

Contents

Acknowledgements	iii
Abbreviations	iv
Chapter 1. Introduction	1
Chapter 2. The Role of Energy in Civilisations	9
2.1 Energy in hunter-gatherer societies	9
2.2 Agriculture, energy surplus and socio-political complexification	12
2.3 Fossil fuels, industrialisation and the birth of carbon civilisation	15
Chapter 3. Carbon Civilisation, Economic Growth and the Finitude of Fossil Fuels	21
3.1 Peak oil and the economic implications of rising energy costs	23
3.2 Why did the price of oil drop in mid-2014?	26
3.3 Ten reasons why preparing for scarce and expensive oil is prudent	29
Chapter 4. Climate Change, Carbon Budgets and the Economics of Deep Decarbonisation	45
4.1 Temperature threshold	47
4.2 Probability of success	48
4.3 Carbon-capture-and-storage and negative emissions technologies	50
4.4 Distributive considerations	53
4.5 The economics of deep decarbonisation	54

Chapter 5. Nuclear and Renewables: The Potential and Limitations of Alternative Energy Sources	59
5.1 The potential and limitations of nuclear energy	61
5.2 Can the global economy run entirely on renewables?	64
5.3 Making sense of model-based feasibility assessments: a map is not the territory	65
5.4 Ten reasons why renewable energy technologies may not fully or directly replace fossil fuels	67
Chapter 6. Navigation Notes for Energy Descent Futures	87
Chapter 7. Constituting the Future	97
Glossary	101
Endnotes	103
Bibliography	119
Index	131