

# Peak Oil, Imposed by Nature

*Video production educates by way of narrative*

DVD Review by Edward E. Timm

Colin Campbell, a petroleum geologist, and Matthew Simmons, an energy sector investment banker, are the most public advocates of the concept that we are living in a period of steady to slowly falling petroleum supplies. *Peak Oil, Imposed by Nature* is a video production that advocates for this concept in an unusual manner. Unlike other analytic expositions of the reasons for a contemporaneous peak in world petroleum supplies like Deffyes book *Hubberts Peak*, this video production relies on a more empathic approach to the subject.

*Peak Oil, Imposed by Nature* introduces Colin Campbell to the audience through the artifice of a narrative involving Campbell and operatives from the U.S. CIA who know his message and are interested in learning how effectively he is in disseminating it. This segment leaves the viewer with a feeling that the subject of "Peak Oil" is one in which governments are keenly interested and viewers should be too. Matthew Simmons follows Campbell and makes the point that if the Peak Oil hypothesis is correct the human species will face the need to develop other means of powering our oil-fired society or face economic decline. Richard Webb, a brash young risk analyst, furthers this point

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by discussing the functioning of commodities markets and how critical petroleum is to the world economy. The inevitability of a peak in the world petroleum production rate in the near future is explained in a cursory manner by Aage Figenschou, Board Member at Simmons and Co; Chris Skrebowski, Editor, Petroleum Review and Olve Torvanger, Geologist.

Taken together, these narratives do not build a classic analytical argument for the Peak Oil hypothesis but do leave the viewer with the impression that the proponents found on this video are sincere mainstream experts that should not be lightly dismissed.

I have formed my opinions for this review based on the reactions of several individuals, many of whom are only vaguely familiar with the subject. Internet bulletin boards devoted to the discussion of energy

alternatives have not reviewed *Peak Oil, Imposed by Nature* with enthusiasm. Panned for its amateurish production values and lack of analytical rigor, this video is not recommended for those well versed in the subject. However, this reviewer has found that the video is an effective tool for introducing the Peak Oil hypothesis to those unfamiliar with it and for generating a feeling that credible experts know of significant challenges to our petroleum based future. Taken in conjunction with the current instability in world oil markets, *Peak Oil, Imposed by Nature* is an effective tool for starting a discussion about the issues it raises and is useful as a starting point for furthering awareness of the difficult choices ahead as the cheap petroleum that powers our society dwindles.

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