



in ENERGY TRANSITION

Crossroads Crises in Perspective (Part 3) – Truth and Energy at the Crossroads

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The view from the Global South: Looking from the outside in. This series of essays is based on readings of reports, articles, and presentations that are in the public domain, with provided references. The content contains futurology based on cycle science and the mystical sciences. Readers are encouraged to approach the text with critical, yet open minds.

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“ Western culture is at the crossroads. It must either cling to its outmoded unilateral conception of truth, or else correct its onesidedness by reintroducing other systems. The former choice means that it will forfeit every creative possibility and become completely impotent and fossilized. The alternative will lead to the reestablishment of an integral and more adequate system of truths and values (Pitirim A. Sorokin, *The Crisis of Our Age*).¹

A Crisis in Thinking Revisited

One objective of this series is to delve into the true motivations behind the necessity for an energy transition. Another is to underscore the reality of *a crisis in thinking* that the world is currently facing, characterised by numerous blind spots, generalisations, groupthink, and paradoxical beliefs.

Central to this issue is the tendency for individuals to accept mainstream dogmas without thorough examination of the evidence supporting them. These dogmas often rely on selective science and are unquestioningly embraced, leading to echo-chamber discourse and silo-thinking.

This chapter delves deeper into contradictions and generalisations surrounding crises perceived as global in nature. At the core of the discussion is the theme of truth and its relevance to our lives.

Rising Out of Groupthink

“ The ease with which certain opinions obtain general acceptance results more especially from the impossibility experienced by the majority of men of forming an opinion peculiar to themselves and based on reasoning of their own (Gustave Le Bon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*).²

Knowledge is a fundamental aspect of consciousness, and individuals can elevate their consciousness above that of the general populace by accumulating information that diverges from the mainstream. However, it is essential to recognise that simply possessing a vast amount of alternative knowledge does not automatically equate to wisdom.

While acquiring knowledge is valuable, assimilating irrelevant or false information can indeed result in blind spots and paradoxical beliefs. Verification of facts and critical reasoning are indispensable in this regard. An open-minded approach is necessary to avoid dismissing potentially valuable information, but it must be coupled with an investigative mindset to discern truth from misinformation.

Identifying information that *fills in blind spots* and *illuminates shadows* is crucial for distinguishing the wheat from the chaff. With diligent adherence to this process, a more nuanced, comprehensive, and holistic understanding can emerge. Falling back into groupthink and mainstream assumptions should always be guarded against.

Contradictory Remedies

It was illustrated in the previous chapter that certain subjects, such as *climate, the environment, and population*, must be carefully considered individually to differentiate whether they are in crisis or not, and whether any crises are of a local or global nature.

The discussion below highlights, in no particular order, some of the general contradictions within proposed remedies for the ostensible environmental and climate crises, with attention placed on the transition from fossil fuels to alternative energies.

- ***As part of the energy transition, it is proposed that 'everything should be electrified' by shifting from fossil fuels to clean energy and technologies.***

The reality is that significant amounts of *non-renewable* minerals and rare-earth metals would have to be used for the production of renewable energy generation technologies, specifically solar panels, wind turbines, and electric cars. Therefore, renewable energy devices are not clean in practice, if 'clean' means having limited impacts on the environment. It is already acknowledged within research circles that certain parts of the world would inevitably turn into *environmental destruction zones*.³⁻⁴

- ***It is proposed that fossil fuel energy generation should be replaced by renewable energy generation to protect the climate by reducing CO₂ emissions.***

Fossil fuels are used in the production, transportation, and implementation of renewable energy installations and operations. This factor has led to the establishment of a renewable energy

sector that is robustly supported by the use of fossil fuels. Solar panels and wind turbines typically have a lifespan of around 20 to 25 years before needing to be replaced (renewed), meaning that a perpetual cycle of manufacturing renewable devices using fossil fuels has been set in motion. Whether CO₂ emissions would be mitigated in the process remains an open question.

- ***Coal-powered power stations are expected to undergo decommissioning around the world to reduce carbon emissions. Some of the stated objectives include reducing inequality and preserving jobs.***

The implementation of 'green technologies', such as solar panels and inverters, in domestic households is too expensive for many people in low-income countries. While the upper-middle classes might be able to afford switching to solar power, less affluent communities that rely on affordable electricity from coal power plants would experience a decline in their living standards in countries where coal plants are earmarked for decommissioning. As a result, the disparity between the rich and the poor would likely widen, creating what could be called *the Elysium effect* (referring to the 2013 film titled 'Elysium'). ⁵

- ***Activists claim that by keeping fossil fuels in the ground, nature and the environment would be preserved.***

By replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy solutions, which are considered to be 'clean' and 'green', extraction would shift from fossil fuels to minerals required for the production of renewable technologies. However, these additional extraction processes would necessitate copious amounts of diesel and a wide range of oil and petroleum-based products essential for mining. As a result, fossil fuels would not remain in the ground as initially proposed but would still be extracted, despite the transition to minerals.

- ***It is often suggested that the objective should involve both decarbonisation and digitalisation simultaneously, as effective decarbonisation typically requires widespread digitisation and the utilisation of artificial intelligence for enhanced implementation and optimisation.***

As a result, the technology sector would need to undergo exponential expansion to accommodate the increasing demand for data centres and network infrastructure. This expansion would necessitate the use of fossil fuels in manufacturing, transport, and installation activities within the continuously growing technology sector. Moreover, these operations would draw electricity from national grids, which predominantly rely on fossil fuels and nuclear energy. The global ITC sector already bears a significant carbon emissions footprint, ⁶⁻⁷ which is anticipated to escalate as the *Fourth Industrial Revolution* (4IR) gains momentum.

- ***Another proposed solution suggests replacing organic meat products with laboratory-produced food, as it is believed that farm cattle contribute considerably to global CO₂ emissions.***

As already highlighted, all types of manufacturing, production, and distribution processes would result in additional fossil fuel usage, with added carbon emissions as a consequence. This is due to the fact that all such processes are directly or indirectly dependent on the use of fossil fuels.

Blind Spots in the Spotlight

Most proposed solutions for the perceived *global climate crisis* involve moving away from dirty and polluting fossil fuels. This is because the extraction processes of fossil fuels are known to be environmentally destructive, and the carbon emissions they produce are believed to be a major cause of global temperatures rising to dangerous levels.

The contradiction lies in the fact that transitioning from fossil fuels to so-called 'clean' or 'green' energies could potentially lead to even more environmental degradation and additional CO₂ emissions. Moreover, this transition may result in the destruction of human livelihoods due to job losses, thereby reducing the quality of life for many people in various places, especially in the developing world.

The Urgency to Save the Planet

“ Many people have stopped believing in traditional religions, you know? So, they don't believe in God, but they need something beyond themselves to believe in. What could be more noble than saving the planet? (Elimination of CO₂ is a suicide pact – Professor William Happer on climate change misconceptions and hysteria).

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As pointed out in the previous chapter, when examining credible data on *long-term* CO₂ levels, there is, overall, no clear indication that a global climate crisis is developing because of human activities.

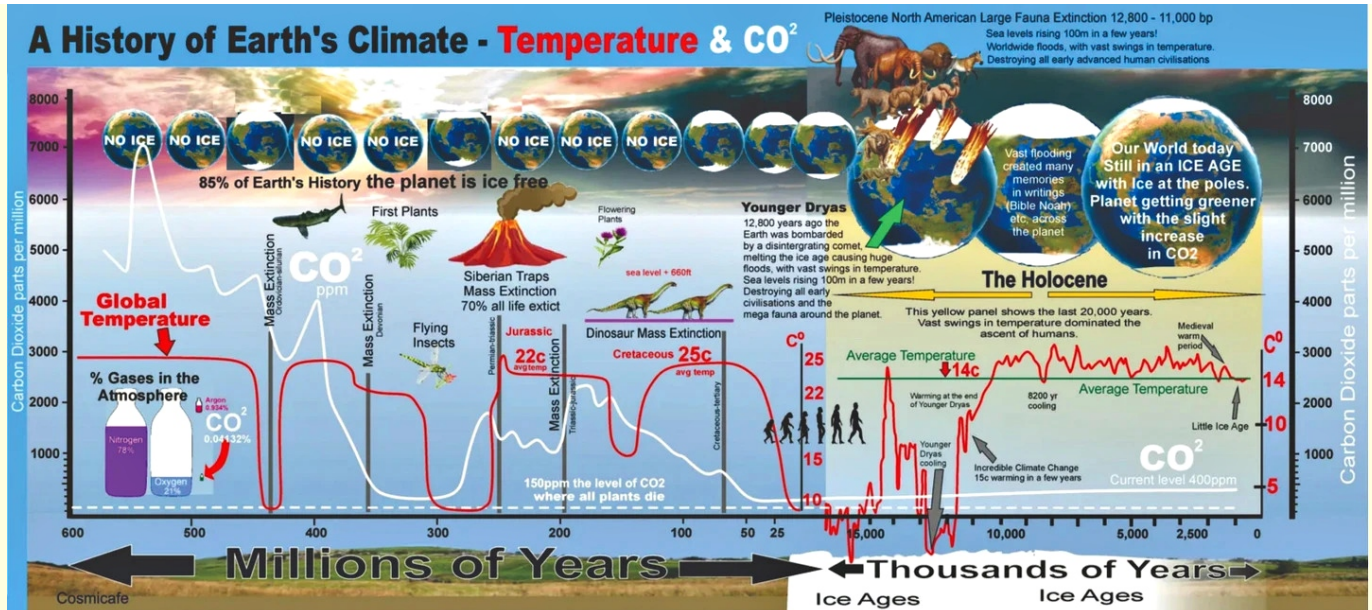


Fig. 1: History of Earth's Climate -Temperature & CO₂ (click to enlarge) ⁽⁹⁾

Data from various sources indicate that CO₂ levels are presently at the low end of the historical spectrum ⁹⁻¹⁰ while recent rapid increases are not considered anomalous. ⁹⁻¹¹ Similar increases have occurred in the past. ^{9,11} It is also important to note that CO₂ constitutes only 0.04% ¹²⁻¹³ of greenhouse gases, with 95% coming from natural sources ¹³ and only 5% from human activities. ¹³ Additionally, CO₂ increases typically follow temperature rises rather than precede them, ¹⁴⁻¹⁵ and there is no consistent correlation ¹⁵ over extended periods of time.

One of the most important considerations is that CO₂ is *critical for life on Earth*. ^{8,16} Eliminating CO₂ emissions, if that were possible, would be tantamount to *a suicide pact* ⁸ because it would lead to *CO₂ starvation*. ^{8,16} Another critical point is that the Earth's atmosphere is not a closed system. ¹⁶ Therefore, a 'greenhouse effect' is not really possible since hot air cannot be trapped in *an open system* without a ceiling to contain it. ¹⁶

Although the scientific community is aware of the factors mentioned above, the urgency of the *energy transition* remains centred on the premise that current CO₂ levels and temperatures are reaching unusually high levels. However, long-term trends present a different picture. ⁹ Additionally, there are *cyclic reasons* for changes in the Earth's climate and atmosphere, which is the most important consideration in this series of essays (see also the [previous chapter](#)).

Paradox, Oxymoron and Dual-Meaning

“ A green economy means investments in renewable energy, such as solar power, onshore and offshore wind power, hydrogen, electric vehicles, and energy efficient homes. The notion of a green economy does not replace sustainable development, but creates a new focus on the economy, investment, capital and infrastructure,

employment and skills and positive social and environmental outcomes (Green economy: a path towards sustainable development and poverty eradication). ¹⁷

Vocabulary such as 'green', 'clean', 'renewable', and 'just' can mean different things to different people at different times. These concepts fit into a framework known as "*sustainable development*", which itself has several definitions. Three notable interpretations are:

- Growth that prioritises the preservation of the environment with constraints on the economy.
- Environmental protection combined with economic growth, resulting in a balanced approach.
- Sustained economic growth through the creation of new technologies, markets, products, and services, but at high costs to the environment.

People are likely to associate *sustainable development* with the first two definitions in general, but outcomes typically tend to reflect the third when one takes the time to analyse real-world results.

Sustainability Through Emerging Technologies

“ It was not until the 1990s that some innovation scholars began to incorporate sustainability concerns into their research. Following the concept of techno-economic paradigms, Freeman (1992) introduced the notion of the 'green techno-economic paradigm' as a new structural era of economic development. The 'green' era potentially follows the eras of steam power, electric power, mass production, information and communication technologies. It is seen as a precondition for sustained economic growth in the twenty-first century (*Sustainability-oriented innovation systems – managing the green transformation*). ¹⁸

Research on the origins of the notion of *sustainable development* confirms observations made when analysing case studies. The implementation of new technologies for economic reasons usually takes precedence over other considerations, which appears to have been a foundational principle of *sustainable development* from the outset, according to credible referenced resource material. ¹⁸

Genuine environmental concerns have never fully evolved to become the main drivers for the urgent implementation of emerging technologies for an energy transition. This perspective offers

a clearer context and explains the anomalies and contradictions evident in the observed outcomes of solutions that are widely promoted as *sustainable, clean, green, and just*.

“ Global warming and other impending environmental mega-problems call for a new technological paradigm. The urgency of the development and deployment of technological solutions is such that governments will need to make widespread use of ‘carrots and sticks’ to ensure that next-generation technologies are developed and deployed, more demanding standards and regulations are applied and stricter enforcement is guaranteed (Sustainability-oriented innovation systems – managing the green transformation). ¹⁸

When reviewing the literature defining the frameworks for a future economic growth paradigm, it becomes apparent that *climate and environmental concerns* are often used primarily as moral leverage to encourage an energy transition. It can be inferred that the *market-oriented* objectives are to *overhaul, refurbish, and replace* legacy and outdated technological solutions through the widespread implementation of cutting-edge systems such as artificial intelligence and robotics, all under the guise of addressing a *meta-crisis* or a *global polycrisis* (see also [previous chapter](#)).

Green Industrialisation

“ The concept [green industry], synonymous with green industrialization, is broadly defined as industrial development that enhances natural systems and human well-being while mainstreaming environmental, climate, and social issues into business operations. As an industrial strategy, it transforms manufacturing and related industry sectors by promoting sustainable practices of production and consumption (Emerging green industry toward net-zero economy: A systematic review). ¹⁹

Green industrialisation is an oxymoron because industrialisation is the antithesis of *green*, which is normally associated with the natural world. What is especially notable in the present era is the extent to which paradox can occupy the same mental space as rational thought, apparently without the latter detecting the former. This phenomenon might be viewed as evidence of a decline in human self-awareness, which is related to a decline in consciousness at the end of a *Great Cycle* (a subject discussed in earlier essays). Additionally, it is influenced by mainstream media messaging.

“ Paradoxically, the same green industrial growth strategy that fosters green technology to fulfill climate goals gives rise to green extractivism, akin to

greenwashing, due to rising global demand for resources like lithium in peripheral regions, driven by industrialized nations. Extractivism of any form contradicts climate policy and devastates the periphery (Emerging green industry toward net-zero economy: A systematic review).¹⁹

The Bottleneck Ahead Revisited

In relation to *extractivism*, it was stated in *The Bottleneck Ahead*²⁰ that:

A new scramble for resources among the major powers is underway, and it appears that the Global South will once again have to bear the brunt of it. The bottleneck ahead is a transition from an old industrial system to a new one – a transition that may or may not be successful due to feasibility and viability issues related to the limitations inherent in the proposed technologies. These issues constitute some of the biggest blind spots concerning the energy transition.

The largest blind spot of all, though, is that the proposed solution of moving into a new technology-based industrial revolution to rejuvenate global economic growth, while also attempting to preserve the environment at the same time, would in practice wreak much more havoc on the environment than the previous industrial revolutions ever did, once it is fully up and running.

Mantras Are Not Always Truisms

Regular conceptual shifts in language can largely be attributed to *the mainstreaming* of new definitions and interpretations. A consequence of widespread use of personal electronic devices, along with excessive consumption of mainstream news and social media content, is that the original meanings of words and concepts are often reversed due to prolonged exposure to new interpretations. The original understanding is effectively 'overwritten' in the process. Paradox and rationality can coexist within the same mental space because the inversion of meaning causes what were once obvious paradoxes to no longer be so.

However, mantras based on inverted meanings are not truisms. An example of inverted meaning is how the word *diversity*, which in the past would have meant *differentiation*, has in recent years come to mean *social integration with little differentiation*. In other words, according to its new meaning, *differentiation*, wherever it is to be found, is (meant to be) *largely cosmetic*. Similarly, the meaning of the word "sustainable", which would normally have meant *having resilience*, such as being *strong, viable, workable, and endurable*, often means the opposite in practice.

Religious Techno-Utopianism

Tech-optimism has significant blind spots due to its reliance on *ideological techno-utopianism*, rather than a realistic understanding of the limitations that exist regarding what technology can

actually deliver in practice. While many individuals are not engineers and may not have a deep understanding of technical issues, they still view new inventions as a form of salvation. This positive belief in technology has transformed into *a modern-day religion*.

The truth is that many serious independent researchers on the subject of a viable energy transition from fossil fuels to renewable energies already know that renewable energies are, first of all, not truly green. Secondly, they do not have the capacity to fully replace fossil fuels. This is partially due to issues such as *energy density*, *base-load*, *grid capacity*, and *grid transmission*. It is only by delving into the technical aspects of these issues and examining case studies that one can fully understand the limitations inherent in the solutions being offered.

Intermittent Energy Solutions

The sun and wind are considered renewable energy sources because the sun ‘always shines’ and the wind ‘always blows’ (relatively speaking). The issue is that although these natural energies are freely produced by nature, they are only intermittently available. *The devices*, such as solar panels and wind turbines, used to capture, transform, and harness the aforementioned intermittent natural energy sources, need to be regularly replaced because they are not designed for recycling. Furthermore, the minerals used to produce them are not renewable. Hence, *peak minerals* would be reached in a similar fashion as *peak oil* would eventually.

At best, renewable energies could be useful as short-term strategies for softer landings when the initial decline in fossil fuel energy really sets in. However, the limitations of renewable devices have already been proven in jurisdictions where major energy transition schemes have been piloted. The long and short of it is that while *renewables* can work well in some environments, but with limitations, they can also severely fail to live up to expectations in other cases, especially when implemented at scale.

Select Your Circular Economy

“ *The CE [circular economy] concept is of great interest to both scholars and practitioners because it is viewed as an operationalization for businesses to implement the much-discussed concept of sustainable development (Conceptualizing the circular economy: An analysis of 114 definitions).* ²¹

The *circular economy* is a term that is often surrounded by ambiguity, leading to a variety of definitions. In a report from 2017, an analysis of the concept revealed at least 114 different interpretations of what a “circular economy” is. A more recent paper from 2023, which has been revised and updated, identified a staggering 221 definitions. ²² Naturally, one might conclude that with so many descriptions, *a circular economy* could mean almost anything to anyone. The

fact that numerous academic papers have been written in an effort to establish definitive meanings speaks volumes about the complexity of this concept.

“ The transition to sustainable production makes it necessary to disrupt established technological trajectories and to support replacement technologies: coal-based power stations are gradually being replaced by renewables-based power stations, traditional light bulbs by light-emitting diodes and combustion engines by electric motors. These substitutions devalue existing assets and increase the value of others (Sustainability-oriented innovation systems – managing the green transformation). ¹⁸

When sifting through the technical jargon often associated with the *circular economy* concept, it becomes clear that it encompasses more than just utilising new technologies for economic growth. It also involves replacing economic growth in established sectors with growth in emerging sectors. This necessitates a significant shift in systems (i.e. *systems change* ⁴³), which is seen as crucial for transitioning into the 4IR. This is why there is so much focus on *electrification and digitisation*.

To sum up, *sustainable development* within the context of the *circular economy* can be more accurately defined as economic growth that is primarily based on replacing old systems with new ones and expanding these new systems while leaving the old ones behind. The fundamental implication is that *recycling* is not necessarily the primary objective, even though it is usually what comes to mind when people hear the term ‘circular economy’.

Out with the Old and In with the New

“ When a technology has reached the end of its life, it doesn’t make sense to continue to perpetuate it; the Stone Age didn’t end because of a lack of stones!” said De Ruyter to a laughing and clapping crowd in an auditorium filled to near capacity. “I don’t think that the fact that we have coal means that we should continue to burn coal... that’s a fallacy (A just transition is the only solution to South Africa’s energy crisis, says Andre de Ruyter). ²³

A few basic analogies are worth considering at this point:

- First, there were watermills and traditional windmills for power generation. Later, small to medium-sized steam and coal-generated power plants were introduced, followed by large hydroelectric schemes as well as big coal-fired and nuclear power stations. Presently, the world is in the process of transitioning into a new paradigm of solar, wind, and hydrogen-

powered energy generation, while the long-term viability and feasibility of these ventures remain uncertain.

- First, there was the horse and cart, then early battery-operated vehicles came along, followed by the mass production of internal combustion automobiles (ICEs). In recent years, the world has seen the resurgence of the electric car, but this time in mass-produced form.
- First, there was the cassette Walkman, then the CD Walkman, followed by the MP3 player. After that, the smartphone arrived, capable of streaming music live from the Internet.
- First, there were reel-to-reel films, followed by VHS and Betamax video cassette tapes, after which came DVDs. Eventually, online streaming superseded all of them.
- First, there were box cameras, followed by film and digital cameras, and finally, the high-resolution smartphone camera.
- First, there was the dial-up telephone, and the rest is history.

As an aside:

- First there were plant-based medicines, then came concoctions of plants, minerals and chemicals, followed by modern pharmaceutical solutions. Finally, (very recently) new cutting-edge experimental medical technologies were introduced. Natural or organic alternatives were almost instantly vilified or forbidden. The largely untested (i.e. insufficiently tested) experimental solutions were to be embraced as a matter of urgency (and) as *a social duty*.

The market was revitalised with each evolutionary step, resulting in economic benefits and a perception of positive progress. People quickly embraced new product lines, abandoning their old versions to stay *trendy and current*. When the smartphone was released, anything before it was instantly labelled as 'prehistoric' or 'shameful' to use.

This highlights how people are often slaves to fashion. As social beings, most of us dislike being left behind. Marketing and advertising consistently capitalise on this sentiment to drive the uptake and adoption of new trends, fashions, and innovations, particularly during the early stages of their commercial introduction into the market.

Constant Progress as an Imperative

Constant progress as an ideological imperative is a strong feature of modern and postmodern civilisations. In *Paradigm Shifts in the Age of Polarity*²⁴ it was argued that:

Trends happening in post-modern societies are usually perceived within the context of moving forward, i.e. 'progressing'. Whether negative or positive, they are considered as progress nonetheless – and when changes produce negative results they are considered as being the price that we have to pay for progress. That's because post-modern Western culture is not values-, principles- or ethics-based anymore, but trends-driven. Society, therefore, tends to go along with whatever new is taken up by society in general – and that's usually commercially driven.

The term “Luddite” (or *technophobe*) is typically employed to describe individuals who resist embracing the latest technological advancements. Often used as a persuasive strategy, it aims to encourage widespread acceptance of new technologies and enhanced iterations of existing ones. Typically, it takes around three to four years ²⁴ for most individuals to adapt to *a new material paradigm*, driven by various social influences.

Social Equity as an Afterthought

“ The main aim of the circular economy is considered to be economic prosperity, followed by environmental quality; its impact on social equity and future generations is barely mentioned (Conceptualizing the circular economy: An analysis of 114 definitions). ²¹

While *social equity* received less attention in circular economy literature a few years ago, there has been a notable shift in approach since then. In recent years, alongside stated climate and environmental concerns, the potential negative social impacts of *the energy transition* have gained significant prominence. However, despite this increased awareness in the literature, social equity often remains an afterthought when examining *real-world outcomes*.

Choose Your Just Transition

“ Essentially, JETP [Just Energy Transition Partnerships] is a financing mechanism. In a Partnership, wealthier nations fund a coal-dependent developing nation to support the country's own path to phase-out coal and transition towards clean energy while addressing the social consequences. The social aspect is important here. Robust protection and proactive measures are crucial in JETP plans because a significant portion of the population will be affected. Re-skilling, up-skilling, and creating new jobs are among the ways to ensure a just energy transition for workers and communities (What is Just Energy Transition Partnerships?). ²⁵

The *Just Energy Transition* (also known as 'JET', 'Just Transition', or 'JETP' ²⁵), piloted and deployed in peripheral zones as experimental projects, is another term open to interpretation. While some of

its key objectives include *social equity* and *job creation*, the term itself is subject to various definitions. Two possibilities are outlined below.

1. *Transition fairly and equitably*: This perspective advocates for an energy transition that is fair, equitable, and beneficial for all stakeholders, including the environment, climate, local communities, businesses, industries, and governments.
2. *Transition urgently*: This interpretation suggests that countries should transition *without delay* to reduce harmful CO₂ emissions in pursuit of *sustainable development* as an *ethical imperative*. It emphasises the adoption of 'clean' and 'green' technological solutions for climate and environmental 'protection'.

Given its wording, members of the public may associate a *Just Transition* with one or both of the interpretations above, considering that words can hold different meanings for different individuals at different times. However, in practice the concept doesn't translate into either of the two above definitions.

Objectives vs Outcomes

The *International Trade Union Confederation* defined a *Just Transition* as follows:

“ A *Just Transition* secures the future and livelihoods of workers and their communities in the transition to a low-carbon economy. It is based on social dialogue between workers and their unions, employers, government and communities. A plan for *Just Transition* provides guarantees of better and decent jobs, social protection, more training opportunities and greater job security for all workers affected by global warming and climate change policies (What does the *Just Transition* look like in South Africa). ²⁶

Much of the literature concerning *sustainable development*, the *circular economy*, and *JETs* heavily emphasises phrases related to *climate care*, *environmental protection*, and *social equity*. However, despite these stated objectives, *real-world outcomes* often fall short, potentially contributing to the lack of coverage of case studies in mainstream media (MSM) and the infrequent analysis of case studies by environmentalists.

This lack of interest raises several questions about environmentalism, which will be explored further down.

A Missing Case Study

A detailed examination of the *JET* initiated in South Africa in 2021 is beyond the scope of this essay. However, this segment focuses on *social equity* issues, which are particularly relevant to the current discussion.

Essentially, the implementation of the *JET* in South Africa involves a phased decommissioning of the nation's coal power plants. These will be replaced by *renewable energy installations*, including wind and solar farms. The aim is to offset *base-load* energy deficits that will result from the decommissioning of coal-fired power stations.

Some of the power stations are slated for *refurbishment* and *repurposing*, with stated social-equity objectives including the retraining of staff and transitioning them into various roles within the growing *renewable energy* sector in the country. Anticipated benefits encompass reduced emissions and pollution, alongside accelerated economic growth, which is envisioned to enhance the overall quality of life for citizens.

From the outset, the *justness* of the *JET* was highlighted and promoted by politicians, MSM, non-governmental organisations, civil society groups, free-market institutions, and certain unions, with support also coming from the business and mining sectors. However, as the project progressed, there appeared to be *minimal public consultation*, and scant media coverage was given to it. If there were public consultations, they seemed to be of limited scope or were not adequately reported on.

“ This process started three or four years ago. At the time decommissioning was raised we thought there would be proper consultation, but we have not been given the opportunity. Our concern is that we do not know what is going to happen to us as workers, and we have already been promised things which have not materialised. It makes us sceptical,” said Komati NUM shop steward David Fankomo (*Decommissioning of power stations: Anxiety and confusion over energy transition*).²⁷

After some time, a handful of government officials and union representatives publicly raised concerns. However, their voices were met with strong pushback and condemnation from the MSM and prominent members of opposition parties. The counterarguments mainly centred on the assertion that any criticism of the *JET* could impede the country's adherence to its official commitments regarding global CO₂ reductions. It was also claimed that coal-powered plants were *a relic from the past* and should be replaced with cleaner technological solutions, in alignment with global standards. Critics of the *JET* were further accused of being sponsored by the coal lobby.

“The world wants us to be encircled because then you do not think. You are a conveyor belt for other people’s ideas,” the minister said about the JET programme. “That is what developed economies want. For us to just sign agreements (Just Energy Transition a foreign concept – Mantashe).²⁸

Some of the officials questioning²⁸ the JET highlighted external pressures they felt were exerted on the country to undergo this transition. They expressed a preference for implementing the JET on their own terms, considering local and regional realities on the African continent. However, these statements seemed to receive little attention in the MSM, and there was limited debate on the matter elsewhere.

From the outset, there was a noticeable lack of sorely needed investigative analyses regarding the potential effects of the JET on local communities. Similarly, ongoing reporting on the progress of the JET within affected areas was absent. In summary, the JET received minimal questioning or critical assessment within the MSM or academia, as observed. Despite this, it was widely promoted, with virtually all institutions seemingly onboard without much scrutiny.

“They started to engage us after they shut the power plant down; that’s when they came into the community. Before that, we never had a proper conversation with them. Everything moves without us knowing. We hear things from journalists, and then after that they tell us politicians are coming, etc. But the community is left in the dark. Even myself, I don’t properly understand the just transition,” said Carlos Vilankulu, a community leader in Komati (Komati Power Station – the cautionary tale of the Just Energy Transition and lessons to be learnt).²⁹

In one of the rare investigative articles analysing the shutdown of the first coal power plant for repurposing and refurbishing as part of South Africa’s JET, a comment offered valuable insight into local sentiments:

“However, for workers in Komati, talk of a just energy transition is a big ruse. What is actually at play is a neoliberal structural adjustment pacified by rhetoric of a green agenda (Decommissioning of power stations: Anxiety and confusion over energy transition).²⁷

In the second quarter of 2024, reports indicated that certain government officials were acknowledging mistakes made during the decommissioning of the *Komati Power Station*. Despite this, there was a reaffirmation of commitment to the project, with a notable emphasis on economic development. The officials stressed that *the climate transition* presents positive

opportunities for job creation and economic growth, underscoring its importance for the country's future. ³⁰

Environmentalism in the Spotlight

Markets usually promote new products vigorously until sales slump due to market saturation, after which the cycle begins again. A similar pattern seems to be emerging concerning *the energy transition*.

Nowadays, it is commonplace to see environmentalists and climate activists fervently advocating for new products and services hailed as *sustainable solutions*. However, while mainstream activists frequently lead protests against fossil fuels, there is a noticeable lack of protests addressing the (so-called) *sacrifice zones* ⁴ caused by the energy transition from fossil fuel extraction to the extraction of various rare-earth minerals and other minerals. Moreover, the impact on local communities in many countries and regions appears to be of little concern.

It seems that *grassroots environmentalism* has been displaced and overtaken by *pseudo-environmentalism*. However, in truth, the modern environmental movement has always been used as a platform to advance political, social, and commercial interests that are not directly linked to the environment. ³¹ By invoking environmental concerns, assertions of morality and ethics are made to advocate for the phasing out of fossil fuels. However, authentic environmentalism would require *questioning the damaging effects of implementing renewable energy solutions*.

The question of whether environmentalists would reconsider their stance if they became aware of the significant environmental destruction caused by the implementation of *renewables* has already been addressed. The 2020 documentary film '[Planet of the Humans](#)'³² by Michael Moore and Jeff Gibbs, which highlighted many downsides of renewable energies, sparked considerable controversy. What was surprising was that many environmentalists *opposed it*. ³³ Now, four years later (as of 2024), *renewable energies* continue to be aggressively promoted, while much of the movement appears to remain unaware of their limitations and negative environmental impacts.

In 2024, a *new documentary* film titled '[Climate: The Movie \(The Cold Truth\)](#)'³⁴ was released, shedding light on several crucial non-mainstream facts essential for a more thorough understanding of global climate issues. Whether this new film will prompt any significant shifts in mainstream beliefs remains uncertain. It is noteworthy that in the face of alternative facts, environmentalists generally *tend to stick to their guns*, suggesting that environmentalism is *a dogma-driven phenomenon*, akin to a secular religion. This aspect was recognised by depth psychologists decades ago. ³⁵

Placing Recycling at the Centre

Somewhere along the line, *recycling*, which would imply *circularity*, has come to mean *replacement*. This shift in language is a prime example of inversion. Instead of advocating for the reuse or extension of the lifespan of products or systems, environmentalists have shifted towards promoting their replacement. Due to the fact that renewable devices and batteries typically have a lifespan of a couple of decades, they eventually need to be exchanged for new ones. *This results in a perpetual replacement cycle rather than a consistent recycling system.*

What would *a real circular economy* look like in a less inverted world? A more classic definition of a circular economy, as provided by the website *TechTarget*,³⁶ offers a straightforward and logical perspective on what it should entail.

“ *What is a circular economy? A circular economy is a model of production and consumption, where items and products are reused whenever possible rather than discarded. Taking the cynical approach, circular economy is a fancy way of saying used products. The circular economy is a sustainable economic model that focuses on reusing and recycling materials to reduce the consumption of natural resources and avoid waste creation (Definition: Circular Economy – TechTarget).* ³⁶

The definition provided above, however, does not accurately depict the circular economy as it exists today. Currently, the production of *new* renewable devices necessitates the extraction of *additional* natural resources. The prevailing model focuses on replacing or converting legacy systems rather than prioritising the extension of their lifespans. Hence, *recycling* is not at the centre of *the circular economy* (notwithstanding its name), making the model *more linear than circular*.

“ *A circular economy is built on reuse, repair, refurbishment and recycling to create a loop system of reuse. The goals of each are different too. The linear economy maximizes profit. It can be easier and cheaper to dispose of a product than to recycle it. The effort to recycle and reuse products takes time and money (Definition: Circular Economy – TechTarget).* ³⁶

It should be acknowledged, though, that establishing *a global recycling system* would be challenging for various reasons. While technically possible, it may not always be economically feasible on such a vast scale. This economic consideration could contribute to why *the circular economy* often ends up resembling *a linear system* in practice. Nevertheless, the fundamental problem lies in the fact that *the circular economy*, along with other environmental concepts, is being portrayed as *something that it is not in reality*. This touches on the core of our relationship with truth.

Fast Fashion and Planned Obsolescence

Environmentalists might be taken more seriously if they campaigned against *fast fashion and planned obsolescence*, both of which are prime examples of replacing goods rather than recycling them. Activists may consider it 'unfair criticism', but the reality is that most of them use Smartphones for their online campaigning, wear *fast-fashion* items to their protests, and travel to their campaigns and protests in automobiles that run on fossil fuels.

To state the obvious, for the environment to be protected, clothes and electronics would have to be produced in a way that extends their lifespan, reducing waste and making them more recyclable. However, the current model dictates that items *must be replaced* with lower quality products that are often not properly recyclable, resulting in *more frequent discarding*. Surprisingly, this ongoing state of affairs is still rarely addressed compared to other environmental issues.

Ambiguous Solutions for Confusing Problems

“ The energy transition, propagated as the flagship solution to climate change, is far more complex than replacing fossil energy with renewable energy. It is ambiguous, uncertain and often poorly understood or narrowly framed. In this sense, the energy transition resembles a 'wicked problem' (The discursive blinkers of climate change: Energy transition as a wicked problem). ³⁷

So-called 'wicked problems' have been described as difficult-to-explain issues, which can make them confusing. Understanding these problems proves challenging because they span multiple disciplines, crossing traditional boundaries. Considered existential threats, 'wicked problems' are believed to require immediate attention. In brief, they are described as 'hard to understand but urgent to solve'. ³⁸

In the previous chapter, it was shown that *careful consideration* must be given to any crisis that is perceived to be global in scope. It is crucial to discern whether they genuinely affect the entire globe or if they are predominantly localised issues that have been elevated to global status. The analysis revealed that many crises perceived as global are, in fact, local problems amplified by the tendency of analysts to adopt a global perspective.

Similarly, defining problems as overly complex or 'wicked' discourages critical thinking about them. When a sense of urgency is added to solving perceived existential threats while they remain vague, it results in hastily implemented remedies that lack careful consideration, while neglecting rigorous real-world testing.

Responding to poorly defined crises with ambiguous remedies translates into what could be termed *wicked solutions for wicked problems*. If the outcomes reflect even more *wickedness*, in the

form of contradictory results, unintended consequences, and additional complexity, it shouldn't come as a surprise.

Decentralised Crisis Management Revisited

Global solutions are essentially *wicked solutions* as per the above definition because they are ambiguous in nature. They mainly serve global centres and markets while claiming to have everyone's best interests at heart. The peripheries, however, regularly *get the short end of the stick*.

A natural antidote to global ambiguity would be local specificity. In *A Crisis in Thinking and The Way Out* ³⁹ it was expressed that *locally devised solutions are small-scale and tailored to local particularities, taking into account what works and what doesn't. Issues and problems are addressed in accordance with local norms, customs, and practices, rather than applying generic one-size-fits-all solutions that may not be suitable for local conditions.*

Departing from Ambiguity

In the last chapter, it was concluded that global problems are often chimeras that disappear when approached critically. The same can be said of 'wicked problems'. When it comes to *wicked solutions*, it is evident that they typically give rise to a range of *additional problems*.

If the word 'wicked' has become synonymous with 'vague', 'ambiguous', 'complex', 'not well-defined', 'hard to understand', 'difficult to explain', and '*confusing*', then the opposite concepts of 'wicked' would be 'concrete', 'clear', 'simple', 'well-defined', 'easy to understand', 'simple to explain', and '*illuminating*'.

Departing from ambiguity would logically require one to embrace *the opposites of wickedness* (above) as principles. Furthermore, adopting a general orientation towards *truth* would counter ambiguity in several ways. Firstly, it would reduce unnecessary (additional) complexity and curb the creation of additional problems. Placing truth *right-side-up* would be a mental activity and philosophy well-worth cultivating and pursuing to bring much-needed *light* into the world.

The Path to Illumination

*When the metaphysical energy of a very large cycle turns downwards towards the end of it, the human collective's consciousness turns downwards too. From the perspective of alchemy, human consciousness darkens. The result is that the collective mind descends into the depths of materialism where dark passions rule and sacred laws are forgotten. How crises are then interpreted, understood and responded to could result in more destruction, not less (Cf. *The Cyclic Reordering of Civilizations*).*

This chapter has illustrated how people have gradually shifted their understanding and interpretations of certain words, phrases, and expressions to adopt adjusted or *inverted* forms of truth. While many people continue to descend deeper into *darkness*, those who have chosen the path of light – *the path of truth* – set themselves on a path of *inner illumination* through intellectual and spiritual endeavours, some of which have been illustrated in this chapter.

Becoming *truth-oriented* as a way of being would be to align oneself *intrinsically* with *the constructive side* ⁴¹ of *The Greatest Shift in 26,000 Years* ⁴² Having such an inner disposition would naturally have a positive impact on the outside world.

J.J. Montagnier

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J.J. Montagnier is an independent researcher and writer based in the Global South, at a midpoint between West and East. The views and opinions expressed are those of the writer. (This content is made available for free as a public service and is not intended for commercial use).

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Jean-Jacques

Explorer, Philosopher, Photographer



4 Comments



Katharine Otto

5 MONTHS AGO EDIT

REPLY

JJ, This is very long, so I'm making a couple of comments before having read all of it.

First, I am a very open-minded person. My mind is like a sieve. But the simple fact that all life is carbon-based, throws the whole paradigm of carbon-emission-reductions into question. I see it as a politically motivated sales pitch by a coterie of know-nothings to demonize the most basic building block of life itself.

While I am a fan of alternative energy technology, like you I recognize the limitation attempts to produce solar panels, wind turbines or solar or wind farms on any mass scale. Totally impractical, for the reasons you mention and more.

Although I live in the US, I have traveled some and have noticed practical small-scale adaptations to variations in seasons, climate, altitude, and cultural preferences, like cisterns in South America. As you know, places like Machu Picchu in Peru are marvelous technological application built long before stock-market churners in London or Wall Street started pitching their versions of innovation.

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Jean-Jacques

REPLY

5 MONTHS AGO EDIT

Katharine, thank you for taking the time to reply and for reading. This is actually a chapter that will be incorporated into book, hence its length, but I'm making it publicly available so long for interested readers. As with the previous chapter it will shortly only be available as a PDF download.

Very well expressed in your first paragraph. For a time I was also convinced by the idea shared by so many people especially in the modern environmental movement that carbon emissions are harmful, specifically due to claims that they are responsible for global temperatures rising higher and faster than ever before.

I think anyone can be forgiven for feeling concerned if they are not presented with all the facts, because many of us genuinely care about the planet and environment. I think as long as we are prepared to correct ourselves and to admit when we are wrong, then everything's fine since we are all human after all and can make mistakes, especially if true facts are really hard to come by. However, many people simply aren't open minded enough to consider the possibility of being wrong, because that would set them apart from the mainstream and no-one wants to be 'unpopular' in this day and age.

It was around 2018/2019 that I started to feel that things just didn't add up as there were many actual scientists coming out against the climate change narrative. It just didn't make sense, but at first it was also difficult to determine which side was correct. I came across some online videos by Tony Heller where he presented actual newspaper clippings from news reports in the 1800's and early 1900's which showed extreme weather events with

temperatures much higher and much colder during certain years than we have. That then caused me to become skeptical of the entire narrative related to climate change and started to investigate and delve deeper into the issues.

It took quite some time to really form a clear picture as I had to actually search and read quite a number of scientific papers, old and new. Also, there was quite a bit of back and denial in the energy and environmental forums where I used to participate. I most strongly believed that fossil fuels were causing global warming. I eventually left virtually all such forums and decided to go my own way, which is usually the only method of arriving at a semblance of comprehensive truth. Otherwise one is just pushed back by other people's opinions and ideologies.

Considering that I had written about climate change in a couple of my early articles, I was concerned that I might have based my assumptions on wrong beliefs, so I subsequently edited two of my earlier pieces to remove any possible incorrect information. Since then I try to do my best to be as accurate as possible based on weighing up as many scientific and other facts as I can. It slows down the writing process though. This essay above took me almost a year to put together, which also explains why it's so long. Nevertheless I think people need to take their own journey to discover the truth for themselves (as I said in my previous chapter), so my writing is only to point them in the right direction.

As for alternative energies, after experiencing 3 years of electricity cuts while living in South Africa (on and off) recently, I have experienced, seen and heard about issues related to solar panels and inverters. They are at best good backup systems that keep the lights on and the refrigerator going during blackouts, but that's about it ... (if you are a 'millionaire' and can afford a 'mini solar farm'). And they come at enormous costs, which simply excludes a lot of working class and even lower middle-class people from obtaining these backup solutions. That in turn causes resentment and criticism, escalating, among other issues. I will write some more about the S.A. case studies in the next chapter which should be published before the end of the year.

I liked what you said about South America and ancient and indigenous solutions for handling climatic extremes in simplified, yet advanced ways. I wish we could do that, although I've also come to realize that going back in time for modern people is not a feasible solution. I think we just need to work better with what we've got (renewable fuels) rather than creating a host of new problems with technological solutions that don't deliver. (To be continued in the next chapter ...).

It's always a pleasure to hear from you Katharine.

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EnergyShifts

2 MONTHS AGO EDIT

REPLY

This post is also available over at EnergyShifts.net

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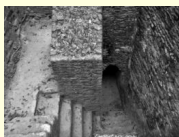
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