

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments xi

Introduction 1

PART ONE Global Warming and Energy Production

1. Global Climate Change: Real or Myth? 9
 - What Is the Debate About? 9
 - The IPCC and International Conventions 9
 - The Greenhouse Effect 12
 - Skeptical Politicians and Pundits 13
 - Skeptical Scientists 14
 - Historical Temperature and Greenhouse Gas Record 17
 - The Last 10,000 Years of Climate: The Holocene 19
 - Recent Changes in Temperature and CO₂ 20
 - Melting Glaciers and Rising Seas 26
 - Models 28
 - Response to Singer and Avery 29
 - Predictions of Future Global Warming and Consequences 31
 - Sea Level and Acidification 32
 - Global Weirding 34
2. Where Our Energy Comes From 39
 - A Brief History of Energy 39
 - Coal 39
 - Oil and Natural Gas 40
 - Uranium 41
 - How Much Energy Do We Use and Where Does It Come From? 42
 - World Energy Usage 46
 - What Can Be Done to Reduce Our Carbon-Intensive Energy Economy? 47
3. The Good, Bad, and Ugly of Coal and Gas 54
 - Coal 54
 - Anatomy of a Coal-Fired Plant 54
 - Carbon Dioxide Emissions and Other Pollutants 55
 - Mining and Health Hazards 58
 - How Much Is There? 59

Carbon Capture and Storage	60
Natural Gas	63
How Much Is There?	64
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	64
Fracking	65
4. The Siren Song of Renewable Energy	73
Solar	73
Photovoltaic (PV) Solar Power	73
Concentrated Solar Power (CSP)	79
Solar Heating	80
Limitations of Solar Power	81
Wind	84
Limitations of Wind Power	86
Summary	96
5. Back to the Future: Nuclear Power	101
Anatomy of a Reactor	102
Advantages of Nuclear Power	104
Baseload Power	104
Greenhouse Gas Emission	104
Location and Footprint	105
Cost	106
Subsidies for Nuclear and Renewables	108
Advanced Reactor Technology	110
Can Nuclear Replace Coal?	112
Arguments against Nuclear Power	114
PART TWO Radiation and Its Biological Effects	
6. The World of the Atom	121
What Is Radiation?	121
Black Body Radiation: The Quantum	124
The Nuclear Atom	126
The Quantum Atom	128
The Nucleus	133
Radioactivity: Decay Processes	134
Fission	137
Summary	141
7. How Dangerous Is Radiation?	144
Interactions of Radiation with Matter	144
Electromagnetic Radiation (Photon) Interactions	145
Charged Particle Interactions	148
Neutron Interactions	150

What Is a Dose of Radiation?	150
Effects of Radiation on DNA and Cells	152
How Does Radiation Cause Cancer?	156
What Are the Risks?	161
Death from Radiation	162
Cancer from Radiation	163
Hereditary Effects of Radiation	165
How Bad Is Plutonium?	165
Summary	166
8. What Comes Naturally and Not So Naturally	170
Natural Background Radiation	171
Cosmic Radiation	171
Primordial Terrestrial Radiation	173
Medical Exposure	178
How Dangerous Is Background Radiation?	180

PART THREE The Risks of Nuclear Power

9. Nuclear Waste	185
What Is Nuclear Waste?	185
The Long and the Short of Waste Storage	190
Yucca Mountain	192
Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP)	196
Recycling Spent Nuclear Fuel	199
Making New Fuel from Recycled "Waste"	202
Summary	205
10. About Those Accidents	210
The Scare, March 16, 1979	210
Three Mile Island, March 28, 1979	210
How the Accident Happened	210
Consequences of TMI	212
Chernobyl, April 26, 1986	214
How the Accident Happened	214
The Hazardous Radioisotopes	216
Health Consequences	218
Environmental Consequences	222
A Trip to Chernobyl	223
Consequences for Nuclear Power	228
Fukushima, March 11, 2011	229
How the Accident Happened	229
Health and Environmental Consequences	231
Consequences for Nuclear Power	234
Public Perception of Risks from Nuclear Power	235

11. The Quest for Uranium	241
Mining for Uranium	241
Shinkolobwe	241
Shiprock	242
Milling	244
In Situ Recovery	245
Enrichment	250
Fuel Fabrication	252
World Resources of Uranium	253
Megatons to Megawatts	255
Is There Enough Uranium for a Nuclear Renaissance?	256
Breeder Reactors	257
Thorium	259
Summary	261
12. Now What?	266
Myth 1: Radiation Is Extremely Dangerous and We Don't Understand It	271
Myth 2: There Is No Solution to the Nuclear Waste Produced by Nuclear Power	272
Myth 3: Nuclear Power Is Unsafe and Nuclear Accidents Have Killed Hundreds of Thousands of People	274
Myth 4: Uranium Will Run Out Too Soon and Mining It Generates So Much Carbon Dioxide That It Loses Its Carbon-Free Advantage	276
Myth 5: Nuclear Power Is So Expensive It Can't Survive in the Marketplace	276
Afterword	281
Appendix A: Global Warming	283
Earth's Energy Balance	283
Radiative Forcing	284
The IPCC Special Report on Emissions Scenarios (SRES)	286
Appendix B: Glossary of Terms, Definitions, and Units	289
Energy	289
Power	289
Powers of 10	290
Radioactivity	290
Appendix C: Glossary of Acronyms and Abbreviations	291
Appendix D: Selected Nobel Prizes	293
Index	295