collapse. The center will not hold.

A great deal of excitement emerged among members of the Democratic Party just before the end of July, when Senator Schumer actually struck a deal with rogue Dem. Joe Manchin, the coal-covered senator from West Virginia for a severely cut down version of what had been the "Build Back Better" bill. Word was that the Dem's simply knuckled under to Manchin's demands to ease the permitting process for the gas pipeline he wants to enrich West Virginia fossil-fuel elites like himself. In deference to the rogue, they now call it the 'Inflation Reduction Act,' which it did all along. The other rogue Democratic senator, Kyrsten Sinema, has finally agreed to the bill on condition that her rich Wall Street sponsors get to keep the "carried interest" income tax loophole. Corruption knows no boundaries.

As I have said before, if we can't get a grip on the climate/ecosystem emergency, nothing else will matter. As conditions deteriorate, issues of economic and climate justice, human rights, and just plain civility in everyday life will succumb to violent conflict over the requisites of survival. (For more extensive discussions of this and related matters, go to:

<https://thehopefulrealist.com/the-hopeful-realist-blog/> )

***Featured Image:***



Photo Credit: NY Daily News. Indonesian surf champion Dede Suryana rides a wave filled with trash on Untung Jawa Island. (Zak Noyle/A-Frame)

### ***Surfing: Communing with Nature or Dodging Trash?***

When I surfed off the Southern and Central Coast of California many years ago, I could not have imagined a situation such as that pictured above. Surfing was idyllic then. Too many of those who recognize the huge scale of pollution of the oceans with mostly plastic trash, focus their efforts on cleaning up the mess—a necessary but inadequate response—without considering the need to address the *source* of the problem. Treating the symptoms does not cure the disease. We must demand the elimination of almost all single-use plastics. The same misdirection occurs in relation to carbon emissions.

Old guys like me remember the milkman delivering fresh milk directly from the local dairy to our home and collecting the empty glass bottles for re-use. We remember returning the beer bottles and Coke bottles for the deposit—they would be re-used dozens of times. We also remember selecting vegetables in the store unadorned by plastic ‘clamshell’ packaging. Just 5% of [plastics in the US](#) are ever recycled. Recycling processes are very water-intensive, and water is becoming a very scarce commodity. It is another failing attempt to treat the symptom instead of the disease—a Band-Aid on a compound fracture.

### ***Books and other Sources on the New Great Transformation***

Jason Hickel is a young economic anthropologist with a strong voice advocating “degrowth” of the global corporate economy. His recent book, [Less is More](#), makes a powerful case for the severity of growing mass extinctions, ecological collapse, and the unsustainability of the endless-growth ideology of corporate capital. Hickel is a thought leader in the movement for replacing the neoliberal corporate economy with a *new economy* that will prioritize *human needs* over corporate profits and growth. His writing is insightful and incisive.

Hickel, Jason. 2021. *Less is More: How Degrowth Will Save the World*. London: Windmill Books.

Climate and ecological activists I know pay attention to Hickel's work. He makes clear too, that our addiction to increased energy use, renewable or not, must be constrained, and that "green growth" is not a real thing. He perceives a cultural change coming, especially among youth. However, he does not explain *how* societies can transform themselves to create the circular human-values-based economy he advocates. Ecologists and climatologists know that degrowth is a *precondition* for stabilizing climate and restoring ecosystems. However, getting there from here will require societal transformation at a scale that is hard to grasp.

Transforming societies to operate their economies with much lower energy inputs, and none from fossil fuels is now an unavoidable necessity. Yet, it will be the most problematic of all actions to accomplish, as I explain in [HOPEFUL REALISM: A Climate Manifesto](#). Nevertheless, it is a survival requirement now, a physical non-negotiable prerequisite to humans surviving and thriving on Planet Earth. neither its celebration nor the "Inflation Reduction Act" itself will reach beyond scratching the surface of the escalating climate catastrophe.

### ***Quotable Quote***

*What we need to do to survive is the same as what we need to do to have better lives.*

*~ Rupert Read and Kofi Mawuli Klu,  
in their Preface to Jason Hickel, [Less is More](#).*

It is remarkable that several factors that would make life much better are identical to much of what is required to survive by stabilizing the increasingly unstable components of the Earth System we have so disrespected and trashed for hundreds of years. To effectively restrain the forces that we have unleashed, which have caused climate and ecosystems to destabilize, we must also repair other areas of human degradation.

We must address economic and climate injustice, racism, white nationalism, the attack on human rights, the assault on democracy by [autocratic attempts](#), and the culture of excessive consumerism. All of this must converge with transforming the rapaciousness of the global corporate economy of endless growth into a global network of ecologically harmonious communities. No small task!

See you in two weeks. Meanwhile, stay safe and read [HOPEFUL REALISM: A Climate Manifesto](#).