

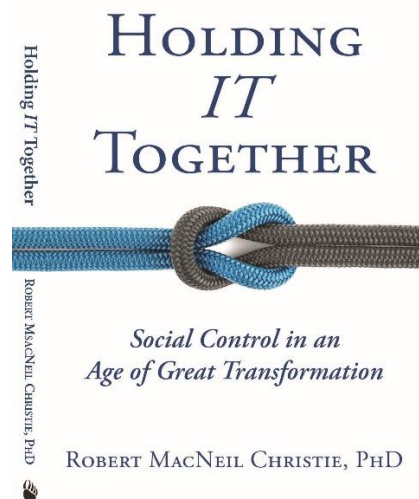
## The HOPEFUL REALIST Newsletter: *Looking at the World Today as if Facts Matter*

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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*

If you are near Santa Fe on September 28, Saturday, come to my **Book Talk and Signing**, at 1:00 PM, at the Vista Grande Public Library. I will briefly discuss my new book, described below, and then engage in creative conversation with those present around the challenging issues it raises. While some folks would rather not talk about the prospects for human survival in the coming decades, others recognize the necessity. U.S. Ambassador (ret.) Mark Asquino has a great global perspective, has read the book, and will join in the conversation. I hope to meet other Santa Feans (and any others) who want to do what we can to assure a livable future on planet Earth. Please join the conversation.



**Published July 26**, and the product of decades of research and reflection, ***Holding IT Together: Social Control in an Age of Great Transformation*** explains the global changes that have resulted in the catastrophic convergence of the crises of climate, ecosystems, economies, and politics, which we see intensifying every day. In it, I also describe the deep changes that are now necessary in order to effectively head off societal collapse so we can more comfortably shape the New Great Transformation of our institutions and our ways of living necessary in a world of less intensive energy consumption. We *will* transition away from fossil fuels, the sooner the better. Later would be catastrophic. Petroleum products provided great affluence for some for a while, yet are already causing chaos and environmental destruction for everyone.

**"Buy it!"** says the author. It is available on Amazon, and is distributed to bookstores by IngramSpark, so if you want to **support your local independent bookstore**, please ask them to order it for you.

***Holding IT Together*** can be ordered from your favorite independent bookstore in paperback, or on [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com) in paper and eBook formats. Although authors can earn larger royalties from Amazon, especially from eBooks, I hope many readers order it from their local independent

bookstore, where actual humans talk about reading and literature; they cannot survive without your support. “Brick and mortar” bookstore availability will depend on your asking them to stock it or just order a copy for you. Just because a distributor has it into their catalog, does not mean the bookstore will stock it, unless that author is a celebrity, of course, or customers ask for it. As Harari put it, of the massive increase in information out there, most of it is junk. It is up to us to filter out and use what is actually valuable for our lives.

### **Politics Gone Wild: Is That News?**

They say that Kamala Harris ‘baited’ Donald Trump at the ‘first’ (and likely only) debate last week, and that he took the bait every time because of his uncontrollably insecure ego. His campaign advisors are going mad trying to get him to talk about something other than himself and all the conspiracies he imagines are out to get him. He baited himself; Kamala just opened the door. So, after every analyst, right or left, declared the disaster for him, he claimed victory in order to argue that winners don’t need a second chance...

Well, as I was driving my pet to the veterinarian the other morning, a caller into Thom Hartman’s radio show begged to differ with the ‘Kamala baited him’ theme. From his perspective, Kamala Harris was merely calling him out on any number of his outrageous lies and his uncontrollable narcissism that just could not allow him to even attempt a rational argument about any national policy, as he spun off the rails and into another incoherent tirade. Well, I guess there’s a bit of truth to both sides of that one. Yes, Kamala opened the door, but only he chose to go wild. Maybe ‘chose’ is not the right word; to choose you have to be in control of yourself.

Then, there was the ‘attempted assassination’ of Trump-while-golfing—Is that the inverse of ‘driving while Black’?—with apparently not a shot fired, except by the Secret Service agent who spotted the wannabe shooter... How does that work? What was that guy doing out in the bush for eight hours before the perennial golf-cheat appeared on his own course? Something’s fishy here, and it ain’t fish. I know, it turns out that he is just another ‘nut case’—there seem to be so many. Both Trump and Vance tried to spin it off as a result of Harris-Walz’ “extremist” talk. I call that ‘denial and projection.’ The failed shooter was apparently also a failed ex-military wannabe mercenary who imagined himself organizing Afghans to fight in Ukraine (???) while living out of his car with only \$60- left in his bank account. ‘More at eleven,’ I’m sure.

Is there anything about governance or policy to be gleaned from the presidential campaign in 2024? Well, Kamala talks about various plans for legislation in general terms that focus on the wellbeing of the people, and ‘not going back to the era of Trumpian fear and hatred. Of course, none of it can happen unless the Democrats sweep the down-ballot races so they can actually pass legislation.

While Trump rails about everything that he does not control as being a hoax, he characterizes his proposed tariff on all imported goods—which obviously would be passed on to the

consumer in the price of products—as a windfall for America. Meanwhile, economists of every stripe cringe at the prospect of a consequential deflated economy. It is no mystery that any tariff has the effect of a tax on the goods sold. It has the effect of a sales tax on basic necessities that the poor already cannot afford. Of course, when framed as a punishment for all those other nations that have somehow exploited the biggest imperial nation in history, the imperialism is ignored and the evil of the **Other** is accepted as part of the culture of victimhood.

Some have even offered the conjecture that the so-called ‘second attempted assassination’ was actually a ‘false flag’ operation meant to stimulate a bump in campaign contributions to Trump. I’ll leave that one to whatever conspiracy theorist you can find on the left. The only competent assassins today are the clandestine government agents we never hear about; fortunately (in a tragically unfortunate context) the average school shooter is an incompetent mad teenage boy using a very powerful war-fighting weapon that would do far more death and destruction in the hands of a skilled shooter.

No, an AR-15 is not designed for deer hunting. A retired CIA operator once told me while driving through the Ozark wilderness that in the dense deer country he would much rather use a 30-30 lever action rifle for the one or two shots he could get off before the deer disappeared into the brush. Any more shots from an assault rifle would be wasted ammo.

Meanwhile, every important issue, including America’s globally unique gun violence, remains in limbo as the causes of chaos remain mostly out of bounds for rational political discourse. Economic growth continues as the implicit and explicit central goal of every political speech. Never mind the unimpeachable scientific data that confirms the approaching end of the industrial era as all the ‘natural capital’ rapidly depletes and the planet burns, and the consequent destabilization of the Earth System accelerates. We have an election to lose. Even if the MAGA madness diffuses and the caring centrist prosecutor (who the extremists call a communist) wins, the global disintegration will continue unless and until the impending collapse is collectively faced. We need to be Buffalo, not cows (see below).

**That new publishing company, *Omega Publishers***, which has now published [\*Holding It Together: Social Control in an Age of Great Transformation\*](#), under its imprint, Bear Claw Press, is building its relations with the publishing industry infrastructure, which is both archaic and transforming itself in the context of electronic technology. Even now, I keep learning things about the complexities of bringing a book ‘to market.’ Even with the amazing facilitation of publication by microelectronic technology, the complexity of the process leaves openings for all sorts of errors.

Amazon remains the near-absolute ruler on whom authors depend for the majority of sales. I must mention again that when the first five customer reviews of *Holding IT Together* came in, all positive, they were taken down before I even had a chance to read them. Without a significant number of customer reviews, good or bad, the Amazon algorithm will ignore a book

into oblivion. Nevertheless, I hope many who buy ***Holding IT Together*** will do so at their local independent bookstore. Of course, both paper and eBook versions are available on [Amazon](#).

My eBook ***HOPEFUL REALISM: A Climate Manifesto*** remains available as a **free** download from [Kindle Unlimited](#). The regular Kindle eBook price is \$6.99. Please give it a rating/review on [GoodReads.com](#). Also, please [review and rate](#) *Hopeful Realism* on its Amazon page. You can 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 frame them.

**Note:** As always, past issues of this Newsletter are available, archived on my web site:

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

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

**Words and Deeds: What will It Take?** Many years ago, in 1966 actually, a sociologist named Irwin Deutscher, published an article titled, "Words and Deeds," in the journal, *Social Problems*, which I have never forgotten. Many academic articles are highly forgettable, but not this one, along with a few others. Deutscher, had noticed an "absence of any positive relationship between people's verbal responses and their behavioral tendencies."

Deutscher argued that while policy makers look toward behavior in developing strategies to improve conditions, most social scientists base their findings on verbal responses to interviews and surveys. He pointed out that words and deeds often diverge significantly, and he cited many studies that confirmed that difference. People often express opinions that are frequently at odds with what they actually do, would do, or even believe, especially when they feel pressured by what they think others—usually their peers—believe.

For example, it now appears that the majority of people in the U.S. realize that something has gone very wrong with the climate. But for a long time, climate denial propaganda—funded by the fossil fuel companies and their corporate allies—made it appear that the science was inconclusive, or even wrong, and that this was the national consensus. It also resonated with widespread discontent and the sense of being left out of the nation's economic 'progress.'

Many who know that climate chaos is growing still feel uncomfortable even talking about climate change or, especially, what societies must do to mitigate the climate emergency. Many also still resist acknowledging the fact that it is an emergency, preferring to think it is something we must deal with in the future.

Deutscher was concerned with the fact that the results of opinion surveys do not necessarily reflect what people actually do or are willing to do beyond what they perceive as the 'conventional wisdom' of a situation. He cited research going back to the 1930s, which revealed a variety of inconsistencies between 'attitudes and actions.' In a famous example, Richard T. LaPiere reported in a 1936 article in *Social Forces*, that when he traveled with a Chinese couple

across the United States, out of 251 establishments only one refused service to the Chinese couple. However, LaPiere reported that when the same proprietors were surveyed six months later:

*Half of them were asked only, "Would you accept members of the Chinese race as guests in your establishment?" The other half were asked additional questions about other ethnic groups. Only one "yes" response was received—this from a lady who reminisced about the nice Chinese couple she had put up six months earlier.*

Almost all denied that they would accept Chinese as guests, yet only one actually denied the Chinese couple service in a real situation.

Today, I think it is accurate to say that attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors surrounding the complexities of climate and ecological crises are widely disparate, and for good reason. Also today, with the growing overt racism of the 'leaders' of the MAGA movement, I note that more racists are acting in overtly racist ways, having been 'given permission' by the false personification of their grievances, Donald Trump.

Now all this is to say that the relationship of words and deeds is far more complex than even most educated environmentalists and social activists imagine. In the case of climate change, an honest assessment of the social implications of reducing carbon emissions, is far more complex than merely "changing the mindset" of the people. Some argue that the essence of the problem is the need to change behavior; others say it is to 'change the mindset.' Well, both are right, and they are also wrong because while both are very necessary, both approaches (either separately or together) are also *far from sufficient*.

What is essential, but goes against the grain of American culture, is the fact that the predicament of how to redirect industrial-consumer civilization is deeply *structural*. As industrial modernism approaches its end, either in a catastrophic collapse or in a complex self-initiated transformation into an ecological civilization that returns humanity to a place of harmony with the Earth System that is our home—currently society's primary decision makers remain entirely unprepared. Much more is required than changing either individual 'mindsets' or individual behavior.

The problem is structural, and the structure that is so problematic is the political-economic hierarchy of industrial modernism. And the even more problematic element of our global predicament is that the hierarchy is increasingly hardened by the rise and deployment of ubiquitous information systems that feed the hierarchy and thereby degrade the conditions of life for humanity.

As Yuval Noah Harari points out in his new book, [\*Nexus: A Brief History of Information Networks from the Stone Age to AI\*](#), information systems are mistaken for new benefits to humanity because their purveyors persuade us that their technologies are both inevitable and always constitute progress—certainly good for Silicon Valley investors and their political agents. And undoubtedly good for their domination over the rest of us. Social media and AI are

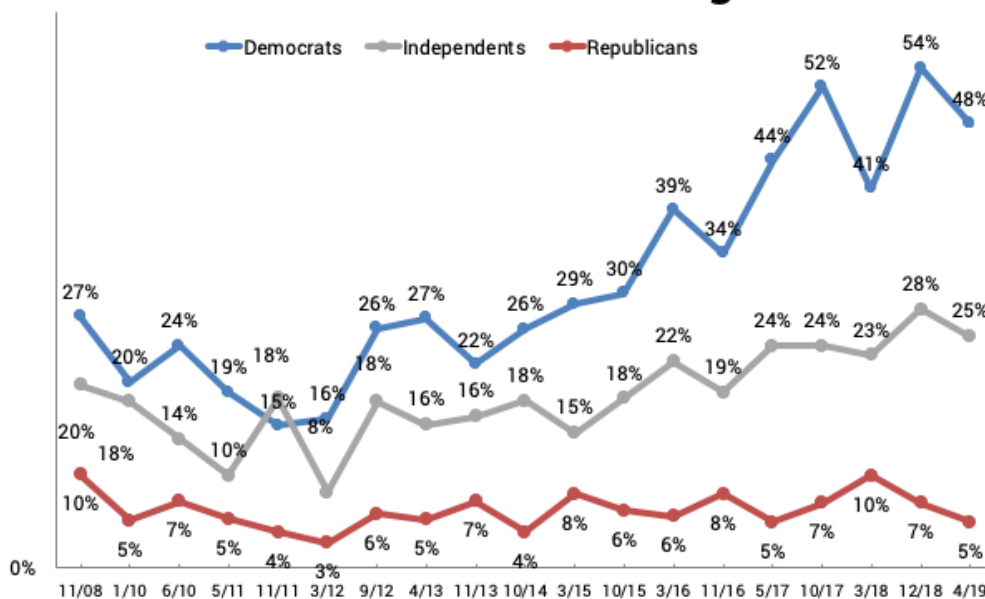
designed to draw power and wealth to their owners by controlling communication, emotions, and eventually consciousness itself.

So, a call for action on climate change or any other existential threat, must reach much further than persuading individuals to change their minds or their behavior in a political vacuum. The only viable response to the ubiquity of institutional hierarchies and the information systems they control, which resist the necessary transformation of hierarchy, is social mobilization, and that means ramping up social movements for change to scale, so that ordinary people can challenge the self-defeating power of the extant global political economy.

### ***Today's Featured Image:***

***While distinct differences exist among Democrats, Independents, and Republicans in how high a priority global warming should be as a political issue, even among Democrats only around half feel that it should be a “very high” priority.***

## **Global Warming Should be a “Very High” Priority for the President and Congress**



**Do you think each of these issues should be a low, medium, high, or very high priority for the next president and Congress? [Global warming]**  
Base: Registered Voters.



YALE PROGRAM ON  
Climate Change  
Communication



GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
CENTER for CLIMATE CHANGE  
COMMUNICATION

--Image credit: Yale Program on Climate Change Communication

***That means that the greatest human predicament in history still fails to get the attention of most Americans. Given the incontrovertible evidence of the Earth System plummeting toward chaotic collapse, those who would have us unite to face this impending catastrophe have a great deal of work to do.***

### ***Books and other Sources Related to the New Great Transformation***

The complexities involved in how we perceive and understand different ‘kinds of things’ in the world are not much considered in everyday decisions and actions. Nevertheless, the ways we classify objects, events, and living beings matters a great deal. When it comes to humans, the ways we infer the essence of one kind of human or another results in our illusions about race and our practices of racism. That extends to the perverse idea that some who appear human are really a different kind: some subhuman animal. We cannot understand dehumanization unless we carefully examine the hierarchies of ‘kinds of being’ and where so many place others in that imagined hierarchy of value, and why.

David Livingston Smith. 2020. *On Inhumanity: Dehumanization and How to Resist It*. New York: Oxford University Press.

David Livingston Smith has written a small but very powerful book that exposes what usually goes unrecognized and unspoken about how humans come to treat others as subhuman, as monsters, and evil solely on the basis of how they define their ‘kind,’ in order to justify despicable acts such as genocide. I consider this book to be at the level of that little powerful book by Timothy Snyder, *On Tyranny: Lessons from the Twentieth Century*. Read both and weep, because now you understand. They are both a call to humanized action.

### ***Quotable Quotes***

So many now cite the importance of heeding indigenous wisdom. Clearly, we have much to learn from those who have lived in direct relations with their habitat. I have often referred to the !Kung hunter-gatherer bands in the Kalahari Desert of Southern Africa before the arrival of the Europeans and the diamond mining and other developments that destroyed their way of life. American Indians have at least as much to teach us ‘moderns’ about the world in which they lived and from which we have become so detached.

*Cows run away from the storm while the Buffalo charges toward it- and gets through it quicker. Whenever I'm confronted with a tough challenge, do not prolong the torment, I become the Buffalo*

-Wilma Mankiller (First Female Chief of Cherokee Nation, Oklahoma)

Gems of wisdom such as that expressed by Wilma Mankiller are often applicable to any context in our lives. We need to act like the Buffalo, for example, in dealing with the climate emergency that we created and that only we can mitigate. So far, we have acted mostly like cows.

See you in two weeks. Meanwhile, stay safe, say hello to a neighbor or stranger, check out my blog posts at [The Hopeful Realist.com](https://TheHopefulRealist.com), read [HOPEFUL REALISM: A Climate Manifesto.](#), and, buy my new book, [\*Holding It Together: Social Control in an Age of Great Transformation\*](#).