

GREENWASHING AND YOU!

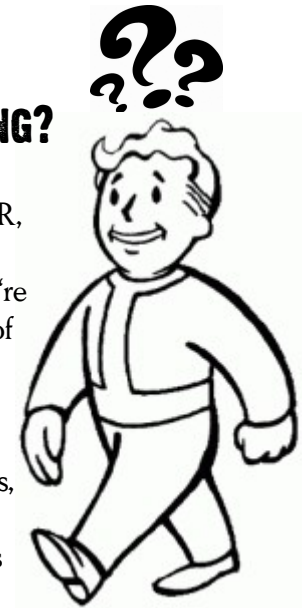
a primer on "green" capitalism
and how to move toward true sustainability



Ruin Doppëlganger, Esq.

SAY, WHAT'S GREENWASHING?

Green sheen, green marketing, green capitalism, green consumerism, green PR, linguistic detoxification... This absurd practice goes by many names, but they're all the same. Greenwashing is the act of intentionally spinning marketing campaigns, advertisements, and policies as being "environmentally friendly", when in reality, such campaigns, adverts, and policies are extremely ecologically destructive. At its core, greenwashing is false advertising.



The practice of greenwashing has become nearly ubiquitous in the modern capitalist economy; so common, in fact, that few people recognize greenwashing when they encounter it. Some others recognize greenwashing, but convince themselves (or allow themselves to be convinced) that the delusions provided by such advertising are true, thus allowing them to feel good about their consumption and admonishing themselves of any complicity in the devastation wrought by industry and global commerce.

SO HOW DOES GREENWASHING WORK?

Most middle- and upper-class Westerners have certainly encountered greenwash at some point, largely because these are the demographics targeted by greenwashing campaigns. Corporations and businesses use a variety of flashy slogans and hackneyed catchwords to convince consumers that what they're buying is green and is therefore ethical. To list but a few: "green," "sustainable," "organic," "environmentally-friendly,"

"carbon-neutral," "local," "natural," "energy-efficient," "hybrid," and "clean coal".

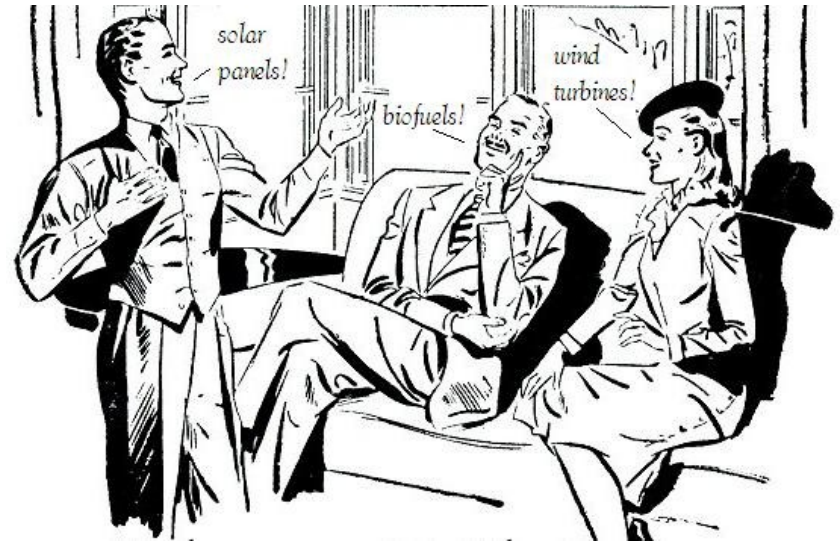
The scope of greenwashing is not limited to catchy language alone. Greenwashing advertisers also use a variety of images and other media to establish an artificial atmosphere of environmentalism. Pictures of pristine fields, virgin forests, clear skies, and all manner of tranquil flora and fauna are used regularly. Industrial technologies and products are often superimposed upon images of wilderness, especially "exotic" locales and distant bioregions. Greenwashing also makes exhaustive use of certain fonts or typefaces, like the Papyrus Font, that become synonymous with ethical/environmental consumerism in the eyes of the public.

Here's an example of a greenwashed product:



This "Clean Flame" firelog uses papyrus font, claims to be clean and green, claims to reduce carbon footprint, and pictures a pristine outdoor setting.

WHAT ABOUT "ALTERNATIVE ENERGY"?



Beyond advertising and marketing, greenwashing is closely tied to "alternative energy". The underlying thrust for alternative energy is that fossil fuels- the current dominant energy paradigm- are ecologically and biologically disastrous and inherently unsustainable. Thus, many concerned environmentalists- particularly the yuppie liberal demographic targeted by greenwashing initiatives- propose a general shift toward alternative sources of energy.

There have been and continue to be numerous proposed alternatives to the use of fossil fuels. Among these, bio-fuels (biodiesel, bioethanol, etc.), wind turbines/generators, and solar panels are perhaps the most common. Water generators, tidal harnesses, natural gas, and other "solutions" have also been proposed.

Proponents of the popular alternative energy sources suggest- and probably genuinely believe- that these energy sources are green, environmentally-friendly, and even sustainable. However, even a topical examination of these technologies reveals them to be exactly the opposite. Biofuels, for example, require intensive monocrop agriculture. Monocropping requires destruction of native forests or prairies, soil toxification and the depletion of nutrient-rich topsoil, the use of petroleum-based fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides, and it requires the *entire industrial infrastructure* for machines, tools, transportation, and trade. Moreover, monocropping for the purpose of biofuels deprives certain human communities (ie- the poor, marginalized, oppressed, and third-world) of food so that the privileged and wealthy can drive fancy hybrid cars. Of course, all of this doesn't even begin to explore the production of cars itself, the havoc brought about by car factories, the destruction brought on by the mining and transporting of resources required to manufacture the cars, the industrial infrastructure necessary to build and maintain roads, *ad nauseam*.

And this is just scratching the surface. If we look at solar panels, a perennial favorite of reformist environmentalists everywhere, we find exactly the same story. Solar panels are largely made of plastics, which predicates the existence of petroleum drilling, extraction, refining, and transportation, and factories in which petrol is converted to plastics. If bioplast- a form of plant cellulose-based, biodegradable plastic- is used, we find all the problems with monocrop agriculture that were just highlighted.

Copper is also a critical element in the manufacture of solar panels. Without copper wiring, there are no solar panels, and there are no coils to store, transmit, and receive electricity. The

industrial mining of copper- a very rare metal- is an astonishingly destructive and difficult process. The barren wastelands that result from this process are not green, and solar panels require the existence of such wastelands. Readers are free to draw their own conclusions from these premises.



Industrial copper strip-mining = not green!

If we move from solar panels to so-called "wind energy," we find a similar list of problems. Liberal environmentalists and green capitalists alike insist that wind turbines are the "greenest of the green," that they are essentially clean and environmentally-harmless. However, even advocates of wind power understand the devastating effects that wind turbines have on migratory songbirds, bats, and other avian creatures. Although the number of birds annihilated by wind turbines is statistically much less than the number of birds killed by fossil fuel plants, this does not excuse wind power of its devastating effects on bird populations.

Beyond its effects on birds and bats, wind turbines, like all other industrial technology, require a vast and complex industrial infrastructure to manufacture and maintain. The blades and bodies of wind turbines are made from fiberglass, various metals, or carbon fiber, all of which require mining and refinement in *industrial factories* (which themselves require all manner of industry to exist) to be used. Magnets within turbine generators contain rare earth metals, such as neodymium, which are not necessarily rare, but which do require industrial strip mining, extraction, and refining to use in wind turbines. Once fully manufactured, wind turbines must be transported, which requires the industrial production of large trucks, and requires the existence of roads, themselves dependent on industry and equally devastating to ecological habitats.

Upon analysis, all of the alternative energies championed by the liberal environmental movements and green capitalists across the globe have similar faults. The purpose in investigating the environmental impacts of these technologies is not necessarily to slam the technologies themselves, nor the people who support them. The point behind this brief and wholly incomplete examination is to show that these technologies are physical manifestations of greenwashing.

To be sure, all of these alternative energy sources are somewhat less destructive than the burning of fossil fuels. However, they all still rely on the existence of an inherently environmentally-harmful industrial infrastructure for their creation, maintenance, and utilization. Thus, none of these technologies is green, environmentally-friendly, or sustainable. And so, the faith in alternative energy sources is at best greenwash.

WELL, AREN'T YOU JUST A NEGATIVE-NELLY?

This small primer is not meant to make you feel bad about yourself. Nor is it meant to attack greenwashing liberal yuppie scum. Well, okay, it is meant to attack greenwashing liberal yuppie scum. But its purpose is also to educate and enlighten, as well as to encourage action.

To those who believe in alternative energy sources, carbon credits, hybrid cars, clean coal, and other toxic flights of fancy, it can definitely be unpleasant to consider that these things are not, in fact, environmentally friendly or ecologically sound. Questioning such beliefs can be difficult and daunting, leaving one with a sense of hopelessness and despair, and a longing to know what to do next.

The good news is that the answer to the global environmental dilemma is simple. The bad news is that most folks are too set in their ways and governed by fear to listen to the good news.

For the natural world to live (including human animal life), all we have to do is dismantle the entire industrial infrastructure and return our lives and our technologies to our local landbases, AND we must abandon the concepts of perpetual growth and expansion. That's it, piece of cake!

Any economy that is based on constant growth and ever-increasing consumption is by its very nature unsustainable. Any economy that is extractive- taking resources from landbases near and far without giving back an equal amount of nutrients/resources to these landbases- is and always will be unsustainable. Any economy that takes the means of production and technologies required for life out of the hands of individuals

and inflates them into a complex and intertwined industries is unsustainable. And any economy based on technologies that depend on an industrial economy- whether they claim to be green or not- is unsustainable.

SO WHAT EXACTLY AM I SUPPOSED TO DO?

First, educate yourself. There are a number of resources at the end of this pamphlet that delve much deeper into the topics that are mentioned herein. Read, study, question, learn.

Second, break away from all attachments you have to greenwashing, greenwashed technologies, and greenwashed society. If you truly desire a sustainable, ecologically-beneficial existence, prepare to part with the world of industrial civilization.

Then, once you've done these two things, choose a role. Help build a culture of resistance: agitate, educate others, build radical infrastructure and community, rejuvenate and defend landbases through legal means, rediscover and teach the hundreds of ancient skills that sustain human life without industry and without ecocide, learn and teach others about your bioregion and local plants and animals, help build community-based alternatives to the dominant social institutions, spread seedballs of native plants everywhere you go, create propaganda and educational materials, and support those who are willing to fight in every way you can!

Or, if you're the clandestine and/or combative type, fight! Tear down dams, tear down fences, bust up and remove concrete and asphalt, burn automobile factories to the ground, raze sweatshops, annihilate earth-movers and other heinous machines, free animals



from vivisection labs and factory farms, incinerate research labs and factory farms, train in hand-to-hand combat and grappling, learn how to use and maintain all manner of weapons and armor, learn and teach others the creation and use of explosives, prepare for guerrilla warfare with the forces of control and oppression, and support those who are not willing to fight in every way you can!

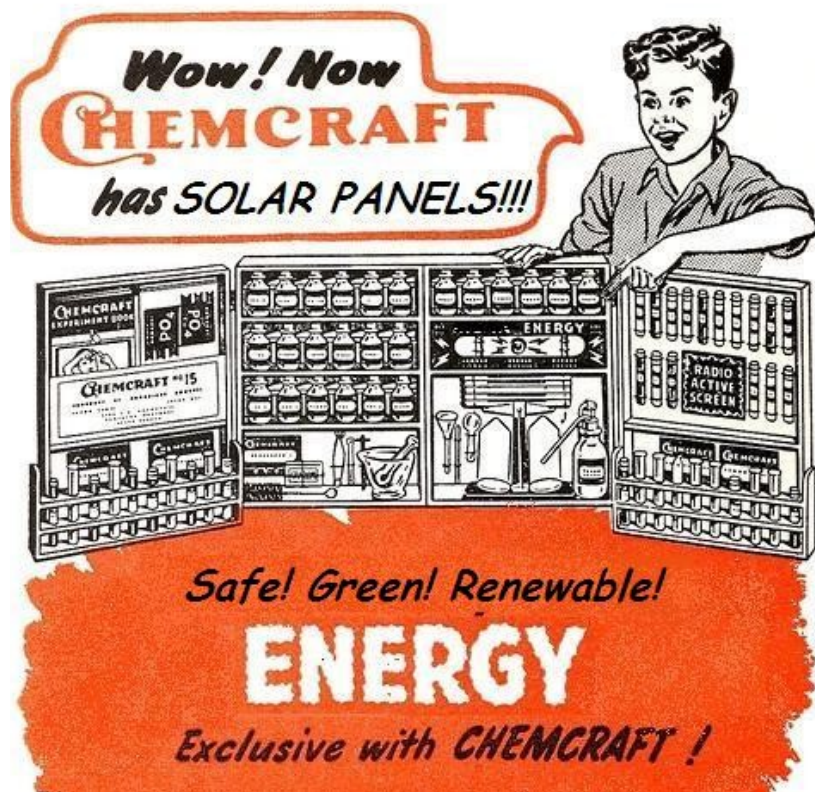
WHERE TO GO FROM HERE:

SUGGESTED READING & RESOURCES

- *Endgame* by Derrick Jensen, this book will change your life
 - *What We Leave Behind* by Derrick Jensen and Aric McBay, contains a detailed analysis of greenwashing and the consequences of its delusion
 - *As the World Burns: 50 Simple Things You Can Do to Stay In Denial* by Derrick Jensen and Stephanie McMillan, adorable comic about greenwashing, denial, and violent resistance!
 - *Elements of Refusal* by John Zerzan
 - *Against Civilization* edited by John Zerzan
 - *Pacifism As Pathology* by Ward Churchill, examines how pacifism and non-violent resistance reinforce the power of the state, looks at violence as an appropriate revolutionary tactic; also see *Endgame* and *As the World Burns*
- View/download at <http://zinelibrary.info/pacifism-pathology>
- *Green Anarchy* magazine
 - *The Original Affluent Society* by Marshall Sahlins
- View/download at <http://zinelibrary.info/original-affluent-society-marshall-sahlins>

- *Bloodlust: a feminist journal against civilization*,
View/download at <http://zinlibrary.info/bloodlust-feminist-journal-against-civilization>
- *Minimum Security*, an anti-civ comic strip by Stephanie McMillan, updated often at minimumsecurity.net/blog/
- submedia.tv
- sinsofgreenwashing.org
- insurgentdesire.org.uk
- zinlibrary.info

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