

The report also outlined how we could have acted to prevent the collapse of our civilisation - 'The challenge of overshoot from decision delay is real, but easily solvable if human society decided to act' through policies that could have prevented the overstep of planetary limits. When the report was published it sold over 30 million copies, before it abruptly went out of print (suspicious).

I think this is probably the hardest thing to fathom. We could have acted - were given ample opportunities to act - but decided to continue business as usual, leaving it up to future generations to deal with the destruction of our civilisation.

In 2022, Dutch economist and senior director at KPMG, Gaya Herrington, re-analysed the Limits to Growth report to confirm if the predictions and findings were accurate and on track. Herrington found that, yes, the predictions were accurate and very much on track.

But hey, what about renewable energy? Can it help us continue to live life as we currently know it? Can it save us?

I'm afraid not.

Perhaps it could have if we made a full switch to renewables a long time ago, but it is too late now. Jem Bendell in his book *Breaking Together* outlined that 'replacing fossil fuels with other sources of energy is not technologically, economically or politically possible at the pace being proposed to curb climate chaos.' Coal, oil and natural gas (fossil fuels) are limited resources and extracting them from the earth will become more and more expensive, to the point where it will no longer be affordable to do so. Currently, fossil fuels account for 91% of Australia's primary energy consumption and around 83% of the world's consumption. This underscores how reliant we are on fossil fuels to meet our energy needs and highlights how little energy renewables are currently generating. We use a lot of energy (the world currently consumes 100 million barrels of oil a day), and demand is increasing faster than our production of renewables. Moreover, we rely on fossil fuels to mine the minerals required for the production of solar panels (which are also finite!) as well as to create things like wind turbines, making it impossible to make the switch to renewables without continuing to exploit fossil fuels.

Additionally, as Sarah Wilson touches on in her *Collapse* book serialisation on her Substack, renewable, clean energy, utopian, 'solutions' such as driving electric cars and purchasing recycled goods 'keep us consuming. They keep us in the same human behaviour crisis. And they keep us grasping out to more - to more growth, more comfort, more "fixes" and more energy and resource use'. Which of course is the reason why we are in the capitalist mess that we are in now.

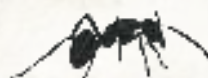
As I look at the world around me today, I think that collectively, we are growing tired of our current way of life. We crave meaning and connection and to have our phones and apps dissected from our grasp and our minds. If the world as we know it today were to end, if we were to return to a world where we had a closer connection to our community, land, and culture, and spent less time at our desks and on our devices, would that be such a bad thing? The ending of our post-industrial civilisation presents an opportunity for a makeover of society, where we live more closely and harmoniously within our local communities, looking out for and caring for one another. I like to envision a world where we move at a slower, less complicated pace, connecting with one another on deeper, more loving levels, growing our food together, cooking together. A whole lot of together. In an increasingly polarised world, community and connection sounds pretty damn good. So, if our civilization is coming to an end, I like to view the end of this world as an exciting opportunity to build a better, more loving, more connected world in its wake.

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ANTS

BY CLARE O'TOOLE



The little black ants wriggle around in the tub, mocking me. There's only four of them, and I know I need to make a decision now about how valuable their lives are compared to my need to get to work on time. Their lives, as animals, have no difference in value compared to human life. I know this. They are able to communicate, have goals, and feel pain. In some ways they're better than me. My communication is far less effective than vomiting chemicals into each other's mouths. I wonder if any ants are worse at vomiting chemicals than other ants?

I'm going to be late. I really need to take a shower. I can't go into the office with my hair this greasy, that wouldn't be good for the cause. I need to be as effective and efficient as possible to support the cause, because otherwise my value as a person would become net-negative. I'm so close to being a net-negative person and there's really no point in living if you aren't contributing. At that point you're morally obligated to kill yourself so you aren't consuming valuable resources. I need to decide what to do with these ants, to calculate how valuable their lives are.

If I go to the office with greasy hair, I might not be taken seriously. I might reduce my ability to make an impact, which would be ineffective, and waste the resources I've already consumed. I need to be able to take this shower, so I can be viewed as someone whose ideas need to be taken seriously, so I can ensure that they listen to me when I tell them how to avoid the almost inevitable technological singularity wiping out all life because we failed to ensure it valued animal life and human life, and was able to make the most logical and rational decisions when it gained total power.

So these ants have to go. I could find some paper and a cup and take them out of the bathroom. I don't have any paper; buying notepads, books, magazines, newspapers is all a waste of resources. Contributing to the demand for paper pulp, the destruction of trees, all to have something sit in your house in case you remember that at one point you thought you were actually going to read 'Ulysses' is morally repugnant. Obviously everyone should just read digitally, as the use of our devices is the more effective way of ingesting information. Even more effective is audiobooks, but most people waste their time reading fiction, not realising that with the amount of information available in the world there really isn't any time to waste on imaginary people and scenarios which have nothing to do with reality and are just distractions from what we need to be working on, which is contributing to the cause. I guess I could use part of a cereal box and a cup.

This is taking too long. The amount that I'm thinking about this is wasting my mental energy. I need that. I need to be making as much money as I can and collecting as much influence as I can and I need to have all of the brain energy I can at work to complete these tasks. With the amount of time it would take to additionally go to the kitchen and tear off part of the cereal box and wrangle these ants and take them outside I'll definitely be late. The amount of positive I'm doing for the cause by washing my hair and getting to work on time is high. These ants are as valuable as people, true. But people don't have value if they are not contributing to the cause, like I am. Most people aren't even aware of the cause, and without that they're almost definitely net-negative. It would be easier to achieve our goals if so many net-negatives weren't getting in our way.

Like these ants. I guess the ants aren't taking as many resources as most people, but they're definitely a barrier to me being effective right now, and I need to be effective all the time. It's so easy to become net-negative. Normally these ants would be net-neutral, but stopping me from taking a shower is definitely a negative for the cause.

The morally correct choice, if you're net-negative, is to kill yourself. The ants, having the same baseline value as humans, are as unaware of their net-negativity as most people. They also don't have the ability, as far as I'm aware, to kill themselves even if they were aware. If I let these ants stay in my way I could become net-negative, and then I'd have to kill myself. Then I wouldn't be able to contribute to the cause. Ants only follow their leader, not the cause.

The tap rushes and a wave sends the ants across the tub and eventually down the drain. This was the right choice.

THE **WAY** IT WORKS



BY ANGELINA SOKOLSKY

It's not long ago that the world was run by two girlfriends. But, of course, their reign had to end. Females are so catty.

Historians can now pinpoint the exact hour the two creatures flexed their claws at each other. It was the day that Miss Trust brought up the olive oil again.

Miss Trust was sitting on a dining chair she'd dragged closer to the landline on the kitchen wall. She was late for their chat. But Miss Pookie was later, which made Miss Trust early. It was just the way. Perched right on the edge, Miss Trust tried not to rub her fresh tan on anything. She curled her freshly painted nails inward, waiting for them to dry. Red on one hand, blue on the other, with stick-on stars across both. On the opposite wall of the kitchen, the clock hand wheeled another lap around its circular field. Outraged, Miss Trust took an elegant puff of her cigarette. The landline chirped with an electronic chime.

Pookie?

Uh-huh.

Imagine a 90s-film split-screen, paralleling the two women clutching their brick-like phones. On the left, Miss Trust watches the ceiling through the haze of sweet vapour, convinced there are rats in the roof. On the right, Miss Pookie leans her back against the fridge. She has killed all of her rats.

The pleasantries always took a few minutes. Then Miss Trust looped the cord around her finger, smudging the damp nail

polish. She'd been rethinking how to approach the conversation, since their debate about tariffs.

Darling, I want to ask about your olive oil.

Uh-huh, Miss Pookie straightened her crop top.

Usually she wore the blue and red one in public, but she liked to wear the red and yellow one around the house. Above the breasts was a print of cartoon farm animals with a few tools, a hammer and sickle and so on.

A hush settled like fog. Both women cradled their phones tight against their skulls, listening for secrets on the other end of the line.

Go on, Miss Pookie squinted, shoot.

An hour and a half later, the women hung up their telephones, greased in sheer sweat from their palms. Miss Trust stood with her nail polish contorted like meringue and fake tan smeared on the chair. Miss Pookie kept squinting well into the evening, with her vertebrae aching against the fridge.

How dare she? They relayed to their respective husbands, who nodded.

The men twisted their wedding rings and recited, *I've got to be somewhat lucky. Surely.*

They watched their wives spit through a cycle of insults, moist clots of lipgloss leaping from their mouths. Sharpening acrylics and ignoring landlines, from deep inside their dressing gowns, the women pulled out their emergency land mines. Next door to each woman's kitchen was a study which waited for them. Inside the dark rooms, a panel of buttons gleamed raspberry. *Tariff. Nuclear. Sanction. Deport. Deploy. Declare. War.*