

What is it, to will? - we laugh at one who steps from his room at same the moment the sun steps from his, and says "I will that the sun rises"; and at he who cannot stop a wheel, saying "I will that it rolls"; and at the wrestler who, when thrown to the canvas, says "I lie here because I will it." But, joking aside, are we really doing anything other than these three, when we use the words "I will"? Nietzsche *Dawn*, §124

Well, Well, Well.

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In the "Suppression of the Solution?" I expressed the fear that Greenerth was a mere front for the coal-industry's suppression of the development of geothermal energy. Today I am sitting down at my desk to a delicious meal of my own words. The admission that I was wrong is now a happy one for me to make, for the Victorian State Government and Greenerth Energy have [today announced](#) a \$20 million grant for the Greenerth pilot project, at a site just inland from Angelsea, and in conjunction with federal funding, a series of grants totalling \$50 million over the next decade. In a nice piece of poetic juxtaposition, the drilling rig will be erected a kilometer or two to the north of the coal mine and furnace which supply the massive power needs of the Alcoa aluminium smelter, near Geelong. This is much more than a coincidence. The ford motor works, the wood chipping mill at the wharf, the railroad hub and the oil refineries: these, together with the Alcoa smelter, make the Geelong region a massive consumer of electricity.

A pilot well goes in next year, and if all goes to schedule, a seires of further wells in a network of a dozen or so wells drilled in subsequent years. Well well well. Greenerth also happen to own the exploration rights to the state's second-most promising geothermal site, down by Lake's Entrance in Gippsland - conveniently located with respect to the controversial de-salination plant currently underway, another massive consumer of electricity. Why the de-sal plant is not being built next to the Alcoa alumnium smelter is a mystery, for the desal plant's other big problem - that it discharges salt brine in toxic concentrations - is surely a valuable resource to the aluminium smelter, which uses massive amounts of salt, which it imports from overseas in quantities dwarfing the domestic human consumption market.

To have the desal plant and the aluminium smelter side-by-side, both powered by one purpose-built geothermal station, and to have the aluminium smelter converting what would be pollution into the very aluminium which is building mankind's bridge to the space-age: this is real sustainability in action, and we here in Victoria can show a curious world how it can be done. And it would be perfect symbolism as well: the effectively inexhaustible sublimated into the future's potential: seawater into aluminium: geothermal heat into zero-emissions electricity. Brilliant.

But reality always bristles with contradictions if we look hard enough, and in fact it's not at all difficult to spot the glaring one here. For this same government is trying to set up a multi-billion dollar export market in brown coal to India. Is this (relatively small) \$50 million for geothermal in Victoria (the single most important infrastructure development since the invention of the railroad) being used as a distraction from the billions gleaned from the sale of brown coal to India? Like Peter Garrett's dam, (a

transparent attempt to distract from the insane deforestation he has now countenanced in Tasmania), the geothermal plant could be seen as a minimal concession to corporate business-as-usual, which continues unabated in Victorian coal mines and logging coups. Not so brilliant.

We need to be exporting geothermal technology, not exporting one of the world's dirtiest fuel sources for the sake of the profit of a few coal barons, for as we export the coal, we also inadvertently import the worst aspect of Indian culture. For although awesome in its antiquity and venerable in its spirituality, what the world has to learn from India about industry regulation and pollution prevention is what not to do.

Five years ago I stood in a philosophy lecture and asked the hundred or so students assembled why we had an "energy crisis" when we lived on a huge ball of molten lava? Now to think that my persistent bothering of unconvinced editors and curious talkback disc jockeys about the geothermal imperative "caused" the establishment of the Greenerth geothermal project in Geelong, is as absurd as Nietzsche's man thinking his getting out of bed makes the sun come up. Like the childhood gag of calling out to cyclists in anxious tones "hey your wheels are turning round", the wheels of industry turn regardless of my pointing out that they are turning the right way. And like Curley Howard's catch-phrase dada quip "ah, a coincidence", my being bowled over by a geothermal plant actually going in right near Angelsea built by a company I had doubted leaves me flat on my face claiming "I meant that".

But I did! And I'm taking this as a personal Christmas present.