

# The Power of the Myth

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# Abstract

Myths are a fixture of human society, and provide several vital psychological services. People need to make sense of complex situations, and they need heroes with super-human powers. Myths have universal themes that help us understand moral dilemmas, right and wrong. Of course, the meaning of myth that I am referring to is a widely held false belief, or something that is fictitious or nonexistent. The interesting thing about false beliefs is that there is almost always a reason behind them. There is currently a Western Industrial mythology of simple solutions to a complex problem: alternative clean energy sources and technologies that will substitute for fossil fuels to support the lifestyles we are afraid to change. This package of myths includes fuel cells, hydrogen, biofuels for transport, carbon capture and storage, wave and tidal energy, air cars, and electric cars. The myths are easily communicated, easily believed, and once believed, difficult to dispel with facts. The green energy myths are low-cost compared to the loss of income which would be incurred by conventional fuel and transport markets if people started responding en-masse to the imperative of CO<sub>2</sub> emission reduction and the reality of fossil fuel depletion. Thus, we discover the purpose behind the creation and propagation of the Green Energy mythology. Every year that the general population can be made to wait for miracles and super-heroes, is another year of car sales, fuel sales, road building, sprawl development, jet-setting eco-tourism, entertainment governance and air-freighting of eggs to the USA. It also means another year lost and increased risks, with no changes in urban form or other innovations that would reduce the motorized travel demand and improve wellbeing.

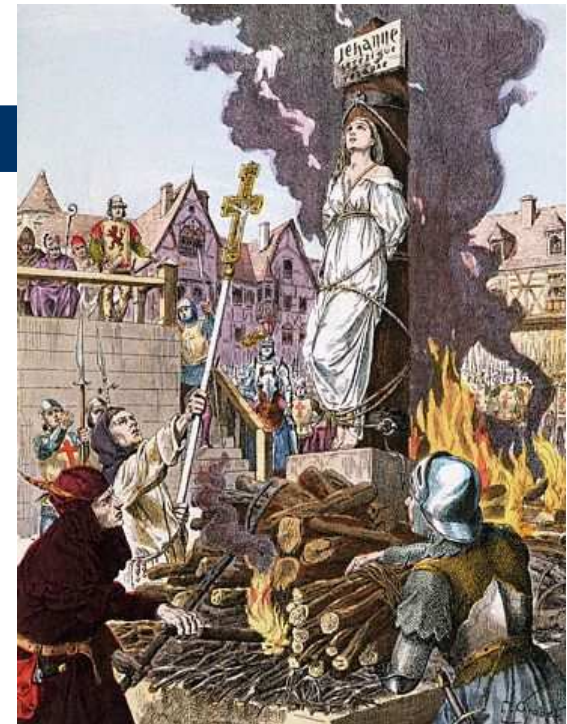
# Types of Myths

- Origin Myths
  - Cultural Capital
- Hero Myths
  - Harmless Entertainment
- Apocalypse Myths
  - Satisfy some personality types



# Types of Myths

- Widely held false beliefs
  - Tragic



# Properties of Myths

- Have some factual elements
- Fulfil emotional need
- Anecdotal evidence sufficient
- Self propagate
- Hard to eradicate
- Resistant to factual analysis





# Widely Held False Belief Myths

- Example: Y2K



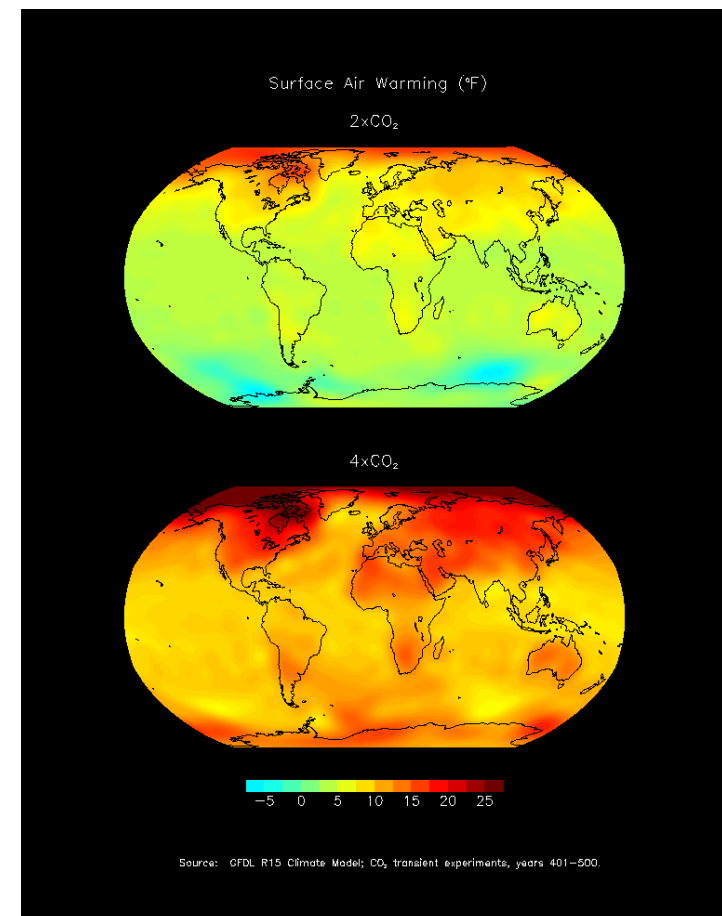
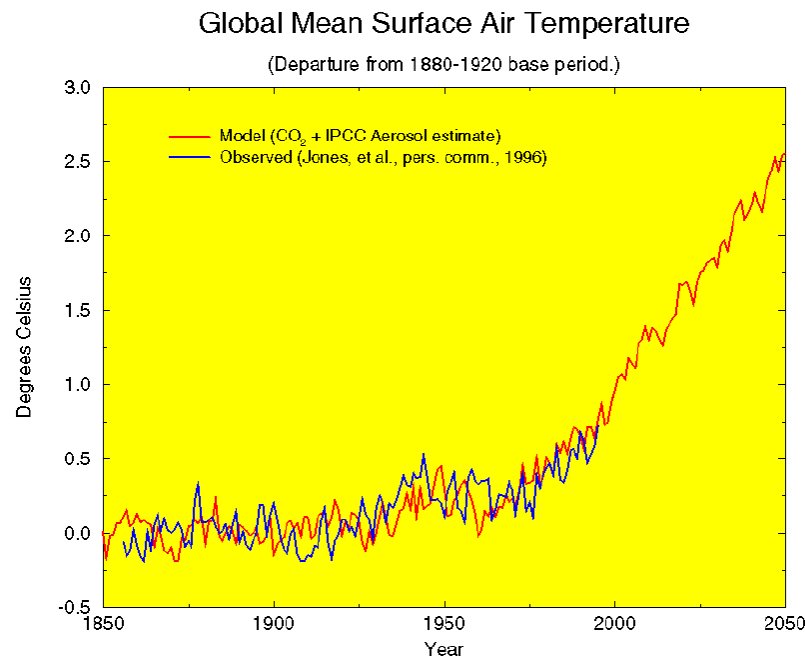
# Creating and Using False Belief

- Example: WMD's
- Cause Action



# Dangerous Energy Myths

- Induce Paralysis
- When change is needed





# Dangerous Energy Myths

- Green Technology



# Methods for Myth Identification

- Ask an expert
  - This is easy but very rarely used
  - Experts are to be suspect if currently receiving Mythological research funding
- Use Dr. Krumdieck's Myth-Busting formula for non-experts!
  - Easy and simple to use



# Identifying Energy Myths

- Existence Test
- Delivery Test
- Performance Test
- Material Test
- Market Test
- Relevance Test

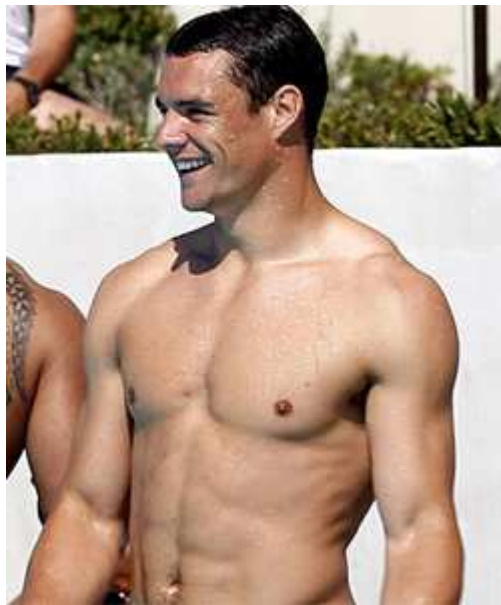


If GT deployed, fossil fuel use reduced

- |                                 |            |
|---------------------------------|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> True?  | Not a Myth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> False? | Myth       |

# Existence Test

- Real or Computer Animation?



# Delivery Test

- Can I buy it?



## Kindle: Amazon's 6" Wireless Reading Device (Latest Generation)

Other products by [Amazon](#)

★★★★★ ☒ (4,700 customer reviews)

Price: **\$299.00** & this item ships for **FREE with Super Saver Shipping**. [Details](#)

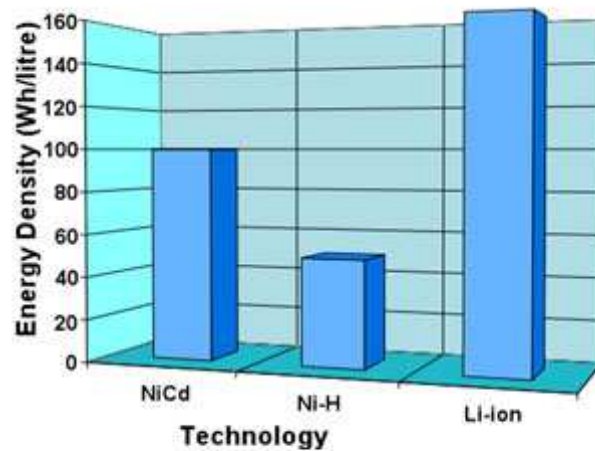
**In Stock.**

Ships from and sold by **Amazon Digital Services**. Gift-wrap available.

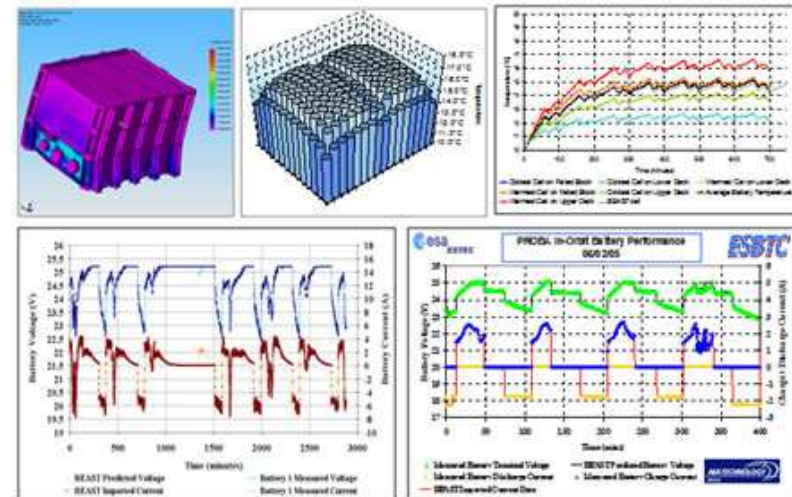


# Performance Test

- What are the claims? Numbers & Units
- Can I get performance data?
- Is there a national standard?

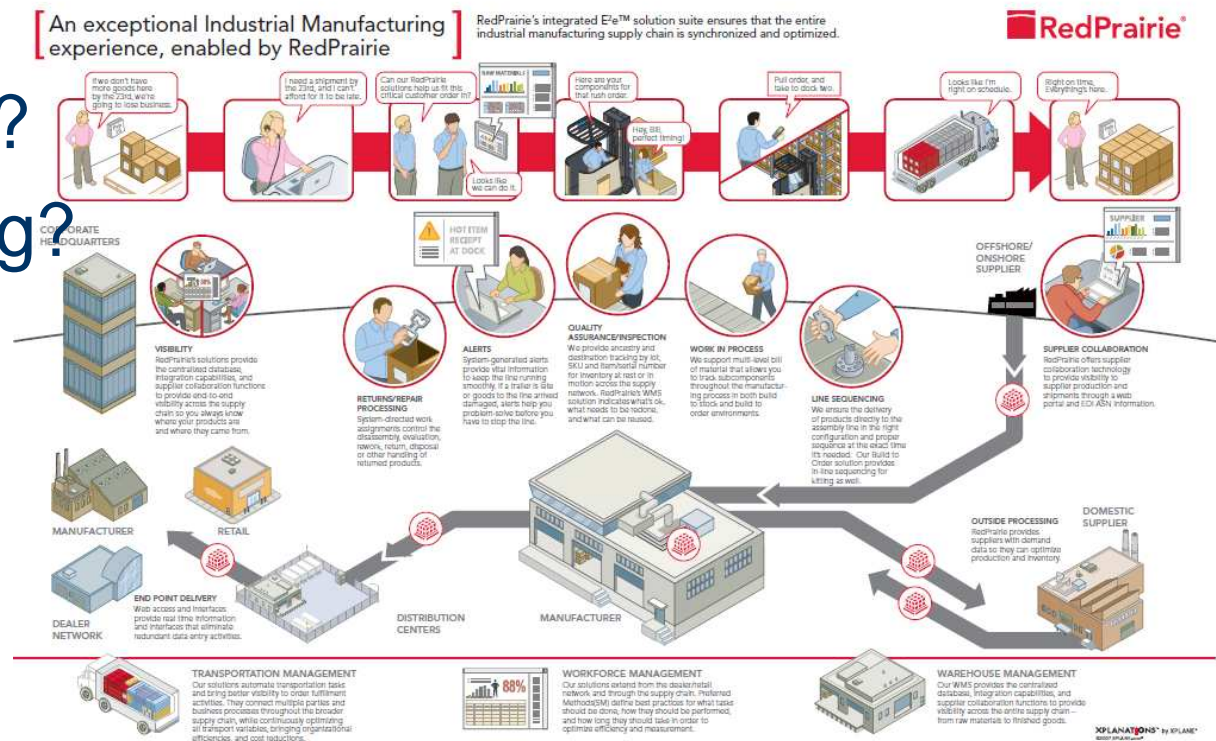


Lithium-ion Batteries



# Material Test

- Lifecycle Cost?
- End of life?
- Supply chain?
- Manufacturing?



# Market Test

- Market penetration rate?
- Will incentives be required for uptake?



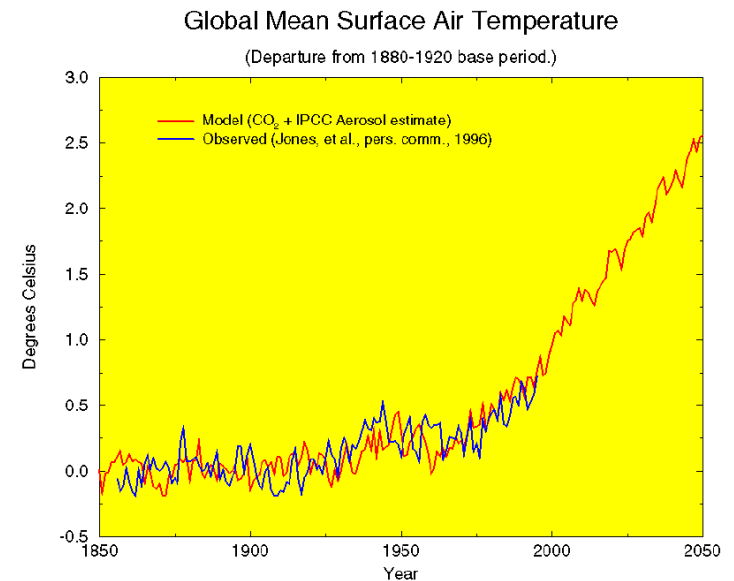
Green  
Energy  
Transport



Solar PV

# Relevance Test

- What was the reason for this green technology?





# Myth-Busting Skills 101




Debunking myths



# Level 1 Myth-Identification

- ✗ Existence
- ✗ Delivery
- ✗ Performance
- ✗ Material
- ✓ Market
- ✓ Relevance



The advertisement features a blue Renault Clio car parked on a grassy field. Above the car, a woman's head is shown with the text "I saved over \$130 last month!" - Kara S. To the right of the car, two large blue water jugs are depicted. The main headline reads "Run Your Car on WATER" in red and blue, followed by "and Gas to Double Mileage!". Below this, a box contains the text "Turn your car into a water-burning hybrid!" and "Conversion works on 99.9% of Motor Vehicles." At the bottom, three bullet points ask: "Are you TIRED of high gas prices?", "Want to DOUBLE your gas mileage?", and "Want a CLEANER emissions Vehicle?". A red gas pump icon with "H2O" is in the bottom right corner.

"I saved over \$130 last month!" - Kara S.

**Run Your Car on WATER**  
and Gas to **Double** Mileage!

Turn your car into a water-burning hybrid!  
Conversion works on 99.9% of Motor Vehicles.

- ▶ Are you **TIRED** of high gas prices?
- ▶ Want to **DOUBLE** your gas mileage?
- ▶ Want a **CLEANER** emissions Vehicle?

H2O

# Level 2 Myth Identification

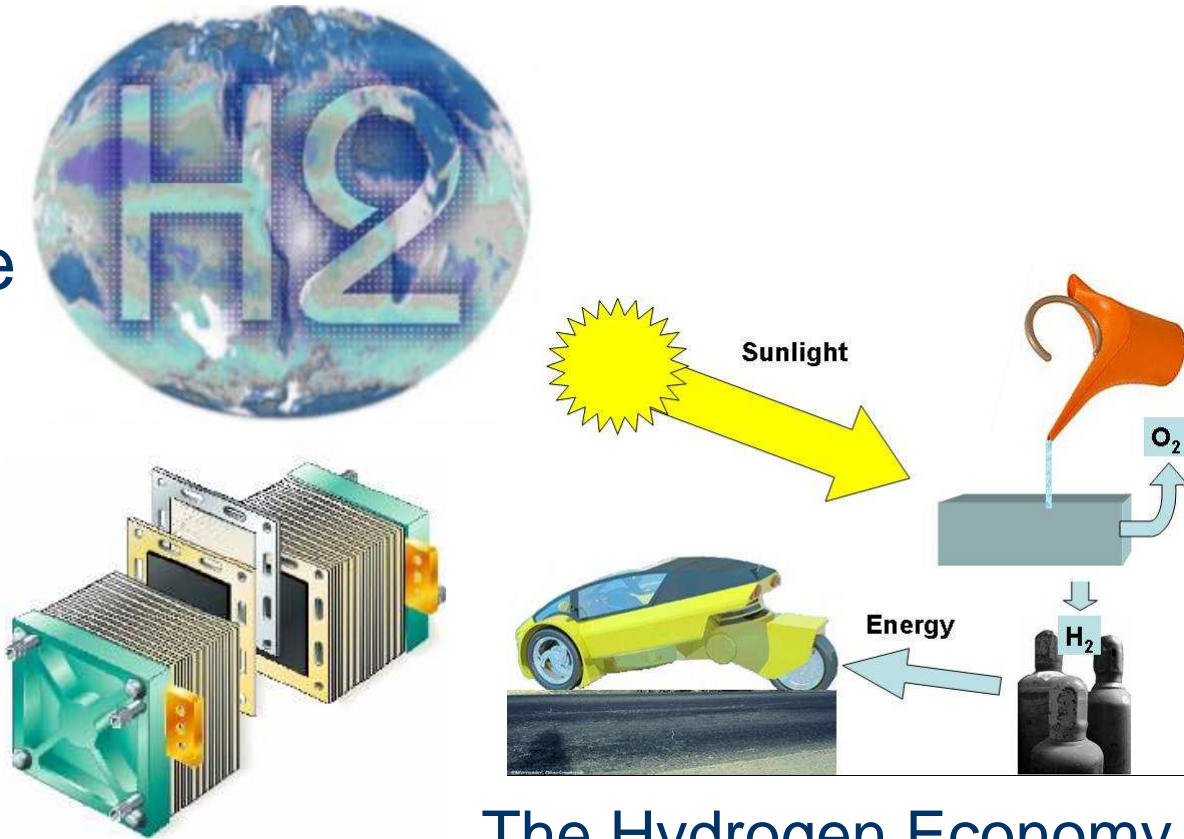
- ✓ ☐ Existence
- ☐ Delivery
- ☐ Performance
- ☐ Material
- ☒ Market
- ☒ Relevance



Carbon Capture and Storage

# Level 3 Myth Identification

- ✓ ☒ Existence
- ✓ ☒ Delivery
- ✓ ☒ Performance
- ☒ Material
- ✓ ☒ Market
- ☒ Relevance



The Hydrogen Economy

# Advanced Myth Identification

- x ☒ Existence
- x ☒ Delivery
- x ☒ Performance
- x ☒ Material
- x ☒ Market
- x ☒ Relevance



40% Electric Cars by 2030



# Relevance Test

- Electric Cars are the answer
  - A resilient myth

1970'-80's large govt.  
research funding of car  
companies to develop  
electric cars.

The idea of electric cars  
has reduced the urgency  
for walkable urban form  
re-development and  
public transport network  
improvement





# Relevance Test

- If we were all driving electric cars, then this would be cool!



# Relevance Test

- If we had biofuels and electric cars, everything would be green



# Conclusion?

- Don't leave Myth Identification to the experts
  - No body listens to them
- Be careful, but get out there and start Myth-Busting
- Homework assignment:
  - Biofuels for Transport

