

The Green Drawings - Talking Ourselves to Death

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- rough transcript of performance -

1.

Conny takes a Red Bull from a plastic bag, pours it into a plastic cup, drinks, then tosses all in a waste basket
Red Bull gives you wings (Red Bull gir deg vinger). But no worries if not, there are these great companies that can help you with the flying now that this Covid-thing is past us, and if you pay extra they might even add a few drops of bio fuel to the fossil fuel mix.

Scandinavians fly approximately 5 times more than people in general. "*If we fly more, the airlines will have more money to develop more sustainable ways of flying*", say the right wing politicians. Big business has done a marvellous job with the climate so far, of course we should keep putting the planet's faith in its nurturing hands. We just have to travel more in order to help the Earth, it's not our fault that this happens to be rather comfortable and easy on the conscience. "We should hurry and visit the coral reefs while there's any left", a scientist at the climate research station in Abisko once told us. We should all go, we should all travel half the globe for it. While there's still time. *Book the cheapest flight and hotel deals - Travellink.com. Your travel agency: Book cheap flights - eDreams International. Cheap Holidays deals, flight + hotel - Opodo. Flight deals, package deals. Deals deals deals! Book your journey, book already today online! Apollo. Flygresor.se. MrJet. Expedia. Hotelspecials.se. Flight + hotel equals simplicity, equals convenience, equals flexibility, equals saving. travellink.com.* So easy and comfy, flight, hotel, car, algorithms guide us through it all, a couple of clicks and we're off.

Coincidentally, the search engine that helps us coordinate all parts of the journey was developed by the American air defence to track enemy aircrafts, but since it proved too unreliable for such tasks it was repurposed for commercial use. Anything bad is good for something, as my wife's mum says. Poor American Air Force, but at least we can now travel so easy. Booking trips on-line saves time and it is both practical and pleasant - and we don't have to drive to town and visit an agency, no CO₂ emission there at least, like in the stone-ages 15 years ago. Or? Not quite so. Flying is not the only bad we do to nature when travelling. Having booked our trip on-line, we have contributed to the CO₂ emissions considerably before even taking off. Remember when e-mails used to have those disclaimers not to print them out to save the nature? Actually our online time is directly effecting the climate more than one might imagine. The cooling of all the server farms that are keeping the Internet running were already before COVID-19 producing as much CO₂ globally as the whole air transport business. And it is not the server farms themselves that are the problem, it is our usage of the Internet that makes the servers work and heat up. Especially when we use Internet pages with lots of images we are generating server heat, so when watching movies on Netflix, or cute kittens on YouTube, browsing online shops, selecting hotels for our journeys or gambling at online casinos, we are participating in pollution in levels equivalent to flying. And as the world keeps getting warmer, the server farms need more cooling...

Incidentally, us Scandinavians are among the most avid internet users in the world, and during

the pandemic, usage rose with over 70%, thus balancing out any good from lessened air travelling.

To add insult to injury: living in a hotel makes for a considerably large CO₂ footprint. For example, a week in a hotel for two people, with visits to restaurants, cafes etc. contributes to the emissions approximately as much as 2 people flying from Copenhagen to Venice and back.

Fun fact 1:

High CO₂ levels makes us stupid. Just like in a poorly ventilated classroom, the learning capacity decreases when the amount of CO₂ rises. This could maybe explain our inability to act upon the climate crisis.

2.

The climate change crisis is not something that will happen in the future. It is happening now. Only, it is mainly happening elsewhere, in the poorest parts of the world where people who have done little to cause it live. Media focuses on what penetrates our cold hearts best, so we have all been crying over Koalas this past summer, and marveling over crazy high temperatures in Canada. But it is not only Koalas that are dying, and there are people who have to persevere horrors much worse than heat.

While producing the smallest amount of greenhouse gases, Africa is one of the continents most vulnerable to climate change and with the greatest lack of adaptive capacity, sub-Saharan countries like South Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia and Burundi are considered among the most vulnerable countries in the world. Livestock and agriculture, the main livelihoods and components of the economies, directly depend on the weather and environment. According to researchers, international humanitarian agency staff, local NGOs and local people, the drought cycles have changed over the last decades - major droughts used to hit cyclically every tenth year and each drought was given a name, but now drought is a nameless constant. But hey, don't let them rain on our parade - as long as we find better ways to stop refugee ships trying to cross the Mediterranean this is not our problem is it?

Leading up to the uprising in 2011, Syria had suffered a record breaking freak drought since 2006, five years during which 85 percent of rural livestock died and crops withered. Nearly 800,000 people lost their livelihood according to the UN, and the population received little relief from the Government. Instead the al-Assad regime redistributed the traditional rights to the dwindling water supplies to political allies and forcefully suppressed all protests, thus igniting the fire that would result in the uprising and the devastating war that followed.

Bangladesh is not only one of the poorest and most densely populated countries in the world. It is also one of the countries suffering most due to climate change. With the melting glaciers of the Himalayas flooding rivers from the north and rising sea levels threatening the delta country from the south, there is little need to speculate in the possible effects of climate change - they are on constant display. Bangladesh has suffered some of the fastest recorded sea level rises in the world and more and more frequent cyclones push walls of water 90 kilometres up the rivers. The intruding sea water contaminates groundwater supplies and

destroys farmland, rendering it barren. In recent years, riverbank erosion has annually displaced between 50,000 and 200,000 people. Scientists project a five-to-six foot rise by 2100, and this will displace around 50 million people. And this is only in Bangladesh. If the current development continues big parts of the world will be uninhabitable by 2100 and billions of people will be looking for new homes.

Fun fact 2:

Where there are super poor, there must be super rich. And while happily backing research that usually concludes that we should blame the climate change on African and Indian villagers with 8+ children per household, the ultra rich are buying superyachts. There has been a dramatic surge in demand during the pandemic and there is now a global fleet of thousands of superyachts.

The largest superyachts have a disproportionately negative impact on the planet: one with a permanent crew, a helicopter pad, submarines and pools emits over 7,000 tons of CO₂ a year.

Multiplied by 300 -- roughly the number of such large top of the class superyachts worldwide -- that equals over 2 million tons of CO₂, more than the individual yearly emissions of about a quarter of the world's countries.

3.

Conny kicks the wastebasket.

This was for theatrical purposes, I never throw garbage like that. ...but I'm not sure how much good my meticulous sorting does. We carry our bottles and glass jars, sorted by colour, plastic wrappings and paper, some 500m to our garbage sorting station. We carry it out on foot, about every 3rd day. We're very decent about it. Most of us are, up here in Scandinavia. We are doing our part. Maybe a couple of years of sorting makes up for one trip to Spain. But the thing is - we are sorting so well that Swedish trash-burning plants have to import garbage to have something to burn. Sweden yearly imports around 6 million tons of garbage and Norway is one of the main sellers. And it is a really good business. For example: more than 60 000 truckloads of garbage roll down our roads from Norway every year. First the power plants get paid to take care of the garbage, then they get paid for the energy they produce. Not surprising that they oppose more regular check-ups on their emissions - they prefer to be able to do the tests when they want to - the results are so much better that way. Since the mid 1990s the emissions of hexachlorobenzene have increased by 80 percent in Sweden. An increase entirely parallel with the boom of garbage burning plants. Hexachlorobenzene is a carcinogen chemical that disrupts hormones and can cause brain damage. By the way, did you know that once the garbage is burnt and poisons emitted, Sweden exports the equally poisonous ashes from the plants back to Norway? Yes, the ashes are getting a second ride along our highways back to Norway where they are buried in the ground, clean environment Norwegian style. Syns inte, finns inte. (Not visible, not there.)

Fun fact 3:

Cars are the big polluters, our biggest sins (as long as we don't happen to own a petroleum refinery or a concrete plant or similar). As individuals, let's please keep on reusing our plastic bags and sort our garbage, but we are not making a very big difference as long as we choose

to drive fossil-fuelled cars.

However, back in Sweden we find it more important to support car and villa loans to the middle and upper class citizens than to invest in the people who live more climate sensibly in apartments and commute to work with public transport. The yearly tax subsidies on mortgage loans could finance free and expanded public transports for all in the whole of Sweden. And still it is well known that CO₂ impact rises exponentially with income.

Or, if we like the thought of sponsored private housing for the well off, we could also secure free public transport with income based tax. For an average family, costs for commuting would be cut in half this way, compared to monthly public transport tickets at current rates. If you happen to earn more than 75 000 SEK per month the cost might get slightly higher, but you can make up for this by selling one of your Jaguars.

Fun fact 4:

As it happens, Slovenes (we are half Slovene, my wife, baby and me) travel by car more than any other EU citizens - 85% of all their journeys are done by a private car. It's a good thing they're not that many. We are actually the exception to the rule, but then we live in a country where, albeit often unpunctual, the public transport does reach into the outskirts ...

Fun fact 5:

Flying is subventioned in Sweden - the state yearly subventions the industry with more than 10 billion SEK, and as far as we understand something similar is going on here in Norway. Not talking about the support during Covid-19 here, this is just regular, usual subventions...

Now batteries and electric vehicles are being presented like a super clean new option. Is it? Maybe for us in the rich west. We can keep consuming in the same pace, keep all our comforts and still have fine air around us. But how about the poisoned salt lakes left behind the lithium mining fields in Bolivia, and the 35 000 children breathing toxic dust in the cobalt mines of Congo?

Fun fact 6:

Have you heard of Earth 300? An atomic super mega ship, combining luxury travel and climate fighting science all in one place! It aims to bring together climate scientists and the wealthy in a daring quest to save the planet. And this one will probably be made only of locally sourced ... well, like, wood and stuff.

A bit like how Francesca Thyssen-Bornemisza likes to cruise round the world in her yacht (non nuclear, but probably as green as they get) with the art elite, discussing how to save the oceans...

Initially however, Earth 300 will be powered by green fuels, as the new reactor is still in development. It will be nuclear powered only some time later. But once the reactor is ready, it will be retrofitted, allowing the superyacht to be really for real and one hundred per cent emission-free.

And then it will save the world.

4.

So, clean air here - on whose account? We supposedly have all clean power in Sweden, but we import slightly less clean one from Germany. That's ok isn't it? The air above Germany is abroad —theirs, not our concern. During dry hot summers, Sweden cannot produce the usual amounts of hydropower and instead fossil fuel energy is imported from Germany. The more the climate change effects the Swedish weather, the more coal power Sweden needs and the more CO₂ is emitted, producing a positive feedback loop.

Or, to talk of Norway. So clean. Your country aims to be completely fossil free by 2030. Beautiful notion, remarkable. But how about the fossil fuel that keeps being pumped out of the ground? No worries, it is not going to be burnt here, it will be sold abroad. If burnt elsewhere, it only affects those other planets.

Sure Russia might produce a little more emissions while extracting the oil but we all know extraction is not the main problem. Currently Norway and Sweden are emitting about as much CO₂ yearly, but that means Norway is emitting the double amount per citizen, despite using green energy to pump the oil out of the ground. And in 2017 the CO₂ emissions inside Norway amounted to 53 million tons, but the emissions from Norwegian fossil fuels sold abroad amounted to 471 million tons the same year.

What nobody talks about is scaling down. Moderation doesn't sell. Who would vote for a party promising to let us only drive cars every third day of the week or ensuring that fish farming gets 100% sustainable, hence more expensive and selection scarcer? Would we give our votes to people claiming they will make sure we have less goods to choose among, less chances to shop for pleasure? Imagine our political candidates at next elections promising to ensure absolutely no fresh strawberries in the winter, no rocket salad before May, no sweet potatoes 'till they grow in Spain, and my absolute deal breaker - almost no avocados, ever, I'd never vote for that. And they would promise curfew, with lights, TV, and Internet off after 9pm.

It's obviously much easier to be excited over the invention of an atomic superyacht that is to be sent on a voyage to save the planet.