

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, as it unfolds before our eyes. We apply the Hopeful Realism we all need to work through the greatest predicament in human history.

Latest News from the Hopeful Realist

At the end of the COP27 Meetings in Egypt, yet another “agreement” and NO Action

Already people are talking about COP28, following the wrap up of another COP-failure in the 27th attempt to *appear* to do something meaningful about the growing danger posed by the climate emergency. The new ‘agreement’ by delegates from the most polluting nations in history to provide funding for the ‘loss and damage’ suffered by victim nations **means nothing**, though the claims go a bit beyond previous failed pledges to help them adapt to growing climate chaos. Now that the conference is over, the agreement to help the non-industrialized poor nations adapt to climate disruption, even if they actually fund it, will be too little too late, unless the rich industrialized nations immediately stop growing their profligate pollution of the planet and reduce it to near zero in the near term.

But let’s face it. Both governments and giant international corporations, the biggest and most powerful institutions in the world, continue to subsidize and invest in more and more fossil-fuel developments—new exploration, new drilling, new LNG processing sites, etc.—as the world heats up around them. They remain unwilling to turn away from their efforts to gain more short-term profits from the global addiction to fossil-fueled energy projects before it all comes tumbling down.

As one critic put it, we keep asking the COP delegates to make decisions that would require nations and corporations to curtail their extraction and use of fossil fuels. But they cannot and they will not, since they are agents of those same nations and corporations. So they make gestures that disappear into the ether as their overlords go on with business as usual.

As I said in a blog post on the eve of Thanksgiving, COP27 did not [disappoint](#); that would have assumed that I expected some positive outcome, but I did not. The makeup of the conference, dominated by old white men of high status and power, was subject to outlandishly brazen influence by the fossil-fuel industries and nations, especially the Saudis and the Russians.

But the **good news** I can report is that the elegantly articulate and impassioned climate writer and activist, **Erin Remblance** has partnered with **Ra James**, who integrates transformational ancestral wisdom for future-ready leadership; they are beginning an important new venture. Indigenous wisdom is an extremely important ingredient in forging ecologically sound post-growth societies. Erin and Ra

recently co-founded [\(re\)biz](#) an international organization with a very specific and valuable mission: to help people connect the dots between our ecological crises and our economic system and learn more about what we can do about it. Erin left her early successful career with blue-chip companies, and with the insights of a new mother, dedicated her life to educating people on climate change, de-growth, planetary boundaries, modern monetary theory, and more. She is one of the most inspiring climate writers around.

[\(re\)biz](#) offers workshops for people who work in organizations that may have good intentions but insufficient information or vision to act effectively, or that just make politically correct statements about climate but without acting to contribute to solutions. Information is ammunition for influence driven by commitment. It is very important for people to work within their organizations to help shift the corporate culture to one that becomes part of the solution instead of adding to the problem. I urge everyone to take a look at the website [rebiz.io](#) and to read Erin's writings at [Resilience](#) or follow her work on [LinkedIn](#), to enrich your climate education.

The *almost* good news is that *Al Gore* is doing something that could be useful and extremely important if institutions act upon the information that results from the research he supports. Gore is promoting the [ClimateTrace.org](#) consortium of research institutions, universities, and others who have been developing a comprehensive global greenhouse gas emissions tracking system. Using satellite sensing technology and other data sources, along with artificial intelligence algorithms and big-data computing, TRACE will soon have documented all major sources of carbon emissions on the planet, right down to the details of a particular source, whether factory, refinery, power plant, or whatever. The obstacles are not technical; they are various forms of institutional intransigence.

What Climate Trace means is that it is now possible to calculate precisely the optimum priority for shutting down emissions sources. By applying precise emissions data to shape an action plan, in theory we can accomplish the greatest emissions reduction in the shortest time—exactly what the world needs.

However, *Al Gore's* naïve plan is to 'bring in the private sector' by some *convenient* sort of persuasion. The problem of course, is that so many of the business elites he would persuade are those who have denied, resisted, distorted, diverted, and ignored the climate-action imperative for decades. The truth he tells they may no longer deny, but they still dodge it because it remains as *inconvenient* as ever. *Al* is stuck in the business-as-usual mentality of the terminal culture of industrial civilization. His persuasive power still lacks the *force* of social, economic, or political leverage.

As I pointed out in last week's blog on [thehopefulrealist.com](#), the only plausible strategy remaining to act on this new technical opportunity is to mobilize enough people around the world to *force* the fossil-fueled institutions (both public and private) of the industrial-consumer political economy to comply with the extreme emissions reduction protocols we need to deploy now. Such protocols would call for curtailing the greatest sources of emissions first and going right down the pollution hierarchy from top to bottom, in hopes that we can accomplish enough in time to avert total societal as well as climate and ecological collapse.

At this point, a **global social movement** to salvage enough of the biosphere to allow a *relatively* smooth transition to a post-growth economy, seems the only viable strategy remaining. This **new great transformation** of society must be designed in action, such that societies begin to operate in harmony with the Earth-System habitats upon which we rely for human survival, and which must endure for the

sake of the Earth System itself. It all depends on honoring and supporting the ecosystems we must restore while protecting the remaining species we hope to prevent from declining to the point of extinction. It's not just about us.

My eBook ***HOPEFUL REALISM: A Climate Manifesto*** continues to fare well in Amazon's sales rankings, mostly downloaded free from Kindle Unlimited. I'm always looking for feedback from readers. [GoodReads.com](https://www.goodreads.com) is a great resource for finding books that you will want to read; it is where readers talk with other readers about what they are reading, want to read, and have read. I use it to find and evaluate new books on areas of interest. Please read, [review and rate](#) *Hopeful Realism* on Amazon and/or on Goodreads.com. On Amazon, do so by clicking the button on the lower left of the book's Amazon page below "Customer Reviews," and say a few words about what you think about the issues and how I explain them. If you don't do Kindle, email me and I will send you a .pdf version directly.

Note: You can find past issues of The HOPEFUL REALIST Newsletter archived on my web site:

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

LOOK UP! A Bi-weekly Featured Commentary

Neither the climate, an extremely complex biophysical system, nor the principles of physics that drive it are negotiable. Remarkably, from the words spoken by many delegates to the COP27 conference concluded a few days ago, you would think that they were. Even more remarkable is the fact that negotiations went on as if the climate and the Earth's ecosystems were just something out there to negotiate about as if they were merely political commodities that the culture of the extractive industrial-consumer political economy of growth has always viewed them as: resources waiting us to exploit. The global worldview must change.

No matter how often or well scientists explain this reality, the captains of industry and the managers of consumerism remain unaffected. They see it all as someone else's problem. Yet, eventually they will become victims of the operations of the global political economy of endless growth, even in their gated communities and corporate boardrooms. Even a lot of 'environmentalists' do not quite get it. Economic growth will end, and soon.

You don't have to advocate 'de-growth' to see that the end of industrial civilization is nigh; the evidence is unequivocal. That means the end of unfettered economic growth has begun, even though growth continues to be driven by the whims of surplus capital seeking a venue for its own expansion when there is nowhere else to go. The sooner global decision-makers get that, the sooner we can initiate measures to mitigate the damage and carve out a viable place for ourselves within the Earth System that has sustained us until we so severely messed with Mother Nature.

The question is not whether to continue growing the global political economy. Given the trajectory we have set the Earth System on, it will spin further out of balance and collapse without major intervention. Instead, we must face the fact that the unsustainable structure of growth will either collapse on its own or 'we' will step into the situation with *realism* and take massive collective action in the *hope* that we can steer our fate in a livable direction. We must direct the profligate global economy of waste toward a *new great transformation* of the global political economy to embed economic activity *within* local and regional ecological societies. We need our societies to become networks of ecologically sound

communities where humans can live in harmony with the very habitats that would have sustained us if we had not gotten so carried away with the false idol of endless economic growth.

I know that it is extremely difficult to imagine the end of industrial civilization, what seemed for a long time to be the inherently natural path of progress. But that cultural icon was based on fundamentally flawed premises: that economic growth could be endless on a finite planet, and that we could somehow 'decouple' economic growth from ecological and climate destabilization.

What were all those professional economists thinking? And why do they keep thinking that their false premise can continue to drive social reality? Well, they are just like the delegates to COP27. They hold to a set of beliefs that are no longer compatible with life on the ground, because that is where their money comes from.

Sure, you can fight Mother Nature, but only for a little while. After that, the limits of delusion set in and the reality of objective boundaries confronts even the most delusional. However, when you consider the number of people who believe all sorts of nonsensical conspiracy theories, the economic illusions of the past couple of centuries don't seem quite so far-fetched. After all, they did work quite well for some for a while, until we started to bump up against the real-world limits to growth. That is why we now face the choice between a human-directed *new great transformation* of society, and the do-nothing prospect of total collapse.

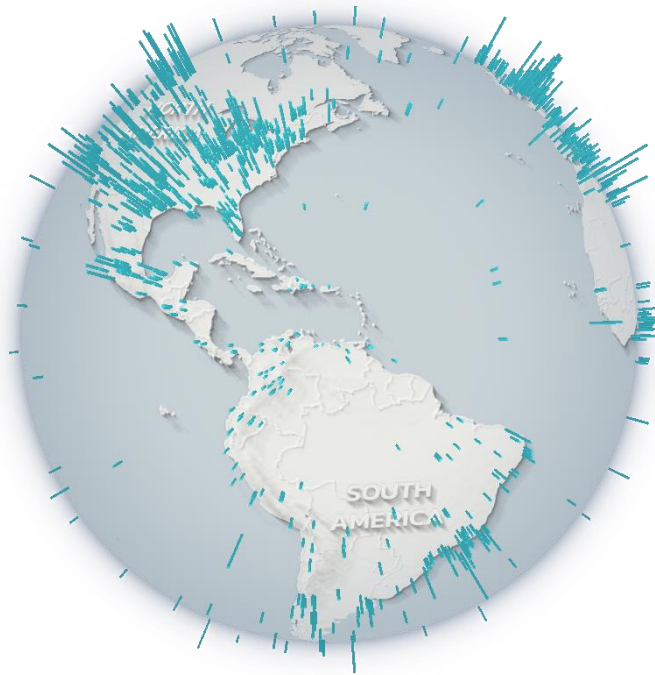
For more discussions of this and various related matters, go to:

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

Today's Featured Image:

The World's Major Sources of Carbon Emissions:

[ClimateTRACE.org](https://climate TRACE.org) Documents Them All



Most Major Carbon Emissions Sources are in the Global North.

On the Climate Trace website, this Earth image rotates, showing all the major emissions hot spots on the planet. Information is power, or it can be. Since we will shortly know in great detail, thanks to climatetrace.org the precise locations of all major sources of carbon emissions that cause the heating of the Earth, 'we' will have the capability to make the most efficacious decisions about where to cut the largest emissions first.

Will we make the decisions and take the climate action that we must? The answer to that will depend on whether and to what extent ***the people*** of this world will ***mobilize*** in sufficient numbers to ***force*** our stagnant institutions to take the actions they must. The alternative? Collapse of climate, of ecosystems, and of society itself. The choice is between realistic hope and fatalistic futility.

Books and other Sources on the New Great Transformation

The importance of mobilizing people to force institutions to 'do the right thing' cannot be overstated. It is also important to understand that social movements are not only about marching in the streets. Protests and demonstrations are great attention getters, but they are not enough. More and more people need to take whatever action they can, where they live and work.

Most of us live at least half of our lives in organizations where we make our living. In that context, each of us has some particular degree of freedom to influence institutional decisions. That is why I believe that the new international program developed by ***Erin Remblance***, climate writer and activist who lives

near Sydney, Australia, and **Ra James**, international traveler and seeker of indigenous wisdom—which we all desperately need—has so much potential to make a difference.

Erin Remblance and Ra James. *(re)biz Reconnecting Business Leaders Back to Earth*. rebiz.io

Business leaders are often fond of ‘networking.’ This can be a powerful tool for climate/ecological action. Recent research in social network science indicates that properly configured social networks can be a powerful force for social change. That can work within and/or between organizations. If the kind of knowledge and understanding that (re)biz is offering can penetrate and even help form strong networks for change, with strong connections between such networks, the limits of this kind of change may be far beyond what we need to transform our societies for survival.

Quotable Quote

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

~ Margaret Mead

I know, this statement is widely quoted but its importance does not fade. Margaret Mead turned me into a feminist in 1965, when I was fortunate enough to have a conversation with her after she gave a talk to the assembled students at Campbell Hall on the campus of the University of California, Santa Barbara. I didn't quite know it at the time and I doubt that I'd even heard the term by then. Mead understood that whether the issue was women's suffrage, civil rights, or apartheid in South Africa, the formation of strong networks of committed people could leverage their interpersonal power to motivate non-violent movements for social change. That is as true today as ever.

All over the world, small groups of committed citizens in strong relations of intention may be the last great hope for humanity to stave off the chaos and collapse that will otherwise destroy industrial civilization without leaving us a chance to create something better to replace it. Strong climate action can pave the way for the creation of ecological communities—which are inherently democratic. Human social formations (families, communities, societies) must be capable and intending to live in harmony with the habitats of which they are a part, by restoring and regenerating what we can. And, it can happen within your organization by people who understand the strategy and tactics for creating organizational change, and have the vision to take action.

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