

Grow! (2011; directors: Christine Anthony and Owen Masterson; 60 minutes)

A biology teacher would hope that *Grow!*, a short film about young adults choosing an agrarian over a modern, urban life would change his or her students' perspectives on many things. Christine Anthony and Owen Masterson teamed up with Georgia Organics, a farmer advocacy group, to portray fellow farmers toiling on their own small, organic farms in Georgia. The stars of this documentary lead the phalanx of the food movement: they consciously turn to agriculture when farmers are getting older and older, the environment is becoming more unpredictable, and the economy is becoming less and less promising.

After screening this 60-minute film during a double period, my high school biology class (mainly sophomores) came away with little more than the impression that these farmers realized that life is short and were making the most of their own lives. It is difficult for an ethnically and socioeconomically diverse student body to identify with the white, college-educated, twenty-somethings in Georgia. Students nowadays are removed from nature, from recognizing novel career paths, and from healthy food itself.

This is a sad statement in its own right, and the film is too brief and one-dimensional to provoke thought. *Food, Inc.* and *King Corn* are examples of films with a similar message that utilize sensationalism and shock to provoke emotional responses and intelligent

conversations about food choice, individuals' impact on the environment, and students' roles in their own economy and society. At the very least, *Grow!* shows students that a career choice beyond a desk or cash register takes hard work and a committed spirit, which their teachers can appreciate and encourage.

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GAIA: The Living Planet (1990; Bullfrog Films, www.bullfrogfilms.com; 45 minutes)

We are taught that there are inferences, hypotheses, theories, and laws in the sciences. In this 45-minute video, we are introduced to James Lovelock, originator of a theory to explore physics, chemistry, biology, and earth science. Against a background of panoramic photography and a well-chosen musical score, Angelika Lizius and Detlef Jungjohann, producers of this 45-minute DVD, investigate a theory that has experienced more than 40 years of controversy. Since the 1960s, Lovelock, now in his 90s, has implored us to recognize that our earth is "one single living organism" and to "be nice to our earth." He does an admirable job defending his theory, providing models, observations, data, historical perspectives and some pretty awesome and ingenious

devices he has developed to support his theoretical work. The most notable device is the electron capture detector, an instrument that has made it possible to detect atmospheric chlorofluorocarbons, and ultimately assisted in knowledge of the ozone layer's depletion in our stratosphere.

Above all, Lovelock makes connections for the viewers. In his charming, no-nonsense way, he tells us his story. He was the person who exposed fluorocarbons in the atmosphere; he explains the coexistence of incompatible gases. He gives us an ecology learning experience when he shows how sulfur and carbon cycles are linked. He also had a staunch supporter in Lynn Margulis, the world-renowned evolutionary biologist, who died in 2011.

This DVD is recommended for high school through college students, those who, upon our passing, inherit custodianship of our earth. Lovelock reminds us all that it is our personal responsibility to care for Gaia.

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