



HUMAN is a Third Quarter 2018 LVCA dvd donation to the Hugh Stoupe Memorial Library of the Heritage United Methodist Church in Ligonier, Pennsylvania. Below is Kino Ken's review of that dvd film.

15 of a possible 20 points

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Afghanistan / Australia / Bahamas / Bangladesh / Bolivia / Bosnia and Hercegovina / Brazil / Burkina Faso / Cambodia / Canada / Central African Republic / China / Congo / Cuba / Democratic Republic of the Congo / Dominican Republic / Egypt / Ethiopia / France / Germany / Greece / India / Ireland / Israel / Italy / Japan / Jordan / Kazakhstan / Kenya / Lebanon / Libya / Madagascar / Mauritania / Mexico / Mongolia / Morocco / Myanmar / Namibia / Nepal (Mustang) / Norway / Pakistan / Palestine / Papua New Guinea / Peru / Philippines / Russia / Rwanda / Senegal / South Africa / South Korea / Thailand / Tunisia / Ukraine / United Kingdom (England and Northern Ireland) / United States / Uruguay / Venezuela 2015 color 149 minutes live action feature documentary perititled (using lateral placement titles) in English translation Humankind Production / GoodPlanet Foundation Producer: Florent Gilard

Key: *indicates outstanding technical achievement

Points:

1 Direction: Yann Arthus-Bertrand

music. Whether vocal, orchestral, or instrumental, intensely rhythmical musical interludes command auditory attention, fascinating and just as colorful as visual complements. Kudos to composer Armand Amar and his arranging collaborators for introducing exotic novelties in a genuinely universal sound spectrum.

Most impressive among speakers, for this viewer, were the ex-President of Uruguay, Atman from Haiti, convicted criminal Fresno from the United States, Yevgeny of Russia, and an exiled revolutionary from Syria.

Pepe Mujica spent ten years in solitary confinement with no access to reading material before eventual liberation and subsequent election to the presidency of his nation. Like Leo Tolstoy, he urges simplification of desire and thoughtfulness directed at both resources and fellow occupants of the planet as the only way to achieve individual happiness.

Haitian Atman indicates the despair and obsessiveness related to constant scrounging for basics like food, shelter, and adequate clothing in his homeland. Since weather and government have done citizens no favor, can society at least extend some generosity? This is a question not asked, yet implicit in Atman's definitions of poverty.

A teenage murderer convicted of killing his girlfriend and her child, Fresno has experienced salvaging redemption through conversations with the juvenile's grandmother. He now speaks deliberately, weighing each phrase, taking the time to think of consequences and his future. The weight of irreversible, hasty actions is a burden he understands must be carried throughout the rest of his life. What he did temporarily severed relationships with the rest of his species, placing him outside law and civil acceptance. But he realizes a second chance is now available, one the man gratefully accepts.

Quite a different story is Yevgeny's. Hoping to obtain a son to share his ideas and labors, he received instead the blessing of a disabled child. How could that be a privilege? It defied his dreams, shattered his aspirations. In their place came unconditional love, which Yevgeny believes the single most precious gift of humanity after life itself.

For a Syrian former anatomy teacher, watching gunmen kill his wife and children hardened his heart, converting him into a killing machine. He doesn't seek revenge for its own sake. Revolution and blood sacrifice are envisioned as necessary to establish a more tolerant and safer nation. Extremists who spread

hate at gunpoint and those who support them are enemies perceived as threats. They must be destroyed and rendered harmless, whatever the cost and methods involved. This is easy to understand in this case. Yet isn't it eroding his character, making him as intolerantly volatile as those he wishes to overthrow and annihilate?

Though extremely difficult to select from a bounty of memorable scenes, three appeared especially arresting. One was a shot of trekkers moving along a ridge of sand in Pakistan as blue shadows supply cool relief from blazing sunlight. Another impressive scene was flocks of birds in organized flight winging over Lake Magadi in Kenya. The finale, a kind of tree of life composed of rust-colored runoff gulleys in Bolivia, serve to remind by branchings from a common source of mankind's single ultimate ancestry. Shouldn't relatives be cooperating for the planet's greater welfare instead of greedily competing against each other for the biggest possible slice of pie?

Sections of panoramic vistas occasionally prove somewhat sluggish. They could have benefited from quicker pacing. Since the dvd's runtime is forty-two minutes less than that of the film's theatrical release, it's necessary to reference a variety of HUMAN reviews by critics to excavate essential background information about certain vague comments heard. With no names being provided for onscreen participants, a barrier of anonymity keeps audiences away from the kind of complete personal empathy Arthus-Bertrand definitely desires.

Lighting and sound are enhanced to the utmost degree with the sharpest imaginable picture definition and carefully filtered speech recordings.

Is the film adequately insightful? This is a debatable point. Not being informed where an anonymous subject lives and what his or her income level and education are creates an intellectual vacuum short-circuiting logical judgments while compelling sheer emotional responses. Those by themselves are transient, unlikely to produce lasting changes in behavior.

Locations are admirably diverse topographically. They are individually highlighted by a stately elegance in time allotment, allowing more complete appreciation of details.

Considered separately on aesthetics alone, bird's-eye photographs represent a formidable artistic achievement. They offset the director's Utopian idealism, perhaps unintentionally.

Whether the film will actually result in positive political and economic reforms is questionable. As a record of humans in crisis, it has substantial value, suggesting greater acceptance of the natural environment confronting people is essential for survival. Only if coupled with greater mutual respect for traditions, wishes, and sensitivities of other inhabitants will the planet's future be an improvement over its past. Mutual hatred doesn't make for prosperous, productive living. Replacement by love and just dealings with others is a better path to follow. That perhaps is the most profound conclusion to be drawn from this production.

Because of graphic verbal content, with grim statements about war, insurrection, genocide, and abuse, HUMAN is strictly adult auditing.

Bonus features of the dvd are a 2½ minute trailer and a fifty-two minute "making-of" documentary elaborating on filmmaker purpose and methodology, translation difficulties, and decisions about balancing art with truthfulness, these latter considerations bringing male and female editors into periodic conflicts necessitating compromise by both.

A most highly recommended film experience, HUMAN rewards viewers with ineffable imagery and inspired communication about mortal existence, stressing simultaneously uniqueness and universality. That's a rare achievement indeed for cinema.