

SIGNIFICANT QUOTES

Editor's Note: As a regular feature in each issue, Proceedings will include quotes of writers and other persons which are considered to be of significance to the human predicament and the health and survival of our planetary ecosystem.

An Ice Age Hunter, Clever but Seldom Wise

“Homo Sapiens has the information to know itself for what it is: an Ice Age hunter only half-evolved towards intelligence; clever but seldom wise.

... We have the tools and the means to share resources, clean up pollution, dispense basic health care and birth control, set economic limits in line with natural ones. If we don't do these things now, while we prosper, we will never be able to do them when times get hard. And this new century will not grow very old before we enter an age of chaos and collapse that will dwarf all the dark ages in the past.”

Ronald Wright, *A Short History of Progress*, 2004

Progress or Apocalypse

“Yet an odd blindness affects attempts to make sense of our predicament. People on all sides of the debate talk as though the future has only two possible shapes: progress or apocalypse, either business as usual for the foreseeable future or a catastrophic slide into savagery and mass death. Whether the topic is global warming, renewable energy, fossil fuel depletion, or anything else, the same claims repeat like a broken record. One side insists that technology will inevitably solve our problems and yield a better life for all, while the other side brandishes worst case scenarios and talks of millions of corpses. It should be obvious that these aren't the only possibilities. The fact that this isn't obvious at all is worth exploring.”

John Michael Greer,

The Long Road Down: Decline and the Deindustrial Future, 2004

The Inevitable Peaking of Peak Oil Production

“The world has never confronted a problem like this. Risk minimization requires the implementation of mitigation measures well prior to peaking. Since it is uncertain when peak will occur, the challenge for decision-makers is indeed vexing. Mustering support for an invisible disaster is much more difficult than one that is obvious to all.

Over the past century, world economic development has been fundamentally shaped by the availability of abundant, low-cost oil. Previous transitions (wood to coal, coal to oil, etc.) were gradual and evolutionary; oil peaking will be abrupt and revolutionary.

Without massive mitigation at least a decade before the fact, the problem will be pervasive and long lasting.”

Robert L. Hirsch, October 2005