#### Confronted with the rampancy of fossil fuel culture there is only one possible realization—the world is consuming itself whole. It is fallacious, however, to suggest that this autoimmune condition can go on forever. Fossil fuels will run out. And then a transition will be necessary to avert the apocalypse.

**Scheer, ’12** Member of the German Parliament, President of the European Association for Renewable Energy EUROSOLAR, Chairman of the World Council for Renewable Energy WCRE (Hermann Scheer, Earthscan, 2012, “The energy imperative: 100 percent renewable now,” kindle reader so no page numbers)//CC

Why, when and how? If the transition from nuclear and fossil to renewable energy is only carried out in a piecemeal and gradual manner, then it is highly likely that world civilization will be thrown into a staggering crisis affecting everyone and everything: dramatic climate change threatens to make entire habitats unfit to live in and to trigger mass misery and the migration of hundreds of millions of people. This burdens civilization with challenges and damage limitation costs greater than those required for the transition to renewable energy. Already the reduced availability and increased costs of power supplies generated from nuclear and fossil resources are having dramatic economic consequences, causing social fractures in the industrialized countries and allowing developing countries to become ever more impoverished. We face the threat of growing international conflict over access to remaining resources, the severity of which could lead to war. The problems associated with nuclear power - from constant security threats to ongoing operations, through to nuclear terrorism and the thousand year “writing on the wall” for nuclear waste - remain both unsolved and unsolvable. The huge volumes of water consumed by nuclear and fossil power plants aggravate the water crisis in a growing number of regions. The dangers to health posed by nuclear and fossil-based energy supplies are increasing, and the contamination of marine life by oil extends into the food chain. All these crises, appearing simultaneously and exacerbating one another, are cutting societies to the quick. They are a greater threat to the industrialized model of civilization, one based on fossil and nuclear energy, than the global financial crisis. Whether in its guise as a capitalist, market economy or a socialist, planned economy, this model of civilization has already severely damaged the foundations of our existence. Therefore every year wasted in making the comprehensive and complete transition to renewable energy is a year lost. This change is the ultima ratio: the last possible means of averting existential and possibly irreversible dangers. It is of ultimate significance because there is no other way for humans to generate energy in a natural and sustainable manner. The consequences of the established power supply system compel us to urgent and decisive action.

#### Only a full transition to renewable energy can halt the coming crisis—the question remaining is one of autonomy—don’t be bought off by power companies seeking to reassert the energy industry

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Renewable energy has two economic characteristics: it comes free of charge and is available wherever it is needed. To this is added its inexhaustibility and pollutant-free nature, something to which no one could object. However, it is precisely the cost-free and ubiquitous natural availability' of renewable energy which makes it so threatening to the traditional power industry. Energy debates which fail to recognize this are sham debates. Nature has already determined that renewable energies will win through in the end. The primary energy industry', its existence based entirely on fossil reserves and uranium, will disappear from the scene altogether, either earlier than it is willing to accept, or too late. The outcome of the conflict surrounding the second key attribute of solar energy, its ubiquitous nature, has yet to be decided: whether mankinds energy needs should be met by local sources of natural energy, or if renewable energy will be appropriated in specified, concentrated areas and then delivered over long distances to consumers, along the lines of conventional power supply structures. As described above, opinions are divided over the question of structure. Although rarely mentioned, it is this dichotomy which has shaped the controversy surrounding renewable energy right from the beginning, as demonstrated by the numerous administrative hurdles to establishing production plants for renewable energy. Now openly discussed, this question has shifted to thecentre of our attention. Concentrating production systems in specific locations maintains centralized structures of supply. In contrast, the widespread production of power usingrenewable energy represents a broader, more comprehensive definition of an energy industry' - with a national and regional economic focus, and communal or even individual autonomy - i.e. the opposite of that intended by the conventional power industry'. For those concerned only about a change of energy source, environmentalreasons in general and secure, long-term energy supply, these structural questions are oflittle interest. But for conventional power companies, fervently trying to hold on to their habitual role as centrally organized producers and suppliers, they are of great interest. They are also of interest to those who support regional production and value creation, those with organizational interests or a direct, personal interest in emissions-free energy supply. Industry' too, which benefits from a rapidly growing market for renewable energy technologies, should stand up for its spatially unrestricted development and thus for a system of decentralized power supply. Renewable energy technologies have four specific qualities which determine that decentralized production is not only the faster, but also more economically-effieient and socially attractive option: • Energy is appropriated and transformed using a single technical system: the appropriation of solar radiation and wind power and their immediate transformation into electricity' in one and the same plant is a unique technological simplification, one which opens up a multitude of autonomous applications; • Energy appropriation, storage and use in a single geographical location, which enables an energy economy to develop based on short distances and the step-by-step renunciation of large- scale infrastructure; • The use of both small-and large-scale solar power systems, where smaller systems are no less efficient because increases in technological productivity' occur during their production and not during their use; • Energy technologies can be integrated into products that we already need, thereby incurring only minimal additional costs: e.g. the glass front of a building which is simultaneously a solar module. These hybrid opportunities apply to many renewable energy technologies and some are already being used today. They cannot be quantified using standard calculations of energy-efficiency. Taken together with their specific qualities, renewable energy's two economic characteristics indicate that the catalysts for energy change arethe potentially innumerable autonomous users who benefit economically at municipal, regional and national level, and the manufacturers of systems for utilizing renewable energy. Anything that breaks up the rigidity' of the current system and can berealized immediately serves to accelerate this change. The pace of change accelerates when the technologies involved are not over-complex, are easy to install and use, and are modular. A large number of independent investors are standing by, ready to invest. This is impressively confirmed by the figures given at the end of Chapter 2. which are the resultof many small individual investments rather than a few major technical projects. If Germany had decided upon a project a la DESERTEC in the year 2000, rather than its EEG, then it is highly likely that, by the year 2010,110 single additional kilowatt hour of power generated by renewable energy would have flowed into the German supply network.

#### In response to the affirmative, the alarm bells of political recalcitrance will ring, like Pavlov’s dogs, in an attempt to prevent the transition until it is too late. In response you should deploy the ballot as an affirmation of autonomous renewable energy production—refusing to lose sight of the goal is key

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(Hermann, *Energy Autonomy: The economic, social, and technological case for renewable energy* pg 32-35, dml)

The keynote of the signal to liberate us from our dependence on fossil energy was sounded by universal-minded scientists even before the Fossil Age had fully unfolded. At the dawn of the 20th century, Wilhelm Ostwald, who received the Nobel Prize for chemistry in 1909, spoke of the ‘unexpected legacy of fossil fuels’ that (mis)leads us into ‘**losing sight** temporarily of the principles of a durable economy and into **living from one day to the next’**. His clear-sighted conclusion was that a ‘durable economy’ needed to be based ‘**exclusively on the regular influx of energy from the sun’s radiation**’.2 In those days Ostwald was probably thinking in terms of a longer time period before this ‘energy imperative’ would have to be realized. Nobody in his day could have foreseen the growth in world population, which quadrupled over the last century. Nor was it possible to foresee the century ’s explosive economic growth, including the rise in consumption that (especially in the second half of the 20th century) triggered **a worldwide orgy in fossil energy consumption**. The industrialized world plunged into an energy delirium – a sustained state of intoxication that **animated the rest of the world to imitate it and obscured everyone’s senses in a kind of smokescreen**. In the 20th century Ostwald’s oracle was increasingly suppressed as more evidence piled up corroborating it. The Swedish scientist Svante Arrhenius, who won the Nobel Prize for chemistry in 1903 and later became director of the Nobel Institute, also wrote this in his 1922 book Chemistry in Modern Life:

Concern about raw materials is already casting a dark shadow over mankind. Concerns likes those about petroleum are also warranted owing to the future of almost all raw materials. Every industrialist seeks to push his production as high as possible in order to achieve the largest conceivable profit, and he gives no thought whatsoever to how things will be after fifty years or half a century. The states~~man~~, however, needs to apply a different standard.

Arrhenius was already warning about brutal international conflicts over energy:

States lacking [in raw materials] cast covetous glances at their neighbours, of whom it is said that they have more than they need. And the result is that profit-seeking will be increasingly lured into those countries whose interests are not guarded by judicious men. Future historians will bring to light how much craving raw materials for the future is to blame for [our] great misfortune.

Fossil raw materials should therefore not be abandoned to ‘national egoism’ and ‘industrial profit-seeking’. ~~Man~~kind **needs to arrive at the insight** that it must ‘replace [those raw materials] with the ~~man~~power that **the sun pours out over us** in inexhaustible amounts’, whether directly or ‘indirectly via the amounts of energy originating from the sun, amassed in streams of water and greening plant life’.3

Natural scientists – for whom it was more than self-evident at the beginning of the 19th century than it is today to think about the universal picture – were not the only ones who had an early awareness of these problems. In 1908 President Theodore Roosevelt convened a governors’ conference in order to initiate compiling an inventory of raw materials not yet exhausted and to catalogue the health defects and destruction of natural resources caused by raw materials exploitation. In 1909 the National Conservation Commission he designated for this purpose submitted its report, which called for resolute measures to reduce emissions and save energy, to substitute water power for coal, and to use solar heat, alcohol and other organic fuels. Roosevelt called on 45 world governments to come to an international conference in The Hague in order to discuss the worldwide consequences of resource exploitation.4 This conference never came about, and even the National Conservation Commission discontinued its work because Congress refused to fund it any longer. Roosevelt was the same man who had an early grasp of the danger to the US’s democratic constitution emanating from the petroleum trust run by Standard Oil boss John D. Rockefeller, and he started a campaign against the Rockefeller monopoly. That campaign ended in 1911 when the Supreme Court decided to enforce the Sherman Act against Standard Oil and dissolve the conglomerate into several independent corporations (such as Esso, today’s Exxon).5 This first large-scale political initiative against the fossil industrial energy complex **remained a mere episode**, however. There followed a century rife with environmental destruction caused by the use of fossil energy and of an increasingly internationalized concentration of power in the energy business. New discoveries and new drilling and mining techniques **repeatedly provided new excuses for** brashly repressing awareness **of the mounting dangers.**

Falling back on the sun was felt to be a relapse back to a time before the Industrial Revolution and, by extension, to the conditions of 10,000 years of civilized history in which human beings satisfied their energy needs almost exclusively with renewable energy. The opportunity to use renewable energy optimally by taking advantage of modern technology was not taken into account – this in spite of technologies that had already been developed for this purpose in the 19th century.6 Yet the limitations of fossil energy were known to the world of the physicists. Once atomic fission was discovered, the prevailing view was that there was an historic path from using solar energy in preindustrial times, to utilizing fossil energy created over millions of years inside the Earth, to nuclear energy. The possibility of acquiring colossal amounts of energy from nuclear fission or fusion fascinated scientists as much as it did governments and the public. It seduced them into **a sense of omnipotence that** regarded all risks as manageable – at least the risks associated with the ‘peaceful use of nuclear energy ’ or even of nuclear weapons, which were assigned the role of deterring wars.

In this way **the basic pattern was woven for worldwide energy conflict** in the second half of the 20th century, the pattern that is also shaping the first half of the 21st century. Nuclear energy became the reinsurance policy **needed to resume the world’s intoxication with energy consumption** even when claiming**,** all the while, **that the environmental sins of fossil fuels could be ended some day**. Atomic energy also rationalized ignoring renewable energy as something supposedly backward-looking. An arrogant fossil/nuclear world view emerged. Its sponsors could not concede that they had misjudged and were being haughty. They steadfastly invoked the indispensability of nuclear energy.7 The cost for its expansion could go as high as one liked so long as its world view would never have to capitulate before renewable energy. The expense incurred for its introduction dare not have been in vain. The conflict between ‘solar’ and ‘atom’ – between embracing renewable energy or continuing down the path taken in the 1950s, initially by way of nuclear fission, later via nuclear fusion – is, above all else, a structural conflict linked to world views. It is played out using superficial technological and economic rationales that conceal the very things for which the advocates of renewable energy are reproached: ideological fixation and technological pipe dreams. This basic conflict was not apparent for some time, or to put it more precisely, it did not become visible until nuclear energy became discredited by the fateful warning of Chernobyl in 1986.

#### The ballot is the autonomous individual’s way of taking shelter under solar power as the energy industry collapses around us

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(Hermann, *Energy Autonomy: The economic, social, and technological case for renewable energy* pg 215-217, dml)

Democratic industrial societies – with their scientific elites, high level of technology and broad information base – claim that they overwhelmingly follow reason-oriented and pragmatic standards of behaviour and are free of fundamentalist or irrational inclinations. If that were really the case, **there would not be so many protracted crises** in the developed world, and certainly no global ecological crisis. It is more than self-evident that society ’s reorientation towards a more efficiency-driven approach to energy and towards renewable energy would have been rung in on a large scale three decades ago. Yet instead, more and more people do not even want to hear anyone **so much as hint** that such a reorientation is the only way to avoid the apocalyptic consequences of nuclear and fossil energy use. In the meantime, there is even a Pentagon study on ‘an abrupt climate change’ that discusses how ‘imagining the unthinkable’ has indeed become practically imaginable.31 Yet the logical conclusion is not drawn by this study’s authors either – although it is actually not hard to grasp that a radical shift to renewable energy can ward off this danger and other energy crises of catastrophic proportions. Here the stakes are nothing less than making the world ‘**incapable of self-destruction’** again, as the contemporary philosopher Peter Sloterdijk has put it. The denial of this logical conclusion does not just come from lack of information. It is by no means simply the result of a discrepancy between knowledge and interest, a discrepancy that, in the case of the energy business, would at least represent a kind of rationality that is interest-based and calculable. There is a more deep-seated problem, which is the denial practised by many people who are not entangled in the web of energy business interests, a denial of renewable energy’s potential as a solution, **even if this refusal is accompanied by an awareness of the dangers** that come from nuclear and fossil energy use. **Many people want neither to hear nor know the truth, and if they do hear it,** they do not want to believe it**. If they believe it, it is either** forgotten **or** repressed **again** – or they do not let the knowledge penetrate their consciousness. This mentality is more likely to be encountered among members of the social ‘elites’ than in the general population. It has to do with psychological barriers that cannot simply be explained away by the way people subjugate themselves to those marvels of highly complex technology without which modern life has become unthinkable. The photovoltaic transformation of sunlight into electricity – a technology without moving parts, without any noise, without any kind of emission – is an even greater marvel than nuclear technology. **Nobody has to submit to this solar technology, but everyone can take shelter under it**. A ‘political neurosis’ is how the writer Arthur Koestler described the discrepancy between those unimaginable dangers than have become imaginable and human conduct, which is guided by our emotional life: ‘Since Hiroshima, humanity as a whole has had to live with the prospect of its annihilation as a biological species’; since that time, mankind has had a ‘time bomb around its neck’ and has been ‘living on borrowed time’. A ‘psychoactive fallout’ has occurred, an ‘intellectual assimilation’ to this condition, whose potential truth ‘is too awful for one to stare it openly in the face’. Getting accustomed to this condition weakens the symptoms, and people accommodate themselves to ‘pseudo-normal conditions’. They accept only the ‘pleasant outcomes’, and all the other ‘indigestible’ results are shoved aside. This built-in ‘inner censor’ works ‘**more thoroughly than the state censor of** a totalitarian country ’ and causes people ‘to act doggedly against their own welfare’.32 The philosopher Peter Sloterdijk also talks about an ‘Internationale of Soldiering On’; the most powerful social groups have ‘invested so much entrepreneurially, politically, vitally, and ideologically in fatal practices so that accidents, no matter how large-scale, are **denied from the very outset** the right to cause doubts in principle about the procedures’. But even among the less powerful, ‘feelings of powerlessness and lack of competence coalesce into a mental constitution that is indolent and incapable of experience’. For these reasons there are ‘masses of irreversibly formed mentalities that are catastrophe-proof and that, in the bunker of their conviction, are a match for any shock’.33 Following Chernobyl in 1986, the mechanism of ignoring nuclear technology no longer worked, in spite of tireless attempts by the incorrigibles to portray this catastrophe as a one-off exception. The longer we go on without another atomic worst-case scenario materializing, however, **the sooner this psychological mechanism will take hold again**. It is only possible to speak of a learning process, however, when the danger has not only been seen but when, in addition, the obvious and compelling conclusions have been drawn.

#### The energy industry will not go peacefully—agents of the market work to reify inequalities to perpetuate their own necessity. Using the ballot to endorse local solar works to reestablish links in the economy and equality at large

**Scheer 2** (Hermann, Member of the German Parliament, President of the European Association for Renewable Energy, PhD in Economy, Social Science, Public Law at Free University Berlin and recipient of the alternative Nobel Prize. "The Solar Economy: Renewable Energy for a Sustainable Global Future." Earthscan Publications. 2002. Pgs. 31-34)

The most sensitive question humanity faces is whether the global economy produces enough to go around. If our economy continues to be based on limited, polluting resources and ever more concentrated global business structures, then there will not be enough for all. The more obvious this becomes, the more likely it becomes that in the absence of a clear alternative, the ideal of equal human rights will be revoked. This process is covertly already well under way. Carl Amery identifies the nub of the issue: if there is not enough to go around, then the Nazi doctrine of ‘national selection’ will not remain an isolated historical episode. Instead, the distinction between the privileged and the disenfranchised, between those seen as superior and those seen as inferior, will be maintained into the 21st century. We face the threat of new genocides in new wars for Lebensraum, and of ‘ecocides,’ brought about by humans and guaranteed by the law of the market. But when nature strikes back, she has no regard for privilege; her selection is indiscriminate. She is just and yet unjust, for her vengeance also meets those who have not provoked her. Yet she will toler- ate a compromise, which we ourselves must enact. The answer is not ‘environmental protection’, which merely maintains isolated reserves without arresting the overall destruction, but rather a natural economy which respectfully partakes of the ‘Wealth of Nature’ (Donald Worster) ,J0 instead of disfiguring the world with rape and pillage in the pursuit of an imagined 'Wealth of Nations Adam Smith). The goal of universal provision is the social and democra- tic ideal of the modern age, an ideal which originated with the Industrial Revolution. But the Industrial Revolution’s excesses, which have led us to put ourselves above nature, make it impos- sible to realize this ideal for all people in the long term. To achieve universal provision, it is not necessary to give nature priority over the needs ol humans. What is essential — and this is my sixth proposition - is the primacy of physical laws over the laws of the market. Iti practical economic terms, this means above all that locally or regionally produced solar energy, foodstuffs and solar resources should be consumed and marketed in preference to otherwise equivalent products. A society which, with the aid ot its political institutions, is unable to reverse the primacy of the market over nature is destined to die. The choice is not between private or public enterprise, between the tree market or the planned economy. It is a question of the physical laws that govern private and public enterprise, market and planned economy alike. Solar resources are products of the primary sector. In view ot their fundamental importance in providing tor the inhabi- tants ot an economic region, they may not be subordinated to the market or to some macroeconomic plan. This is the essen- tial conclusion that follows from the sham existence ot the tossil-iuelled global economy. By switching to a solar resource basis, we can end this sham, and ensure that there will be enough to go around. My seventh proposition is that only it solar global economy can satisfy the material needs of all mankind and grant us the freedom to re- establish our social and democratic ideals. This solar global economy will consist of a global market for the products of technology alongside innumerable linked regional commodity markets, whose economic basis cannot be usurped. An unattainable utopia? On the contrary, it is the predominant belief that a stable economic future can be achieved through the famous 'invisible hand of the market' which is utopian. According to Adam Smith’s theory, the market directs individual behaviour j such that people’s unconscious interaction works to the general good. Although many times disproved, foiled by the market participants themselves, this theory has become an axiom, an indisputable absolute truth, ot which the collapse ot the social- ist planned economy seemed to be the final prool. But the directly perceptible hand in each case is more often greedy than helpful, more otten taking than giving, more often combative than sympathetic. Being invisible, the hand of the market can steal and exploit without being recognized. The result is not harmony, but tension, division and disruption. My proposal, to rely above all on the visible hand of the sun, on desirable and direct benefits, is more precise, more compre- hensive, more manageable, more comprehensible, more accessible, more appropriate to people’s needs, and more realis- tic. It is also free of danger and definitely less utopian. The propositions in summary 1 Global civilization can only escape the life-threatening fossil fuel resource trap if every effort is made to bring about an immediate transition to renewable and environ- mentally sustainable resources and thereby end the dependence on tossil tuels. 2 Making the groundbreaking transition to an economy based on solar energy and solar resources will do more to safeguard our common future than any other economic development since the Industrial Revolution. 3 Economic globalization can only be made environmentally sustainable through the targeted replacement of tossil tuels by solar energy sources. This is the only way to rein in the destructive imperative of the fossil economy and call a halt to the creeping homogenization of economic structures and cultures. It is the only way to make economic development diverse, sustainable and of lasting benefit to both individ- uals and society. 4 An economy based on solar energy and solar resources will make it possible to re-establish the links between the devel- opment of the economy as a whole and environmental cycles, stable regional business structures, cultures and democratic institutions, links which are essential if the future Security of human society is to be guaranteed. 5 An examination of the entire supply chain for fossil fuel energy demonstrates that its claim to be more economical is a myth. In theory, renewable energy sources have an economic advantage because of their much shorter supply chains. This can be exploited it the atomic and tossil fuel energy suppliers are divested ol their numerous state privi- leges, and technical development and market introduction strategies tor renewable energy are refocused on this unique economic advantage. Solar resources can be harnessed in a more efficient, user-friendly and thus more productive way than would ever be possible with conventional energy. 6 The immutable laws of physics must have primacy over the mutable laws of the market in our economic order. It follows from this that locally or regionally produced solar energy, loodstulls and solar resources should be consumed and marketed in preference to otherwise equivalent products. 7 Only a solar global economy can satisfy the material needs of all mankind and grant us the freedom to guarantee truly universal and equal human rights and to safeguard the world’s cultural diversity. What is in principle impossible with the invisible hand of the market’ alone can be achieved with the visible hand of the sun.

#### The affirmative is the only way out—Fossil fuel culture necessitates a constant state of emergency, recreating fascism and nihilistic inaction. The end result is war and the theft of identity from individuals

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Never is the aesthetic of destruction sufficiently related to an object for it to become a critique of this fascism of representation. Never, as I switch on the light or turn on my car engine is the truth of this freedom - the aesthetic of destruction - illuminated as my universal. Thus my identity as a person, my mastery, consists in my having fossil fuel culture relieve me from all social and political relations. It relieves me from a totality which I no longer see as absent but view as not mine. As such I am relieved of any experience in which I am the master of fossil fuel culture or the destroyer. This freedom will - is- destroying itself. The wars, current and future, for control of oil are destined to be the aesthetic of destruction that Benjamin identified. Indeed, riots and wars for oil in the name of freedom point towards an almost certain future. The totality of fossil fuel culture, unmediated by the totality of the negative, as suggested above, is its own categorical imperative. It is an imperative which reproduces itself in an aesthetic of destruction. In fossil fuel culture, destruction *is* freedom. The immediacy of this imperative, feeding itself on the need which it creates, resembles Adorno’s critique of culture as pre-digested ‘baby-food. 32 Both offer a dialectic of nihilism emancipated from all save the needs which it reproduces for itself. But fossil fuel culture adds an important dimension to this totality of ideology. It enjoys the fetishism of the object as the fetishism of fetishism itself. Freedom is freedom not only from the object, but also from our alienation from the object. As such, fossil fuel culture echoes Adorno’s observation that objects pass ‘impotently by.’33 ‘Nothing happens any more.’34 The decay of aura has already removed experience from its objects. Image and reality parade as the aestheticization of the political, and freedom from culture is the new culture, fossil fuel culture. We have seen, at the beginning of this century, that fossil fuel culture claims and will continue to claim the state of emergency and ‘restoration’ as its own unquestionable imperative. This freedom, this imperative, is absolute godless spirituality, and is evil. It has overcome nature yet it is also in a constant state of emergency in anticipating, knowing, that nature will only yield finite amounts of freedom. Running out of oil will play itself out as the allegory of the fallen creature. Fascism will carry the crisis. It will offer the ‘sanctuary of a dialectic of nihilism, inwardly experienced as the yearning for a restoration of itself with the freedom that is deserting it. and outwardly carrying out its imperative for restoration in ruthless fashion such that the dialectic of nihilism becomes the praxis of intrigue.35 At stake is how fossil fuel culture learns to represent itself as other to itself. Those who refuse this negation, this real loss of abstract freedom, will find in a state of emergency the authority to destroy others by protecting themselves. Those who can learn of culture as the representation of representation will learn of their collaboration in the illusions of fossil fuel freedoms and will recognize a relation to the universal. But do not be surprised then, when, ‘at home’, freedom demands armed guards at petrol stations, and ‘abroad’, it offers destruction to feed the aesthetic. In what may prove to be the coup de grace of fascist culture, through the reproduction of destruction on television and the Web, the categorical imperative of bourgeois freedom will itself be aestheticized. As such, even absolute destruction will not be recognized as a universal event. Ruin in fossil fuel culture is the absence of a notion of culture as representation at all. We are continually learning to enjoy (watching) the recognition that there is nothing we can do. That, above all else, is the triumph of culture as the representation of fascism and the fascism of representation, and as the fate of philosophy.

#### Only the aff is up to the task of dealing with the problem presented in the 1ac. The autonomous renewable community shifts energy away from purely economic logic by injecting cultural concerns. The result is an active energy society of engaged individuals

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From the passive to the active energy society In contrast, what we all want is access to secure supplies of energy. In developing countries there are billions of people whose only concern is securing access to any form of energy, especially electricity. When this access is made possible using renewable energy, even via methods different from those traditionally available, then increasing numbers of people will grab this opportunity - and the cheaper it is, the faster they will do so. Where renewable energy can be appropriated by autonomous means, it mutates from a pure economic and consumer commodity into a cultural commodity. That is the social logic of renewables: they stimulate the shift from a “passive energy society”, with ever fewer and increasingly large-scale providers serving a unified market of planned energy consumers, to an “active energy society”, in which energy supply is increasingly autonomous and appears in a multitude of new guises. This shift is supported by other economic factors. As the primary energy is free of charge and permanently available, the cost of generating power using renewable energy is easier to calculate than with conventional energies, where fuel costs constantly rise. This mathematical advantage also extends to the modular availability of the technologies: where use of these technologies is decentralized, then local capacity needs can be calculated precisely, avoiding the error of investing into overcapacity. Where demand for capacity grows, additional modules can be easily and quickly installed. And as installation times for decentralized systems are very short and production begins at once, equity redemption also begins immediately. All this makes it clear why the mushrooming potential offered by renewable technologies thwarts long-term energy plans, whether for conventional or renewable energy. Long-term investments become unavoidably risky, a risk that can only be limited by continuing to deliberately block renewable technologies by refusing to grant authorizations, prohibiting use, making connection and use compulsory, direct and indirect subsidies to providers of centralized structures, right through to import restrictions for new energy technologies in countries in which they are not produced. The risks facing large investors can be reduced only by means of political intervention. If renewable technologies are allowed to develop freely, investments in large-scale plants and widespread infrastructures could become a disaster over the medium-term, because capacity utilization levels will continue to fall. The fact that power plants will become uneconomic to run and need to be decommissioned is actually a relatively minor problem, for only the power plant operators themselves will be affected. A more general problem is that of widespread infrastructures, from gas and oil pipelines through to high and highest voltage distribution networks for power transmission, where regional production reduces demand for long-distance supply routes. Customers who remain dependent upon the under-utilized networks will inevitably be forced to bear a greater share of the transmission costs. This in turn strengthens the trend to autonomous power supply, making maintaining the network even more expensive. As renewable energy technologies continue to rapidly develop, the conventional energy supply system will reach a tipping point, triggered by changes at the end of its supply chain, even before it becomes obsolete as a result of conventional energy resources becoming exhausted. To prepare ourselves for this development, we need what the sociologist Oskar Negt calls “sociological fantasy and learning by example”: an increasing number of “best practice” examples develop into a widespread social movement.

#### The United States federal government should substantially increase incentives for the autonomous energy production of wind and solar power.

#### Providing financial incentives takes advantage of the snowball-like qualities of knowledge—the affirmative may start small, but it is capable of exponential expansion

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History has shown that anytime humanity wants to learn how to do something, such as land a man on the moon, the answers can be found if money and resources are devoted to the cause. One desired technology is cheap and clean energy. Sunlight provides more energy than humanity could ever use, we just need to find how to harness the same. Plus, solar energy is environmentally clean. A massive research effort could find the answers to this cheap and clean source of energy within a relatively short time. If we had started such an effort during the gas shortage 25 years ago, we would probably have this technology now. Once the savings and benefits of abundant clean solar energy are achieved, those freed resources can be rolled back into other beneficial research, and any freed resources from the results of that new research can be rolled back into other beneficial research, etc. until we have Utopia. Knowledge is like a snowball rolled from the top of a snow covered mountain. It starts small, but exponentially increases. In the last 30 years more information was processed than in the previous 5,000 years. If humanity recognized this reality, and devoted more resources toward acquisition, dissemination, and use of knowledge, we could accelerate the pace at which we reach a better world. It should be noted that knowledge and technology are not synonymous. Technology is simply a tool that can be used when the benefit to society exceeds the benefit of other methods. If natural methods provide the best results, then clearly they should be used over manmade methods. Knowledge is cognition of truth, insight of justice, awareness of the best way, and wisdom in behavior. The rest of this book proposes some ideas for resource realignment toward the goal of Utopia. Resource realignment simply involves finding current ways that effort and material are being used wastefully, and then diverting these efforts and materials toward the most productive use. Since the ultimate goal is Utopia, and knowledge is the key to the goal, then as many resources as possible should be diverted toward knowledge. The following resource realignment ideas are not exclusive, so please feel free to develop other ideas, and disseminate that knowledge for the benefit of all mankind. Chapter III Wisdom "Use from Awareness" The three basic ways of interacting with knowledge, are: 1.) acquisition of new knowledge from research, through experience, or from other avenues of discovery; 2.) dissemination from accessing stored information, through teaching, or from other methods of communication; and 3.) use through actions based on awareness of knowledge. The remainder of this chapter will discuss dissemination and use of knowledge. The next chapter will discuss acquisition of knowledge. Humanity has achieved proficient methods for dissemination of information, and thereby means for easy access to use current knowledge. Computers offer an efficient and economical way to store information, and the Internet provides a method for fast and easy access to information. However, the full potential of the Internet is not being utilized. The solution could be a master web site for each area of man's accumulated knowledge, a virtual library of all accumulated knowledge. For example, in the field of medicine, the American Medical Association, in cooperation with universities that teach in the field of medicine, could create and maintain a web site which contains all knowledge about medicine, so that anyone could access the information. Government should initiate a consortium effort in conjunction with organizations, institutions, and/or industry to create a master web site for each area of knowledge, or encourage the creation of such master web sites through financial incentives and/or financial support. Such a system has minuscule costs in comparison to the benefits that could be derived therefrom. The full power of current knowledge could be unleashed by such a universal system providing fast and easy access to Humanity's accumulated knowledge.

#### To this end, our current task must be to incentivize the creation of autonomous solar spaces for communities to be born. Refuse to even consider doubts; the aff is about galvanization, not implementation

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In his book, Plan B, Lester Brown, founder of the Worldwatch Institute and current director of the Earth Policy Institute in Washington, demands a political show of strength and speed worthy of a wartime mobilization to effect the transition to renewable energy. He reminds us how, at the beginning of 1942 after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, and Hitler's declaration of war against the US in 1941, US President Franklin D. Roosevelt mobilized the military and began the immediate, mass production of war ships, fighter planes and tanks, declaring that “no one should dare say this is not possible”. These actions included an almost three-year ban on the sale of private cars, allowing the automotive industry to concentrate its entire production capacity on manufacturing the vehicles needed for war.— An exceptional show- of strength is also required to end the virtual nuclear and fossil war against human civilization's future opportunities, although this is the only analogy with Roosevelt's military mobilization. The current mobilization for energy change demands an entirely different approach to that of Roosevelt, for we are facing entirely different opponents: we need to focus on the production of new- technologies, on the complete reorganization of our economic structures, a new culture of production operating within a new- framew-ork - one which is free from state-guided interventions in company decisions. Its aim is to override the structural statism of traditional power supply. However, Roosevelt does exemplify the ideal of purposefully grouping all necessary powers through unconventional methods. He didn't want to be forced to say that “unfortunately we cannot adequately combat Japanese and Hitler Germany’s aggression because this demands too much of our existing economic structures”. We, too, must be unwilling to allow- the strategic mobilization for the transition to renew-able energy to be made contingent upon - and compatible with - the vested interests and structures of traditional power supply. We cannot placate the next generation, forced to deal with the catastrophic consequences of fossil and nuclear energy, with the excuse that, although we could have avoided these catastrophes by making the change to renewable energy, we had to take into account opposing interests. That was more important. We apologise for the inconvenience. Every strategy for energy change demands that obstacles be overcome, obstacles that, however, differ from country to country. Because the sources of naturally occurring renewable energy vary from region to region, there can be no uniform global strategy for energy change. The monocultures of conventional power supply, which strongly resemble one another at international level, will yield to a myriad of renewable energy cultures. For this very reason, the strategic mobilization of renewable energy must be primarily focused at the level of the individual state - not for narrow, nationalist reasons, but because each strategy needs to reflect each nation's natural renewable energy sources, as well as its economic structure and legal system, both of which are closely bound with traditional power supply in so many ways. Added to this are the various stages of economic development through which countries go. We have developing countries, threshold countries and industrialized countries, countries with a completely structured electricity market and others with only sparse networks. Some countries are energy exporters, other energy importers, some large countries with low- population densities, others small but with high population densities. Therefore the over-all transition to renew-able energy cannot be based on a single strategy, applicable to all, although successful ideas such as Germany’s Renew-able Energy Sources Act (EEG) can be used as a role model for many countries. How-ever, even this is only possible w'here there are network infrastructures, and only for supplies of electricity or gas. But it is no longer necessary to expand pow-er networks to cover w'hole countries (something lacking in many developing countries) in order to mobilize the use of renew-able energy. Indeed, this w-ould significantly delay implementation. Moreover, we are not dealing with electricity supply and the electricity market alone, but also with the question of heat and fuel supply, market regulation, regional planning, building legislation and tax law- and, last but not least, with the question of each country’s political ability to act in accordance with its own constitution. Tw'o basic principles are decisive in every political strategy for mobilising renew-able energy: • The first is the importance of looking beyond the traditional calculations made by the energy industry-, calculations which focus only on comparing the current costs of conventional and renew-able energy technologies. These generally ignore the major economic costs involved in conventional pow-er supply which are not reflected in energy prices, i.e. the burden of international payments for energy imports as well as damage to health, the environment and climate. Equally unconsidered are the traditional pow-er supply chain's infrastructure costs, over and above those for maintaining the pow-er plant or refinery. The measure of all things is the economic advantages which accrue from using renew-able energy, although not enjoyed equally by every player in the market. Hence political strategies for mobilizing renewable energy must transform these economic advantages into microeconomic incentives. How-ever, these advantages (and with them each country's own economic room to manoeuvre in effecting energy change) will be lost should renew-able energy be imported from other countries w'here it can be more economically produced. Transformation strategies must therefore be measured against the yardstick of national and regional economies, rather than isolated economic calculations. • The second principle is the primacy of renew-able energy, legitimated by its unequivocal and greater social value, which must guarantee that regulations are established to force traditional energy supplies out of the market as the share played by renew-able energy in supplying our energy needs grow-s. Official policies must guarantee that the functions of the traditional power supply system are adapted to those of renewable energy. The established energy industry regards this as an unreasonable demand, for it must be forced to accept a subordinate position w'hile still making the dominant contribution to pow-er supply. No longer can the yardstick be simply how- much renew-able energy the traditional energy system can cope with. In practical terms, this means refusing to authorize any new- investments in traditional pow-er supply mechanisms which involve payback periods of several decades. Only in this way can we prevent the mobilization of renew-able energy being constantly and repeatedly thw-arted by the functions of the traditional pow-er supply system. For this reason, neither new- large coal-fired pow-er stations, nor new- nuclear pow-er plants and extended operating lifetimes have a place in a strategy for energy change. These two principles can only be enforced once regulations have been established. The first principle demolishes the current pow-er industry’s frame of reference and scope for action, turning a closed pow-er supply system into a playing field which is open to many innovators. The second is directed at the pow-er industry's interest in preserving its structures, compelling the industry itself to take on a constructive role during the process of energy change. It forces the industry to choose between fighting to maintain its current status (for a further decade or two, or a new- generation of large-scale installations) or adapting to entirely new- business perspectives (different dimensions and priorities, and extending outside its current core business). This structural energy conflict is being fought out in the political arena and cannot be seen separately from the battle for public opinion. Every call for energy consensus, with each energy source having or being allotted its “fair” role, creates a quota system and, by definition, a limited role for renew-able energy. How-ever, supporters of the traditional energy system and its protectors in political institutions and parties are failing to notice that the transition to renew-able energy is developing its own momentum. From a certain point omvards it will no longer be possible for traditional pow-er supply structures or political institutions to hold back the availability of the necessary technologies. At most, it will be able to slow this process down, at least in democratic and free market economies. This momentum is generated primarily by the technologies which allow- renew-able energy to be used autonomously, independently of established networks. The most prominent and significant example of this are buildings which can supply their own energy by drawing from their natural surroundings. It w-ouldn't be the first time that a technological development undermines or overruns established structures and political obstacles. In the w-orld of pow-er supply, only renew-able energy can do this. Any energy change strategy must be aw-are of this potential, for we can never expect every government and political party to simultaneously recognize the signs of the times and decide on energy change irrespective of the energy interests striving to maintain the status quo. That has never been the case, even during the period of coalition government in Germany, when the Social Democratic and Green parties shared pow-er. Governments must be carried to the fight by a democratic public and by the economic players in renew-able energy’s technological revolution w'hich has begun to unfold. The key political task is to create space for this to happen, by abolishing all arbitrary restrictions on the autonomous use of renew-able energy. The common excuse of those who support the traditional energy system is that rapid energy change is either unfeasible or too risky. In their long-conceded claim to omnicompetence in questions of pow-er supply, the pow-er industry- mistakes itself for the economy and society as a whole; w'hat is unfeasible or too risky for the pow-er industry is disqualified in general. Therefore we must all ask ourselves whether the many blockades and brakes hampering and delaying the transition to renew-able energy are simply prevarications or justified objections. In the conflict involved with the transition to renew-able energy, it is crucially important to make this distinction. As long as refutable statements are accepted as reasonable and cogent, they will prevent many in politics, in society and in the economy from forcibly driving forward the transition to renew-able energy, and taking the quickest route to get there.

#### The affirmative’s provision of incentives shifts the frame of politics from achieving marginal reforms to doing what is absolutely necessary.

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Real realism

It is true that every economic or political initiative to promote renewable energy drives development forward in some way, irrespective of the underlying motives. However, they are neither of equal value and nor are they equally suited for effecting rapid energy change. Therefore it is vital to separate the wheat from the chaff and to recognize: • which initiatives facilitate the unlimited development of renewable energy and which permit this only to a limited extent - and do these initiatives complement or hinder one another; • which policies encourage growth in the number of renewable energy supporters and provide them with the necessar\r room for manoeuvre, and which have the opposite result of reducing the spectrum to just a few players upon which future progress then depends; • which initiatives do justice to the multitude of reasons for the transition to renewable energy, and which focus only on a single goal (e. g. climate protection), thereby limiting their overall efficacy. The catalogue of contentious questions is extensive: what should be made dependent on international agreement? Are global climate negotiations the silver bullet upon which everything else depends, or are they a well-trodden path along which there is almost no chance of making headway? Does emissions trading encourage energy change or act as a brake? Do we need more comprehensive, multilateral approaches or more individual pacesetters? What value do the various options represent for renewable energy? Should renewable energy be appropriated predominantly in those regions where more sun shines or more wind blows, or everywhere? What do we mean by “cheap” and “economic” power supply? Increasingly the most contentious question is that of “decentralized” or “centralized” renewables-based power supply structures: are large-scale power plants necessary at all? If so, under what conditions? Is it also essential to expand power supply networks on a major scale by means of “super grids” even where the provision of renewable energy is predominantly decentralized, or should the focus be on regional and local “smart grids”? These questions lead not only to differing plans of action but also to conflicting objectives for introducing renewable energy which need to be discussed and battled out. However, political parties and governments, as well as many advocates of renewable energy, shy away from these questions and, in order to keep the peace, declare all these diverging policies to be equally important and worthy of promotion. Disputes about the ways and means of achieving the transition to renewable energy are being fought out in political institutions as well as in environmental organizations and those promoting renewable energy. These disputes are confusing many people and generating public and political uncertainty about the necessary route to achieve energy change. Therefore we need to take stock. A critical analysis of the various approaches, one that examines their likelihood of practical success and their consequences, is long overdue. The main question is why the obvious and urgent matter of our energy survival, also an ethical concern, is still largely being dealt with in a half-hearted manner. The reasons given for this are specious and a forceful push towards energy change is now essential. There are longer and shorter “roads to Rome”, paved with a multitude of various obstacles and challenges to implementation, and with a diverse range of political, economic, social and cultural ramifications. This makes it all the more important to recognize the fastest paths to energy change. Our decision whether to set off along these paths should reflect not just business management or energy policy considerations but also economic, political and, last but not least, ethical grounds. The systematic and critical analysis of the current situation I attempt in this book is intended as a navigational aid for breakthrough strategies. It is based on my experiences in development and in implementing the most successful political initiatives for renewable energy at national and international level to date, as well as my observations on the success and failure of concepts for renewable energy in many countries. In order to make something happen, one must recognize the likely obstacles and understand how to overcome them. This demands that we understand the interests and intentions behind these obstacles and the strengths that are required to overcome them. Everyone involved needs to understand the realism upon which their action is based. Too many interpret this as the task of only pursuing that which seems possible under the current conditions and existing power structures. However, if analysis of the current situation indicates that the limited opportunities to act do not provide an adequate answer to the real challenges we face, then we need a different understanding of realism, one aimed at changing the parallelogram of forces in order to expand the room for manoeuvre. In view of the climactic dangers arising from established power supply systems, politics can no longer be regarded as simply the “art of the possible”. Instead it must become the “art of the necessary”. This is the real realism needed for energy change. Analyses and concepts must be thought through in an uncompromising manner. Although generally unavoidable, compromises should only be permitted during the actual process of implementation. Therefore I show the bottlenecks that need to be overcome and explain why one-dimensional observations lead us nowhere. Opening up our minds is the prerequisite for practical breakthroughs. The political key to energy change lies in breaking up the established framework in which the power industry operates, a framework which is perforce limited, constricting the global economic, social and cultural opportunities for the transition to renewable energy. Energy change is a macroeconomic and social project which is focused on the future. It cannot be realized using only the methods and calculations of the traditional power industry. The range of technological capabilities is constantly growing, making change possible at a speed that pragmatists who focus on the present believe impossible. Rapid energy change needs multitudes of autonomous activists, prepared neither to hold back with their initiatives, nor to wait and see what others do. This thesis, which I set out and explain in my book Energy Autonomy (2005), has now been confirmed in practice, in the face of the prophecies of doom issued by the usual experts on practical constraints. Politics needs to forge new pathways to overcome this faintheartedness, not least because the traditional power industry' has only been able to secure and maintain its dominant role thanks to various forms of political patronage. This patronage, rarely mentioned and examined far less critically than renewable energy initiatives, must be denounced politically. Recognizing the fundamental importance of energy change for society’s ability to survive in the future, my starting point is not renewable energy but rather society itself. I have not moved from renewable energy into politics in order to implement them. Rather, it is my view of the fundamental problem and my understanding of political responsibility that has led me to renewable energy. The transition to renewable energy is of historic significance for civilization and we need to know how to speed this process up. It is not renewable energy that we lack, it is time.

#### Reframing political priorities at a national level is a necessity to shift the entire legal framework towards equitable decision-making

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In order to accelerate the transition to renewable energy, this transition must be made a political priority7 and the primacy of renewables anchored in law. This involves more than simply putting a stop to the current privileges enjoyed by conventional energy, and it implies more than simply legal equality7 for renewable energy. Equality7 alone would not sufficiently reflect the fundamental differences between traditional and renewable forms of energy. Thus renewables must be given priority, over and above the legal dictates of energy law and in all spheres of legislation relevant to renewable energy. This requires fundamental political decisions, which must be permanently valid and based on a socio-cultural system of values. These will form the basis for a new, general legal framework that redefines public decision-making methods and responsibility and alters the evaluation and decision-making criteria of public bodies. These are vitally important structural framework decisions - in contrast to the sort of political decisions which simply make minor tweaks to problematic sectors and resemble piecemeal policies operating within a predetermined framework. Once a new and universally applicable framework for developing renewables has been established, many individual political decisions will be superfluous. Key decisions designed to promote the transition to renewable energy make many laws and regulations on limitations to, and protection from, emissions increasingly superfluous, and wipe out the entire costs of controlling these emissions. These are “begin-of- pipe” regulations: with the comprehensive use of renewable energy, whose appropriation and use are pollutant-free, many of the damage reduction regulations, such as emission protection regulations, along the conventional energy flow or at its end (“end-of-pipe”) fall away. Thus energy change also has the effect of reducing bureaucracy. Initially it will be hard to force through the fundamental priority7 for renewables, but this will simplify all subsequent decisions. The most important programmatic challenge is to recognize the key decisions that will open up a wide range of new developments. And the most important political resource needed to take these decisions is the courage to act. Essentially there are four fundamental principles that need to be enshrined in law, reflecting both the physical energy imperative as well as social and ethical values: • permanent priority7 for renewable energy in the power market; • priority7 for renewable energy systems in regional policy and public land-use planning; • the fundamental shift from taxes on energy to taxes on pollutants; and • the stringent organization of energy infrastructure as a community asset, with municipal energy supply playing a central role. These fundamental principles can only be implemented at national level, for they impact directly on each country’s legal system. As a result, this development can only take place at a variety7 of speeds. In addition, now that we are forced to regard the efforts of the world climate conferences as having failed, for the reasons given in Chapter 2. we must decide upon the joint tasks for which the international community should be responsible. These questions will be dealt with in Chapter 6.

#### Use the ballot to unlock the exponential potential of the affirmative

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(Hermann, *Energy Autonomy: The economic, social, and technological case for renewable energy* pg 204-206, dml)

Ecological thinking **needs to be holistic** so that its impact can be understood in context. Ignoring these contexts – proceeding from that particularistic concept of science that has become dominant in modern natural science – **is a** profound cause **of the ruthless way that industrial growth societies have dealt with natural goods.** Specializing in the particular has been carried forward from the natural and technical sciences onto an evergrowing number of scholarly fields. A particularistic understanding of science shapes teaching and occupational training, and it promotes the increasingly frayed specialization of professions. Weighing trade-offs between a number of factors is becoming harder, as is the evaluation of their relative significance. By contrast, the capacity for a holistic view of strategy against environmental crises is **indispensable**. Yet it is a tortuous path from these imperatives of thinking and acting to heeding what they tell us to do.

‘Any new interpretation of nature’, according to the physicist, philosopher and historian of science Thomas S. Kuhn in his book The Structure of Scientific Revolutions:25

emerges first in the mind of **one or a few individuals**. It is they who first learn to see science and the world differently, and their ability to make the transition is facilitated by two circumstances that are not common to most other members of their profession. Invariably their attention has been intensely concentrated upon the crisis-provoking problems; usually, in addition, they are men so young or so new to the crisis-ridden field that practice has committed them less deeply than most of their contemporaries to the world view and rules determined by the old paradigm… [At first] a new candidate for paradigm may have few supporters (and the motives of the supporters may be suspect). If the supporters are competent, they will improve **the paradigm**, explore **its possibilities**, and show **what it would be like** to belong to the community guided by it. For the paradigm destined to win, the number and strength of the persuasive arguments in its favour will increase. As more and more scientists are converted, exploration increases. The number of experiments, instruments, articles, and books based on the paradigm will multiply. More scientists, convinced of the new view’s fruitfulness, will adopt the new mode of practising normal science, until **only a few elderly holdouts remain**.

So far, however, the scientific revolution leading to a holistic ecological approach has remained bogged down. Renewable energy, which is the natural linchpin of the new paradigm from a holistic perspective, has hardly gone beyond the candidate role, in spite of enormous interest on the part of younger scientists. Specialized disciplines dominate the world of science so much that **they have succeeded in subordinating holistic efforts**. There are quite normal reasons for this, having to do with inertia inside the world of science itself, a system that is not eager to rewrite its textbooks, and whose exam regimens and careers are oriented around specialized disciplines. Instead of a new holistic approach, often nothing more is ventured than a summation of specialized perspectives that empty out into a sea of ‘complexity’. This goes along with a refusal to recognize just one parameter – in our case, renewable energy – as the key factor, and not just for overcoming a single problem, but for overcoming several. To the representatives of the particularistic scientific establishment, **this seems too monocausal**, although it cannot be disputed that the central cause of most environmental problems is fossil energy consumption, which is why the central solution – which will enable many other problems to be solved simultaneously – can only lie in **a shift to** renewable energy. But the moments of inertia in today’s specialized culture of science are not the only impediments to a holistic perspective; equally obstructive are the economic interests and dependence relations of scientific training institutes.

Even environmental policy, although it is a classic case of a problem that cries out for a comprehensive approach, became enmeshed in a political decision-making operation that was also **organized in a particularistic way**; environmental policy became just one department among many. This started with the installation of environmental ministries. Their job, to be sure, is championing the environmental cause, but as a rule they do not have authority to attack the problem of energy crises at their roots and to press ahead immediately with the necessary shift in resources. One of the few exceptions is Germany’s Environment Ministry, which was authorized to deal with renewable energy in 2002. This led to tensions inside the Ministry, whose classic assignment was to alleviate the consequences of resource consumption, meaning that it was attacking the problem at the end of the resource chain rather than at the beginning. This inevitably leads to sideshow battles. The more environmental policy deals with pollutant particles instead of the sources of pollution, the more extensive is the growth in the number and scope of environmental laws accompanying the number of recognized particle dangers – rather like that well-known criticism of criminal law practice whereby the little guys go to the gallows and the big fish get off scot-free. Particle-oriented environmental protection is also directed against renewable energy. When the environmental authorities cannot find a single hair in the renewable energy soup, **they shake their heads until a hair falls in.**

#### Abandon the typical paradigm of ‘realistic vs unrealistic’—set the goalposts at the optimum—only maintaining the status quo is unrealistic

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(Hermann, *Energy Autonomy: The economic, social, and technological case for renewable energy* pg 296-297, dml)

**Many will doubt** that the renewability of politics described here is realistic. There are many empirical reasons for such doubts in light of the arduous tug-of-war over renewable energy. The strategies aiming at autonomous action, the approaches to activating society, and the maxims for political action outlined above represent the optimum that is conceivable and possible for a rapid acceleration in the shift to renewable energy. None of these approaches will be pursued everywhere and at the same time. But the more of them we adopt, **the more we can expect to see** amplification effects **that mutually reinforce each other**, and the faster renewable energy will actively evolve. It is appropriate, moreover, to address a counter-question to the doubters: how much realism is there among those who imagine that we can keep providing our societies with energy **if we do not undertake a rapid shift to the renewable kind?** Those who say this are really advocating **plans that are** illusory. Under current circumstances they wield a lot of power, decisively more power than do the champions of renewable energy. But **because of their** unrealistic plans **they no longer have any power over what matters**: control over the conditions that produce energy crises in the first place.

#### The 1ac is critical of labels of ‘utopian politics’ in the debate space. Visionary politics is the best way to promote advocacy skills, detached policymaking rehashes the same disenfranchised debate every round.

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(Brian and David, “Policy Debate as Fiction: In Defense of Utopian Fiat”, Contemporary Argumentation and Debate 18 (1997) 23-35, dml)

Snider argued several years ago that a suitable paradigm should address “something we can ACTUALLY DO” as opposed to something we can MAKE BELIEVE ABOUT” (“Fantasy as Reality” 14). A utopian literature metaphor is beneficial **precisely because it is within the power of debaters to perform the desired action suggested by the metaphor**, if not always to demonstrate that the desired action is politically feasible.

**Instead of** debaters **playing to an audience** of those who make public policy, **debaters should understand themselves as** budding social critics in search of an optimal practical and cultural politics. While **few of us will ever hold a formal policy-making position**, nearly all of us grow up with the social and political criticism of the newspaper editorial page, the high school civics class, and, at least in homes that do not ban the juxtaposition of food and politics, the lively dinner table conversation. We complain about high income taxes, declining state subsidies for public education, and crumbling interstate highways. We worry about the rising cost of health care and wonder if we will have access to high-quality medical assistance when we need it. Finally, we bemoan the decline of moral consensus, rising rates of divorce, drug use among high school students, and disturbing numbers of pregnant teen-agers. From childhood on, we are told that good citizenship demands that we educate ourselves on political matters and vote to protect the polis; the success of democracy allegedly demands no less. For those who accept this challenge instead of embracing the political alienation of Generation X and becoming devotees of *Beavis and Butthead*, **social criticism is what good citizens do.**

Debate differs from other species of social criticism because debate is a game played by students who want to win. However, conceiving of debate as a kind of social criticism **has considerable merit**. Social criticism is not restricted to a technocratic elite or group of elected officials. Moreover, social criticism is not necessarily idle or wholly deconstructive. Instead, **such criticism** necessarily is a prerequisite **to any effort to create policy change**, whether that criticism is articulated by an elected official or by a mother of six whose primary workplace is the home. When one challenges the status quo, one normally implies that a better alternative course of action exists. Given that intercollegiate debate frequently involves exchanges over a proposition of policy by student advocates who are relatively unlikely ever to debate before Congress, envisioning intercollegiate debate as a specialized extension of ordinary **citizen inquiry and advocacy in the public sphere** seems attractive. Thinking of debate as a variety of social criticism gives debate an added dimension of public relevance.

One way to understand the distinction between debate as policy-making and debate as social criticism is to examine Roger W. Cobb and Charles D. Elder’s agenda-building theory.5 Cobb and Elder are well known for their analytic split of the formal agenda for policy change, which includes legislation or other action proposed by policy makers with formal power (e.g., government bureaucrats, U.S. Senators), from the public agenda for policy change, which is composed of all those who work outside formal policy-making circles to exert influence on the formal agenda. Social movements, lobbyists, political action committees, mass media outlets, and public opinion polls all constitute the public agenda, which, in turn, has an effect on what issues come to the forefront on the formal agenda. From the agenda-building perspective, one cannot understand the making of public policy in the United States **without comprehending the confluence** of the formal and public agenda.

In intercollegiate debate, the policy-making metaphor has **given primacy to formal agenda functions** at the expense of the public agenda. Debaters are encouraged to bypass thinking about the public agenda in outlining policy alternatives; appeals for policy change frequently are made by debaters under the strange pretense that they and/or their judges are members of the formal agenda elite. Even arguments about the role of the public in framing public policy are typically issued by debaters as if those debaters were working within the confines of the formal agenda for their own, instrumental advantage. (For example, one thinks of various social movement “backlash” disadvantage arguments, which advocate a temporary policy paralysis in order to stir up public outrage and mobilize social movements whose leaders will demand the formal adoption of a presumably superior policy alternative.) The policy-making metaphor concentrates on the formal agenda to the near exclusion of the public agenda, as the focus of a Katsulas or a Dempsey on the “real-world” limitations for making policy indicates.

Debate as social criticism **does not entail exclusion of formal agenda concerns** from intercollegiate debate. The specified agent of action in typical policy resolutions makes ignoring the formal agenda of the United States government **an impossibility**. However, one **need not be able to influence the formal agenda** directly in order to discuss what it is that the United States government should do. Undergraduate debaters and their judges usually are far removed—both physically and functionally—from the arena of formal-agenda deliberation. What **the disputation of student debaters most closely resembles**, to the extent that it resembles any real-world analog, is public-agenda social criticism. What students are doing is something they really CAN do as students and ordinary citizens; they are working in their own modest way to shape the public agenda.

While “social criticism” is the best explanation for what debaters do, this essay goes a step further. The mode of criticism in which debaters operate **is the production of utopian literature**. Strictly speaking, **debaters engage in the creation of fictions** and the comparison of fictions to one another. How else does one explain the affirmative advocacy of a plan, a counterfactual world **that, by definition,** does not exist? Indeed, traditional inherency burdens **demand that such plans be utopian**, in the sense that current attitudes or structures make the immediate enactments of such plans unlikely in the “real world” of the formal agenda. Intercollegiate debate is utopian because plan and/or counterplan enactment is improbable. **While one can distinguish between incremental and radical policy change proposals, the distinction makes no difference in the utopian practice of intercollegiate debate.**

More importantly, intercollegiate debate is utopian in another sense. Policy change is considered because such change, it is hoped, will facilitate the pursuit of the good life. For decades, intercollegiate debaters have used **fiat** or **the authority of the word “should**” to propose radical changes in the social order, in addition to advocacy of the incremental policy changes typical of the U.S. formal agenda. This wide range of policy alternatives discussed in contemporary intercollegiate debate is the sign of a healthy public sphere, where thorough consideration of all policy alternatives is a possibility. Utopian fiction, in which the good place that is no place is envisioned, makes possible **the instantiation of a rhetorical vision prerequisite to building that good place** in our tiny corner of the universe. Even Lewis Mumford, a critic of utopian thought, concedes that we “can never reach the points of the compass; and so no doubt we shall never live in utopia; but without the magnetic needle we should not be able to travel intelligently at all” (Mumford 24-25).

An objection to this guiding metaphor is that it encourages debaters to do precisely that to which Snider would object, which is to “make believe” that utopia is possible. This objection misunderstands the argument. These students already are writers of utopian fiction **from the moment they construct their first plan** or counterplan text. Debaters who advocate policy change announce their commitment to changing the organization of society in pursuit of the good life, **even though they have no formal power** to call this counterfactual world into being. Any proposed change, no matter how small, is a repudiation of policy paralysis and the maintenance of the status quo. As already practiced, debate revolves around utopian proposals, at least in the sense that debaters and judges lack the formal authority to enact their proposals. Even those negatives who defend the current social order frequently do so by pointing to the potential dystopic consequences of accepting such proposals for change.