



<i>We Were Warned</i>: The Spelling of the Word Has an Extra "u" That Many People Forget..

Posted by [Prof. Goose](#) on March 19, 2006 - 3:16am

Topic: [Sociology/Psychology](#)

Tags: [cnn](#), [frank sesno](#), [oil](#), [oil prices](#), [peak oil](#), [we were warned](#) [[list all tags](#)]

...and that word is pab·u·lum, a noun; here are some definitions:

1. *plant or animal food: a source of nourishment in an easily absorbable liquid, especially the nutrient intake of plants and lower animals*
2. *unsatisfying intellectual material: material whose intellectual content is thin, trite, bland, or generally unsatisfying (literary)*

That was the word that immediately came to mind after I watched "[We Were Warned](#)" this evening. Some other thoughts under the fold.

Pabulum, however, isn't always a bad thing. I think we among the supposed PO cognoscenti have to remember that this program was not that threatening of a thought experiment, easy to consume and, in this case, this "idea pabulum" exposes people to ideas that they maybe had not thought about before.

It wasn't aimed at us. It was aimed at people who haven't thought about this yet. It was gentle.

In fact, this kind of idea pabulum could be viewed as a (very) necessary step in the changes in awareness and consciousness-construction that could lead to actual incremental changes in actual behavior in a certain part of the American populace down the line.

I am sitting in my conference hotel tonight, ill with some sort of stomach bug, I downloaded [the torrent of the program](#), and watched with some anticipation, even if I was horizontal the whole time. I was hoping for a home run, a program that integrated the whole of the peak oil message and took it to the masses.

What did I find? Instead, I found the *beginnings* of a message, the *beginnings* of an emergence and integration of the ideas of the sacrifice and potential suffering this harbinger of the meme beheld, but constructed in a nice, safe sanitary package for easy consumption.

Then I thought about it a bit. First, I was surprised that I allowed myself to think that the media would go too in depth on anything the least little bit controversial. Second, call me an intellectual snob, but after thinking about it (and I vacillate on this), I'm not sure the workaday Joe Schmo of the American populace--or the Joe Schmos of the rest of the 'first' world for that matter--who had never heard of these ideas before could handle the gravity of the responsibility that comes with the awareness that my "ideal" program would attempt to generate in one fell swoop.

So, after thinking about it that way, it seems to me that the key questions we have to ask after this program are:

Does this program reflect an improvement on prior coverage of the topic? is it a step in the right direction? Yes.

Does it miss some (oh, ok, most...) of the important components of the argument? Yes, absolutely. (See the previous discussion thread for some of them [here](#).)

Can we say that the media has done due diligence in its integration of the myriad ideas underlying this phenomenon? No, not yet...not even close.

Can we say that the media *can* do such a thing in a two hour program without completely bringing entire economies and society to a halt, just as they hypothesized a hurricane and a terrorist attack would in this thought experiment (corollary: editors and network presidents losing their jobs, etc., etc., which is why such a program would never go on in the first place, etc., etc.)? Hell no, not yet anyway.

So, in conclusion, it may seem like business as usual from the media for many of you. However, I will still maintain that tonight's program is an important event in the growing meme that underlies this problem we face.

Slow and steady wins the race, I guess? (well, perhaps not this one.)



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 United States License](#).