



# Why this professor's climate-crisis solution is rankling Twitter: 'The worst thing you can do is have a child'



**Beth Greenfield**

**Yahoo Lifestyle** • February 13, 2020, 11:53 PM GMT+8



Patricia MacCormack, a UK philosophy professor, has shaken up the climate-crisis discussion by suggesting, through her new book, "The Ahuman Manifesto," that humans stop

An academic is adding her voice to the rising chorus of climate-crisis alarm bells with a newly published manifesto that has been attracting widespread attention for its radical ideas — particularly “antinatalism,” or the end of reproduction as a way of phasing out of the human race.

“I mean, it’s a really basic idea: In terms of carbon footprint, the worst thing you can do is have a child,” Patricia MacCormack, a philosophy professor at Cambridge’s Anglia Ruskin University, tells Yahoo Lifestyle. “And it’s the one taboo that nobody wants to speak.”

MacCormack’s argument centers on overpopulation — if human beings cause climate change by creating greenhouse gases, then more humans mean more emissions. [One study](#), for instance, found that the “carbon legacy” of just one child creates 20 times more greenhouse gas than one can save by recycling, or driving an electric car. It’s something plenty of families [have been taking into account](#) for years — even Prince Harry, who [said recently](#) that he and Meghan Markle would have two children, “maximum,” for the sake of the planet, noting, “We are the one species on this planet that seems to think that this place belongs to us, and only us.”

It’s a controversial stance, however, and MacCormack says that since the release of her book, [The Ahuman Manifesto](#), the teacher, researcher and “old-school goth” London DJ has received “hate mail, death threats, ‘go kill yourself,’ stuff like that,” she says, adding that an Italian news outlet called her “delusional.” Others have dug up photos of her in full-goth getups, “thinking it’s insulting.”

MacCormack, who largely stays away from social media, says she's found the angry reaction intriguing. "I simply propose people not reproduce, and it automatically translated into acts of violence," she says. "So, somehow, I want to kill children, which is ridiculous. Somehow, I'm proposing eugenics or some kind of ethnic population control ... and I think that what that shows is there is an anthropocentric — or a human — impulse to read acts of grace as, automatically, acts of violence. And that says a lot more about the people *not* reading the book and just taking over the message."



**Bruce R. Fenton** 🛸 🧬 🔬 ... · Feb 8, 2020 🐦

'The only solution for climate change is letting the human race become extinct' [cambridge-news.co.uk/news/cambridge...](https://www.cambridge-news.co.uk/news/cambridge...)



**'The only solution for climate change...**  
Anglia Ruskin professor Patricia MacCo...  
[cambridge-news.co.uk](https://www.cambridge-news.co.uk)



**snakeshack**

@snakeshackstack

Anyone who believes this should kill themselves immediately or its just posturing, intellectual dishonesty, Patricia MacCormack lead the way.

♡ 21 1:47 AM - Feb 8, 2020



 [See snakeshack's other Tweets](#)



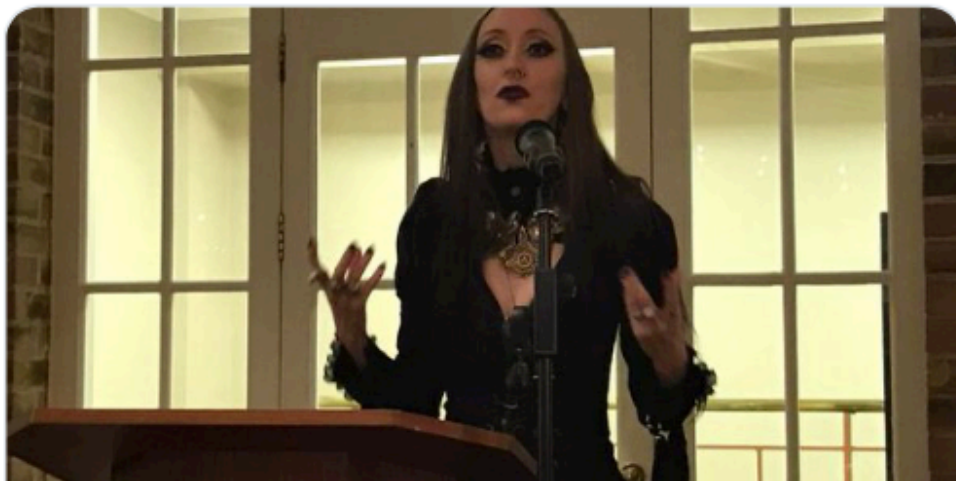
**Kenny**

@KennyOfTheGulch



When Patricia MacCormack tells everyone they need to die for the good of the world, she's an "academic."

But when I do it, I'm "drunk" and "banned from Denny's." [cambridge-news.co.uk/news/cambridge...?](https://www.cambridge-news.co.uk/news/cambridge...?)



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Anglia Ruskin professor Patricia MacCormack has written a controversial book on how our  
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**jaio xu**  
@xu\_jaio



British professor, Patricia MacCormack has the ultimate way to stop climate change & I'm surprised Greta hasn't taken this up yet. MacCormack demands that all people stop having babies and let the human race go extinct to end climate change! Sorry AOC, she thought of it first!

♡ 16 6:10 AM - Feb 11, 2020



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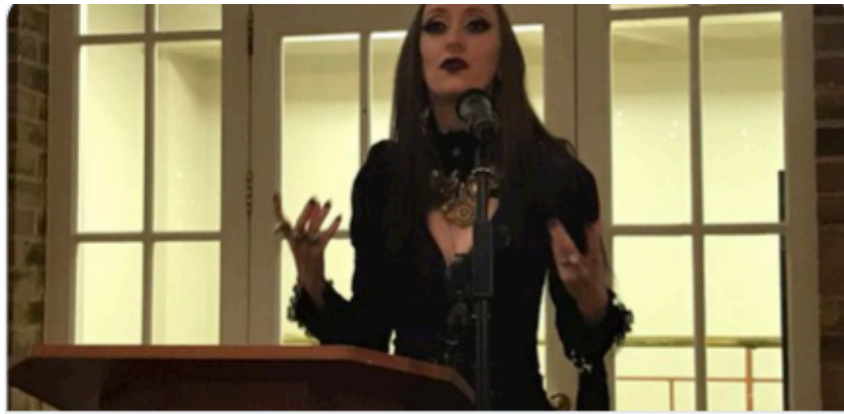
**Zia Marie** ★★ ★ @ZiaD... · Feb 10, 2020

Welp...it's been real guys but we all need to die in order to solve climate change..



[cambridge-news.co.uk/news/cambridge...](https://www.cambridge-news.co.uk/news/cambridge...)





**'The only solution for climate change...**

Anglia Ruskin professor Patricia MacCo...

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**Mr. BlueSky**

@ringsixty

Patricia MacCormack should take own advice.  
Be the first to go.

♡ 8 4:53 AM - Feb 10, 2020



[See Mr. BlueSky's other Tweets](#)



The vitriol is understandable, though, she says, because, “when people are confronted with something that makes them afraid of the tenuous nature of their own position ... they have a choice: to either go through their fear and lose themselves, and perhaps enter into a creative relationship with the opposition so that both parties come out thinking new, or, that fear transforms into aggression in order to maintain their sense of self and that position.”

That idea, of people having to confront ideas that they've always believed to be right and true, is "triggering," MacCormack says. "And rather than engage with the possibility that there are multiple truths in certain scenarios, they have to defend the precarity of their own identity. And they use threats and violence to do so."

In fact, says a doubling-down MacCormack about the concept of antinatalism, "Not only does having a child really increase your carbon footprint, but we are living on an earth where there are a lot of organisms — human, non-human — that are in desperate need of care. And so, for me, if people want to care for children, for animals, whatever, there are cries for care everywhere." In light of that, she says, "I'm asking us to reflect on this idea that we need to reproduce." Further, she believes such a lifestyle would come with great freedom for women.

**Related Video: Vowing Not to Have Children Due to Climate Change**



## Vowing not to have children due to climate change

Vowing not to have children due to climate change

“We have to start thinking about what liberty does it give women when they no longer have to explain why they don't want children? When they no longer have to sneak off to a different state to get reproductive freedom? When they are no longer defined by the maternal roles?”

She stresses that the book — which has been praised by fellow scholars and activists for being “a passionate, insightful meditation,” a “delightful provocation” and “an unrelenting and exacting takedown of the violent self-interest of the human species” — is not legal blueprint or set of demands, but a hopeful, unselfish and oddly optimistic manifesto.

“That means that it's a call to action,” she says. “So, by its nature, it has to propose action, and it has to propose action that radically displaces the systems we have now to work with.”

Among its tenets, besides antinatalism, is veganism — specifically, “abolitionist veganism,” which is the belief that all sentient beings, human or non-human, have the right to not be treated as the property of others.



“So, being an abolitionist vegan also has far-reaching consequences for feminism, for anti-racism, for queer theory, because it's all about each individual fighting for a space for the other, to allow the other to simply be,” MacCormack says, explaining that this belief system supports another: abolishing false hierarchies.

“Human exceptionalism is using the Earth, exhausting the Earth, treating the Earth as if the Earth is for us as a resource. We don't act as if we are part of the Earth. And nonhuman animals are beneath us in this schema,” she says, echoing [Joaquin Phoenix's recent Oscars speech](#) in noting that it needs to change. “And then certain animals are more valid than others. And our measure is based on the equivalence to us rather than on the fact that they are on the Earth ... and then within human, we have a similar hierarchy, where white, heterosexual, usually rich men are at the top and then arguably, you know, the rest of us.”

## Video Not Available

Unfortunately, this video is missing or damaged and cannot be played.

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What MacCormack is pressing for, at the heart of her manifesto, is for people “to start thinking about all lifeforms as worthy — simply because they are here. ... We need to make unnatural kin. We need to make participations with all life forms, without a hierarchy that's based on proximity to our so-called bloodline.”

And if all of this talk makes you quake with fear over the nearing of the apocalypse, the professor says to forget all that — because really, the apocalypse is already here.

“There are people living in the apocalypse right now — especially non-human animals, who have born into an apocalypse. They live to suffer and then they're murdered,” she points out. “But there are people living in refugee camps. There are people who, by virtue of being born a woman, by virtue of being born queer, their lives are apocalyptic, because they never achieved that level of subjectivity that counts.”

So instead of the cinematic idea of the apocalypse being some sort of “rupturous event,” she believes, “every era has its own apocalyptic age. And we, I think are feeling quite apocalyptic, because every morning we wake up and there's something in the news where we think, ‘Oh no, humans haven't done *that*, have they?’”

Still, if we focus too much on impending doom, the professor suggests, “We're not attending to the people who are experiencing the apocalypse right now,” and it can lead to deep despair. Which, in turn, can lead to doing nothing. “But doing nothing is an act,” she says. “It's an act for which we have to be accountable. So, instead, I'm advocating doing something —whatever we can do. Everyone is capable of doing something.”

And to those who are horrified by her suggestion that we throw in the towel and kiss the human race goodbye, MacCormack says, “Our race *is* done if we keep acting like we act.”

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