Few endeavors in human history have had as profound an impact on the course of civilization as mining and its sister sciences. Fascinating in its own right, the narrative becomes even more engaging when it is put in the context of the personalities, nations, and events that helped move it forward. Like so many other fields, however, it has evolved in into a highly technical pursuit that seems out of reach to the average person. It is either bland to bother learning about or too difficult to understand. It also seems, to a generation raised to deify tech billionaires, to be a relic of the industrial revolution, a source of pollution that should not be tolerated any longer (but then where would they get the materials for their circuit boards?). In other words, there are many misconceptions floating around about it - as well as a lack of acknowledgement.

This is unfortunate since it efforts are being made to make mining more sustainable and environmentally friendly every day, it is doubly unfortunate since it does not change the fact it remains one of the most vital links in the chain of civilization. Geologists, miners, metallurgists, and others need to be cast in a heroic mold. The story is replete with entrepreneurs and risk takers, the very sort of figures young people are taught to idolize from an early age. Because of its antiquity and ubiquity it is taken for granted. This is the tragedy. A documentary is one of the best way to renew interest, open eyes, and change people's opinions. By reinforcing its criticality and its malleability, by presenting both the past and present in a digestible narrative form, my intention is to spark interest not only in the topic itself, but to inspire people, especially young people, to pursue subjects, like math, computer science, physics, and chemistry, that at first glance may seem impractical, unimportant, inaccessible, or boring.

The second half of the piece will consist of showing off by opportunities that lie ahead. The exploration of the ocean’s depths and asteroid belts for minerals as well as the applications of nanotechnology, synthetic biology, and robotics - which will move these endeavors forward. The incentive to bring back these precious materials back to earth will undoubtedly be one of the great impetuses for going beyond earth, beyond our solar system and, perhaps one day, beyond our galaxy. It could be argued that metals and alloys were the first truly global market. Why would they not be the first intergalactic one too?

Works Cited

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