

One thing we have learnt this week – we need to talk about endless growth

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[pulses](#) [w.tillman.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/one-thing-we-learned-this-week-2018-09-28-17x30.jpg](#) **We need to talk about endless growth.** George Monbiot wrote a typically provocative article this week looking at the idea of endless economic growth and the damage it would do to the planet. I don't agree with everything he writes but on this he is right. Endless growth is not possible on a finite planet. What precipitated this article was the OPEC annual report this week. This suggested that oil demand was going to rise until at least 2030 due to plastics and air travel. In addition electric cars would still be in a minority and not cut oil demand at all. US fracking would drive supply and not peak until the 2020's. What George pointed out was that its impossible to do anything without damaging the planet. So he gave the example of an electric car. This takes resources (and as he did not point out energy to make). The problem is both worse and in some ways more hopeful than he wrote. On the worse side of the argument its not as simple as merely replacing one thing with another. So for example plastics with bioplastics. The bioplastics have to have some kind of resource to make them (probably plant material grown in a field). Even using waste plant material would we have enough and would this denude the countryside of compostable material? On the positive side there are beginnings of moves afoot towards the circular economy which is the only possible solution towards this. We need to reuse everything we make and design we use in from the start (and great longevity and repair). In addition the oil price is moving up again which does at least make the alternatives far more economically viable. There are some solutions and we looked at these and the possible economics in our [book](#). Nevertheless we need to start having a conversation about a very difficult concept making do with less which is not a solution as such, but seems inevitable. The George Monbiot article can be seen [here](#). Neil

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