

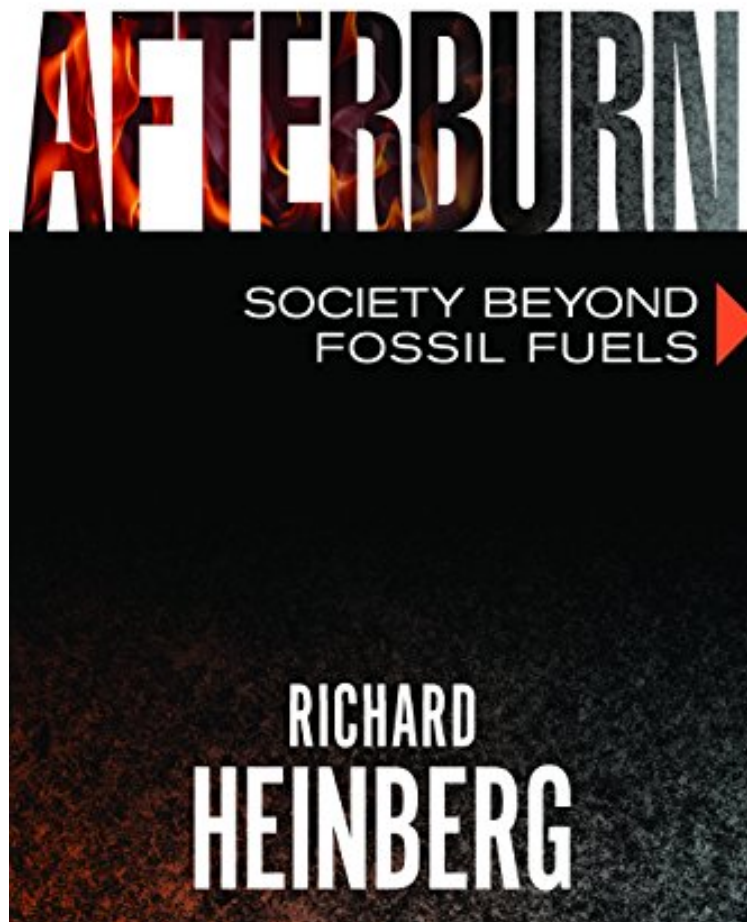
[Ebook free] Afterburn: Society Beyond Fossil Fuels

Afterburn: Society Beyond Fossil Fuels

Richard Heinberg

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With rare insight, clarity, and compassion Richard Heinberg helps us face the music. — JOANNA MACY



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Richard Heinberg : Afterburn: Society Beyond Fossil Fuels before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Afterburn: Society Beyond Fossil Fuels:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Excellent read filled with information on the critical yet difficult ...By David AndersonFrom the author of The Infidels.E=This is an excellent read; filled with copious information on the difficult critical decisions that will have to be made regarding energy use by world society over the next five, twenty, fifty to one hundred years. The author is extremely knowledgeable about all aspects of the equation. Every US congressman should be required to read this book. Failure by our US government ndash; and all others - with respect to the two key elements; population growth and energy issue will come back to haunt the next generation. There is no

question about that. This author speaks from a platform of scientific empirical truth. I would suggest though that he move away from the idea of gasoline rationing in the US and argue for a market approach as I outline in my letter to Paul Krugman in my Blog # 12 on my Web Site. There I suggest a market based solution that will pass increasing costs up the line through graduated taxation with the revenues used to subsidize alternative sources of energy and the societal adjustments that will be necessary for civilization to proceed ultimately in an upward direction. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Empowering, Gripping, and Absolutely Essential By Customer Afterburn: Society Beyond Fossil Fuels truly lives up to its name, as Richard Heinberg sets the reader ablaze in thought about a potential present and future reality that is sometimes empowering, sometimes terrifying, and always deeply thought-provoking. A Senior Fellow of the Post Carbon Institute, Heinberg's writing is rich with data- and experience-fueled arguments that are not to say the least head-turning. The "novel" is actually a collection of fifteen essays written by the author between 2009-14 (contrary to the introduction, which labels the timespan 2011-14, even though the essay Our Evanescent Culture and the Awesome Duty of Librarians dates back to 2009) and represents an impressive array of accumulated research and serious ponderings about the current trajectory of human society. More than mere musings, though, Heinberg's presentation impels the reader to question much of what our social, political, and financial pundits present as the status quo. The book's proposition, in brief, is the all-too-foreseeable yet notoriously-cloaked end of an age of economic growth and consumerism, hopefully to be replaced by a societal structure that embraces localization, low-footprint living, and sustainable practices. This premise is grounded in arguments heavily constructed from the findings of energy analysts and the well-argued assumption that (primarily) oil and its industry are coming to an end — an end much sooner than is touted by media, politicians, and pretty much everyone else. The notion that the future of oil could be limited to just a few decades is sure to confuse and turn some readers off from the book as a whole, especially when cheap US gas prices and promises of easy, alternative-oil extraction methods, such as hydraulic fracturing ("fracking"), are widely publicized. However, Heinberg's detailed explanations of long-standing political and industrial deceptions (that have contributed to the current, false notions of "oil plenty") present a head-turning alternative prediction of the road ahead for the energy industry. Another not-of-heard stance is the author's position on alternative energy sources. While many renowned thought leaders of energy and environmental economics spend their careers encouraging society to reap the benefits of renewable energy, Heinberg maintains a more sobering position. He suggests that although it is very important to continue building renewable energy infrastructure as fast as possible, we've waited far too long to get a jump on renewable energy. As a consequence, the world will most likely suffer from energy shortcomings as we attempt to go 100% green. Essentially, Heinberg emphasizes that a global energy switch to renewables is itself extremely energy intensive and dependent on fossil fuels! Our huge infrastructure that's already in place to extract, transport, and deliver fossil fuel energy to society needs to be replaced by an equally huge infrastructure to generate, transport, and deliver renewable energy. Chillingly, our oil industry — which is forced to seek out increasingly difficult to extract and economically-unviable oil — may not endure to see us through this transition. Moreover, he spells out several obvious and not-too-obvious shortcomings of a 100% renewable energy industry. All of this amounts to Heinberg's best-case scenario, where "hellip;nations would transition as much as possible to renewable power, maintaining a functioning national grid or network of local distribution systems but supplying rationed power in smaller amounts than is the currently the case" (p. 155). In this statement readers can discern several recurring themes throughout the essays, namely localization and the end of economic growth. At this point, readers of this review may be wondering what, after all, is so "empowering" about this book? It sounds mostly like gloom-and-doom future projections based on a pessimistic analysis of our energy situation. While all of Heinberg's essays are cause for a serious mental timeout to pause and take stock of everything we more or less take for granted, they also emphasize the enormous potential for growth and construction of a better society, which could accompany the hard times to come. Part of this optimism is encompassed in Heinberg's praise of localization and seen in his acclaim of the Transition Movement (which is mentioned over a dozen times throughout the book). Emphasized over and over again are the vast benefits that can come (shown through studies and the author's personal experience) from a tightening of communal ties via localized efforts to make towns and cities more resilient to the inevitable worsening of climate and economic tipping points. According to Heinberg, there are "hellip;substantial social and psychological benefits from living in a way that's more localized and communitarian." While these aren't substantially elaborated upon in the text, their mention will certainly strike a chord in readers who have already experienced the rewards of building close connections with community and feeling a part of something larger than yourself — whether through volunteer service, a town project such as the building of a community garden, or simply through a good friendship. Quite simply, Afterburn is one of the most important reads of this era — for all ages. However, Heinberg's post-carbon declarations (in his matter-of-fact style) are sure to rile some readers. If you anticipate this to be your reaction, I urge you: read the book, cover to cover. Soak it in. Consider each argument for its mere possibility of accuracy. Even if the author isn't completely correct in his premise or future scenarios — which even he says he knows are merely projections based on current evidence and definitely not to be taken as prophecies — it is imperative that society members are at least aware of

the broad diversity of predictions sustained by scores of energy experts. As caretakers of our planet and representatives of its dominant inhabitants, we are tasked with properly educating ourselves so that we may respond to the future needs (whatever they may be) of an extremely-rapidly-changing society with the greatest sense of perspective and a sufficient knowledge base to inform our decisions. In my opinion, this is precisely the effect that each of these fifteen essays has. Especially for young millennials, the reading of *Afterburn* empowers and arms one in such a way that he/she feels educated about and at least forewarned of the inevitable climate- and energy- related challenges we face at the end of, in the words of the author, this "brief age of cheap, abundant energy." 14 of 16 people found the following review helpful. Cascading tipping points By R. Kreis For readers just beginning their conversation with peak oil and climate change (Hubbert's Curve and the Keeling Curve), this collection of essays explains the thesis expounded by the Post Carbon "doomers" in a clear and compelling way. But, for those of us who have been following the topic for some years, Heinberg does not bring much new material to this, his latest effort. Let me be clear, I am sympathetic with Heinberg's views (he signed my copy of *End of Growth*), but based on this book's subtitle, I was hoping to read more thoughtful speculation on the time after the crash. As pessimistic as Heinberg's prognostications may seem, I suspect he is holding back on what should be obvious: He knows the climate is poised to do something truly terrible; if not in our time, certainly in our children's time. It won't be boiling frogs, it will be cascading tipping points. Should we manage to dodge the bullet of NTHE, our destiny is sure to be pulling plows at the insistence of men with guns. Fate could have it that rapid climate change will hit about the same time our international financial balloon has burst and resource depletion has left us without means to adapt to changing conditions. The fate of civilization? Poof! It will be just another layer of debris in the earth's crust.

Climate change, along with the depletion of oil, coal, and gas, dictate that we will inevitably move away from our profound societal reliance on fossil fuels; but just how big a transformation will this be? While many policy-makers assume that renewable energy sources will provide an easy "plug-and-play" solution, author Richard Heinberg suggests instead that we are in for a wild ride; a "civilization reboot" on a scale similar to the agricultural and industrial revolutions. *Afterburn* consists of fifteen essays exploring various aspects of the twenty-first century migration away from fossil fuels including: Short-term political and economic factors that impede broad-scale, organized efforts to adapt The origin of longer-term trends (such as consumerism), that have created a way of life that seems "normal" to most Americans, but is actually unprecedented, highly fragile, and unsustainable Potential opportunities and sources of conflict that are likely to emerge From the inevitability and desirability of more locally organized economies to the urgent need to preserve our recent cultural achievements and the futility of pursuing economic growth above all, *Afterburn* offers cutting-edge perspectives and insights that challenge conventional thinking about our present, our future, and the choices in our hands. Richard Heinberg is a senior fellow of the Post Carbon Institute, the author of eleven previous books including *The Party's Over* and *The End of Growth*. He is widely regarded as one of the world's most effective communicators of the urgent need to transition away from fossil fuels.

With rare insight, clarity, and compassion, Richard Heinberg helps us face the music. Over the years, since *The Party's Over*, his books have earned our trust with their accuracy in delineating the limits of the possible. Now in this bold collection of essays, he helps us see the landscape being bequeathed us by the Great Burning — an understanding that is necessary to the Great Turning — and will save us considerable time and confusion. With ever more gratitude I bow to those who shake us awake.—Joanna Macy, author, *Coming Back to Life: The Updated Guide to the Work That Reconnects*. *Afterburn* gives us a sense of a survivable future — hope fed by Heinberg's realistic deeper analysis, a sense of the trends ahead, and a bold (largely local) plan. Few are as good at the craft of synthesizing this powerful package then Richard Heinberg. This book will help fuel the future.—Randy Hayes, Rainforest Action Network Founder Director of Foundation Earth In my business we have a saying: hope is a terrible investment strategy. Let's go further and say hope alone is a terrible strategy, period. Yet most of society continues to simply ignore the freely available and terribly important information about where we are headed on this planet, and simply hope that things will work themselves out somehow. They won't, and we all know that now on some level. *Afterburn* bravely and thoughtfully examines the predicament we face, one idea and one fact at a time. Those who can stir in a few facts along with their hope will be able to both understand and foresee what the future holds. Pick up this book. Read it. Discuss it. Let it sink into your bones, and then understand that this book is not asking you to abandon hope, it is inviting us all to greatness.—Chris Martenson, PhD, Co-founder of Peak Prosperity *Afterburn* is like a "Richard Heinberg's Greatest Hits" compilation, drawing together a selection of his prolific output from the last few years. To choose what went in must have been to pore over an embarrassment of riches, given his seemingly untiring creativity and brilliance. He writes with incision, with passion, with rage, with compassion, and *Afterburn* captures in one single publication why he's such a shining light of insight in times of much darkness. *The Party's Over* changed my life. Perhaps *Afterburn* will change yours.—Rob Hopkins, founder, Transition Town movement and author, *The Power of Just Doing Stuff*