I did a little light reading over the last weekend. I started with an essay about defeating learned helplessness, then read the latest from Chris Hedges "*Rise Up or Die*," and finished with a story with this snappy headline:
Human race 'will be extinct within 100 years', claims leading scientist.

Now this last story sounds like one of the screaming headlines from one of the tabloids clogging a supermarket's checkout counter but no … this wasn't a variant of "*Bat-child Found in Cave!*" or "
Donnie & Marie are Aliens!
" This was a three-year-old article from
The Australian
, the biggest-selling national newspaper in Australia.

The leading scientist interviewed was Professor Frank Fenner whose Wiki entry reads, "*… an Australian scientist with a distinguished career in the field of virology. His two greatest achievements are cited as overseeing the eradication of smallpox, and the control of Australia's rabbit plague.*
"

The article starts out on this happy note, "*Frank Fenner doesn't engage in the skirmishes of the climate wars. To him, the evidence of global warming is in. Our fate is sealed.*

"We're going to become extinct," the eminent scientist says. "Whatever we do now is too late."

"Since humans entered an unofficial scientific period known as the Anthropocene - the time since industrialisation - we have had an effect on the planet that rivals any ice age or comet impact …"

"Homo sapiens will become extinct, perhaps within 100 years," he says. "A lot of other animals will, too. It's an irreversible situation. I think it's too late. I try not to express that because people are trying to do something, but they keep putting it off.

Fenner's colleague and long-time friend Stephen Boyden, a retired professor at the ANU, says there is deep pessimism among some ecologists, but others are more optimistic.

"Frank may be right, but some of us still harbour the hope that there will come about an awareness of the situation and, as a result, the revolutionary changes necessary to achieve ecological sustainability," says Boyden …"That's where Frank and I differ. We're both aware of the seriousness of the situation, but I don't accept that it's necessarily too late. While there's a glimmer of hope, it's worth working to solve the problem. We have the scientific knowledge to do it but we don't have the political will."

I don't know about you but the phrase "*there's a glimmer of hope*" doesn't quite fill me with optimism when it's followed by "
…we don't have the political will
."

I went back and re-read the Defeating Learned Helplessness article, decided it was poorly written satire, and turned the computer off. I went into the TV room and submerged myself in surround sound high definition movies for the rest of the weekend. Our new 60 inch television is great. Almost as good as heroin.

Almost.

There is just something so goddamned fundamentally awful about reading how my grandchildren could witness the extinction of humanity that transcends the wonders of a well equipped home entertainment system.

I think it's finally happened. Freddy "Life of the Party" Nietzsche said when you gaze long into an abyss … the abyss also gazes into you.

Scary right?

But ol' Fred wasn't exactly crystal clear about what happens next. What are the real world ramifications of abyss gazing as a full-time hobby? We all know what it's like when you get a song stuck in your head but what do you do when that sneaky abyss slips an idea into your head? Well … what I do is flip on the computer and get on The Google to see what's going on.

Within 14 short years 1.8 billion people will be living with absolute water scarcity, and two thirds of the world population could be subject to water stress when the demand for water exceeds the available supply. The carrying capacity of the Earth is speculative. There's going to be 9 - 11 billion people on the planet by the year 2050. If Professor Fenner and other concerned scientists are correct, over-population and unbridled consumption fuels the global climate change that is doing us in. So what are the People In Charge saying about exponential population growth and global climate change? What's the Plan Stan?

Well … there isn't one.

Our "Hope and Change" guy and the rest of Congress are behaving like a bunch of spoiled aging children playing stupid one-upmanship "gotcha" games with each other instead of doing anything useful. We cruised passed the Carbon Dioxide 400 parts per million threshold on May 13th. If we continue with business as usual, we will cross the 450 parts per million limit in a couple decades. Our "Hope and Change" guy and the rest of Congress have only proposed more and more of more business as usual.

Now I'm just a guy in a room with a pretty good Internet connection. I'm not an "expert" in anything. My academic record wasn't as good as George W. Bush's. But I think I've got a pretty good handle on Cause and Effect and I am not aware of anything getting better by doubling down and making it worse.

Forget All of Humanity just for a second. Let's just talk about our kids. If some crazed murderer broke into our house what lengths would we go to … to protect our children? I think it's hardwired into every parent to do whatever is necessary. "Necessary" being the euphemism for

grabbing a baseball bat and beating the aforementioned crazed murderer into the afterlife.

But now let's talk about our unborn grandchildren. My son is 13. Let's assume he starts a family when he's 30. If his children live to be 70 … they'll have a front row seat for The Extinction Event. We can only imagine the nightmare world they will know. What's keeping us from swinging the baseball bat for them?

I think there's a semantical switch in our heads that flips on so we perceive unthinkable events as impossible events. It helps to keep the abyss at bay so we can get from Monday to Tuesday without blowing apart at the seams but it doesn't do diddley for our grandkids.

No more giants
Waging war.
Can't we just pursue our lives
With out children and our wives?
'Till that happy day arrives,
How do you ignore
All the witches,
All the curses,
All the wolves, all the lies,
The false hopes, the goodbyes,
The reverses,
All the wondering what even worse is
Still in store?

All the children...
All the giants...
No more.

Now that the lament is out of the way … Let's try to figure out how to do something that's really hard. Let's try to do something impossible. Everything's riding on it. You can pick up the handbook, Deep Green Resistance, at http://www.deepgreenresistance.org.