

Chapter 8: People Creating a Future: The Global Wave

Chapter 8. G. Media

Age of Stupid, The

2008, NR, 89 minutes, 3 ½ stars. Looks interesting, haven't see it.

In the desolate future of 2055, an archivist combs through a vast collection of videos to learn what went wrong with the planet. His research points to the first decade of the century, when humans blithely ignored the warning signs of climate change

American Jobs

2005, rated NR, 62 minutes, 3 stars. Even though may be a bit dated, the trend is continuing today.

Filmmaker Greg Spotts exposes the carnage left behind by companies who choose to outsource their jobs. Moved to action after hearing that 3 million jobs ceased to exist in America between 2000 and 2003, Spotts set out to make this documentary by visiting 19 hard-hit cities across the nation and meeting the men and women who have suffered the after-effects of mass layoffs. The result is a heartbreaking study of the global economy.

Art & Copy

2009, NR, 90 minutes, 3 stars. Looks very interesting, want to see it.

Filmmaker Doug Pray explores the fascinating and mysterious world of advertising in this compelling documentary, which includes interviews with the talented minds that created famous taglines such as "Where's the Beef?" and "Just Do It."

Baraka

1992, rated NR, 96 minutes, 3.9 stars. Great movie.

Shot in 24 countries on 70mm film, this mesmerizing visual study conveys the relationship between humans and the environment, with images ranging from the daily devotions of Tibetan monks to time-lapse views of the Hong Kong skyline. Accompanied by diverse world music -- without narration or dialogue -- the scenes capture nature's glory as well as its destruction, all expertly photographed by director and cinematographer Ron Fricke.

Blue Gold: World Water Wars

2009, NR, 90 minutes, 4 stars.

Narrated by Malcolm McDowell, this award-winning documentary from director Sam Bozzo posits that we're moving closer to a world in which water -- a seemingly plentiful natural resource -- could actually incite war. As water becomes an increasingly precious commodity, corrupt governments, corporations and even private investors are scrambling to control it which leaves everyday citizens fighting for a substance they need to survive.

Carbon Nation

2010, NR, 84 minutes, 4 stars.

Bypassing politics and fingerpointing, this forward-thinking documentary zeroes in on enterprising individuals -- from a wind farmer to a solar-panel retrofitter -- who are devising business-minded ways to avert the looming climate crisis. The cross-country expedition yields encounters with Virgin Group CEO Richard Branson, Earth Day founder Denis Hayes and former CIA director James Woolsey, along with everyday pioneers in low-carbon living.

China Rises: Behind the Great Wall

2008, NR, 2 discs 3 star

China's shift from secluded land of mystery to global economic powerhouse is explored in this compelling documentary about the country's progress, power and people. With unprecedented access, the Discovery Times

Channel's cameras capture every aspect of this dynamic country, from the Shanghai Film Festival to a factory floor, a Great Wall rock concert to the legacy of Tiananmen Square and preparations for the 2008 Olympics.

Collapse

2009, NR, 82 minutes, 3 ½ stars. Interesting perspective. Good for students.

In an avant-garde soliloquy, investigative journalist Michael Ruppert details his unnerving theories about the inexorable link between energy depletion and the collapse of the economic system that supports the entire industrial world.

College, Inc.

Frontline, PBS, 2010, NR, 60 minutes, 3 ½ stars. Great documentary, about privatization of college. Must see for educators.

Uncovering the truth about for-profit colleges and universities, this Frontline episode investigates the schools' powerful recruitment methods, convenient online curriculum, connections to Wall Street and astronomical revenues. Through interviews with former students, employees and education experts, this program questions whether such institutions of higher learning improve the lives of their graduates or simply saddle them with debt.

Connected: An Autobiography About Love, Death and Technology

2011, PG, 82 minutes, 4 star Some might like it, I didn't care for it.

Director Tiffany Shlain takes audiences on a rollercoaster ride to discover what it means to be "connected" in the 21st century. Shlain examines her own use of technology, and whether or not modern convenience is worth the pitfalls it brings.

Cool It

2010, PG, 88 minutes, 3 ½ stars. Haven't seen it but looks interesting.

A provocative voice vilified by pundits on both ends of the political spectrum, Bjørn Lomborg challenges prevailing ideas on climate change and explores scientific and technological advances that may help avert a global warming crisis.

Countdown to Zero

2009, PG, 92 minutes, 3 ½ stars

Since the first atomic bomb exploded in 1945, scientists and world leaders have grappled with the apocalyptic dangers and paradoxes posed by nuclear weapons. Lucy Walker's documentary presents an unblinking look at humanity's lethal predicament.

Cove, The (The Rising)

2009, NR, 93 minutes, 4 stars. Provocative documentary, worth seeing.

A group of activists and filmmakers travels to the small village of Taiji, Japan, to secretly obtain footage of a heavily guarded operation that captures and kills scores of dolphins to use as meat.

Crude

2009, NR, 104 minutes, 4 stars. Haven't seen it but looks provocative.

Joe Berlinger's provocative documentary explores the ongoing battle waged by 30,000 indigenous Ecuadorans and their lawyers against Chevron for dumping billions of gallons of toxic waste into the Amazon, a catastrophe dubbed the "Amazon Chernobyl."

Cultural History of the Western World, The

2006, rated NR, 2 discs, 2.8 stars. Check later segments on the disc.

Tour the Western world's greatest achievements with a comprehensive look at the eras that shaped them. The Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque periods, the Age of Reason, the epoch of revolution and the Impressionist era are illuminated with examples of the art, literature, music and technology that emerged from each. Each segment of this six-part documentary examines a different movement in the culture and society of Western civilization.

Cut to Nirvana

2004, rated NR (nudity among pilgrims), 85 minutes, 3.4 stars. Such an interesting twist that pilgrims go to the festival for spiritual reasons, so different than Western commercialized festivals.

From filmmakers Maurizio Benazzo and Nick Day comes this inspiring documentary that captures the sights and sounds of Kumbh Mela, a spiritual festival attended by more than 70 million pilgrims -- the largest gathering of people in history. Held every 12 years near Allahabad, India, Kumbh Mela attracts young Hindu monks, old sages, honored guest the Dalai Lama and other Hindi and Buddhist leaders.

Darfur Now

2007, PG, 98 minutes, 3 ½ star. Interesting but depressing look at the situation in Darfur.

A gripping insight into the tragic genocide in Darfur, this documentary highlights the work of six individuals who have taken a role in trying to stop the killings and help the millions of suffering residents of the region. Filmmaker Ted Braun spotlights actor Don Cheadle, a politically active UCLA student, a refugee camp leader, an international prosecutor, an Ecuadorian working to feed starving victims and a young female armed rebel.

Daughters of Wisdom

2008, rated NR, 68 minutes, 3.1 stars. Fascinating to see how some people live through their spiritual dimension, outside of the materialistic focused modern life. Also beautiful scenery.

This acclaimed documentary spotlights rural Tibet as seen through the eyes of some of its most extraordinary women, the nuns of Kala Rongpo Monastery. Through the vision of their benefactor, the nuns receive training previously unavailable to them.

Desert Flower

2009, rated R, 120 minutes, 4 stars. Excellent documentary, recommend for mature students only.

A drama based on the real-life story of Waris Dirie, a poor girl who flees an arranged marriage in Somalia, winds up in London and becomes one of the world's most recognizable supermodels. As her star rises, Dirie speaks out against the practice of female genital mutilation, a trauma she experienced as a girl.

Devil Came on Horseback, The

2007, NR, 85 minutes, 4 stars. Very graphic, excellent documentary.

In this unflinching documentary chronicling the genocide in Darfur, former Marine Capt. Brian Steidle is forever transformed by the atrocities he witnesses as a military observer for the African Union.

Dirt! The Movie

2009, NR, 80 minutes, 4 stars. Haven't seen it looks good.

Dirt takes center stage in this entertaining yet poignant documentary from Bill Benenson and Gene Rosow, which unearths our cosmic connection to soil and explores how diverse groups of people are uniting to save the natural resource.

Earth 2100

2009, 84 minutes, 3 stars. Rather depressing, but interesting scenarios.

In 2009, ABC broadcast this dire parable to viewers as a two-hour special addressing the issues of climate change, overpopulation and the management of the United States' energy resources in coming decades. Hosted

by correspondent Bob Woodruff, the program uses the fictitious story of Lucy, born in 2009, to reflect the grim details of what might happen if citizens and leaders don't work to resolve looming environmental matters.

Empire in Africa, The

2006, rated NR, 87 minutes, 3.6 stars. Haven't seen it but looks interesting.

Director Philippe Diaz exposes some of the issues the movie *Blood Diamond* touched upon in this award-winning documentary on the atrocities that occurred in Sierra Leone, West Africa. In 1991, a civil war exploded in this tiny, diamond-rich country, fueled by a rebel group against exploitative Western interests. But instead of coming to the aid of the people, the international community manipulated an election and used violent means for their own ends.

Even the Rain

2010, rated NR, 103 minutes, 4 star. Saw this movie, very interesting twist and portrays the conquest of the Western hemisphere from a contemporary angle.

In this provocative film-within-a-film, a director heads to Cochabamba, Bolivia, to shoot a movie about the trespasses of Christopher Columbus in the New World, only to find the locals protesting present-day exploitation of the poor.

Flaw, The

2011, NR 82 minutes, 4 star. Haven't seen but looks intriguing.

A look at the recession and financial collapse of 2008, this documentary investigates the causes of ruin and includes interviews with noted economists, financial reporters, Wall Street bankers and homeowners on the brink of foreclosure.

Flow: For Love of Water

2008, NR, 84 minutes, 4 stars.

From both local and global perspectives, this documentary examines the harsh realities behind the mounting water crisis. Learn how politics, pollution and human rights are intertwined in this important issue that affects every being on Earth. With water drying up around the world and the future of human lives at stake, the film urges a call to arms before more of our most precious natural resource evaporates.

Fresh

2009, NR, 72 minutes, 4 stars. Well done documentary.

This absorbing documentary surveys American farmers' and researchers' pioneering efforts to develop efficient systems for growing food. All of those profiled share a common goal of limiting pollution while creating healthier products.

Fridays at the Farm

2006, TV-G, 65 minutes. Haven't see it but it looks interesting.

Lamenting his family's loss of connection with the natural world, filmmaker Richard Power Hoffmann joined a local organic farm and documented his experiences with the community-supported organization as he himself transformed from consumer to grower. The fascinating result uses nearly 20,000 still images to create time-lapse and macro photography sequences that reveal Hoffmann's personal journey in a powerful, one-of-a-kind visual experience.

God in China: The Struggle for Religious Freedom

2009, rated NR, 60 minutes, 2.8 stars. Lots of interesting questions raised by this film. A good study in our own cultural biases as well. Is Christianity suited to the new capitalist-consumerist China?

God and country don't necessarily mix in China, where leaders have long harbored an antireligious bias. This documentary shines a light on that uncomfortable relationship, showing how common people go to uncommon

lengths to practice their faith. Through interviews with believers and representatives of both government-sanctioned and "underground" churches, the film explores the fine line that exists between tolerance and persecution in China.

Good Kurds, Bad Kurds

2000, rated NR, 79 minutes, 3 stars. Haven't seen it but looks like an interesting study of the stateless Kurds.

Journalist Kevin McKiernan's powerful film takes a close look at the Kurds, compelling and controversial subjects whose identities seem to shift depending on the loyalties of those viewing them. To some, they are heroes fighting to rebuild war-torn Iraq; to others, they are terrorists to be feared and loathed. What is the truth, and where do the answers lie? This provocative study earned Best Documentary honors at numerous film festivals.

History & Art of the Geisha, The

2005, rated NR, 84 minutes, 2.8 stars. Haven't seen it but looks interesting.

Veiled in mystery, the secret society of the Japanese geisha has fascinated Westerners for centuries. This revealing program charts the history and art of the geisha, from the society's all-male origins to the beautiful kimono-clad women trained from childhood to carry on the age-old tradition. Exploring the contemporary practice of the craft as well as its surrounding controversy, this program offers an enlightening look into the geisha culture.

Human Footprint

National Geographic, 2008, rated, NR, 1 hr. 30 min. Watched part of this documentary, lots of facts and figures.

With the aid of eye-opening visuals, this national Geographic special illustrates the true nature of the "footprints" human beings leave behind on the planet. By tracing the arc of an average person's life – a time period that spans about 2.5 billion seconds – the program reveals how much energy a person consumes, how much waste he or she produces and even how many people they will have met by the time they die.

Inherit the Land: Adventures on the Agrarian Journey

2008, NR, 48 minutes. 3.1 stars. Interesting life-style shift by some Christians.

Featuring Christian families across America who've chosen to live an agrarian lifestyle, filmmaker Ken Carpenter's inspiring video presents a compelling case for making farming a way of life. Highlights include visits to Washington state, Illinois and Virginia, where families such as the Bradricks, the Houks and the Wilsons offer viewers a glimpse into the benefits -- and abundant blessings -- of agrarian living.

Inside North Korea

National Geographic, 2006, 50 minutes, 3 ½ star.

Disguised as a medical coordinator, National Geographic correspondent Lisa Ling gains access into North Korea and gives viewers a powerful glimpse inside one of the most restrictive countries in the world. Through personal accounts and exclusive footage, Ling exposes the difficulties North Koreans face while living in such an oppressive regime, coping with poverty, hunger and the lack of civil liberties.

Last Mountain, The

2011, NR, 95 minutes, 4 stars. Looks interesting, haven't seen it.

This gripping documentary follows ordinary citizens in West Virginia's Coal River Valley as they wage a campaign to prevent the infamous Massey Energy Company from expanding ruinous mountaintop removal mining operations in their community.

Maxed Out

2006, NR, 87 minutes, 4 star. Well done documentary. Recommend.

With sobering facts, this thought-provoking documentary unveils the consequences of Americans' collective addiction to plastic debt -- including its contribution to the vanishing of a once-robust middle class. Investigating

personal debt, the U.S. government's out-of-control national debt and those who prey on the poor, this film explores the staggering financial burden people live with every day, which has driven some to extreme action.

Nomadic People Mongolia: Land Without Fences

A nomad's hard choice, April 19, 2007, A PBS documentary. Excellent documentary.

Internal and external forces threaten the nomadic lifestyle.

http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/rough/2007/04/mongolia_land_w.html

One Peace at a Time

2009, 83 minutes, 3 stars. Haven't seen, looks good.

Contemplating the possibility of ensuring that every child receives basic human rights, filmmaker Turk Pipkin travels to 20 countries seeking insight from Nobel Laureates Desmond Tutu, Muhammad Yunus, Steve Chu and many others. This compelling documentary also features comments from Queen Rania of Jordan and musician Willie Nelson, along with music by Ben Harper, Bob Dylan, Jack Johnson, Cat Stevens and more.

Persuaders, The

2004, 90 minutes, 3 stars. A bit dated but excellent look into advertising industry. Recommend.

PBS's long-running television series "Frontline" examines the inner workings of advertising and public relations and the men and women -- dubbed "persuaders" -- whose job it is to influence the buying habits of today's consumers. See how they research the preferences of shoppers, pique their interest, entice them to part with their hard-earned money, and get their own messages across in an increasingly complicated and tech-savvy world.

Place at the Table, A

2012, 84 minutes, 4 stars. Good documentary.

Using personal stories, this powerful doc illuminates the plight of the 49 million Americans struggling with food insecurity. A single mother, a small-town policeman and a farmer are among those for whom putting food on the table is a daily battle.

Sand and Sorrow

2007, TV-13, 94 minutes 3 ½ stars.

A heartrending documentary about the humanitarian crisis in Darfur, Sand and Sorrow examines the causes and effects of tragedy on a mass scale. Executive producer George Clooney narrates the program, focusing on the bloody civil war raging in Sudan, in which hundreds of thousands of native Sudanese have died and millions more have been displaced from their homes and land by their own government. Peabody Award winner Paul Freedman directs.

Story of India

2007, 2 discs, 4 stars. Very good documentary, recommend more contemporary segments.

Hosted by noted historian Michael Wood, explores the rich culture of India with this visually striking program that takes viewers on a fascinating journey from the country's ancient origins to its significant place in our contemporary global community. Hosted by noted British historian Michael Wood, the series explores the many facets of Indian society, including the arts, spiritual traditions, the diverse population, the rising high-tech business community and much more.

Tapped

2009, NR, 76 minutes, 4 stars. Haven't seen it but looks interesting.

The high cost -- to both the environment and our health -- of bottled water is the subject of this documentary that enlists activists, environmentalists, community leaders and others to expose the dark side of the bottled water industry. Americans may rethink their obsession with bottled H2O when they learn of the unregulated industry's willingness to ignore environmental and health concerns, and the problems that arise as a result.

To Market to Market to Buy a Fat Pig

2007, rated NR, 60 minutes, 3.8 stars. Interesting look at alternative food sources, farmer's markets.

Foodies will salivate over this PBS tribute to market houses and farmers' markets across America, showcasing the buyers and sellers and, of course, the food. From crab cakes in Baltimore to specialty celery in Lancaster, Pa., berries in Santa Monica, Calif., bison in Santa Fe, N.M., and heirloom tomatoes in Asheville, N.C., filmmaker Rick Sebak and crew check out the culinary bounty and social aspects found in this country's regional markets.

Unforeseen, The

2007, NR, 93 minutes, 3 stars. Well done documentary, interesting ideas explored.

Robert Redford and Terrence Malick executive produce director Laura Dunn's vivid examination of unchecked development at the expense of environmental sustainability, specifying the Barton Springs aquifer of Austin, Texas, as case in point. The documentary draws on archival footage and interviews with Redford, former Gov. Ann Richards, lobbyist Dick Brown and Austin land developer Gary Bradley to contemplate the true cost of the American Dream.

Unmistaken Child (Ha-Gilgul)

2008, rated NR, 102 minutes, 3.9 stars. Wonderful film, I think it is always interesting to see the different ways people live outside of the West, and the values they cherish.

Filmmaker Nati Baratz follows the spellbinding journey of Tibetan Buddhist monk Tenzin Zopa as he travels far and wide to identify the child who is the reincarnation of his deceased master, Lama Konchog. Acting on instructions from the Dalai Lama, the shy Zopa relies on astrology, dreams and other signs to locate the child, knowing that if he succeeds, he must also convince the boy's parents to release their child into his care.

Up the Yangtze (Sur le Yangzi)

2007, NR, 93 minutes, 3 star. Great documentary, the everyday lives of ordinary Chinese people affected by globalization.

When the Three Gorges Dam makes life hard for the Yu family, daughter Yu Shui must take a job aboard a cruise ship, where she enters into a dizzying microcosm of modern China. Meanwhile, her parents face the rising waters of the Yangtze.

Urbanized

2011, NR, 85 minutes, 4 stars. Haven't seen but looks interesting.

The third part of Gary Hustwit's design film trilogy, Urbanized looks at the issues and strategies behind urban design, explores a diverse range of urban design projects around the world, and frames a global discussion on the future of cities.

Vanishing of the Bees

2009, NR, 87 minutes, 4 stars. Very intriguing. Recommend.

This documentary details the economic, political and ecological consequences of a dwindling world honeybee population. It's a phenomenon with a name -- Colony Collapse Disorder -- but no explanation or solution exists.

War Child

2008, PG-13, 92 minutes, 3 ½ star. Looks good.

Hip-hop star Emmanuel Jal returns home to Sudan, where he was forced to fight as a child soldier during the region's civil war, in this powerful documentary that examines the roots of the long-running conflict and its impact on Jal's life and music. Going back to Africa to be reunited with his family provokes a deeply moving response in Jal, and his powerful songs reveal his very complex feelings about one of the world's overlooked tragedies.

War Dance

2006, PG-13, 105 minutes, 4 stars. Wonderful film, inspiring.

Set in civil war-ravaged Northern Uganda, this Best Documentary Oscar nominee follows the lives of three youngsters who attend school in a refugee camp and find hope through a rich tradition of song and dance. Coming from a world in which children are abducted from their families and forced to fight in the rebel army, these kids give it their all when they travel to the capital city to take part in the prestigious Kampala Music Festival.

Where Is the World Going, Mr. Stiglitz?

2007, rated NR, 2 discs, 2.7 stars. Perhaps a bit dated now.

Nobel Prize winner Joseph Stiglitz, a former chief economist for the World Bank, explains the forces driving the global economy in this five-part series designed for a general audience, not just globalization experts. In addition to offering theories about the state of the world's finances, Stiglitz also suggests ways in which prosperous nations can extend assistance to struggling Third World countries.

Why We Fight

2005, PG-13, 98 minutes, 4 star. Interesting examination and provocative questions in this documentary.

Through personal stories of soldiers, government officials, scholars, journalists and innocent victims, this documentary examines the political and economic interests and ideological factors, past and present, behind American militarism.

World Without Us, The

2008, NR, 3 ½ stars. The book was good, hope the documentary is as well.

This provocative documentary probes what would happen if the United States were to suddenly remove itself from the world stage, giving up its self-appointed role as a global policeman and withdrawing into its own borders.