



The Concise Routledge Encyclopedia of the
DOCUMENTARY FILM

Ian Aitken
editor



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The Concise Routledge Encyclopedia of the Documentary Film

The Concise Routledge Encyclopedia of the Documentary Film is a fully international reference work on the history of the documentary film from the Lumière brothers' *Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory* (1885) to Michael Moore's *Fahrenheit 9/11* (2004).

Documentary film dates back to the last decades of the nineteenth century and has been practiced since then in every region of the world. This Encyclopedia provides a resource that critically analyzes that history in all its aspects. Entries examine individual films and the careers of individual filmmakers, but also include overview articles of national and regional documentary film history.

Previously published in three volumes, entries have been edited for the new, concise edition and two new entries have been added, on India and China.

The Concise Routledge Encyclopedia of the Documentary Film:

- discusses individual films, bringing together all aspects of documentary film.
- introduces filmmakers, including lesser-known filmmakers from countries such as India, Bosnia, China, and others.

- examines the documentary filmmaking traditions within nations and regions, including places such as Iran, Brazil, Portugal, and Japan.
- explores themes, issues, and representations in regard to specific documentary films, including human rights, modernism, homosexuality, and World War I, as well as types of documentary film such as newsreels and educational films.

This accessible concise edition provides an invaluable resource for both scholars and students. With stills from key films, this resource provides the decisive entry point into the history of an art form.

Ian Aitken is Professor, in the Department of Cinema and TV, Hong Kong Baptist University. He is the author of *Film and Reform: John Grierson and the British Documentary Film Movement* (Routledge, 1990, 1992), *The Documentary Film Movement: An Anthology* (Edinburgh University Press, 1998), *The Cinema of Alberto Cavalcanti: Realism, Surrealism and National Cinemas* (Flicks Books, 2000) and *The Encyclopedia of the Documentary Film*, three-volume set (Routledge, 2006).

The Concise Routledge Encyclopedia of the Documentary Film

Edited by
Ian Aitken

First published as *The Encyclopedia of the Documentary Film* in 2006

This concise edition published 2013

by Routledge

2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada

by Routledge

711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

The concise Routledge encyclopedia of the documentary film / ed. by Ian Aitken.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Documentary films--Encyclopedias. I. Aitken, Ian.

PN1995.9.D6C545 2011

070.1'8--dc23

2011024554

ISBN: 978-0-415-59642-8 (hbk)

Typeset in Baskerville

by Taylor & Francis Group

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Angela: Portrait of a Revolutionary
Ark, The
Ascent of Man, The
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 Secrets of Nature
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 79 Springtimes of Ho Chi Minh
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Silent World, The
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 Sorrow and the Pity, The
 South
 Spellbound
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 Testimony on Non-Intervention
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 Three Songs About Lenin
 Times of Harvey Milk, The
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 Triumph of the Will
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 Woodstock: Three Days of Peace and Music
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 Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation
 Zone, La

Individuals: directors and producers

Agee, James
 Agland, Phil
 Akerman, Chantal
 Akomfrah, John
 Alexander, Donald
 Allégret, Marc
 Alvarez, Santiago
 Anderson, Lindsay

Anstey, Edgar
 Antonio, Emile de
 Apted, Michael
 Arcand, Denys
 Bang Carlsen, Jon
 Barclay, Barry
 Basse, Wilfried
 Benoit-Lévy, Jean
 Berliner, Alan
 Bitomsky, Hartmut
 Blank, Les
 Bond, Ralph
 Bossak, Jerzy
 Böttcher, Jürgen
 Boulting, John and Roy
 Brakhage, Stan
 Brault, Michel
 Burch, Noël
 Burns, Ken
 Canudo, Ricciotto
 Capra, Frank
 Cavalcanti, Alberto
 Chan, Evans
 Clair, René
 Cooper, Merian C.
 Cousteau, Jacques-Yves
 Coutinho, Eduardo
 Craigie, Jill
 Davis, Peter
 Depardon, Raymond
 Deren, Maya
 Dindo, Richard
 Drew, Robert
 Dyke, Willard Van
 Elton, Arthur
 Emigholz, Heinz
 Epstein, Jean
 Ertel, Dieter
 Fanck, Arnold
 Field, Mary
 Flaherty, Robert
 Forgács, Péter
 Franju, Georges
 Freyer, Ellen
 Galan, Hector
 Gardner, Robert
 Godard, Jean-Luc
 Godmilow, Jill
 Gold, Jack
 Goldovskaya, Marina
 Goldson, Annie
 Gorin, Jean-Pierre
 Grabe, Hans-Dieter
 Graef, Roger

Greene, Felix	Ljubic, Vesna
Grierson, John	Loach, Ken
Grigsby, Michael	Longinotto, Kim
Groulx, Gilles	Lorentz, Pare
Guzmán, Patricio	Low, Colin
Guzzetti, Alfred	Lozinski, Marcel
Hegedus, Chris	Lumière Brothers, The
Heller, Peter	Lye, Len
Herzog, Werner	Macartney-Filgate, Terence
Heyer, John	MacDonald, Kevin
Honigmann, Heddy	McElwee, Ross
Hughes, John	McLean, Ross
Hurley, Frank	Makavejev, Dusan
Huston, John	Malle, Louis
Ichikawa, Kon	Malraux, André
Isaacs, Jeremy	Marker, Chris
Ivens, Joris	Marshall, John
Jackson, Pat	Mauro, Humberto
Jacobs, Lewis	Maysles, Albert
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Kamei, Fumio	Moffatt, Tracey
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Karmen, Roman	Moore, Michael
Kauffmann, Stanley	Moretti, Nanni
Kawase, Naomi	Morin, Edgar
Keiller, Patrick	Morris, Errol
Kiarostami, Abbas	Moulet, Luc
Kieślowski, Krzysztof	Murrow, Edward R.
King, Allan	Nestler, Peter
Kirchheimer, Manfred	Obomsawin, Alanis
Klein, James	Ophüls, Marcel
Kline, Herbert	O'Rourke, Dennis
Kluge, Alexander	Ottinger, Ulrike
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Kossakovsky, Viktor	Pennebaker, D.A.
Kramer, Robert	Peries, Lester James
Krelja, Petar	Perrault, Pierre
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Langlois, Henri	Podnieks, Juris
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Leiterman, Douglas	Reichert, Julia
Lelouch, Claude	Reisz, Karel
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Litvak, Anatole	Riefenstahl, Leni

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 Rochemont, Louis de
 Rodríguez, Marta and Jorge Silva
 Rogosin, Lionel
 Romm, Mikhail
 Roos, Jørgen
 Rossif, Frédéric
 Rouch, Jean
 Rouquier, Georges
 Rubbo, Michael
 Sander, Helke
 Sauvage, André
 Schadt, Thomas
 Schlesinger, John
 Schoedsack, Ernest B.
 Seidl, Ulrich
 Seleckis, Ivars
 Seta, Vittorio de
 Seybold, Katrin
 Shannon, Kathleen
 Shub, Esfir
 Shuker, Gregory
 Sinclair, Upton
 Siodmak, Robert
 Sokurov, Alexandr
 Špáta, Jan
 Spottiswoode, Raymond
 Stern, Bert
 Stern, Horst
 Stewart, Charles
 Stoney, George
 Storck, Henri
 Strand, Paul
 Strick, Joseph
 Swallow, Norman
 Taylor, John
 Thomas, Antony
 Thomson, Margaret
 Toscano, Salvador
 Trinh T. Minh-ha
 Tsuchimoto, Noriaki
 Turin, Viktor
 Urban, Charles
 Vachek, Karel
 Varda, Agnès
 Vas, Robert
 Vertov, Dziga
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 Warhol, Andy
 Watkins, Peter
 Watson, Patrick
 Watt, Harry

Weiss, Andrea
 Whitehead, Peter
 Wild, Nettie
 Wildenhahn, Klaus
 Wintonick, Peter
 Wiseman, Frederick
 Wright, Basil
 Zahn, Peter von
 Zetterling, Mai
 Zielke, Willy

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Documentary film: an introduction

Ian Aitken

It is with great pleasure that I acknowledge the invitation to write this new Introduction to the *Concise Routledge Encyclopedia of the Documentary Film*. The original three-volume, hardback edition of *The Encyclopedia of the Documentary Film* appeared in 2006, and met with considerable acclaim. For example, the Encyclopedia was awarded the prestigious Dartmouth Medal by the American Library Association in 2006 for the 'outstanding work of reference of the year'. Unfortunately, the single-volume *Concise Routledge Encyclopedia of the Documentary Film* is unable to accommodate all that appeared in the original hardback edition of the Encyclopedia and, as a consequence, many entries have, necessarily, had to be excluded from the present edition. Readers interested in these entries are referred to the 2006 edition, which is widely available. The entries appearing in the Concise edition have, after some deliberation, been limited to those concerning films, filmmakers, and national traditions. Two new entries on India and China have also been added to the national traditions covered in the original work.

Given the necessary abridgement involved here, it might be assumed that the task of a new Introduction would be to provide an overview of the contents of the new work. However, this is not my intention, as I do not believe that such a summary would be especially enlightening, or useful. Instead, I intend to take the opportunity presented to me here to do something perhaps more trying: to think about the documentary film in general, and to reflect upon the nature, character, structure, purpose and role of the documentary film. In doing so, I also draw on

my own theoretical interests, as set out in my trilogy of books on cinematic realism: *European Film Theory and Cinema* (2001), *Realist Film Theory and Cinema* (2006), and *Lukácsian Film Theory and Cinema* (2011). Rather than an overview, therefore, I intend to use this Introduction to reflect more generally on the documentary film, and I also hope that this modest contribution will play some role in initiating and escalating further debate on what I regard to be one of the most important of contemporary aesthetic media: the documentary film.

I The likeness of everyday occurrence

Documentary film is the founding genre of the cinema and, like still photography before it, the original imperative of that genre was to record existing human, social, physical and natural reality. Documentary film is thus, always was, and ever will be, intrinsically related to issues of realism and realistic representation, and this affiliation has certainly influenced the development of the medium up to the present day. The earliest films, shot by the Lumière brothers and others towards the end of the nineteenth century, were, as a consequence of this orientation, chiefly concerned to represent aspects of everyday life—the ephemeral life of the street—and, in doing so, these films also carried on some of the central traditions of nineteenth-century realist art, traditions that were deliberately concentrated upon the representation of the quotidian and low, rather than the elevated and eminent. In carrying through this intrinsically democratic-realist mission, these films also

passed on one of the principal—perhaps the principal—aesthetics and representational accomplishments of photography: the preservation and perpetuation of moments of everyday life which would otherwise be doomed to fade into darkness within the ever-changing flux of perceptual experience.

For early spectators, therefore, the chief initial fascination with these films lay in the fact that those spectators were now not only able to see moments of everyday life approximately as they appeared within perceptual experience, but were also able to spend time reflecting on and considering those moments. For the first time, the rich, concrete tapestry of commonplace lived experience, with all its peculiar, surprising, evolving and information-rich particularities, had now been made lastingly visible, and the *actual* perceptible reality, within which all people are necessarily domiciled, had been made tellingly and unbrokenly manifest. ‘So that is what that street corner really looks like’, would have been the exclamation arising from spectators who may have passed by that same street corner in ‘real life’ a hundred times before. Here, what also distinguishes film from photography, of course—the crucial element that film adds to still photography—is the portrayal of the experience of temporal duration. Film now becomes much more like perceptual experience than the stationary images of photography: images that simply lack the humanity which the moving image is able to both invoke and evoke, by virtue of its ability to secure the human perceptual experience of duration. Of course, still photographs are also able to evoke a powerful sense of human essence, when observed by a spectator. However, the crucial difference here is that film is able to create a simulacrum of how human beings exist within perceptual experience—of how human beings experience life—and this simulacrum is also, essentially, *documentary* in essence. One provisional definition of the documentary film, therefore, might be that it is the type of film that embodies most fully a simulacrum of the perceptual experience of human existence, although, of course, not all documentary films can be accommodated within this definition, and some much more so than others.

The crucial and momentous ability that the documentary film possesses to portray the evolving material complexities of everyday life—what phenomenologists frequently refer to as the

Lebenswelt, or ‘lifeworld’—was also to eventually come to fascinate both of the two major theorists of classical cinematic realism: André Bazin and Siegfried Kracauer. Bazin’s influential essay ‘The Morphology of the Photographic Image’, written shortly after the atrocities and carnage of World War II had become more conspicuously and chillingly apparent to the European consciousness, is permeated by the idea, one also shared with the larger terrain of post-war French existentialist thought, that contemporary man is increasingly alienated from the ever more cold-blooded contemporary world that surrounds him: the ‘machine world’ that was also portrayed so effectively in the art of the Weimar New Objectivity movement. However, the essay is also characterised by the idea that all men—from the beginning of time until the present—are also deleteriously affected by a human condition in which man is inexorably caught up within the flow of temporality, and is, unfortunately, unable to stand outside of that flow and arrest its relentless passage towards finitude. What Bazin referred to as the ‘corrupting’ effect of temporality, therefore, refers, in part, to an existential inability to hold on to phenomenological experience, and to genuinely and meaningfully encounter the ‘complex fabric of the objective world’ (Bazin 1967: 15).

For Bazin, the human experience of temporality is ‘corrupting’ in two ways. First, it is corrupting in that existence within temporal duration eventually leads to decline and death. Second, it is corrupting because we cannot ever really, as the saying goes, ‘grasp the moment’, but must always be predestined to observe that moment fall away from us. Bazin argues that there is little we can do about the first of these consequences of temporal corruption and decline. However, he does argue that film can do something about the second, and that the filmed sequence of images is able to portray and secure the perceptual experience of temporal duration, and thus allow us to encounter the ‘complex fabric of the objective world’ as it is experienced through time. As Bazin argues, in film a span of temporal duration is captured as ‘change mummified’, and the flowing of the present out of and into the past can be observed time after time, as a section of the once-having-been-present that has now become the past completely (what we see in the film sequence is something that has already happened, and is now *in the past*); this can, therefore, also be said

to amount to a more consequential experience of totality than is ever available through a perceptual experience which is always characterised by ephemerality and fragmentation. In this sense, film can be said to compensate for that which is missing from perceptual experience—permanency—almost as though, as Bazin hints, the medium was brought into existence in order to fulfil this existential requirement and so advance the capacities of the human condition in an auspicious evolutionary manner. Such compensation is also *documentary* in essence, as Bazin insists that the filmed sequence should remain as close as possible to what he refers to as the ‘physiology of existence’: in other words, to our perceptual experience of reality (Bazin 1967: 133).

Taking the above into account, it can also be argued that the film sequence functions in an analogous way to human memory, which similarly links past and present into a unified whole. However, the act of memory—like the moment of perceptual experience—cannot, of course, be held on to for very long and, as argued above, such debility must again be distinguished from the immutability which characterises the film sequence. Despite this, it is possible to argue that there is a similarity in another sense between the act of remembering and the act of viewing the film sequence. For example, the act of remembering must also, and always, remain necessarily part of the present—that is, of present experience—because we can only remember from the site of the present moment; in a similar manner, the act of viewing the film sequence also remains located as part of the present, because we can only watch a film sequence from the site of the present moment. However, despite this similarity, a key difference must also be recognised here. In the act of memory, the person remembering is remembering his or her own past, whereas in viewing a film the spectator watches a picture of the past that is not part of his or her own past (unless we are talking about the untypical case of home movies). Film, therefore, broadens out beyond the individual in a way that memory cannot, and the act of viewing the film takes the individual *out* of his or her own individuality, rather than further *into* that individuality, and in so doing both possesses the capacity to challenge the preconceptions upon which such an individuality is founded and directs that individuality into the domain of social experience.

However, while such a challenge clearly has benefits, this process of raising up the spectator out of his or her own individuality, and of positioning the spectator within a more trans-individual context, is also problematic because it means that, unlike the act of memory, the spectator is not the sole protagonist involved in the experience of spectatorship, but must share that experience with something that already persists in itself and, in addition, as a totality: the material, fabricated film sequence. In memory there is only one totality involved, one which consists of the person remembering, and that which he/she remembers. However, in the act of spectatorship two totalities are involved, the first of which consists of the film sequence, which is complete unto itself, and the second of the union of film sequence and spectator in the act of spectatorship. The loss of creative sovereignty involved here, and concomitant propensity for manipulation entailed by a possible subordination of the latter of these two totalities to the first, has exercised many who have thought about the documentary film, and particularly so when such a film is perceived to be connected to an economic, industrial and ideological apparatus, as is the case with many documentary films made yesterday and today (the ‘official’ film, propaganda, the public relations film, etc.).

However, a more propitious outcome can also be envisioned here, and one that takes us back to an important similarity between the acts of spectatorship and of memory. The act of memory is surely an enlightening one, which is not only about remembering for its own sake, but is also meant to illuminate the present circumstances of the person who remembers, and to perhaps show the way forward. Given this, it can also be argued that the act of watching the documentary film has an analogous effect. The act of *watching* (rather than remembering) the past illuminates the present circumstances of the person who is watching, because the past world that is presented to us in the documentary film is *different* from our own, and is, therefore, capable of making us view our present world in a different light: as mutable and open to the prospect of change, rather than as unchallengeable and inevitable. Here the comparison with memory throws up something quite important: by virtue of this ability to show a realistic world which yet differs from the one within which we are domiciled, the act of watching a documentary film always has the potential to expand the

critical insight and reflective powers of the spectator, or at the least shake that spectator up a little. Of course, the fiction film is also able to establish a 'world'. However, and as the philosopher Georg Lukács argues in other contexts and respects, the photographic foundation of the documentary film confers a certain 'authenticity' on the world established within the medium (Lukács 1987: 473).

In addition to this ability to show a different world to the one which we inhabit, the notion that film, and particularly, by implication, documentary film, is able to recover a transient or even lost world of human experience and then redirect our attention to that world, is also echoed in the writings of Siegfried Kracauer, who, like Bazin, also believed that the ordinary everyday life of the street was the proper domain of the film. In his *Theory of Film* (1960), for example, Kracauer argues that the way to escape from the abstract character of the modern condition is to experience the world in all its phenomenological richness: to return to the concrete and intermediate labyrinth of the *Lebenswelt*. As he puts it: 'there is no substitute for the direct perception of the concrete achievement of a thing in its actuality' (Kracauer 1997: 296). When discussing Paul Rotha's 1953 documentary film *World Without End*, Kracauer also echoes Bazin when he argues that the 'substance of the images' in a documentary film should exhibit the 'continuum of physical reality' (Kracauer 1997: 212), while the leading argument of Kracauer's *Theory of Film* is based on the notion that film is able to redeem the material world for us through its ability to replicate and portray perceptual experience.

In his writings on the cinema—writings that still remain relatively little known in the English-speaking world because they are written in German—the Hungarian philosopher and literary critic Georg Lukács also argued that film's 'closeness to life' (*Lebensnähe*) determined the aesthetic specificity of the medium. For Lukács, film possessed a 'photographic basis' which must be respected and, clearly, this amounts to a documentary-naturalist form of film theory. However, all three of these theorists also went beyond arguing that film could reveal reality, to argue that film also possessed the ability to render the ordinary as beautiful, mysterious, enchanting and resonant with human meaning. In a disenchanting world, characterised by alienation and manipulation, film—especially film of a

documentary-realist character—could, therefore, become a medium of necessary enchantment; at the heart of such enchantment lies an ability to return man to the reality of concrete, phenomenological, *actual* existence—to what Kracauer calls 'physical reality', and Lukács the 'outside world', or *Aussenwelt*.

II The art of record

If documentary film is a medium that is able to show the reality of transient, empirical experience, and then 'embalm'—to use Bazin's term—such experience, it is also able to embalm experience that took place in the distant past, and is thus able to produce a long-standing *record* of times past. However, it also seems that, because of this predilection for the transient, in the long run what we find embalmed in the documentary film in a *consequential manner* is not the big issue, the historic event, but the miscellaneous elements of quotidian experience: what, for example, Kracauer referred to when discussing the documentary films of Louis Lumière, as the apparently *inconsequential* 'jumble of transient, forever dissolving patterns accessible only to the camera [...] the ripple of leaves in the wind [... these are subjects which film appears] predestined (and eager) to exhibit' (Kracauer 1997: 82–3). For Kracauer, such a predestination to demonstrate the impermanent is far from unimportant, and his conception of 'ante-room historiography', as set out in his posthumously published work *History: The Last Things Before the Last*, is also premised on the conviction that film should not show the 'last things'—the big issues and events—but the 'last things before the last'—the concrete, intermediate and apparently unimportant things which 'lie in the hollows between the lands we know'. Here, the importance of the documentary film lies in the ability of the medium to render-record that which 'lies in the hollows' that lie below that which we know, or what we are told to know: that which cannot be recovered through, or is generally disregarded by, other media bent on the portrayal of more evidently consequential matters.

The Battle of the Somme (Charles Urban 1916) was designed as a propaganda film, aimed at raising morale amongst the British people during a period in which many family members were being routinely slaughtered in the inhuman carnage of World War I. Admittedly,

the film is a rather understated example of film propaganda, far removed from other, more jingoistic efforts that appeared at the time, such as the aggressively patriotic *Our Empire's Fight for Freedom* (1918). Nevertheless, and even taking this aspect of the film into account, *The Battle of the Somme* is not ultimately significant because of this propagandistic imperative—this 'last thing'—but because the film reveals aspects of human experience that may, in other quarters, be regarded as incidental, and which may also have faded from our knowledge had they not been represented in this film. What we observe here, in *The Battle of the Somme*, are images of real people, but in soldiers' uniforms, living within a milieu of trenches and violently disfigured landscape. We see how these individuals move about. We observe their dress and body language. We notice how they interact with each other, and with the physical environment of trenches, mud and bomb-destroyed landscapes. We monitor the subsistence of a living, though bygone, gestural idiom. These soldiers seem to smile a lot (though this may be induced by the unfamiliar presence of the then bulky camera apparatus), and what in fact is most moving and touching in these scenes of now long-dead men are these instances of commonplace, easy-going companionship and comradeship, and it is this ordinary world of value, rather than any rhetoric of war valour or instrumentality of purpose, which renders the film so important and still eminently watchable. In his book on World War II, the British historian Angus Calder referred to that conflict as the 'people's war', and his ground-breaking study focused on the experience of ordinary people in the conflict, rather than the activities of government and the high command. However, documentary film is, in a sense, always really a record of the people, rather than the elite and, while documentary film has, historically, always presented us with records of leaders and monarchs, these portrayals seem to matter far less in the end than the portrayal of an ordinariness which, in its captivating involvedness, never ceases to beguile. Countless examples could be given, but think only of the scene in *Listen to Britain* (Humphrey Jennings 1942) in which workers congregate in a staff canteen awaiting the performance of a song. What pulls you forwards here is the dishevelled temperament of their demeanour as they loiter aimlessly, occasionally

spitting tobacco-tainted phlegm onto the muddled floor.

Extracts from the wartime films of the British documentary film movement are often used to illustrate expositions carried out in more contemporary films or television programmes that take as their subject World War II. Here, these extracts function both as a putative testimony to what happened, and as corroboration of the explanatory theses being deployed within the commentary and narrative, almost as though these extracts were somehow umbilically linked to both the place and time that they depict, and the diegesis of the later film within which they appear. However, of course, this is not the case and, correspondingly, these extracts cannot therefore be presumed to be either a testimony to historical real-world events or a substantiation of whatever is said and appears in the later film. Instead, these extracts must be conceived of as portraying events and aspects taking place at a particular place and time in relation to the representational imperatives and purposes of the *original* film, where that film was also pre-meditated as a unitary, purposive whole and not as a concoction of extracts, or source of primary data for unspecified future filmmaking. In addition, when that original film was made, it, and all within it, represented the *present*, not the *past*; this is a point that has important consequences for the documentary film, and which, therefore, will be returned to later.

The sort of 'insertion-as-testimony-and-substantiation' being discussed here sometimes happens, for example, in a television documentary film series on World War II such as *The World at War* (1973–74), where extracts from a film such as *Britain Can Take It* (1940) may be used to back up a construal of the London Blitz informed, at least surely in part, by an historical perception projecting backwards from the world view of the 1970s. At any rate, this documentary film series itself was definitely *produced* in the 1970s, not the 1940s, and for reasons, and with an agenda, that are quite different from the reasons and agenda that influenced *Britain Can Take It*. What we have here, therefore, at least at a philosophical level, is what might be described as an abstract disarticulation from the original film, in that these sequences are lifted entirely out of historical and filmic context, rather like pearls plucked from the ocean bed or diamonds cut out of the rock face. In addition, a different *role* has now been grafted

onto these sequences—become—extracts. In Britain Can Take It, these sequences play the role of indeterminate descriptive portrayal, evoking the general atmosphere of the period, and do not really substantiate any particular point being made in the narrative or commentary. However, in some sections of *The World at War*, these *extracts* are more straightforwardly related to narrative and commentary, and this, in turn, means that they come to play a role in what is a primarily *intellectual* exercise; this is, as argued, not the role that they play within Britain Can Take It, where these sequences form part of a more organic whole, like diamonds embedded still in their native terrain. This problem becomes particularly evident in the first episode of *The World at War*, ‘A New Germany 1933–39’, in which an exposition on Hitler’s brutal rise to power is embellished with extracts taken from Leni Riefensthal’s *Olympia* (1936) and *Triumph of the Will* (1935), giving the impression almost that these extracts are sections of newsreel footage.

This is not to say that there is anything axiomatically wrong with the *modus operandi* utilised by *The World at War*, which is, arguably, one of the finest achievements of the documentary film, and anyway, as will be argued later, *The World at War* also uses extracts from other kinds of filmed material in different and more fruitful ways. Clearly, it depends on how the *modus operandi* is utilised. However, this is to say that the practice certainly invites reflection upon its consequences, because there is a conceptual difficulty involved here, in that a sequence is not the same as an extract and the two should not be confused, and there is also, perhaps, an ethical quandary, in that a degree of instrumental disingenuousness is involved. One answer to both of these problems, and one which will also be discussed later in relation to *The World at War*, when the issue of the *structure* of the documentary film is discussed, is to retain as much as possible of the sequence *as sequence*, rather than as extract—in other words to retain more of the sense of the sequence as something relatively autonomous and also, in some cases, as part of something much more extensive than the host film. In terms of the latter, this, for example, is something that *The World at War* manages to achieve when the historical footage used in the film is *archival* footage, rather than footage taken from a specific, autonomous work.

It can also be argued that the primary value of a film such as Britain Can Take It—and also the principal value of the film *as record*—lies not in the capacity of its sequences to be used either as testimony, or in order to substantiate one intellectual-interpretative point or another about the past made in a later film. Instead, at least in respect of the discussion here, the principal value of the film lies in its ability to portray elements of a particular and then currently *present* time and place within a constructed whole, so that what we see emanating from the diegesis of the film is the whole ‘world’ that then surrounded the film’s filmmakers and related agents. Britain Can Take It, like *Triumph of the Will*, allows us as modern-day spectators to intuit that ‘world’, and it is in this more indeterminate sense that the film constitutes a ‘record’ of the past. If the documentary film is an art of record, therefore, it is a form of record far removed from objectivist premises and imperatives, and it may even be possible to argue that the documentary film can never ‘prove’ anything at all.

What is also so revelatory about these sequences, from films such as Britain Can Take It, or, for example, from Humphrey Jennings’ *Spare Time* (1939), is how intrinsically *humane* the worlds that they capture appear to be; how genuinely humanitarian people appear to be within their everyday relations with each other and their environment; and it is also this underlying kindness that these films record. It is possible to believe that human society is a competitive jungle, characterised by a constant struggle to attain power and advantage and weaken rivals (anyone who works in a university will recognise *this* picture), but these documentary films seem to disclose something quite different to this: that whilst the pursuit of such calculating self-interest may indeed exist, underlying it is something far more extensive and prevailing. People shown running to catch a bus, as in Britain Can Take It, do not contend with each other, but are almost light-hearted and co-operative in their actions. Here, the documentary film seems to show us evidence of, and, in a sense, record, an actually existing reality, and may also, therefore, be used to contest a vision of human life based in a belief in the necessity of antagonism, manipulation, exploitation, trickery and deceit. Happy eighteenth-century Enlightenment philosophers such as Marie Jean-Antoine Condorcet once believed that all men were endowed with ‘an active and

enlightened benevolence [and] a decorous and generous sensibility', and the documentary film sometimes seems to show that this might be the case (Aitken 2006: 10). Of course, the documentary film can also reveal the calculating duplicity that exists in human beings, but such duplicity may not be as widespread as has been thought.

As a form of record, therefore, the documentary film seems to be imbued with a humanist imperative, and is even able to make demagogues appear defective, apprehensive and tentative: in other words, human. Look closely, for example, at the shots of Adolf Hitler in Riefensthal's *Triumph of the Will*, a film that was meant to venerate the Nietzschean authority of the Führer and his party. What we actually see, though, is what Kracauer referred to in other respects as a 'man of skin and hair'—a man with a comical moustache, a stumbling gait, shifty eyes, and a coat that appears to be far too big and heavy for him—and this seeps out into the film, between those darkly lit episodes that attempt to extol a rhetoric of high xenophobia and chauvinism (oddly this undermining is also augmented by the choice of music used in the opening sections of the film: extracts from Richard Wagner's *The Mastersingers of Nuremberg*, which is, of course, a *comedy*). Of course, one of the ideological projects of the film was to make the Nazis appear congenial; however, this project is not always carried through and often fades into the portrayal of idiosyncrasy. The documentary film, therefore, seems able to excavate such frailties and incongruities almost as a matter of course, and although such a humanist imperative is much more noticeable when documentary film turns to the portrayal of the lower orders, and the suffering and destitute, it also seems to be intrinsic to the documentary film in general.

Of course, Hitler was an ogre, but his monstrous nature is something that is *internal*, rather than, for the most part, able to be displayed externally, and the documentary film chiefly shows what is *external*. Hitler does not particularly *look* like a monster in this documentary film, even though he may have been one in real life, and the portrayal of 'monstrousness', or evil, or, for that matter, epic adamant leadership, is not easily accomplished within the documentary film without, for example, the accompaniment of a detailed supporting commentary, which an important film such as *Triumph of the Will* does

not possess. In many documentary films there is often a contradiction to be found between the images used and the narrative/commentary/plot that is employed, and whatever degree of bombast is being articulated in the commentary, the images remain essentially descriptive-empirical in character. This is not to say that *Triumph of the Will* intentionally seeks to subvert the Hitler myth, but it is to say that this does appear to happen at certain points in the film.

What this also amounts to is a point concerning the value of *naturalism*. As record, the documentary film seems most valuable in its indeterminate portrayal of the empirical and intermediate details of times past and present, and less valuable when such details are connected up to an over-dominant and controlling intellectual diegesis. Even when the subject matter involved is weighty—for example, the rise of Hitler and Nazism—the documentary film is better employed showing a whole 'world' in all its empirical detail, rather than placing emphasis on consequential, concept-laden subject matter. This is what Riefensthal achieves in *Triumph of the Will*, and also in her *Olympia*. It does not matter here if such portrayals are of things, nature or people, because, ultimately, everything is filtered through a human sensibility: we cannot escape the fact that every conception of reality is filtered through our human perspective. So, for example, in Joris Ivens' *Regen* (1929), shots of reflections in a river, or of raindrops falling into a pool of water, appear emotionally moving not because they are so in themselves, but because we relate these images to our emotional and visceral experience of reality. The poetry involved here is partly invoked by the fact that when we see this film, and these images, we realise that our general experience of reality is, as Kracauer argues, 'abstract', and that we have consequently failed to recognise qualities such as those captured in *Regen*. What we have in the documentary film, therefore, is an intensified empiricism in which the rich and complex detail that we would normally fail to notice in daily life is held up for our pleasure and scrutiny. At its best, therefore, and also as a type of 'record', the documentary film appears to be characterised by a form of indeterminate, empirical and intermediary naturalism, which attempts to show us a 'whole world', and invites us to intuit a whole world.

III The structures of the documentary film

The quandary for the documentary film begins when the simulacrum of perceptual experience constituted by the film sequence must be inserted into a narrative structure of some sort. However, this is also, quite obviously, the point at which the film—as film—comes into existence. So, the documentary film is a necessarily and inherently problematical medium in that what lies at its essential centre—the representation of perceptual reality—loses its primacy once such representation become inserted into mechanistic narrative configurations drawn from other sources, whether those sources lie in the arts or the social and natural sciences. There is, therefore, ground present for a potential antithetical conflict here between the deployment of empirical sequences that preserve the continuum of human perceptual experience and a concomitant deployment of intermediary and abstract structures that negate that continuum; this antithesis between an unadulterated, unmediated model of the documentary film, and one that employs mediation to a greater or lesser extent, has driven many of the debates and controversies that have arisen around the development of the medium. In fact, it could even be argued that the question of which type of structure to adopt in a documentary film, and the issue of the impact of such implementation upon the simulacrum of perceptual experience which the film mobilises, has dominated documentary film studies since the earliest days. Should, for example, the documentary film be structured like a work of art, or like a scientific enquiry? Should the documentary film be highly structured, or structured as little as possible? Should the film disclose its principles of structuration, or is this not necessary? These questions related to structure have, historically, also dominated discussion of the documentary film within the field of film theory, often to the detriment of a contemplation of documentary film in terms of questions relating to the first two categories considered in this Introduction: the documentary film as simulacrum of the experience of perceptual reality; and the documentary film as record. Of course, these two areas are inevitably caught up in debates over how the documentary film should be structured, but the prevailing and widespread focus on structure often leads to a situation in which they are not addressed directly, nor sufficiently.

The question of what structure to adopt in the documentary film is also frequently, even perhaps at all times, raised in relation to the *purpose* of the documentary film: what is the documentary film *for*; what is/should be the *objective* in making a documentary film; and, related to this, what purpose can/should a documentary film be said to possess, irrespective of film-making intentionality? Some documentary films are made for entirely aesthetic purposes and, here, purpose and structure are primarily related to interactions within and the evolution of the aesthetic sphere. Films such as Walter Ruttmann's *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City* (1927), a combination of observed documentary and experimental filmmaking, have been characterised—and also sometimes criticised—as formalist-modernist films because of the emphasis they place on questions of aesthetic form and substance. However, the phrase 'formalist-modernism' is a contentious one, and modernism has both supporters and detractors. For the former an absolute engagement with the aesthetic could, as Theodor Adorno and others before him have argued, constitute a standpoint of rejection against the instrumentality and degradation of contemporary human existence. Even though Ruttmann (a former painter) himself may have had only or mainly formalist aesthetic intentions when making *Berlin*, this does not mean that other forms of meaning and significance cannot be attributed to the film, which, it could be argued, stands today as an example of Adorno's 'autonomous art': art that stands against the 'machine world'. Much the same can also be said about later so-called 'structuralist' experimental documentaries such as Larry Gottheim's *Fog Line* (1970), Malcolm Le Grice's *Little Dog for Roger* (1967), or Michael Snow's influential *Wavelength* (1967)—films that have also been disparaged for their alleged lack of social-political substance. Such films constitute an aesthetic practice founded upon freedom, creativity and the importance of art in a materialistic society.

A considerable number of documentary films produced today are, however, not examples of 'autonomous art', but are largely generic products, produced within the commercial or other marketplace, and largely destined for the various purpose of entertainment. The rapid expansion of cable and satellite television—not to mention the internet and various other forms of new information technology—has spawned a huge

increase in such films, and a number of channels have also appeared that are dedicated to their dissemination. Many of these films do not so much challenge or critically analyse the status quo, as reinforce it. For example, many natural history films convey a rhetoric of life as a competitive jungle, marked by the survival of the fittest, which conforms without difficulty with the ideology and needs of contemporary globalising capitalism. One thinks of a Discovery Channel series such as *Predators* here, and this and similar series of documentary films also draw upon a familiar range of stock conventions drawn from the standard (and often sub-standard) Hollywood film and various other entertainment genres. However, this is not the full picture, at least in relation to natural history documentary films, and series such as *Life on Earth* use the highest standards of filmmaking to paint a more enlightening portrait of animal communities which habitually engage in forms of social and familial cooperation and support. In such series the metaphor of the survival of the fittest is still evident, but is mediated by more providential and genuinely educational themes.

At their best, documentary film series such as *Life on Earth* convey knowledge to us about the opulence and wonder of the natural world. Their purpose is to educate, enlighten and enthral, and also, sometimes, to make us become more environmentally aware and active. The same is also true, for example, of Arne Sückdorff's *The Great Adventure* (1954), and the undersea photography in Jacques Cousteau's *The Silent World* (1956) and *World Without Sun* (1964). These films also show us another 'world'—the animal world—which often seems to contain the sort of absolute values that we would seek to emulate, values such as lifelong companionship and dedication to the care of the young. Other series of films also attempt something of the same in relation to the structures of the physical world, and also the story of human history. Carl Sagan's *Cosmos*, and Kenneth Clarke's *Civilization* come to mind here. Such primarily 'educational' series also show us a past 'world', the intricacies of which exist beyond our present knowledge, and make us aware of how little we know of things.

Such films as these may have no overt political or ideological agenda, but they usually always have covert ones. In addition, they sometimes do very much have overt ones, and one thinks here

of Joseph Bronowski's *The Ascent of Man*, in which Bronowski declares that the thought of Hegel led directly and inevitably to Nazism. Bronowski's remarks here reveal the sort of dislike of 'continental' European philosophy, which one also finds elsewhere in the Anglo-American tradition and in 'educational' television documentary series such as *The Ascent of Man*. In addition to such epic 'grand narrative' series as *Civilization*, other documentary film series seek in contrast to tackle more circumscribed historical events or periods. Outstanding examples here might be *The Nazis: A Lesson from History*, and the landmark achievement of *The World at War*. Here, in one of the undoubted masterpieces of the documentary film, an episode such as 'Red Star', which portrays the defence of Leningrad, reaches great heights of emotional and rhetoric power. Here, the emotions provoked are absolute ones, related to matters of extreme heroism and refusal to accept defeat in the face of overwhelming odds.

In addition to such films, which have a primarily—though by no means exclusively—educative or academic orientation, other documentary films have a much more direct political and ideological agenda, and in these films the desire to have an impact on the world and effect change is also inevitably much stronger. Some of these adopt the hybrid form of the documentary drama, and important examples here would be *Cathy Come Home* (Ken Loach, Tony Garnett, 1966), *Culloden* (Peter Watkins, 1964), *Death of a Princess* (Anthony Thomas, 1980) and *Who Bombed Birmingham* (Granada Television, 1990). It seems, though, that the documentary drama is not so effective in dealing with situations that occur at the nationwide level, perhaps because the extent of reconstruction required tends to turn the work into more of a feature film than a documentary: they become feature-drama documentaries. Consequently, those documentary films that have more effectively turned to address national-political situations have tended to be far more obviously and classically documentary in format. Examples here would be *The Battle of Chile* (Patricio Guzman, 1975–7), the highly committed *Cuba Sí!* (Chris Marker, 1961), and the remorselessly committed *The Battle of Algiers* (Gilo Pontecorvo, 1966). The primary purpose of these and similar films is to speak up and out on behalf of the weak and defenceless, the dispossessed and the oppressed, and, in doing so, these films

exhibit one of the central principled charges of the documentary film.

At one level, the documentary film of genuine substance must seek to inform, educate and, possibly, also entertain (though 'entertainment' does not seem to be medium-specific to the documentary film), but the documentary film is often, at its best, also endowed with an ethical imperative to defend and seek redress for those who are treated unjustly, to bring such unwarranted conduct to the attention of the local, national and international community, or, at the least, to raise up the disadvantaged into the sphere of representation. It was this latter objective, for example, which characterised the films of the British documentary film movement, in films such as *Drifters* (John Grierson, 1929), *Housing Problems* (Arthur Elton and Edgar Anstey 1935), and *Coal Face* (Alberto Cavalcanti, Basil Wright and others 1935). In this mission, documentary film can also be compared with the best investigative journalism, although, of course, unlike such journalism, the documentary film is also an *aesthetic* medium. Like the best investigative journalism, documentary film is also rarely particularly effective when used as an instrument of the ruling powers. Eventually, all documentary films that function as propaganda on behalf of one dominant group or another come to seem ridiculous and an object of scorn.

This ethical purpose of the documentary film also returns us to the matter of structure and to the question of what form and structure it would be best to adopt in order to realise this purpose, which also takes us into the realm of documentary film theory and practice. One of the unquestionable masterpieces of the documentary film is Dziga Vertov's *The Man with a Movie Camera* (1929). Vertov's film is, of course, far less important for its ideologically affirmative portrayal of the newborn Soviet Union than it is for its affectionate evocation of the lives of ordinary Russian people as they go about their various businesses during the course of a single day. Vertov wishes to present a panoramic view of everyday life in his film, and in order to achieve this he adopts a form of lateral, rather than linear editing, which allows him to portray a great many people and activities. Of course, Vertov's mission to raise up the image of the masses was, in theory, concomitant with the then dominant ideology within the Soviet Union. However, Vertov's modernist

hierarchy-less, warts-and-all populism went too far, as far as the authorities were concerned, and propelled him into exile in the Russian outback.

The Man with a Movie Camera carries on the documentary film's representational mission to portray the lower classes, and the same can be said of the films of the British documentary film movement, some of which have already been mentioned. A film such as *Spare Time* (Humphrey Jennings, 1939), for example, adopts a similar lateral style as Vertov's film, though on a much smaller scale and without the formalist montage editing that characterises *The Man with a Movie Camera*. Instead, an impressionistic, observational style is employed, drawn from Jennings' involvement in the Mass Observation movement of the 1930s, and a paradoxical style is also employed, drawn from the filmmaker's familiarity with surrealist art. Other films made by the documentary film movement adopt a variety of styles, including the symbolic Soviet montage-inspired style of *Drifters*, the lyrical poetic naturalism of *Song of Ceylon* (Basil Wright 1934), and the social realism of *Fires Were Started* (Jennings 1943). However, whatever the style employed, the same underlying intention to portray the lower classes is always evident within these films, and virtually all the films of the British documentary film movement. Much the same can also be said of the committed Marxist filmmaker Joris Ivens, who combines montage editing, documentary naturalism and a socialist-realist style in films spread as far apart as *The Spanish Earth* (1937) and *How Yukong Moved the Mountains* (1976).

From the 1960s onwards debates then taking place within film studies began to spill over into the area of the documentary film. One consequence of this is that various influences, including that of Soviet montage theory, the work of Bertolt Brecht, and 'screen theory', led to the production of documentary films that sought to intentionally foreground their technical structures and ideological imperatives. From that point on, the 'reflexive' documentary film then became an important filament in the history of the documentary film. One of the earliest, and also most historically important, of these films was Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin's *Chronique d'un été/Chronicle of a Summer* (1961), in which Rouch sets out how his film was conceived and made, and then invites the subjects he has filmed to pass their opinion on the

finished article. Various filmmakers have since followed this and similar reflexive approaches, including Nicholas Broomfield in his *The Leader, the Driver and the Leader's Wife* (1991), Michael Moore in his *Fahrenheit 9/11* (2004), and others. However, the reflexive documentary, and the related 'performative' documentary, has always (and probably always will) remained a minority genre, perhaps because of the extent to which reflexivity inevitably disrupts the coherent diegesis of the film. As argued earlier, it is the evocation of a complete 'world' which is often important in the documentary film, and reflexivity is *sometimes* inimical to this.

Another approach to documentary filmmaking which developed in the late 1950s and 1960s, in many respects contrary to the reflexive approach, was based on the conviction that the documentary film should not only attempt to mask, rather than reveal, its structures, but also possess as little structuration as feasibly possible. Here, the underlying presumption was that a more 'objective' account of a situation could be achieved if whatever had been filmed had not been affected at all by the process of filmmaking, and if it could be verified that the same situation would have occurred exactly as it had whether the camera had been present or not. In order to achieve this degree of detachment the documentary film would not so much attempt to *portray as record* a situation. Underlying this notion of filmmaking is an inductive-empiricist theory of knowledge based on two principal premises: first, that a more 'objective' interpretation of a particular phenomenon can be achieved if no a priori pre-existing suppositions are imposed upon that phenomenon; and second, that only limited, rather than general or abstract, extrapolations should be derived from the observation of that phenomenon. According to this model, methods must be devised through which the subjectivity and mindset of the interpreter of the phenomenon are constrained to play only a minor role in that interpretation and, when this occurs, that interpretation will possess a higher epistemic value than that which is produced as a consequence of bringing more complex and abstract levels of supposition to bear.

When this empiricist model of knowledge was transplanted into the realm of the documentary film a new kind of 'observational', or 'direct', film appeared in which, or so its practitioners argued, the filmmaker's intrusion into events was reduced to a minimum, the events

filmed appeared as they would have had the camera not been present, and the final edited structure of the films arose from the inner logic of the events and situations themselves. In order to facilitate this, a new mode of film shooting and editing was also employed, in which the filmmaker embedded himself or herself within the shooting location for extended periods of time, to the point at which, it was believed, the filmmaker ceased to have any influence on circumstances. Around this period (the late 1950s) new, more portable filmmaking equipment had also appeared, which enabled the filmmaker to interact more closely with the subjects and events being filmed, and also additionally enhanced the possibility that the filmmaker would be able to avoid influencing events less than had been the case when earlier, more bulky equipment had to be employed. After shooting, the film would then be edited in such a way that the narrative structure that emerged conformed as closely as possible to the linear development of the events that had taken place, so that the film reflected the essential structures of those events.

The American 'direct cinema' films of the 1950s and 1960s sometimes went to extreme lengths in carrying out this empiricist project, as, for example, in Andy Warhol's deliberately experimental *Sleep* (1963), a film of a man sleeping, in which there is no editing, hardly any camera movement, and in which commentary, plot, story and even titles are completely absent. Warhol's film also emerges from a context of post-war 'conceptual art', in which the artist followed intellectual premises regarding the formation of the art object to their logical conclusions. However, in the main, the bulk of films that constituted American direct cinema were not closely associated with the movement of conceptual art, and did employ the various cinematic devices eschewed by *Sleep*, although because of the predominance of their empiricist orientation, these films tended to give a lesser priority to such devices than observation of the events portrayed. That empiricist approach also led these films to excel at rendering detailed and intimate—and often surprisingly revelatory—portrayals of individuals and their immediate reactions with each other and their environments. For example, *Primary* (Don Pennebaker and others, 1960) followed closely the Wisconsin primary contest between Hubert Humphrey and John F. Kennedy, showing the often contradictory

and chaotic relations and events that took place during the primary. Here, the primary appears not so much as an integral component of the democratic process, as an almost tribal affair with its own internal—and highly animated—protocols. Similarly, *The Chair* (Robert Drew and Richard Leacock 1963) explores the dramatic and tense interactions and uncertainties evident within a cast of characters—real people—who are caught up in one way or another with the execution—of a real man—to be carried out by electrocution. The films of Frederick Wiseman also fall into this category, although Wiseman eschews the dramatic events favoured by Pennebacker, Drew and Leacock in favour of portraying the micro-complexities of the everyday and mundane, as for example in his *Law and Order* (1969), which centres on some of the more idiosyncratic aspects of routine police work.

However, just as a pure empiricist theory of knowledge is untenable, so also is a pure empiricist conception of the documentary film. As virtually all philosophers would avow, it is not possible to transcend subjectivity in order to reach the ‘truth’, just as we are unable to step outside of our conceptual schemes in order to encounter reality directly. In practice, therefore, the films of direct cinema were all influenced, in one way or another, by the presuppositions of the filmmakers involved, as well as by background ideological formations, and were unable to encounter reality in an unmediated fashion. These films also drew on a whole host of narrative and other conventions in developing their structures, and this, in turn, meant that those structures could not replicate the structures of the real-world events taking place in front of the camera. Real-world events do not *and cannot* possess a definite structure: they are part of the indeterminate generality of the lifeworld, or *Lebenswelt*. In this sense one can also say that, philosophically speaking, Warhol was perhaps on the right track with *Sleep*. Warhol apart, though, the danger that lies here, within the ideological orientation of direct cinema, and one which makes that cinema both problematical and controversial as a mode of documentary filmmaking, is both twofold and important. First, by focusing on immediate interactions, these films tend to reduce context to a minimum and, while the documentary film is well suited to portray immediate interactions, the presentation of context is also central to the medium’s role.

Second, by attempting to transcend the subjective inclinations and ideology of the filmmaker, they also disguise, or leave aside, the extent to which intentionality and subjectivity play a necessary and determining role in any form of filmmaking, including the documentary film. The gate is now open for premeditated manipulation

In terms of the epistemic and moral mission of the documentary film outlined earlier, both of these factors constitute clear and present danger. However, arguing that the underlying theoretical model of direct cinema is untenable is not the same as arguing that this form of filmmaking itself is disreputable, and, as has been argued earlier, the empirical focus of the direct cinema model is both fundamental and indispensable to the documentary film. What is of most value in this approach also takes us back to the classical theories of cinematic realism, in Bazin, Kracauer and others. What this type of direct cinema can do is preserve moments and sections of everyday life which would otherwise be doomed to fade into non-existence within the ever-changing flux of perceptual experience. This ‘mummified’—to use Bazin’s phrase—*naturalism*, which allows us to see and be amazed—or appalled—by aspects of experience to which we would otherwise not have access, or would not have noticed in any meaningful way or contemplative manner, is an essential ingredient of the documentary film and lies at the heart of some of the greatest achievements of the medium. What, therefore, seems to be of primary importance here is that these films can present us with information that goes beyond our pre-existing, often stereotypical understanding of a particular subject, and in doing so these films expand our understanding and make us more knowledgeable about the world around us. As Frederick Wiseman put it:

You start off with a little bromide or stereotype about how prison guards are supposed to behave or what cops are really like. You find that they don’t match up to that image, that they are a lot more complicated. And the point of each film is to make that discovery.

(Bordwell and Thompson 1994: 695)

Wiseman’s hoped for ‘discovery’ points to what can be, in certain circumstances, genuinely illuminating about the documentary film, though, of course, the character of the ‘complications’ he

discovers will always be influenced to a certain extent by his own pre-existing bromidic-stereotypical understandings, whether he believes that to be the case or not. In addition, his portrayal of individual complicated cops will not necessarily tell us much about the institution of the American police force as a whole. Bearing these difficulties in mind, it is worth returning to the argument made earlier, that the truly, or even predominantly, naturalist documentary film potentially possesses the two foreseeable dangers referred to previously: that of disguising ideological positions, and limiting the representation of context. This is also why in its attempt to overcome both of these dangers, while retaining an effective naturalist emphasis and adding to our understanding of the culture and people it portrays, *Chronique d'un été* remains one of the classic films of the documentary cinema.

In many respects the reflexive documentary and the observational documentary represent the Alpha and Omega of the documentary film. However, in addition to these two paradigms of the documentary film, neither of which can be realised in a pure form in any particular film anyway, a number of identifiable genres can also be discerned within the field of the documentary film, and perhaps the most historically important of these is the 'interview film', which often, though not always, also uses archival materials alongside the interviews it displays. In these films interviewees are allowed to have their significant say and the interviewer or narrator does not overly govern proceedings. The objective here, for many of these films, is to break with the omniscient—and conventionally prevailing—'expository' 'voice-of-God' narrative, in which an account or interpretation is given from a singular—and often officially sanctioned—perspective, or in which two or more accounts are given and then are brought into cohesion through a 'balancing' commentary and narration. In both cases here an *order* is imposed upon the subject and, inevitably, the disposition of such order will reflect institutional authority and dominant ideology, especially so in the age of the television documentary film.

Many of the interview-based documentary films that appeared from the 1970s onwards, after the worldwide advance of television, attempted to dispense with such an overall 'order' and, instead, present a more indeterminate understanding of their subjects. Many of these were also influenced by the New History

movement, which also came to prominence during the 1970s. Here, historians attempted to develop histories of everyday life, rather than of high events and noble persons. It is, perhaps, because of this historiographic influence that many of these interview films also link past, present and memory using historical archival footage of the everyday past; in these films the testimonies of commonplace, individual people are linked to a past, and also largely *elapsed*, and indeterminate world of the everyday.

There is also a crucial distinction to be made here between these interview-based films and other types of documentary films which also use filmed extracts to illustrate their exposition. In such latter films, and as also argued earlier, a sequence is taken from a pre-existing film—which has a particular logic and coherence of its own—and is then inserted into the body of the host film in order to illustrate the exposition being mobilised by that film. However, as previously maintained, this is in fact a disingenuous and misleading type of illustration because the original footage was both intended and structured to illustrate another and completely different exposition, and may even not have directly illustrated any exposition at all but, rather, had the purpose of accompanying or even contradicting that exposition (if the original film even had an overall exposition). On the other hand, the footage used in the interview films being discussed here is largely *archival*: part of a huge, indeterminate body of filmed sequences which were originally shot as record, or in the case of war footage, with, at least initially, only vaguely formulated propaganda intentions in mind, or for no particular purpose of any consequence at all. Most of this footage was, therefore, never part of any pre-existing filmic-compositional totality. In addition, in these interview-based films the archival footage is not generally used in an illustrative manner but mainly exists partly in its own right and character, as an extract from a corpus—a sampling taken from the indeterminate historical materials record of filmed everyday life.

The most important of these interview-based films may, as argued earlier, be *The World at War* (Thames Television 1973–6), a film of twenty-six episodes and thirty-two hours in length. A breakthrough in British documentary film's attempt to represent World War II, the film adopts the perspective of the New History movement in consisting to a substantial extent

of interviews given by commonplace people, rather than major political figures, and also employs an extensive range of archival footage, including home movies, instructional footage and captured enemy footage, as well as—as previously discussed—extracts from films such as *Britain Can Take It*, *Triumph of the Will*, and others. In a similar way, another landmark film, Marcel Ophüls' *The Sorrow and the Pity: Chronicle of a French City Under the Occupation*, also consists largely of interviews, and although some of these interviews are of dignitaries, the film largely consists of interviews with the man and woman in the street and focuses on everyday relationships to the Occupation. As the title suggests, *The Sorrow and the Pity* is an emotionally charged film, which forces participants to confront the sorrow and the pity of collaboration and betrayal. In both this film and *The World at War*, interviews and archival materials work together to show a sometimes emotionally overwhelming human-social reality of heroism and fearfulness, anguish and achievement, order and confusion.

It could be argued that these archival-interview films correspond more closely to the epistemic and moral imperative of the documentary film than perhaps almost any other kind of documentary film, and it is perhaps no accident that it is here that some of the most powerful examples of the medium have emerged. It has been argued earlier that the documentary film is most suited to explore the interstices of everyday human, animal and natural life. Clearly, the interview film which focuses on the everyday and the ordinary lends itself to this mission and supposed aesthetic specificity. The archival-interview film can bring Kracauer's 'terra incognita' into view, and present the voices of the oppressed and those treated unfairly. At their best, interview-based documentaries also do not seek some mythical 'balance' but display their preferences openly. The humanist-ethical stance of *The World at War*, *The Sorrow and the Pity*, and, another landmark achievement, Claude Lanzmann's twelve-hour long *Shoah* (1985), is, for example, openly evident. However, the interview film is not restricted to a humanist paradigm, and films such as *Harlan County, USA* (Barbara Kopple, 1976) and *The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter* (Connie Field, 1980) reveal a clear social class and feminist agenda, respectively. In all of these films the interface between interviews and

archival footage is, of course, handled in different ways. For example, in *The World at War* there is an overall commentary and the witnesses who appear are not normally cross-examined in any way. In *Shoah*, on the other hand, the director, Lanzmann, is often present, challenging as well as guiding his interviewees. Despite these distinctions, however, all these films can be linked together into a format which places indeterminate interview materials in conjunction with indeterminate archival materials, and which is also driven by a strong sense of purpose.

In addition to the three types of documentary film that have been discussed in the present section of this Introduction—the reflexive, direct and archival-interview film—other sub-genres of the documentary film are, of course, also identifiable, but can, unfortunately, only be referred to in passing here, given limitations of wordage. These would include the compilation film, such as Fredric Rossif's *To Die in Madrid* (1963), and many of the films of the British documentary film movement. They would also include the documentary film of primarily personal expression, which may be found in the work of the British Free Cinema movement and in the work of filmmakers as diverse as Chris Marker, Alain Resnais, Georges Franju, Werner Herzog and many others. It is not possible to cover the work of these and other filmmakers here, and readers are referred, instead, to the various entries within this Encyclopedia. Instead, it may be more appropriate to conclude this brief Introduction with a conjecture concerning the present and future role of the documentary film.

IV In conclusion: the role of the documentary film

The documentary film, today and tomorrow, has, and will continue to have, many roles to play. Many of these relate to the spheres of entertainment, commerce and uncomplicated gratification, and these are certainly significant domains. Beyond this, though, what are and will be the most imperative of these roles? The contemporary dominance of television from the 1960s onwards means that most documentary films are commissioned by, produced by, or shown on some form of television outlet. Often, these outlets are controlled by nation-states, capitalist corporations or a combination of

both. Where the controllers of these outlets are *enlightened*, say—and to take a by no means unequivocal example—in the public broadcasting services of advanced, capitalist, liberal-democratic nations, the ideal role of documentary film should be to stay close to the mission of the documentary film as set out earlier: that is, to challenge the abuse of power, struggle to overcome injustice, defend the weak and powerless, and communicate information in a sophisticated, disinterested and impartial manner, taking into account the existence and authentic needs of a wide spectrum of types of persons, in terms of race, social class, ethnicity, gender, belief and other factors. However, even in such supposedly advanced nations, dominant relations of power and influence work against the realisation of such a mission, and, in these circumstances, where inequality and injustice is still ubiquitous, the documentary film will have to maintain a forcefully independent character and not shy away from the articulation of uncomfortable avowals.

In other countries, authoritarian and repressive nations of various sorts, which control their media and make that media work in the interests of the powerful, the mission of the documentary film may only be fulfilled by taking on the role of a covert fifth column or by going underground to a substantial degree. Today, documentary film is an important and essential vehicle for social and political change and protest in many countries around the world, where filmmakers often take great risks in order to stand up for the various victims of the current world order. New technology has also made it much easier—and much safer—for independent, underground networks of documentary filmmaking to persist. For example, in China an important movement of independent documentary filmmaking exists which challenges the blanket control that the Communist Party imposes upon the Chinese media and, ultimately, the Chinese people. This form of activity involving the documentary film is being repeated in many parts of the world today and needs to be encouraged. In this sense, the documentary film could become crucially important in the near future as an instrument for progress. The rulers of the contemporary world order will do whatever they can to maintain their power and authority and keep uncomfortable ideas that challenge that power and authority out of the public sphere. The German philosopher and heir to the German philosophical

critique of modernity, Jürgen Habermas, has argued that Enlightenment values such as universal freedom and communicative rationalism are the instruments best able to deconstruct the forms of instrumental rationality which dominate and characterise contemporary experience; if this is so, then the documentary film must be part of that process. The documentary film must be both communicative and activist, in relation to the personal, social and globalised spheres.

Apart from this crucial role, documentary film also has a phenomenological and existential role to play in bringing us back to the material world. Siegfried Krakauer argued that the modern individual's experience of her/himself was an *abstract* one and, as has been argued earlier here, all the major theorists of cinematic realism comment on this abstract nature of the human condition. All of them, in one way or another, also emphasise the importance of film in bringing us back to the one thing that really exists: the present moment, in all its richness and reality. The documentary film is the aesthetic medium par excellence best suited to achieve this outcome, and here the documentary film takes on a utopic dimension. This is not to argue that the documentary film should be prescribed, like a medicinal drug, to persons suffering from various psychological disorders. It may never happen that 'documentary film therapy', like taking-a-holiday therapy, becomes established as a form of curative treatment; however, it is to argue that there is something essentially beneficial about watching a documentary film because, for once, one is faced with the rich and fascinating tapestry of the real world as we actually experience it. The world and our experience of it ceases to become abstract or manipulative, and the world in which we actually persist reveals itself as essentially purposeless and unmanipulative, and as consisting of a plethora of things available for our pleasure and enlightenment. As Georg Lukács put it in his *The Specificity of the Aesthetic* (1963), film is able to bring the *Aussenwelt* (outside world) up to the level of the human world so that we are better able to understand our authentic existential condition. If that is true of film in general, it is even more true of the documentary film. The documentary film also has an *aesthetic* role to play. In his ground-breaking 1913 article, 'Thoughts Toward an Aesthetic of the Cinema', Lukács asserts that film can show us a poetic aesthetic vision of reality. Let the last word be his:

The livingness of nature here acquires artistic form for the first time: the rushing of water, the wind in the trees, the stillness of the sunset and the roar of the storm, as natural processes, are here transformed into art [...] Those achievements of modern technology that are irrelevant to every great art will also become powerfully fantastic and poetic here. For the first time, in the 'cinema'—to give but one example—a car can become poetic, as in a romantic and thrilling pursuit involving other cars. In this way also the common bustle in the street and in the market place acquires a powerful humor and an elementally forceful poetry.

(Lukács 1913)

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A

Abel Gance: Yesterday and Tomorrow

(France, Kaplan, 1962)

Abel Gance: Yesterday and Tomorrow is the dubbed version of *Abel Gance, hier et demain*, produced by the Office de Documentation par le Film and directed by Nelly Kaplan.

In the 1960s the motion picture rose to prominence as a key medium of expression. A newly focused and invigorated interest in the movies manifested itself both in new styles of filmmaking and the study of cinema's history. This generation questioned current cinematic conventions, watched old motion pictures, and identified with forgotten filmmakers and cinematic icons. An important outcome of this renaissance was a new appreciation for the art of the silent cinema. This audience was particularly receptive to Abel Gance: Yesterday and Tomorrow, which championed a rediscovered genius and his neglected silent masterpieces.

Nelly Kaplan, the director of *Abel Gance*, was in the vanguard of this new generation of film enthusiasts. Born in Buenos Aires in 1934, Kaplan abandoned her studies in economics at the University of Buenos Aires because of her fascination with film. She went to Paris as a representative of the Argentine Film Archive, and found employment as a film journalist writing for Argentine newspapers.

Shortly thereafter, in 1954, the 20-year-old met Abel Gance and worked as an actor, assistant director, and collaborator on a number of his film projects. A second unit camera operator on Gance's feature film, *Cyrano et d'Artagnan* (1963), Kaplan used footage of the 74-year-old filmmaker taken on the set to frame the flashback of his life and career in *Abel*

Gance: Yesterday and Tomorrow, which was made that same year.

In this dubbed version of *Abel Gance, hier et demain*, an English speaker provides a first-person account of the filmmaker's story. Recognized as a great technical innovator as well as an artist, Gance tells us that he invented prototypes of Cinerama and stereophonic sound. As his cinematic achievements are identified, film clips support his claims. We see examples of Gance's use of montage in his *La Roue* (1921). Yet, despite the quality of his cinematic innovations, Gance claims that the studios were initially reluctant to support his style of filmmaking. With the advent of sound in film, the director was no longer encouraged to make silent films, which he preferred to make. When asked to work for Adolph Hitler during the war, he fled to Spain. Gance did not make another film for over ten years.

Abel Gance: Yesterday and Tomorrow ends with Gance discussing his later work as a director, his disappointment with the current cinema, and his dreams of once again making sensational motion pictures in the future.

Abel Gance: Yesterday and Tomorrow presents its subject as a living treasure still capable of great work, one of the cinema's great innovators. Although her motives are understandable, Nelly Kaplan's narrowly focused concern that Gance be recognized as a hero of the cinema has its drawbacks. The constant emphasis on Gance's cinematic accomplishments to the exclusion of everything else hinders us from knowing him as a person. The limiting effect of offscreen narration, which could have been relieved by having Gance occasionally speak on camera, particularly accentuates our feeling of being distanced from the subject and prevents us

from experiencing some sense of intimacy with Gance as a human being.

One way in which the interested viewer can get a better sense of Abel Gance as a person is to watch the other important documentary on the filmmaker from this period. Kevin Brownlow's 1968 production of *Abel Gance: The Charm of Dynamite* centers on a trip that Gance made to England in 1965. This documentary uses extensive interviews with the filmmaker to underscore the importance of his films. *Abel Gance: The Charm of Dynamite* also documents the beginning of Kevin Brownlow's lifelong pursuit of reconstructing Napoleon, a quest that confirmed Napoleon as one of the major accomplishments of the silent cinema.

Both *Abel Gance: Yesterday and Tomorrow* and *Abel Gance: The Charm of Dynamite* capture a 1960s cineaste's excitement in recognizing the art of a neglected major silent filmmaker. These documentaries also put Abel Gance in the select company of such maverick geniuses of the motion picture as D.W. Griffith, Erich von Stroheim, Sergei Eisenstein, and Orson Welles. Lauded today for his innovative cinematic achievements, Gance ultimately was denied the freedom to make motion pictures the way he wished, as his iconoclastic vision could not be supported by the film industry.

FRANK SCHEIDE

Abel Gance, hier et demain/Abel Gance: Yesterday and Tomorrow (France, 1962, 30 mins). Directed by Nelly Kaplan.

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Act of God

(UK, Greenaway, 1980)

One of the most controversial and innovative filmmakers of the British film renaissance of the 1980s, Peter Greenaway is a director of fiction films, documentaries, and TV programmes; a painter; and an author of essays and novels. His very distinctive poetic universe is characterized by a proliferation of details and references, and is driven by an encyclopaedic ambition. Fiction features such as *The Belly of an Architect* (1986), *Drowning by Numbers* (1988), and *The Pillow Book* (1996) alternate in his filmography with documentaries that, for their utter originality, are situated at the limits of the genre. He often employs the form of the documentary either to represent something true but futile, as in *Dear Phone* (1977), or *Water Wreckets* (1975), to tell a fictional story through absolutely neutral images of a series of rivers and ponds. As Jorge Luis Borges does, Greenaway applies a scientific language to nonscientific topics, considering the language of science itself as articulated in essay writing, in Darwin's books, and in mathematical formulae as a form of narration.

Act of God is a twenty-six-minute film made for Thames TV as part of a series produced by Udi Eichler. It consists of an investigation into the elusive nature of the phenomenon of lightning, through a series of filmed interviews with people who, from 1966 to 1980, were struck by lightning in various European locations. *Act of God* was presented at several international festivals, including Edinburgh, Chicago, and New York, and won prizes as Best Documentary at the festivals of Melbourne and Sidney. Made with his regular collaborator, musician Michael Nyman, *Act of God* is a documentary that, for its subject matter and aesthetic characteristics, is perfectly consistent with the filmmaker's artistic world and, in particular, with the obsessive cataloguing effort, which has always been at the core of his project. *Act of God*, in fact, confirms Greenaway's passion for taxonomy and categorization, which previously emerged, for instance, in the documentary *The Falls* (1980), the result of lengthy research carried out in the attempt at producing a sort of encyclopaedia of humanity, a gargantuan effort evocative of Borges.

In *Act of God*, Greenaway tries to classify and understand the most unclassifiable and unpredictable event on the face of the Earth. Always

looking for the point in which all the lines of the world converge and everything happens simultaneously, he searches for a mathematical formula for lightning, which he tries to extract from the numbers that recur in the different accidents, keeping into account the site, the date, and the precise time when the lightning struck, the weight and shoe size of the victim, and anything the subject was carrying or wearing at the time. Greenaway makes a list of all the numbers and objects, but also includes advice deriving from popular belief, thus ironically mixing and granting the same importance to science and to folklore, in tune with his postmodern stance.

Act of God is composed of thirteen interviews with victims of lightning who are asked to describe in detail their experiences and the circumstances that preceded and followed the accident. Searching for a manifestation of God in the discovery of the presence of coherence even in the most absolutely indeterminate event, Greenaway is particularly interested in finding out whether and how intensely the victims believed that their accident had a religious meaning and saw it as a divine punishment. Finding that they did not, Greenaway suggests how these extraordinary instances have happened to ordinary people, who failed to interpret them as exceptional events, and tries to offer through the editing a sort of metaphorical interpretation of the stories told. These direct testimonies are intertwined with ten apocryphal stories also related to lightning, narrated in voice-over, in which the focus is always on the site and date of the accident, the victim, and the objects that she or he was carrying. Greenaway consistently highlights the accidental nature of the events narrated in the made-up stories, and intertwines with them a series of references to literary and music works that refer to lightning, drawing attention to the recurrence of this natural phenomenon in Shakespeare's oeuvre.

The interviews of Act of God are shot in a way that is utterly unique for a documentary. Every frame is composed by the filmmaker as if it were a painting, displaying a profound attention for location and background, and an obsessive research for symmetry between the body of the interviewee and the space that surrounds it. In some cases, Greenaway creates a game of shadows behind the interviewee's body; in other cases, he constructs an impressive depth of field through open doors and windows. In one interview held over the phone, Greenaway invents a

shot with a strange perspective: a telephone handle in close-up looks unnaturally big, and from a window in the background the tops of some trees and a threatening sky are visible. Interviews are conducted both in interiors and in exteriors; when they are set outside, they are generally shot in gardens, always with an emphasis on the element of water (for instance, the rain is falling and the interviewee is under an umbrella, or water sprays out of a watering can, filling in the space between the camera lens and the interviewee). It must be noted that water is a recurrent presence in Greenaway's work, an ambivalent element, which is the object of innumerable associations and contradictions, loved by the director for its photogenic quality as well as for being a component of the human body that links us to the world. In Act of God, Greenaway suggests in fact the idea of the liquefaction of the body hit by lightning, in a sort of 'water to water' (rather than 'ashes to ashes') cycle.

The composition of the shots, the subject matter, and the music by Nyman make Act of God a product that is closer to video art than to traditional documentary. As always with Greenaway, the documentary is a language among other languages, to be deconstructed and reconstructed at will. Although the starting point is a real issue, the structure and visual quality of his documentary invite the spectator to doubt the reality of the testimonies, immersed as they are in an aesthetic surplus.

STEFANO BASCHIERA

Act of God (UK, Thames TV, 1980, 25 mins). Distributed by Thames Television—British Film Institute. Produced by Udi Eichler for Thames Television. Directed and written by Peter Greenaway. Music by Michael Nyman. Cinematography by Peter George. Edited by Andy Watmore. Filmed in Devon, London, Lincolnshire, Germany, Surrey, Cardiganshire, Lancashire, Norway, Oxfordshire, Italy, Westmorland, Gwent.

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Adolescents, The (aka That Tender Age)

(France, Baldi, Brault, Rouch,
Teshigahara, 1964)

In 1964, at the height of the omnibus film phenomenon sweeping throughout Europe and parts of Asia, a four-part docudrama about the travails of the teenage years was jointly produced by Cinematografica, Les Films de la Pléiade, the National Film Board of Canada, and Ninjin Club. Released that year in Italy under the title *Le adolescenti*, in France and Canada as *La fleur de l'âge*, and in Japan as *Shishunki*, *The Adolescents* (as it eventually came to be known in the United States and Great Britain after a belated 1967 release) is a curious quartet, its many national affiliations and linguistically differentiated incarnations a product of the polyglot sensibilities of that era. With each of its four episodes helmed by a different director (Gian Vittorio Baldi, Michel Brault, Jean Rouch, and Hiroshi Teshigahara—all of whom had gained international notoriety by that time for their ability to wed documentary and fiction filmmaking), *The Adolescents* is, as its title implies, a plural text, one that deploys ruptures and discontinuities across a broad, indeed global, spectrum so as to point out similarities as well as differences between people based on national, cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds. Moreover, like other multidirector coproductions of the early 1960s, such as *L'Amour à vingt ans/Love at Twenty* (1962), *Boccaccio '70* (1962), and *RoGoPaG* (1962), the film calls into question our critical dependency on the perhaps outmoded notions attending 'auteurist cinema' (in particular, the idea that a single director puts his or her personal stamp on a film), even as it trumpets the individual talents of the contributing filmmakers. Perhaps more importantly, however, it is plural insofar as it combines fiction and nonfiction aesthetics, thus

collapsing distinctions between dramatic artifice and documentary verisimilitude, between narrative construct and unmediated reality.

The Adolescents is differentiated from the above mentioned and other omnibus films—besides its reliance on nonscripted action—by its overriding focus on youth. Although certainly not the first episode film to tap into the existential uncertainties and emotional problems faced by teenagers (Michelangelo Antonioni mined this rich thematic material as early as 1953, when he made *I vinti/The Vanquished*, a three-episode study of the moral bankruptcy and dehumanized behavior of Europe's postwar youth), *The Adolescents* provides a timely reminder of the generational and cultural schisms of the 1960s.

The only scripted episode is that of Gian Vittorio Baldi, who also served as one of the six producers of the film. His tale, 'Fiammetta', concerns a fourteen-year-old Florentine girl (played by Micaela Esdra) whose father has recently passed away. Left to reminisce in her widowed mother's sprawling estate, Fiammetta spends her days moping about the tourist-filled mansion. Eventually, her sexual curiosity and growing awareness of her developing breasts are deflected onto her jealousy for her attractive mother, who is forced to give up her new lover and live a quiescent life alone with her demanding daughter. These interwoven themes of sexual curiosity and jealousy reemerge in the second episode, Canadian director Michel Brault's 'Geneviève'. The titular teen in this slim story is actually one-half of a female duo whose friendship is tested in a moment of indiscretion and dishonesty. Both Geneviève (Geneviève Bujold) and her companion Louise (Louise Marleau) are seventeen years old, and their simultaneous sexual awakenings spark a silent rivalry during a winter carnival in Montreal. Having met a young man named Bernard (Bernard Arcand) the day before, Louise oversleeps and misses her early morning date to see him again. Geneviève steps in and takes her place, spending the day with Bernard while her friend remains blissfully unaware. Later, at the end of the date, Louise discovers the truth when she spies the two kissing—an impulsive yet tentative act on Geneviève's part and one that she steadfastly refuses to admit. Although the plot may sound trite, what energizes it is Brault's deft handling of space, and his judicious use of the wide-angle lens and mobile framing, which extends the

social milieu of the two teens to include a panorama of 'real' people doing 'real' things.

The third story, Jean Rouch's contribution to *The Adolescents*, similarly revolves around the exploits of two girls. Titled 'Marie-France et Véronique', this miniature psycho-drama—starring sixteen-year-olds Marie-France de Chabaneix and Véronique Duval—could be said to have paved the way for Eric Rohmer's *4 Aventures de Reinette et Mirabelle*/4 *Adventures of Reinette and Mirabelle*, another episodic, fragmented film whose main characters' emotional restlessness and perambulatory predispositions provide spectators with numerous opportunities to catch glimpses of Paris—a city that has been fetishized throughout the history of cinema, yet in Rouch's (and Rohmer's) work is portrayed in a subtle way. In 'Marie-France et Véronique' Paris is an expressive backdrop against which this diametrically opposed duo make difficult choices in life and love before ultimately going their separate ways.

Followers of Rouch—a socially engaged anthropologist-documentarian sympathetic to the plight of marginalized dock workers, lumbermen, day laborers, vagabonds, and other fringe-dwellers populating postcolonial Africa—may be taken aback by his decision to focus neither on the dispossessed nor the diasporic, but instead on two well-to-do Parisians whose affluence affords them the luxury of grappling with such seemingly trivial issues as the need to escape boredom, family expectations, and marriages of convenience. However, in delving into the everyday details of contemporary adolescence, the filmmaker gestures back to his first feature-length film, *Moi, un noir*/I, a Black (1958). That film focuses on three young men as they go about their daily routines in Treichville, a suburb of Abidjan in the Ivory Coast. Having emigrated from Niger to this so-called New York of West Africa, these laborers could effectively communicate a sense of rootlessness in improvised scenes that invite the spectator to ruminate on the effects of proletarianization and cultural imperialism. By the time he made his contribution to *The Adolescents*, Rouch had mastered not only the technical aspects of fiction and nonfiction filmmaking but also the thematic motif central to that film, which called for spontaneity on the young performers' parts as well as diegetic participation on the director's part.

The Adolescents is an important historical artifact capturing a decisive moment in the

careers of all four directors, when 'straight' documentary was giving way to fictional forms of cinematic discourse. For instance, Baldi, who drew on his training at the venerable Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia in Rome when making such pro-proletariat documentaries as *Il pianto delle zitelle* (for which he took home the Venice Film Festival's Golden Lion in 1959), had begun segueing into short fiction during the early 1960s, when he contributed episodes to the omnibus films *Le italiane e l'amore*/Latin Lovers (1961) and *The Adolescents*. Although he continued to nurture his documentary roots and—as the organizer and director of the Istituto Italiano del Documentario—became close friends with Joris Ivens and John Grierson (with whom he cofounded the Associazione Internazionale del Film Cortometraggio e del Documentario), Baldi became increasingly ensconced in the world of fiction once he began overseeing the production of works by Pier Paolo Pasolini and Robert Bresson in the late 1960s.

Similarly, the multitasking Brault, one of the innovators behind the 1950s' 'Candid Eye movement' in Canadian documentary, who stepped behind the lens on such groundbreaking productions as *Les raquetteurs* (1958), *La lutte* (1961), *Golden Gloves* (1961), and *Pour la suite du monde* (1963), began to feel that fiction did not lie because it did not pretend to be the truth. Rouch was so deeply impressed by Brault's technical expertise and belief that the imagination was a necessary tool for penetrating reality that he proclaimed the Canadian to be the basis for French breakthroughs in *cinéma vérité*. Significantly, *The Adolescents*—released just one year before Brault left the National Film Board to found Nanouk Films—was made just a few months after his collaboration with friend Claude Jutra on the nondocumentary *A tout prendre* (1963), a film that suggests that Brault had indeed begun to question the ethical dimensions of documentary and shift into fictional modes of filmic discourse.

Like the other contributors to *The Adolescents*, Hiroshi Teshigahara had begun to feel that dramatic truth was as viable as documentary reportage, something to which the Japanese director's many films about artists and designers (such as *Hokusai* (1953), *12 Photographers* (1955), and *Ikebana* (1956)) only faintly attest. Made a few months before his haunting depiction of moral descent, *Suna no onna*/

Woman in the Dunes (1964), Teshigahara's 'Ako' (sometimes referred to as 'White Morning') is the fourth and final episode of *The Adolescents*, although it was cut from US prints due to time constraints and has since been shown on its own as a short film in retrospectives.

DAVID SCOTT DIFFRIENT

See also: Brault, Michel; Rouch, Jean

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Agee, James

The American writer James Agee was one of the most significant contributors to the development of the documentary form in the United States in the mid-twentieth century. He offered no systematized theory of documentary film, and he was only peripherally involved in the industry—first as a reviewer in the 1940s, and then as a screenwriter for such films as *The African Queen* (1951) and *The Night of the Hunter* (1955). However, the publication of *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* in 1941 and his collected writings in *Agee on Film* in 1958 are evidence of his importance to the history of the documentary. Agee argued that many documentaries in the 1930s and 1940s were as removed from reality as Hollywood movies, with the filmmaker often adopting a didactic and polemical approach to the subject. Agee's solution was to develop a hybrid form, or semi-documentary, which he believed would offer a truer record of experience than the 'flat' presentation of life then presented in documentary films. He argued that propagandists

had corrupted the documentary form in Germany and in the Soviet Union by degrading the film craft of Dziga Vertov and Sergei Eisenstein (arguing that by the 1940s it had become 'posterish, opportunistic, and anti-human'), but he believed the form still held great promise in the United Kingdom and the United States.

Agee wrote extensively on British World War II films and newsreels in the early 1940s, applauding them for capturing the bravery of servicemen and offering a cathartic encounter with reality (calling them 'the finest "escapes" available'). He also praised poetic documentaries such as Robert Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* (1922), recommending it for its 'beautiful simplicity', and *Man of Aran* (1934), which manages to convey the drama and nuances of human behavior in its portrayal of the daily struggle of Aran fishermen. He particularly liked the use of nonactors, which imparted a naturalness that would have been lacking, he believed, in actors' performances. Agee considered documentary no less a creative experience than fiction. As a modernist thinker, Agee was interested in the 'musical coherence' of documentary film and wrote about the 'real poetic energy' of its better exponents throughout his reviews for *The Nation* and *Time*, written between 1941 and 1948. This kind of poetic realism, which cuts across generic boundaries, was popular among other American cultural producers such as Tennessee Williams, who developed a plastic form of theater in his dramatic work in the 1940s and 1950s, and later, the New Journalists, who attempted to blend factuality and fiction in their prose.

Agee's major work, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, was derived from a feature article commissioned in 1936 by *Fortune* magazine, for which he was asked to document the lives of white tenant farmers in the South (the article never appeared in the magazine). His research was conducted in Hale County, Alabama. Agee wanted to interfere as little as possible in the lives of his subjects. He relied heavily on montage in the book, with Walker Evans's sixty photographs, literary and biblical allusions, poetic meditation, autobiographical reflection, newspaper reportage, and domestic anecdotes, creating a fragmented text that invites the reader to recognize the artifice involved in producing documentary. The result is a text that shuttles between detailed observation and a broader statement about poverty, deprivation, and human need that cuts across different modes of inquiry—a technique

that accords with Agee's claim that he and Walker did not position themselves 'as journalists, sociologists, politicians, entertainers, humanitarians, priests, or artists, but seriously'. His radical documentary technique challenged the flat realist documentaries of the 1930s, as well as the conservative ideology of the southern agrarians, with their emphasis on past glories at the expense of engaging with the present.

In light of Agee's disdain for certain modes of documentary technique, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* can be read as an attempt to create not only a semidocumentary but, as T.V. Reed (1988) argues, an 'anti-documentary', marked by complexity and an apparent lack of structure. Because it is so difficult to classify, the book can be interpreted as a serious modernist intervention into the verbal and visual language of documentary, or even a playful postmodern pastiche of styles. In fact, its hybridity stems from Agee's interest in the same kind of affinity between documentary and art that is evident in his film criticism. Agee was more comfortable with photographic images than language in capturing 'truth', arguing that words tend to be slippery, ambiguous, and often inaccurate. He describes the camera as belonging to an 'absolute' realm: 'an ice-cold, some ways limited, some ways more capable, eye, it is, like the phonograph record and like scientific instruments and unlike any other leverage of art, incapable of recording anything but absolute, dry truth'. This emphasis on the absolute objectivity of photography echoes the American visual artist Paul Strand's statement in 1917 that 'objectivity is the very essence of photography, its contribution and at the same time its limitation'. For Agee, if handled 'cleanly', photography could provide a documentary record unsurpassed in other media. However, he was aware that the artist's tendency to interfere with the subject, or to make aesthetic choices in terms of framing, would distort the truth of the moment or transform it into something else. In *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* Agee displays his modernist colors by insisting that 'truth' lies in the photographic image, but he also goes beyond conventional documentary form by juxtaposing a range of texts and opening an interpretative space that encourages the reader to engage with the processes of composition.

MARTIN HALLIWELL

See also: Flaherty, Robert; Man of Aran; Nanook of the North; Vertov, Dziga

Biography

James Agee was born in 1909 in Knoxville, Tennessee. He was raised in the Cumberland mountain region and used the topography of his childhood as the basis for his two autobiographical novels, *The Morning Watch* (1951) and the unfinished *A Death in the Family* (1957), for which he was posthumously awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1958. Graduating from Harvard University, Agee became a feature writer for *Fortune* magazine. The research for one feature on sharecroppers in Alabama led to the publication of *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (1941) with the photographer Walker Evans. Agee published his first collection of poetry, *Permit Me Voyage*, in 1934 and spent the 1940s as a film reviewer working for *Time* and *The Nation*. In 1948 he worked as a scriptwriter in Hollywood, producing scripts for *The African Queen* (1951) and *The Night of the Hunter* (1955). Agee died in 1955 at the age of forty-five.

Selected films

- 1949 *The Quiet One*: scriptwriter
- 1951 *The African Queen*: scriptwriter
- 1952 *Crin-Blanc* (Fr)/*White Mane* (US): commentary
- 1952 *Face to Face*: scriptwriter and actor
- 1955 *The Night of the Hunter*: scriptwriter

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Agland, Phil

Phil Agland is known to be an unusual filmmaker in the landscape of television documentaries. Agland's theory and techniques are often compared to those of a careful and detailed painter or a patient hunter. His films are often referred to as poetical and epical accounts of life.

Agland's first film, *Korup—An African Rain Forest*, was a five-year enterprise. Agland, a wildlife enthusiast concerned about the plight of the endangered species in the rainforests, had ventured to make the documentary in an attempt to raise awareness of the problem. Despite having no cinematography experience and with a very small budget, he went into the depths of the rainforest in spells of three months over a period of five years. This endeavour resulted in a poetic film containing images never seen on screen before and in an award-winning documentary.

Since that time, Agland has turned his focus on people. He returned to Cameroon's rainforest to spend two years living among the Baka people with a small crew of two, filming *Baka—The People of the Rain Forest*. In the Western world, the Baka people are considered pygmies. Yet, Agland's impression was that this was in no way how the Baka perceived themselves. Agland's feelings were that the Baka's perception should be reflected in his camera work. Had he kept the camera on his shoulder, he would be filming the Baka from up high, giving cause to view them as pygmies. It was in the attempt to be truthful to the Baka's own image of their height that Agland developed what became his unique camera technique. Instead of perching the camera on the shoulder, Agland cradled the camera at waist height. This technique enabled him to film the Baka people from below their eye-level for a more intimate and nonpatronising viewpoint. Later on, Agland kept to this

technique, claiming that by avoiding direct eye contact and by avoiding pointing the camera lens directly at his subject, he can minimise the presence of the camera.

Agland's theory is that in order to achieve genuine and intimate moments, the camera and crew should be as invisible as possible. He uses a radio microphone technique that enables the sound recordist to be at a fair distance and away from the scene. This radio microphone technique not only enables removal of the sound recordist from the scene but it also eliminates the presence of a third and sometimes a fourth person holding a somewhat intimidating boom pole, minimising the crew to two members or sometimes even one. The invisibility, claims Agland, is crucial in this observant, unobtrusive type of documentary-making, allowing the people in front of the camera to become oblivious to its presence.

Agland believes in observant documentaries rather than interview-based ones. His theory is that genuine stories or emotions will not emerge during an interview but rather in the small, sometimes insignificant and usually unpredictable moments in life, when the subjects are unaware of the camera and, hence, do not feel obliged to deliver or to satisfy. Agland also believes that the audience should feel part of the scene yet not in the middle of it. The centre of attention should be the story, the moment and the feelings within it rather than the camera or the audience. Agland therefore minimises his camera movements and often favours static camera shots.

Allowing for time and film stock is also a crucial aspect in Agland's careful work of portrayal. He avoids setting up situations and prefers to wait for moments and stories to emerge. Spending time with his characters allows them to get used to the presence of the camera and enables Agland to explore and capture rare and intimate moments in their lives. The structure and story are revealed throughout the filming process and during the editing period rather than in the scripting stage.

In his documentaries Agland creates scenes that follow the grammatical rules and language of a fiction film rather than adopting a documentary style of filming. Using a considerable coverage and carefully thought out editing ideas, both during and after filming, Agland creates rich and round scenes, covered with wide shots,

close-ups and details and, hence, creating an illusion of fiction-style, multi-angled scenes.

Though his films appear not to be focusing on a specific place or a certain subject matter, Agland's passion and curiosity lie in people and in the small matters of life. Despite some views that would claim that Agland has an anthropologist's eye, Agland himself claims the very opposite. His aim is to emphasise the similarities between humans wherever they may live or come from, regardless of religion, cultural background or life circumstances. Agland strives to show the audience the familiar in the stranger on the screen.

Agland, therefore, comes back to the common subjects—family structure, sibling jealousy, parents' concern for their children, and the mutual need for attention and love. He deals with questions of age, health, and death as well as love, friendship, and community life. In *Baka—The People of the Rain Forest*, the focus of the film is four-year-old Ali and his family, his father's concern preparing him for life, his parents' relationship, and Ali's reaction to the newborn baby. Through these themes Agland explores the issues common to all humans and paints a portrait of what life is about, beyond the backdrop of place and time.

In *China: Beyond the Clouds*, set in Lijang, a small rural town located in the southwestern region of China, it seems that Agland furthers his attempt to paint a rich and full portrayal of life. He creates an epic about the small, familiar details of life. Agland interlaces different stories: a loss of a child alongside a lifetime friendship, a juvenile crime in a small town alongside a young mother's struggle to heal her child who suffers from cerebral palsy. Maintaining a fine balance between the tragic and the comic in life, Agland offers a complex and multilayered picture.

In his only fiction film so far, *The Woodlanders*, which is based on a nineteenth-century novel by Thomas Hardy, Agland challenges his audience to the same themes of finding the similarities beyond the differences by taking the audience on a journey to a different time, rather than to a faraway place.

SHIRA PINSON

Biography

Born in Weymouth, England in 1950. Read Geography at Hull University, Yorkshire,

England. 1982 Completed his first documentary film, *Korup—An African Rain Forest*. 1982–6 coproduced and codirected a six-hour series, *Fragile Earth*, associated with Michael Rosenberg of Partridge Films. 1987 completed *Baka—The People of the Rain Forest*. 1992 Executive Producer of *Turmid Hed—Sound Stuff*, produced by Agland's company, River Films. 1994 completed a seven-hour series, *China: Beyond the Clouds*, produced by River Films for Channel 4. 1997 completed his first fiction feature, *The Woodlanders*, based on a novel by Thomas Hardy. 1999 completed *Shanghai Vice*, a seven-hour documentary produced by River Films for Channel 4 and Discovery Communications. 2003 completed a three-hour series, *A French Affair*, produced by River Films for Channel 4.

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- Listener*, October 29, 1987: 35.
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- Guardian*, November 11, 1982: 12.
- Broadcast*, November 8, 1982: 12.
- TV Times*, November 6, 1982: 26–7.

Akerman, Chantal

Like Pasolini, members of the French New Wave, Sembène, Kiarostami, and others, Akerman has found her own way to push the boundaries of film realism. She has made a number of creative observational films, or documentaries. Yet the fiction films, for which she is best known, repeatedly allow in, or call forth, a documented reality that turns the film inside out,

or makes the viewer ask: Where is it really grounded, in imagination or in fact? In the third and final episode of *Je tu il elle* (1974), two young women make love in a bed, rendered in three long takes with three different fixed camera positions. Are the women acting? Can they be? In a way, it seems that the earlier part of the film—a woman at home writing and thinking, and then a road journey through the night—is brought to earth by this ultimate dose of reality. Everything must be judged by the standard set here. Everything previous seems, in retrospect, fanciful. In another way, the first part of the film seems an ordinary experience, tied to reality, waiting for the sexual and emotional explosion that goes beyond imagination. In Akerman's most acclaimed film, *Jeanne Dielman, 23 quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* (1975), Delphine Seyrig gives a consummate, highly poised performance as the housewife, mother, and prostitute of the title. However, the film has her assemble a meatloaf from scratch, or peel all the potatoes necessary for a meal, or wash all the dinner dishes, each action filling one extraordinarily long take with a fixed camera. The pure act, documented as such, takes over the film. *Les Rendez-vous d'Anna* (1978) begins with a long-running fixed shot of a railway platform, where a train arrives, a crowd of people leave it, and a woman enters a phone booth fairly far away from us, makes a call, and then leaves the area. Akerman is fond of the long-distant look at a place, where the visual and aural environment seems to absorb people and their particular stories. Throughout this film, memories of 1930s and 1940s history, as well as personal problems of the present, struggle to find voice against the all-but-overwhelming documentation of Europe's cities, trains, train stations, and hotel rooms. In *Toute une nuit* (1982) the many characters, whose lives we see bits of in and around Brussels through a hot summer night, are never named, and their dialogue is largely inaudible; they are parts of the city and the atmosphere.

Akerman has said that she does not believe in the distinction between documentary and fiction. A film is made to project feelings and understanding, and the film may use an invented story and characters to do this, or it may take the world more or less as found, arranging a meeting of facts with what the filmmaker knows in her soul. Akerman's films without story and characters are perhaps best regarded in light of

this denial of special documentary status, as personal, poetic works, which of course have the potential to reveal the world, to be true. *Hotel Monterey* (1972) is a silent film, giving us mostly fixed, long-held shots of the lobby area, elevator, hallways, and guest rooms of a modest old New York hotel, perhaps a residence for pensioners. People come and go in the shots, mysterious, ordinary, seemingly defined by their 1950s-ish attire and by the once stylish, now a bit desolate, clean atmosphere of this place they inhabit. The camera finds an abstract fascination in details of architecture or in the changing lights on an elevator call panel, suggesting forces that shape people's lives, which may not usually be acknowledged, and which may not even be fully understandable. The silence adds to this sense of incomprehensible power in some things we see. Late in the film the camera begins moving forward and back in a hallway, peering out a window at the end, as if curious and seeking escape. In the film's final moments the camera is up on the roof, panning across the New York skyline and Hudson River. The outdoors, the daylight, and the vistas accentuate by contrast the lurid light, the hothouse quality, something even gothic about the hotel interior. The film becomes a comment on the in-bred comforting worlds people make for themselves, or allow themselves, to live in.

Varied nonfictional work followed, including portraits of artists (choreographer Pina Bausch, pianist Alfred Brendel) and in *Aujourd'hui, dis-moi* (1982) a forum for older women to talk about their grandmothers and the Polish Jewish community that was obliterated or displaced by the Holocaust. Two of Akerman's most interesting observational films of the 1970s and 1980s show a great contrast in style. *News from Home* (1976) is a New York film akin to *Hotel Monterey*, this time with sound, giving us a succession of color shots of lonely alleys, streets busy with traffic and pedestrians, subway stations, subway cars with the camera inside among people, and a nearly empty diner at night. From time to time Akerman in voice-over reads letters from her mother in Brussels, at moments drowned out by the sounds of the city. The letters may be made up—but why be sceptical, or what difference does it make? With the reading there is a wonderful tension created between the pull of family ties, something going on in the head and heart, and what we otherwise see and hear in the film, evidence of the daughter artist

confronting a multifarious new urban world, huge and forbidding, but where she can find an uncanny beauty. *Les Années 80* (1983) is about preparation for the making of Akerman's romantic musical *Golden Eighties* (1986). We see auditions and rehearsals, with Akerman's voice giving instruction from off screen. At one point the director appears in a recording booth to do her own version of one of the film's songs. We see acting and filmmaking prepared and executed, and the series of *Golden Eighties* fragments of scenes, some rough and very much in preparation, others perfected, takes us more and more into the world of the fiction film to come. The documentary, with its consciousness about performance, is another version of the fiction's exploration of the psychology of love and the moods of loss.

With *D'Est* (1993) Akerman's documentary work takes a serious turn into history and geography. This is her most impressive film in the observational mode and one of her very best films altogether, a grand two-hour study of Eastern Europe and, mainly, Moscow, just watching and listening, offering no commentary and registering no one's words. Here, as a traveler, Akerman seems to find material she has always deeply known and understood, with which her filmmaking connects powerfully. The film opens with images of space—empty roads and intersections, and flat fields—and one never gets over the impression that human life in this East is lived against a background of emptiness. We see people sitting in their apartments, seeming to have agreed to pose for a portrait, exposing their somberness. Some eat a meal alone. There are long mobile shots—one a full ten minutes—as if looking at an endless world, moving through the streets of Moscow taking in crowds waiting for buses, or moving through railway stations where crowds sit quietly on benches, bundled up in the cold, as if displaced from home and waiting forever. Much of the film is shot at night, with all its beauty and uncertainty, and mostly in winter, where the physical world weighs heavily. It is a picture of life lived against the void, of a sameness with little sign of change. The many faces are intriguing, but do not show much; they acknowledge the camera, but only obliquely. People seem experienced and complex, but closed off. At the end of the film we are at a concert and hear a full solo cello piece by Boris Tchaikovsky, which is greeted with a strong

ovation. This old-fashioned, soulful music, with some painful modernist twists, one feels could be playing inside the heads of all the people we see in the film.

Akerman's more recent films continue to look at places and the cultures associated with them. *Sud* (1999) journeys across the American South, staring at the lush vegetation and the air's heat waves that surround all activity, and listens to people talk about poor lives and racial problems. The journey comes to an uneasy rest in Jasper, Texas, gathering information on the then recent murder by dragging of James Byrd, a black man, at the hands of whites. Twice the camera, looking back at the road, travels over the route the man was dragged behind a truck. It is a simple, unnerving gesture, confronting the event in a way only film could do. *De l'autre côté* (2002) centers on the Mexican/US border in the Sonoran desert/southern Arizona region. The problems of economically desperate Mexicans trying to cross into the United States come into the film in interviews and monologues, as do the attitudes of fearful white Americans. However, the film mostly contemplates the place, the beautiful and threatening desert spaces, the skies in various light, the ugly, endless border wall, the ramshackle buildings that have grown up in the region and, viewed at night, the fence lights and search lights, roads or desert paths traversed by the camera like a migrant or the pursuer of migrants, barely revealing what is there, and finally the view through the night-vision device of an airborne surveillance mechanism or weapon. Human pressures have made this place what it is, yet the place takes on a life of its own, as if it is a destiny that has drawn people into it. As always in Akerman, film registers an inhuman power of place and things, which, paradoxically, is all too human.

CHARLES WARREN

Biography

Born in Brussels on June 6, 1950, Akerman was inspired to take up filmmaking after seeing Godard's *Pierrot le fou*. She studied for several months at the Belgian film school INSAS in 1967, completed her first film, *Saute ma ville*, in 1968, and won recognition when this was shown at the Oberhausen Short Film Festival in 1971. From 1971–3 Akerman spent time in New York doing odd jobs, seeing avant-garde films, and

making films. She won international acclaim for Jeanne Dielman, 23 quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles in 1975, and was given a retrospective at the Venice Film Festival that year. With Aujourd'hui, dis-moi (1980), she began making films for television, which would sponsor much of her future documentary work. With Hall de nuit (1991), she began writing plays, several of which were produced over the next decade. In 1995 her D'Est traveled to several museums in the United States and Europe. Two years later, she was given a retrospective at the Pesaro Festival in 1997. Akerman then taught filmmaking at Harvard University from 1997 to 1998. In 1998 she published *Une famille à Bruxelles*, a memoir/fiction centering on her mother, 1998. She used De l'autre côté for an installation at Documenta 11 in 2002.

Selected films

- 1968 Saute ma ville (Blow Up My Town)
- 1971 L'Enfant aimé ou je joue à être une femme mariée (The Beloved Child, or I Play at Being a Married Woman)
- 1972 Hotel Monterey; La Chambre 1 (The Room, 1); La Chambre 2 (The Room, 2)
- 1973 Le 15/8; Hanging Out Yonkers 1973
- 1974 Je tu il elle (I You He She)
- 1975 Jeanne Dielman, 23 Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles
- 1976 News from Home
- 1978 Les Rendez-vous d'Anna (Meetings with Anna)
- 1980 Dis-moi (Tell Me)
- 1982 Toute une nuit (All Night Long)
- 1983 Les Années 80 (The Eighties); Un jour Pina m'a demandé (One Day Pina Asked Me); L'Homme à la valise (The Man with the Suitcase)
- 1984 Lettre d'un cinéaste (Letter from a Film-maker)
- 1986 Golden Eighties/Window Shopping; La Paresse (Sloth); Le Marteau (The Hammer); Letters Home; Mallet-Stevens
- 1989 Histoires d'Amérique (American Stories/Food, Family, and Philosophy); Les Trois dernières sonates de Franz Schubert (The Last Three Sonatas of Franz Schubert); Trois strophes sur le nom de Sacher ('Three Stanzas on the Name Sacher' by Henri Dutilleux)
- 1991 Nuit et jour (Night and Day)
- 1992 Le Déménagement (Moving In); Contre l'oubli (Against Forgetting)
- 1993 D'Est (From the East); Portrait d'une jeune fille de la fin des années 60 à Bruxelles (Portrait of a Young Girl at the End of the 1960s in Brussels)
- 1996 Un Divan à New York (A Couch in New York); Chantal Akerman par Chantal Akerman (Chantal Akerman by Chantal Akerman)
- 1999 Sud (South)
- 2000 La Captive (The Captive)
- 2002 De l'autre côté (From the Other Side)
- 2004 Demain, on déménage (Tomorrow We Move)

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Akomfrah, John

John Akomfrah was one of the founders of the Black Audio Film Collective in 1982, a group that went on to produce Handsworth Songs (1986). As a member of this cooperative, Akomfrah performed the role of director and writer alongside other writers and producers within a cooperative mode of production. The group's audiovisual practice was marked by a preference for discursive interrogation and recontextualization of archival documentary sources over documentary realism. After Black Audio ceased working as a collective in 1995, Akomfrah set up production of a company called Smoking Dogs with former members of Black Audio Lina Gopaul and David Lawson. The company produced television documentaries such as Goldie: When Saturn Returnz (1998) and Riot (1999) for the United Kingdom's Channel 4, and The Wonderful World of Louis Armstrong as part of the Omnibus season for the BBC.

Akomfrah has frequently favored the documentary form as a means of formal innovation, while also making feature-length films that invoke the relation between drama and documentary. The resources of drama and archival documentary are called on as a means of articulating the diasporic experience in *Testament* (1988), whereas in *Who Needs a Heart* (1991) the combination is used to highlight the cultural politics of the 1960s and a figure rather overlooked by history in the form of Michael X. The style of documentary demonstrated in *Handsworth Songs* involves a nonlinear structure, modernist techniques of juxtaposition and layering, and, in collaboration with Trevor Mathison, a dissonant and contrapuntal relation between sound and image. The interrogation of the relation between narrative, the poetic expression of diasporic memory, and the documentation of history in *Handsworth Songs* is recast via a female dramatic protagonist to Ghana in *Testament*. As a result, the referent for Akomfrah's filmmaking is not only black experience but also an ongoing exploration of form that looks into the problematic form of the bounded categories of fiction and nonfiction and simultaneously raises recurring questions concerning historiography. The concern with materializing history through documentary is underlined in *The Cheese and the Worm* (1996), featuring the historian Carlo Ginsberg and addressing Christianity, heresy, and witchcraft in Italy during the sixteenth century.

Akomfrah documents the diasporic experience of black British subjects in *Touch of the Tarbrush* (1991), which revisits J.B. Priestley's *English Journey* of 1933 as a starting point from which to enquire how the mixed-race community of Liverpool describes its own routes to a hybrid identity. Here, Akomfrah fuses his personal and remembered history as a black English subject with the memories of some members of the mixed-race community that is 'rooted and located in Liverpool'.

The expositional documentary and the tradition of surveying the condition of a particular place and time through history is annexed by Akomfrah in order to represent 'the lives and histories that represent the hope for another England'.

Akomfrah has produced work focused on significant cultural and political figures such as Malcolm X, Michael X, and Louis Armstrong. *Who Needs a Heart*, commissioned

by Channel 4 in the United Kingdom, combines archival footage of the life of Michael X with a dramatic portrayal centered on a group of black people and white people who are caught up in the politics of black power and the culture of the 1960s. The dramatic element of the docudrama is supported by reportage. Diegetic sound and dialogue are frequently muted into silence and replaced by fragments of official voices denouncing the compromised life of Michael X. *Who Needs a Heart* emphasizes the problem of history as narrative and an approach to documenting a relatively undocumented political figure, where the outcome of historical knowledge and truth is rendered less secure and cannot be guaranteed.

Seven Songs for Malcolm X (1993) was produced for and broadcast by Channel 4 in the UK at the same time as the release in the UK of Spike Lee's film *Malcolm X* (1992). This documentary takes the form of a tableau, in which various black personalities and members of his family present a range of perspectives on Malcolm X. It comprises a combination of expositional testimonies, eyewitness accounts, archival footage, and dramatic reenactments. Sound is again used as a mechanism for drawing the viewer's attention to the relation between the different elements that constitute the documentary, and the different manifestations of Malcolm X within African American culture.

In *The Mothership Connection* (1995), Akomfrah attempts to understand the African diasporic experience of displacement through the vehicle of science fiction and new technology. Connections are suggested between the musical sources of George Clinton and Sun Ra, the history of the blues, and science-fiction narratives of abduction and transportation. The *Mothership Connection* questions the boundaries that separate the history of the African diaspora from the scenarios of narrative fiction.

Akomfrah's documentary output spans both television and film. Productions for Black Audio, such as *Testament* (1988) and *Seven Songs for Malcolm X* (1993), were exhibited and awarded prizes at international film festivals—for example at the African Film Festival of Perugia, where *Testament* received the Special Jury Prize in 1989. In the UK his films are generally either broadcast on television or receive a limited cinematic release. As a result, the critical context for Akomfrah's filmmaking is, somewhat problematically, a combination of the documentary

tradition and European Art Cinema rather than the black communities in Britain (Gilroy 1989).

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s Akomfrah extended his reach beyond the context of black British experience, emphasizing the internationalism of the African diaspora. Testament (1988), The Mothership Connection (1995), and the African Political Broadcasts (1995) together represent a documenting of pan-African experience. Akomfrah's contribution to documentary represents both a formal interrogation of the materials and limits of documenting, and a significant contribution to the cultural representation of the black diaspora. Akomfrah, in collaboration with the members of the Black Audio Film Collective, opens up and places in doubt the language of documentary, while simultaneously exposing the gaps, silences, and blind spots of official, recorded history.

IAN GOODE

See also: Handsworth Songs

Biography

Born in Ghana in 1957 to parents who had met in England and who had returned to Ghana, where Akomfrah's father was a member of the government under President Kwame Nkrumah. Raised in London. Attended Portsmouth Polytechnic, where he met some of the future members of Black Audio Film Collective. Returned to London and helped to establish Black Audio Film Collective in 1982. Formed Smoking Dogs production company in 1995 with Lina Gopaul and David Lawson. Member of PACT Cultural Diversity Panel (The Producers' Alliance for Cinema and Television). Appointed governor on the board of the British Film Institute in October 2001.

Selected films

- 1986 Handsworth Songs: director
- 1988 Testament: director
- 1991 Who Needs a Heart: director, writer
- 1993 Seven Songs for Malcolm X: director, writer
- 1996 The Cheese and the Worm: director

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Alexander, Donald

Donald Alexander was a typical representative of the 1930s generation, which—shocked as it was by the human waste caused by the Depression—welcomed the social changes begun during the war and ending in the British Labour government's welfare programme. After graduating from the University of Cambridge, he gained his first film experience in the South Wales coal fields in 1935. Using a borrowed 16mm camera, he and his companion filmed such typical sights as miners looking for coal high upon the slagheaps. Once the film was finished it was shown to Paul Rotha. He invited Alexander to be his assistant at Strand Films—an offer that was immediately accepted.

Rotha ensured that Alexander learned all the tricks of the trade by having him work with the company's more experienced staff. For *Today We Live*, commissioned by the National Council for Social Service, Alexander, acting as assistant to director Ralph Bond, personally reshot on 35mm stock the sequence from his novice film on the Tylorstown slagheap. The footage would be incorporated in countless historical documentaries.

In 1937 Alexander was ready for his first directorial assignment: *Eastern Valley*, about a substance farm for unemployed miners in Cwmavon, run by the Order of Friends. In his last prewar film, about the city of Dundee,

he made use of the more complex narrative structure that would become so characteristic of his 1940s documentaries. The frame story for Dundee is provided by a group of people meeting by chance on the ferry crossing the Tay; each character is used to impart factual information to, and derive empathy from, the spectator.

In December 1940 Alexander was asked by Paul Rotha to return to London. In response to the plans of former Shell publicity officer, Jack Beddington (now head of Films Division at the Ministry of Information (MOI)), to involve outside units in the production program, Rotha had the idea of setting up a new unit. Its aim was making 'films of social importance with an eye to the future' (Alexander), in line with the 'war aims' presented in the very first issue of *Documentary Newsletter* (1940), which demanded that 'the Educational system, Public Health Services, Child Welfare, the Housing Problem' be reviewed and reformed.

In 1941 Alexander was first introduced to Bridget (Budge) Cooper, who would soon become his (second) wife and close companion in film production. While working at Paul Rotha Productions (PRP), they tackled several social and health topics in films about day nurseries, rural local government, rehabilitation, female agricultural labor, and the contributions of West Indians to the war effort. However, it was Cooper's *Children of the City* (1944), analyzing the social roots of child delinquency, that epitomized PRP's social approach to documentary. Alexander acted as the film's producer, but it was Rotha who got the credit. It was out of resentment against this and similar incidents that Alexander, Cooper, and eight others decided in 1944 to break away from PRP. They formed Documentary Technicians Alliance (DATA), a cooperative recognized by the Co-operative Productive Federation. Until his departure in 1950, Alexander was annually elected as chairman by the DATA shareholder-employees.

To a large extent, the new unit was dependent on the MOI. When Labour won the 1945 general election by a significant majority, DATA felt proud in having contributed to this beginning of a new era through their films. However, Labour showed little concern for the documentary. It disbanded the MOI, replacing it with a common service department, the Central Office of Information. This remained the biggest sponsor of DATA, but its nongovernmental status proved a

growing source of friction. By 1948 DATA, now employing more than forty technicians, had changed its direction by looking for other sponsors such as the National Coal Board (NCB, for which it produced the monthly *Mining Review*) and the Steel Company of Wales.

In 1950 Alexander left DATA. The following year he was asked to take over the one-day-a-week job of Films Adviser at the NCB. He discovered that there was a great need for technical, training, and safety films, and argued for the setting up of an in-house technical film unit; in 1953 the unit was operative. Over the years, the volume of its work increased and Alexander, whose NCB job gradually became a full-time one, had to hire more employees. It was his policy not only to give young people the chance to learn the trade but also to make sure that there would always be a place for those who had already 'paid their dues' in documentary.

After a twelve-year stint at the NCB, Alexander decided to step down. He continued working for the Coal Board, and made several films, including *The 4 M's*, a film that NCB Chairman Alf Robens personally used in his presentations. In 1969 Alexander became Director of Audiovisual Aids at the University of Dundee. Being back in his beloved Scotland offered him the chance to get involved in the (second) Films of Scotland Committee. In 1979 he retired from the University of Dundee. Donald Alexander died July 20, 1993.

BERT HOGENKAMP

Biography

Born in London, August 26, 1913. Graduated from St John's College, Cambridge, reading classics, and later modern and medieval languages, in 1935. Joined Strand Films in 1936 as an assistant. Joined Film Centre in 1939. Director at Paul Rotha Productions, 1941–4. Founding member and first chairman of the film production cooperative Documentary Technicians Alliance (DATA), 1944–50. Secretary of British Documentary, 1947–9. Films Adviser to the Steel Company of Wales, 1950–1. Films Adviser to the National Coal Board and later head of the NCB Film Unit, 1951–63. Director of Audiovisual Aids at the University of Dundee, 1969–79. Died near Inverness, Scotland, July 20, 1993.

Selected films

1936	Rhondda: director, photographer	
1937	Today We Live (Bond, Ruby Grierson): assistant director	
1937	Eastern Valley: director	
1938	Wealth of a Nation: director	
1939	Dundee: director	
1944	Children of the City (Budge Cooper): producer	
1948	Here's Health: director	
1958–62	Experiment: Workstudy Experiment at Nafodynyrys Colliery: producer, director, editor	
1966	The 4 M's: director	
1974	Tayside: treatment, written commentary	

Allégret, Marc

Although often remembered as the long-time companion and protégé of eminent French novelist André Gide, Marc Allégret was also among the most prolific directors of his generation. Between 1927 and 1970 he made nearly eighty films, including fifteen documentaries clustered at the beginning and end of his career. His only two feature-length offerings were his most important: *Voyage au Congo/Travels in the Congo* (1927), a portrait of life in central Africa that played a seminal role in the emergence of cinematic ethnography; and *Avec André Gide/With André Gide* (1952), an affectionate retrospective of the writer's life and work.

In July 1925 Allégret and Gide embarked on a ten-month expedition across French Equatorial Africa. Allégret was in charge of all the logistical details, foremost among which was crafting a written, photographic, and cinematic record of the journey. He had no formal training as a photographer or filmmaker, but he practised extensively prior to the trip under the guidance of the renowned surrealist artist Man Ray. In contrast to both Robert Flaherty's influential *Nanook of the North* (1922) and Léon Poirier's hit *La Croisière noire/The Black Journey* (1926), Allégret wanted his film to be an objective record of African cultures that informed and explained rather than entertaining through adventure and exoticism. To that end, the first-time director deliberately excluded references to the trip itself, the many technical challenges he faced, his own presence behind the camera, and

grotesque elements of African culture, such as the large wooden discs worn in the lips of Massa women.

Voyage au Congo presents scenes of daily life among eight distinct ethnic groups, focusing on agricultural practices, hunting and fishing techniques, architectural styles, and key collective rituals, all of which are carefully contextualized with didactic intertitles (over one hundred and fifty in the eighty-minute montage that survives today) and detailed maps (ten in all). In so doing, Allégret rejected the sensationalism and racial stereotyping that had long characterized newsreel and documentary representations of so-called primitive cultures. Instead, the film promoted intercultural understanding by appealing to spectators' intellect and steeping them in knowledge. This approach, which reflects Gide's biting assertion that 'the less intelligent the white man is, the dumber he perceives Blacks to be' was nothing short of revolutionary, for it revealed the potential of cinema as a legitimate ethnographic tool.

Perhaps most importantly, Allégret realized the impossibility of ever achieving total objectivity because of the inherently unequal power dynamic that exists between the filmmaker and his or her subjects. His travel diary, which first appeared in 1987 under the title *Carnets du Congo/Notebooks from the Congo*, charts the emergence of a precocious self-reflexivity that would inform the later work of anthropologists such as Michel Leiris, Jean Rouch, and Claude Lévi-Strauss. In order to minimize the contaminating impact of his presence, Allégret shot much of the film with a long-range telephoto lens and whenever possible accustomed his subjects to the camera through repeated pantomime before taking any actual footage.

Whereas Gide's written accounts of the trip, *Voyage au Congo/Travels in the Congo* and *Retour du Tchad/Return from Chad*, sparked a national debate over colonial policy by exposing forced labour, crushing taxes, starvation, and insufficient medical care throughout central Africa, Allégret's film was more subtle in its politics, eschewing invective in favour of a primitivist aesthetic that celebrated African physical beauty, vitality, and moral purity. This brand of primitivism—which had its origins in the Enlightenment philosophers' critique of modern civilization and idealization of 'natural man'—had a significant influence on French art (particularly sculpture and painting) throughout the

1920s as concerns about European decadence and the need for cultural rejuvenation intensified in the wake of World War I.

In this regard, Allégret's footage of athletic competitions and dances is particularly striking. His long, graceful shots of contracting backs, arms, legs, and breasts create living, neo-classical sculptures reminiscent of the Renaissance. From today's perspective such scenes are disturbingly objectifying and voyeuristic, yet as an exercise in visual aesthetics and eroticism their appeal remains undeniable. Moreover, in the context of the late 1920s they constituted a powerful, if at root equally stereotypical, corrective to the widely held European prejudice that blacks were ugly, brutish, and unworthy of artistic attention.

The film's potentially incompatible aesthetic and ethnographic dimensions in fact complement each other, culminating in a sixteen-minute segment that dramatized courtship and marriage customs among the Sara people near Lake Chad. Although the practices represented on screen are sociologically accurate, the story of a young couple who meet by the river, fall in love, and struggle to satisfy their families' demands is entirely fictional. As Allégret's *Carnets* reveal, he carefully managed all aspects of the production, from scouting picturesque locations and choosing his actors among the local population, to directing their movements on camera and writing the explanatory intertitles. The result is a primitivist melodrama disguised as a documentary that uses the universal theme of love to inform European viewers about African cultural differences.

Although *Voyage au Congo* did not enjoy commercial success or have a substantial impact on popular mentalities, it received praise from critics and it launched Allégret's career as a filmmaker. During the following year he made short documentaries about native culture in Djerba, a small island off the coast of Tunisia, life in the region surrounding Tripoli, and a publicity film for the Belgian National Railroad Company. He then embarked on a successful career as a fiction film director, returning to documentary over twenty years later with *Avec André Gide*.

Released in early 1952 during a series of official ceremonies commemorating the first anniversary of Gide's death, the film was the first feature-length cinematic biography of a French writer. Its first two parts provide a historically contextualized overview of Gide's life and work

through a smoothly edited montage of newsreel footage, photos, and voice-over narration. The narrative is accurate but highly selective and at times superficial, omitting major novels such as *Les Faux-Monnayeurs/The Counterfeiters* and *Les Caves du Vatican/Lafcadio's Adventures*, as well as allusions to Gide's homosexuality and its crucial place in his work.

The third and final section, shot in Gide's small Paris apartment during the last months of his life, is an intimate portrait that awkwardly attempts to humanize the Nobel Prize winner and to ensure his legacy for posterity. Rather than conveying nonchalance and spontaneity—as Allégret clearly intended by filming Gide reading aloud from his works in slippers and robe, playing with his grandchildren, and smoking at the kitchen table while reflecting on his career—this part of the film comes off as pretentious, transparently disguised hagiography. It is obvious that many scenes have been scripted, rehearsed, and edited in order to paint Gide as both the quintessential French intellectual whose genius enlightens the world and, quite inaccurately, as a devoted family man with whom everyone can identify. The film ends pointedly on that note as Gide paraphrases the final lines of *Thésée/Theseus*: 'I have built my city, which is to say my writing. Through it my thought will live eternally.'

In 1952 the film bitterly divided critics as Gide's work always had, eliciting lavish praise and sarcastic denunciation. Despite its obvious flaws, in retrospect *Avec André Gide* can be appreciated as the innovative forerunner of a film genre that is now a standard part of television programming. Also, despite its flaws, on a meta-textual level the film exemplifies Gide's penchant for self-reinvention and the growing role that cinema would play in shaping celebrity and public memory during the last half of the twentieth century. Allégret gave up fiction film in 1963 under the influence of the New Wave, whose exponents heavily criticized his traditional style. However, several years later he returned to directing with a series of well-crafted television documentaries based on the Lumière newsreel archives from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In the end, Allégret's contribution to the development of documentary film is quantitatively modest but qualitatively significant for his pioneering experimentation with form and genre. Though *Avec André Gide* was an

ambitious failure, *Voyage au Congo* stands as a masterpiece of early ethnographic cinema and the most influential film of Allégret's entire career.

BRETT BOWLES

See also: *Voyage au Congo*

Biography

Born in Basel, Switzerland, December 23, 1900, son of a French Protestant pastor. Trip to England and beginning of lifelong relationship with André Gide, 1917–18. Organized short-lived performing arts festival known as *Les Soirées de Paris*, 1924. Graduated from the prestigious *Ecole des Sciences Politiques* with a concentration in diplomacy, 1925. Travelled through central Africa with Gide, 1925–6. Release of *Voyage au Congo* and emergence as a director, 1927–39. Continued making fiction films in Nice during World War II, 1940–5. Pursued various film projects in Switzerland and England, 1946–50. Returned to France to make *Avec André Gide*, 1950–1. Joined Cannes Film Festival Jury and received Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres award, 1960. Named President of the Cinémathèque Française, 1966. Died in Paris, November 3, 1973.

Selected films

- 1927 *Voyage au Congo/Travels in the Congo*: director
- 1927 *En Tripolitaine/Around Tripoli*: director
- 1928 *L'Île de Djerba/The Island of Djerba*: director
- 1928 *Les Chemins de fer belges/The Belgian Railroad System*: director
- 1952 *Avec André Gide/With André Gide*: director
- 1952 *Occultisme et magie/Occultism and Magic*: director
- 1967 *Exposition 1900/The 1900 World's Fair*: director
- 1967 *Lumière (Lumière, part 1)*: director
- 1968 *Lumière (Lumière, part 2)*: director
- 1968 *Début de siècle/Beginning of the Century*: director
- 1968 *Jeunesse de France/French Youth*: director
- 1968 *La Grande Bretagne et les Etats-Unis de 1896 à 1900/Great Britain and the*

United States from 1896 to 1900: director

- 1969 *L'Europe continentale avant 1900/Continental Europe before 1900*: director
- 1969 *L'Europe méridionale au temps des rois/Southern Europe in the Time of the Kings*: director

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Alvarez, Santiago

Santiago Alvarez was not only the man who put Cuban documentary on the world map but he was also one of the most powerful and innovative documentarians in the history of cinema. Politically a supporter of Fidel Castro (he was once described as Castro's poet laureate for his loving film portrayals of the Cuban leader), his aesthetics were anything but conventional. Not only did Alvarez become a master of agitprop, whom many have compared with the Russian Dziga Vertov (although Alvarez himself knew nothing of Vertov's work until later), but he also

extended the art of documentary in several directions. He did this through a highly personal style with huge visual impact, in which a rough-hewn lyricism was carried along by montage work that was often satirical or ironic, frequently using animated titles in place of commentary, and backed by the iconic use of music. In the 1950s Alvarez worked as a record librarian in a television station, and he developed a keen sense of the possibilities of matching—and mismatching—music and images.

One of the founder members of the Cuban film institute ICAIC (Instituto Cubano de Arte e Industria Cinematográficas), which was set up in 1959 during the first year of the Revolution, Alvarez was already forty years old when he was put in charge of the newsreel section and made his first short films. He once called himself a product of ‘accelerated underdevelopment’ and was always grateful to the Cuban Revolution for making him a filmmaker and enabling him to fulfill his youthful dreams. Born in the working-class district of Colonial Old Havana, he was the son of immigrant parents from Spain. When he was five years old, his shopkeeper father was arrested for anarchist activities and spent two years in prison, while the young family struggled to survive on their own. Alvarez started working at the age of fifteen as a compositor’s apprentice, became active in the union of graphic arts workers, went to night school, and set up a students’ association.

At the end of the 1930s he went to the United States, working as a coal miner in Pennsylvania and as a dishwasher in New York. Back in Cuba in 1942, he joined the Communist Party and got a job in radio, and later in television. He also attended a film club in Havana run by the Young Communists, which became a recruiting ground for the new film institute. At ICAIC, he was put in charge of newsreels and quickly proceeded to turn them into a veritable art form, as well as a training ground for several generations of young filmmakers in how to make films quickly, cheaply, and using whatever materials were at hand. Perhaps it was his anarchist susceptibilities that gave his aesthetics their particular slant: a healthy disapproval of schools, conventions, and orthodoxy, together with a penchant for the deployment of pithy, intelligent, didactic montage. These susceptibilities rapidly induced him to discard the conventional language of the newsreel, and turn the format inside out. Instead of an arbitrary sequence of

disconnected items, Alvarez combined them into a political argument, or turned them into single-topic documentaries. He used this technique in the first of his films to win international awards, *Ciclón/Hurricane* in 1963, and *Now* (1965), a denunciation of racial discrimination in the United States.

The newsreel job gave Alvarez the chance to film abroad, and here too he took a radical approach. In 1966 he accompanied Cuban athletes to the Pan-American Games in Puerto Rico, using the opportunity to turn out his longest film yet (thirty-four minutes), a biting satire of US imperialism named after the ship that took them there, *Cerro Pelado*. ICAIC was still at this time filming newsreels on mute, handheld 35mm cameras, but Alvarez was already at the height of his creative powers and using only a few intertitles to convey basic information, eschewing a verbal voice-over and instead using music to narrate the events. At one point in *Cerro Pelado*, shots of a training center for Cuban counterrevolutionaries (as a caption describes it) are juxtaposed with a band arrangement of Rossini’s ‘William Tell Overture’, which naturally recalls the use of the same piece as the title music of the television series *The Lone Ranger*; thus Alvarez presents the counterrevolutionaries as imitation cowboys, an image both satiric and deflating. In 1967 came *Hanoi Martes 13/Hanoi, Tuesday 13th*, a lyrical and wordless forty-minute portrayal of what daily life was like in war-torn North Vietnam (Tuesday the 13th is the Spanish equivalent of Friday the 13th in English). Here, the music was an original score by Leo Brouwer, who was emerging as Cuba’s most original film composer.

The same experimental approach produces both *LBJ* (1968), a stunning satire on US political assassinations, and *79 Primaveras/79 Springtimes of Ho Chi Minh* (1969), a deeply poetic tribute to the Vietnamese leader Ho Chi Minh. *LBJ* uses the three letters of President Johnson’s initials to stand for Luther, Bob, and John—Martin Luther King and the two Kennedys—in a bold play on the strange coincidence that the corpses of these three men littered Johnson’s ascent. Visually, the core of the satire is the image culled from a North American newspaper cartoon of Johnson as the incarnation of the Texan cowboy on his bronco. Alvarez doubles this up with Johnson as a medieval knight in armor astride his mount, reinforced with clips from two classic Hollywood

genres—Westerns and the historical adventure—which appear distorted. (They came from wide-screen films that had been copied directly without using the appropriate lens to unsqueeze them.) The film is thus as much a deconstruction of the imagery of the mass media as of US politics, in which assassination became an almost accustomed weapon that remained veiled in misinformation and mystery. Except for some linking animation and a few shots in the sequence on Martin Luther King, almost everything in this twenty-minute film is found material. As Alvarez put it himself, it was the US blockade of Cuba that prompted this approach by denying Cuba access to new live material, so instead he raided the archives and used cuttings from newspapers and magazines.

One of his best-known films of these years, *Hasta la victoria siempre/Always Until Victory* (1967), was made in only forty-eight hours so that it could be shown in the Plaza de la Revolución in Havana before Castro delivered his eulogy for Che Guevara. Less well known abroad are the films that Alvarez made on internal politics, including the forty-minute *Despegue a las 18:30/Take-off at 18:30* (1969), which confronted the failures of the Cuban economy, although it was made in a Guevara-like spirit of moral exhortation rather than as criticism. Even here, Alvarez eschews conventional narration in a long opening sequence that portrays the lines of potential customers at the food shops and the despondency of ‘No hay!’ (‘there isn’t any!’).

A series of longer films in the 1970s brought Alvarez’s style back toward reportage. In *Piedra sobre piedra/Stone Upon Stone* (1970), Alvarez goes to Peru to report on the radical military regime that had just restored diplomatic relations with Cuba, and is interrupted by a major earthquake, from which he draws a metaphor: an equation between the sixty seconds of the earthquake, the effects of which he films, and the earthquake of underdevelopment that lasted for three hundred and sixty-five days a year. Then came three films that chronicled Castro’s foreign tours of the 1970s (to Chile in 1971, Africa and Eastern Europe in 1972, and Africa again in 1977), where Alvarez developed a unique style of informal, observational filming that evidently took the Cuban leader’s fancy. (Castro gave Alvarez a Russian Lada car for his sixtieth birthday.) *De América soy hijo/Born of the Americas* (1972), the film of Fidel’s visit to Chile,

is by far the longest—one hundred and ninety-five minutes in the full version. The length is justified by taking the cue from Castro’s oratory: Alvarez used Castro’s speeches as entry points to sequences analyzing aspects of Latin American history and the Cuban experience, which Castro explained to his Chilean audiences, and a similar technique was used for *Y el cielo fue tomado por asalto/And Heaven was Taken by Storm*, which covers Castro’s 1972 tour of ten different countries in just over two hours, except that here the interpolated sequences concerned the histories of the countries visited. As one commentator put it after a retrospective of Alvarez’s work in London in 1980, these lengthy films have an easy pace and ‘a certain discursive quality which can be deceptively innocent’—especially *De América soy hijo*, which is ‘loose-jointed but powerful in its cumulative effect and its insistent contextualization of the Chilean situation’ (Hood 1980). At the same time, these films offer a rich collection of glimpses of Fidel Castro in a large variety of circumstances, both formal and informal. There is no denying that Castro greeting crowds and crowds greeting Castro can become repetitive, but such images are frequently offset by moments of individual interaction, such as an exchange he has with a working woman at a rally in Chile, or by the habit Alvarez has of leaving in the scenes that many editors would wish to leave on the cutting room floor (Castro fidgeting with the microphones on the podium in front of him, for instance).

Alvarez himself was a man of unflagging energy, until he was slowed by the onset of Parkinson’s disease. His filmography is enormous. In the 1970s alone, important titles included two more films on Chile, *¿Cómo, por qué y para qué se asesina un general?/How, Why and for What is a General Assassinated* (1971), and *El tigre saltó y mató, pero morirá ... morirá/The Tiger Leapt and Killed but it Will Die ... it Will Die* (1973), which are both rapid responses to events using a montage of library and archive images. Other notable achievements include the two-hour portrait of Vietnam, *Abril de Vietnam en el año del gato/April in Vietnam in the Year of the Cat*, commissioned by the Vietnamese to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the founding of the Democratic Republic, and *Mi hermano Fidel/My Brother Fidel* (1977), an intimate portrait in which Castro meets a man aged ninety-three who had met the Cuban

patriot José Martí when he was eleven years old, shortly before Martí was killed in battle.

Elected to the Cuban national assembly for the Havana district where he lived, Alvarez remained a significant figure at ICAIC and in 1991 was one of the signatories of the unprecedented letter of protest with which ICAIC's film directors greeted the suppression of the controversial film *Alicia en el pueblo de Maravillas*/Alicia in Wondertown, and the threat, later withdrawn, to merge ICAIC with Cuban television.

MICHAEL CHANAN

See also: LBJ; Now; 79 Springtimes of Ho Chi Minh

Biography

Born in 1919. Died May 20, 1998, in Havana, Cuba.

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American Family, An

(US, Gilbert, 1973)

The twelve-part 1973 PBS series *An American Family* marked the culmination of the direct cinema movement in the United States. Producer Craig Gilbert's decision to move his crew into the home, positioning living cinema in the living room of middle-class suburbia, and then broadcasting it into the living rooms of America, erased the divide between public and private, a recurrent dream of *cinéma vérité*. Instead of revealing the private moments of public figures as the Drew Associates had in *Primary* (1960), Alan and Susan Raymond reversed the logic, making public the very private rituals of bourgeois family life as found at 35 Wood Dale Lane, Santa Barbara, California, thus acknowledging it to be an institution as open to surveillance as that of welfare recipients. Joining direct cinema documentary methods with television sitcom

format, *An American Family* created a hybrid that fascinated its viewers.

In Pat and Bill Loud, Gilbert found a family defined, because of their cultural, economic, and political centrality, by their lack of definition. Seemingly raceless and classless, they were nevertheless marked by changing sexual mores, divorce, and homosexuality. The serial exposure of the Loud family on television revealed the suburban home as a central institution of post-war, middle-class experience. Filmed over seven months, the saga of the Louds, 'not the American family, but an American family', in the introductory words of Gilbert, begins with only the sketchiest background about the family prior to the moment of filming; the show, like all living cinema, features present-time experience shorn of sociological or historical context. The opening credits focus the series: first the house appears, then, in succession, Bill, Pat, and each of the children frozen in the middle of doing some typical activity. Their portraits surround the house, which dominates the frame. The sun-drenched family home becomes a spectacle, a source of envy in a consumer culture. Incredibly successful, Bill has built his own business forging replacement parts for heavy-mining equipment, marketing his products worldwide. Thus his home is linked to a global economy that makes possible the expansive ranch house with a pool and ocean view and the comfortable lives of his wife and children, who pursue their interests, secure in the knowledge that he will foot the bill for dancing lessons, apartments in New York City, musical instruments, and a horse and stable.

Yet, for all his economic centrality, Bill is not the center of the home. Rather, Pat, his wife and mother of his five children, dominates and maintains the family, and the footage. In her early forties, she is always perfectly made-up, her hair neatly done, wearing matching outfits and strands of gold around her neck and wrists. During the first episode, which includes both the end of the marriage (surrounded by friends, Pat tells Bill she is seeking a divorce, in the midst of drunken party at a restaurant) and the first day of filming, Pat is up at 6:30, poaching eggs and pouring mugs of coffee for her large family; however, the substance of the film is the emotional labor Pat expends in caring for her children. With the exception of the voluble and 'flamboyant' Lance, her oldest son, the Loud children are barely articulate teenagers.

They mumble about Michelle's horse, Delilah's tap dancing, Grant's band, Kevin's movies, and Lance's acting career.

The close monitoring that goes on in the Loud home (everyone checks in with the others about the day's activities, Lance calls long-distance from New York frequently, parents discuss problems relating to their children) reflects the scrutiny of Alan and Susan Raymond's camera and microphone. It also typifies the emotional intensity of the postwar middle-class family. During the first episode, as the camera follows Lance unpacking after his move into New York's Chelsea Hotel, he describes his siblings. Kevin is 'humane, the only one to buy presents for the others' birthdays'. Delilah 'lives a very Tammy existence, like Trisha Nixon with spice'. Michelle is selfish and bratty, 'made in the image of me', and Grant is 'talented but arrogant'. Summing up what will become clear over the course of the next eleven weeks, Lance's astute eye has been trained by gauging the emotional timbre of the home in which he was raised. The community he finds at the Chelsea Hotel, and continues to make in Copenhagen and Paris, becomes yet another form of this intimate social world.

This televised family saga codified a new political grammar, the rhetoric of celebrity. Both Lance and Pat launched careers from the series: Pat got her own talk show, and Lance became a minor star at Warhol's factory. HIV-positive since 1983, he died of complications from hepatitis C in December 2001, as the Raymonds were filming his last days in a Los Angeles hospice.

PAULA RABINOWITZ

See also: Primary

An American Family (US WNET/13, 1973, 720 mins). Produced by Craig Gilbert; coordinating producer: Jacqueline Donnet; associate producer: Susan Lester. Director: Craig Gilbert. Camera: Alan Raymond; additional camera, Joan Churchill and John Terry. Sound: Susan Raymond; assistant sound, Tom Goodwin; additional sound, Peter Pilafian and Alber Mecklinberg. Editor: Eleanor Hamerow (episode one); David Hanser, Pat Cook, and Ken Werner (episodes two to twelve).

Further reading

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Anais Nin Observed

(France, Snyder, 1974)

Released in 1974, *Anais Nin Observed* is one of a number of films directed by Robert Snyder that takes an intimate look at the lives and personalities of celebrated artists. Snyder describes his films as 'voyages of discovery', and openly admits that he knew very little about Nin's life or works before he began the film. He was introduced to her in 1968, when filming *The Henry Miller Odyssey* (1974), and after a prolonged period of acquaintance she agreed to let him film her for a separate documentary, of which she would be the focus. The two films make up a kind of unofficial diptych: Nin not only features in the work on Miller, as he later would in the Nin documentary, but she also helped Snyder to edit the film, providing encouragement and advice, just as Miller spent a long time with Snyder editing *Anais Nin Observed*.

Snyder's film follows Nin through her daily life, as she takes tea, swims in her pool, works on her journal, and chats with friends. The vast body of the documentary consists of her conversations with Snyder, as well as with friends such as Frances Steloff and students from University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Although frequently categorised as biography, *Anais Nin Observed*, like the majority of Snyder's works, makes no attempt to give a comprehensive historical account of Nin's life and works. The film is aimed rather at providing accessibility to the writer for an interested audience without the barriers of experts. It does not delve into her personal life, but is rather a mouthpiece for her musings on art, literature, and her own life. This is *Anais Nin* in her own words. She is, as the title states, observed.

To this end, the film sets out to reflect qualities of Nin's personality and work within its form. Snyder's signature as a documentary director, paradoxically, tends to consist of a

deferral to the artistic stamp of the documentary's subject, with whom he works very closely. In this regard he calls to mind the many female critics of Anais Nin who have adopted her prose style, writing about her as she wrote about herself. The film echoes the quality in Nin's writings that the literary critic Edmund Wilson describes as 'half ... story, half dream', and recreates the 'special world, a world of feminine perception and fancy' that is the circumscribed universe that Nin's characters inhabit. His success in this area is due in no small part to the work of the film's director of photography, Baylis Glascock, who uses soft focus and filters to recreate the aura of mystery that surrounds Nin. Repeated shots of light catching on glasses and water create a lilting quality that echoes that of Nin's writing. The film is edited in slow rhythms; conversations are conserved in their actuality rather than edited for highlights, so that, for example, when Nin finishes a thought, and gazes off into the distance before beginning her next conversation, the pause resonates with Nin's careful, well-thought out intellect.

Snyder's film mirrors Nin's diary in other ways—a fact he comments on in his notes on the film. At the time of filming, Nin was editing her journals for publication. The editing of the film echoes the process by which Nin selects material from her books: 'We could always pick up new material in the future and—together with material of our current film—make another one ... that's how diaries work!' Nin refers to the diaries constantly within the film: They are, she says, her 'cultural landscape', and she dips back into them daily. Snyder's film echoes this dialectic between past and present, opening with the contemporary Nin, before moving backwards to look at her past life and then forwards again into the present (Snyder 1976).

While *Anais Nin Observed* is unmistakably part of Snyder's oeuvre, at the same time we might consider it to be coauthored by Nin. The film is by no means an academic or historical study made about the subject, but is rather an experience of her: the director's authorship is in many ways secondary to Nin's, both in form and in content. In keeping with Miller's request for Snyder to 'mythologise' her, the director gives a very positive portrayal of Nin that might not be as objective as a more conventional biography, such as Coky Giedroyc's *Spy in the House of Love*—Anais Nin, shown as part of the UK's

Channel 4 Arthouse series on in the late 1990s. Snyder's film is certainly a lot more flattering, portraying Nin as gracious, unpretentious, and intelligent. Unlike Giedroyc's film and the numerous written biographies of Nin, there is little mention of her infamous sex life, and a great deal more emphasis is placed on her intellect and artistic merit. It is perhaps no coincidence that Nin agreed to the documentary at approximately the same time as Miller, Sherwood Anderson, and a group of other intellectuals were campaigning to have Nin nominated for the Nobel Prize for Literature. Until 1963 Nin was relatively unheard of as an author in the United States and had been very frustrated by it. In many ways, the film provides her with the artistic recognition that had so long eluded her.

As an objective history, Snyder's film certainly leaves gaps. Nin's husband, Rupert Pole, for example, who was sharing the house in which Nin was filmed (unbeknownst to her other husband, Hugo Guiler), is omitted from the film altogether, as if he never existed (probably for Guiler's sake!). However, as a portrait of Anais Nin as she saw herself, or more importantly as she wanted others to see her, Snyder's film complements content with form elegantly. Through the film, Anais continues the constant process of seduction that has characterised her life and writing, reaching out to new audiences through the screen. In this respect, Snyder's documentary is an almost perfect replica of the diaries in intent and content. Even before the editing process begins, a great deal has been cut out, leaving us as mystified as to who the real Anais Nin is as she has always wanted the world to be.

HELEN WHEATLEY

Selected films

Anais Nin Observed (US, Masters & Masterworks Productions, 1973, 60 mins). Distributed by The Grove Press. Produced by Robert Snyder. Directed by Robert Snyder; Associate Director: R.A. Fitzgerald, Jr. Cinematography by Baylis Glascock. Edited by R.A. Fitzgerald and Tom Schiller. Sound recorded by John Glascock and Leslie Shatz. Re-recorded by George Porter, Ryder Sound Services Inc. Colour by DeLuxe.

- 1974 *The Henry Miller Odyssey* (dir. Robert Snyder)
 1990 *Henry and June* (dir. Paul Kaufman)
 1998 *Anais Nin: A Spy in the House of Love* (dir. Coky Giedroyc)

Further reading

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 Snyder, Robert, *This is Henry, Henry Miller from Brooklyn*, book to accompany *The Henry Miller Odyssey*, incorporating photo stills and transcripts of interviews, some featured within the films and some not, along with Snyder's descriptions of the filming and musings on the subject, Chicago, IL: Swallow Press Incorporated, 1975.
 ———, *Anais Nin Observed*, book to accompany *Anais Nin Observed*, incorporating photo stills and transcripts of interviews, some featured within the films and some not, along with Snyder's descriptions of the filming and musings on the subject, Chicago, IL: Swallow Press Incorporated, 1976.

Anderson, Lindsay

Lindsay Gordon Anderson, a Scottish director, critic, and cofounder of the Free Cinema movement, played a seminal role in postwar British filmmaking. When Anderson entered the film world in 1947, British filmmakers had largely forsaken art for propaganda because of the utilitarian demands created by World War II. Accustomed to making movies that served a national purpose, British directors churned out works that, to Anderson's eyes, lacked aesthetic appeal. Preferring romanticism to realism, he urged documentarians to abandon the studios, abstain from sophisticated technology, and rediscover the freedom found in the harmony of expression and substance. His search for high art led him to direct low-budget documentaries in the 1940s and 1950s and to create the Free Cinema movement, which encouraged other filmmakers to slip out of their political and social chains. The naturalistic look at the working classes promoted by Anderson would culminate in the British New Wave.

As an editor with the influential film magazine *Sequence* in the late 1940s and early 1950s, Anderson championed film as art and the director as the master of the medium. He argued that only the director was in a position to determine cinematic expression. On the basis of his

reputation, he received a commission to make a series of industrial films for a Yorkshire conveyor belt company, Richard Sutcliffe Ltd. He accepted the offer because he wanted to learn how to make films and he believed that documentaries offered an avenue to larger projects. Anderson's first documentary, *Meet the Pioneers* (1948), focused on the firm's underground conveyor system that brought coal from the mines to the pithead in Yorkshire. This series of films shares a characteristic common to Anderson documentaries, in that the subject is work itself, with the director focusing on how things are made and how processes are set in motion.

Anderson's first nonindustrial film, the thirty-minute *Wakefield Express* (1952), was commissioned to celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of the newspaper. Shot as usual with 16mm film, the documentary begins in typical Anderson fashion—not with background information, but with people. Although the history of the paper is provided, the director focuses on the work of producing an edition. Aiming to capture the dignity of ordinary Britons, Anderson follows a reporter as he interviews local people in search of stories, shows communal activities such as children playing, and has a final sequence of the paper going to press. Anderson was an admirer of Humphrey Jennings, and this film reflects Jennings's influence in its poetic style and focus on common subjects. By showing a reporter interviewing a ninety-five-year-old woman, Anderson imitates Jennings's manner of linking person to person to show the relationship of the past to the present. Nothing about the film is impartial—another Anderson trait. The subjects frequently play to the camera, while the director does not attempt to hide his affection, respect, and occasional exasperation for the Wakefield community.

For his next film, Anderson collaborated with Guy Brenton, an Oxford acquaintance, to direct *Thursday's Children* (1953), about the Royal School for Deaf Children in Margate, UK. Named after the old nursery rhyme in which 'Thursday's child has far to go', the twenty-minute documentary follows Anderson's adage that to make a film, one must create a world. Immersing the viewer fully in the lives of the children, he shows them in their boarding school as they receive lessons and explains how they came to live away from their families. Without informing the filmmakers, the British Office of Information in New York submitted the film to

the Motion Picture Academy and it won an Oscar for best short subject.

Not far from the deaf school was the most popular working-class amusement park in the south of England, called 'Dreamland'. Anderson paid it a visit, and was fascinated by exhibits such as 'Torture Through the Ages' and 'Famous Executions'. He reacted harshly to the passivity of the audience in the face of the unimaginative diversions, sad exhibitions, and pitifully caged animals. It is his anger at the undemanding aesthetic criteria of the crowd that makes this documentary an aggressive criticism rather than the positive affirmation found in his other films. The thirteen-minute *O Dreamland* (1953) was the first film that Anderson directed with no other impetus other than his own wish to make it.

Every Day Except Christmas (1957) is a forty-minute portrait of the workers who sold fruit, flowers, and vegetables three hundred and sixty-four days a year in London's Covent Garden market. The bustling workers, who occasionally mug for the camera, were generally filmed in long shot or close-up to show both their coordinated physical activity and their unique personalities.

Once Anderson had developed a mastery of filmmaking, his impatience with the mediocrity and prescriptive narrative style of most British films of the era increased. To encourage social realist films and freedom for the filmmaker, Anderson helped to develop the small Free Cinema movement. This British group presented six programs of films at the National Film Theatre from 1956 to 1959, including *O Dreamland* in 1956, *Wakefield Express* in 1957, and *Every Day Except Christmas* also in 1957. In the broadest sense, Free Cinema had two objectives: to show what it valued in the cinema, with the emphasis on the work of the young contemporary filmmakers, and to show films to encourage other similar films to be made. Anderson coined the phrase 'Free Cinema', wrote most of the movement's propaganda, and directed the greatest percentage of documentaries in the programs.

Anderson always refused to give his definition of a documentary, arguing that the term limited discussion of the film in question. He cherished freedom, and his films both reflect and examine this concept. In all of his works, Anderson explores the ways in which subjects interact, and the ultimate impossibility of being

subjective. Poetic and lacking technological tricks, his documentaries are unvarnished portrayals of British life during the mid-twentieth century.

CARYN E. NEUMANN

See also: *Every Day Except Christmas*; Jennings, Humphrey

Biography

Born in Bangalore, India, to a South African mother and Scottish father in the Royal Engineers, April 17, 1923. Parents separated in 1926; moved to England with his mother. Graduated from Wadham College, University of Oxford, reading classical studies, in 1942. Drafted into the Army, serving with the King's Royal Rifles as a clerk in India, 1943–5. Graduated from Oxford with a Master of Arts in English, 1948. Cofounder and editor of *Sequence*, 1949–51. Directed industrial films for Richard Sutcliffe Ltd, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, the National Industrial Fuel Efficiency Service, and the Central Office of Information for the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, 1948–55. Wrote *Making a Film: The Story of 'Secret People'* in 1952. Directed and acted in feature films and television commercials, 1963–87. Wrote *About John Ford* in 1981. Died of a heart attack in Angoulême, Charente, Poitou-Charentes, France, August 20, 1994.

Selected films

- 1948 *Meet the Pioneers*: director, editor, commentator
- 1949 *Idlers That Work*: director, commentator
- 1952 *Three Installations*: director, commentator
- 1952 *Trunk Conveyor*: director, commentator
- 1952 *Wakefield Express*: director
- 1953 *Thursday's Children*: codirector
- 1953 *O Dreamland*: director
- 1955 *Green and Pleasant Land*: director and scriptwriter
- 1955 *Henry*: director and scriptwriter
- 1955 *The Children Upstairs*: director and scriptwriter
- 1955 *A Hundred Thousand Children*: director and scriptwriter
- 1955 *£20 a Ton*: director
- 1955 *Energy First*: director

1955 *Foot and Mouth*: director and script-writer

1957 *Every Day Except Christmas*: director

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Lambert, Gavin, *Mainly About Lindsay Anderson*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000.

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Angela: Portrait of a Revolutionary

(US, du Luart, 1971)

Angela: Portrait of a Revolutionary paints a picture of the educator Angela Davis from the point of view of one of her students at the University of California in Los Angeles in 1971. It explores the challenges that Davis faced because of her political activism, and shows the consequences of her being a communist. Shot entirely in black and white, this low-budget, student-produced documentary film is nonetheless ambitious. It tries to capture the essence of Angela Davis, lending a multidimensional view to the person behind the picture on the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) 'Ten Most Wanted' poster. Yolande du Luart, the film's director, takes a sympathetic view of Davis, while at the same time presents the story from a number of different perspectives. The film is du Luart's attempt to legitimize Angela Davis personally, politically, and professionally.

Angela: Portrait of a Revolutionary begins with sound images of police car sirens combined with footage of Angela Davis's arrest in New York for her alleged involvement in the failed attempt to free Black Panther George Jackson, who was on trial for allegedly killing a prison guard at Soledad Prison in California. This scene is followed by a sound image of a cell door crashing shut against a totally dark screen. The camera then focuses on the Women's House of Detention on December 5, 1970, with a voice-over by Angela Davis stating that she is 'now being held captive'. Next, the camera focuses on still shots of her supporters rallying outside the Women's House of Detention, carrying posters saying, 'Free Our Sisters in the House of D' and

'Free Angela Davis'. Angela Davis is thus painted as a political prisoner, not a common criminal.

The film then flashes back in time to the autumn of 1969. The viewer is given an insider's look at Angela Davis, the academic, who is preparing for and then teaching a class in the philosophy department at University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). This scene is followed by one of two interviews with the Chairperson, Professor Donald Kalish, who is filmed in the middle of the screen behind his desk in his office, thus presenting an authoritative image. He discusses in a measured way why and how Professor Davis was hired, and he is quick to point out that her appointment was based on her outstanding academic credentials and the needs of the department.

Later in the film, Professor Kalish explains why the Board of Regents fired Professor Davis, and he concludes that it was because of her membership in the Communist Party. The film also includes a voice-over by Max Rafferty, a member of the Board of Regents, giving his rationale for her dismissal (Professor Davis had yet to earn her doctorate). It is important to note that the film uses more than one voice to tell the story. This use of multiple points of view ultimately gives credibility to Professor Kalish's account. He explains how Max Rafferty is misinformed about higher education, since a completed doctorate is not a requirement for the job of Assistant Professor in the early 1970s at UCLA. In addition, toward the end of the film, Angela Davis herself tells the story of her dismissal. This scene gives Davis ownership of her story. In sum, by illustrating her academic credentials and demonstrating the reasons for her dismissal, the film invites its audience to look at the politics behind the Board of Regents' decision.

Angela: Portrait of a Revolutionary also illustrates Davis's core beliefs. In it, Davis tries to spell out the difficulty of not only organizing a movement for social change and equality but also struggling to maintain that movement. The film seeks to merge the political with the personal, with a series of carefully spliced scenes that move between private spaces that Davis occupies in her home and study, for example, and public spaces where she teaches, lectures, and gives political speeches. These scenes do justice to the idea that the personal and political cannot be separated. Finally, the film demonstrates how

repression comes in many forms by linking the killing of two students at Jackson State College, the war in Vietnam, the killing of four white students at Kent State University, the trial in Connecticut of Bobby Seale, and the Soledad Brothers facing the gas chamber.

Other techniques include the use of sound images to remind viewers of what is not visually present (e.g. police car sirens with gunshots ringing in the background while pictures of the bloody police raid on the Black Panther Party Office in South Central Los Angeles on December 8, 1969, are shown in still shots). This series of still shots serves to imprint police brutality of African Americans on the viewer's mind, especially since it is quickly juxtaposed with still shots of posters declaring 'Feed Hungry Children' and 'Free Breakfast for School Children', representing a Black Panther Party humanitarian initiative for inner-city poor children. By juxtaposing images of mainstream atrocities and Black Panther activism, not only are Davis's political views illustrated but also the notion that Jonathan and George Jackson and other Black Panthers are simple thugs who should be locked up, is challenged.

Angela: Portrait of a Revolutionary was little noted nor long remembered. Angela Davis herself, now a Professor of Social Consciousness at the University of California in Santa Cruz, neither owns a copy of it nor has she stayed in touch with its filmmaker, Yolande du Luart, who is now translating mysteries from French to English. Yet, to use a 1960s term, Angela: Portrait of a Revolutionary seems 'relevant' to those interested in experiencing a pivotal moment in the life and work of the controversial and iconic Angela Davis, and in the production of student documentary films rooted in the political milieu of the early 1970s. Not only is the film Davis's story of struggle but it is also a political act in and of itself. In the end, it powerfully demonstrates the means and methods by which Angela Davis dedicated her life to the struggle against fascism and racism.

THERESA C. LYNCH

Angela: Portrait of a Revolutionary (US, New Yorker Films Release, 1971, 60 mins). Distributed by New Yorker Films. Produced by Mae Mercer. Directed by Yolande du Luart. Cinematography by Roger Andrieux and Lynn Merrick. Music by Yolande du Luart. Edited by

Jacqueline Mappel. Sound direction by Nancy Dowd. Filmed in New York and California.

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Anstey, Edgar

Edgar Harold Macfarlane Anstey OBE, a documentary film director, producer, and critic, was perhaps one of the most versatile documentary filmmakers of the twentieth century, moving easily between the aesthetics of his time and its science.

Living in the shadow of John Grierson's desire to reshape society with ideals of social and ethical cohesion, Anstey was the only member of the Empire Marketing Board with technical and scientific training, and he urgently felt a need to make technological processes comprehensible. Anstey instantly recognized the value of the informational film for the purpose of training and educating. He sought an opportunity to follow through this conception of the informational film, and worked on the report that brought into being the Shell Film Unit. He produced Shell's first film, *Airport* (Roy Lockwood, UK, 1934), an observation of a day at Croydon Airport and the systematic examination and refurbishment of an aeroplane engine.

The film lasted only seventeen minutes, but nothing could quite compare with aircraft, and everything associated with them, for excitement. Many people had never seen an aeroplane, yet everyone recognised the exotic glamour of flight. *Airport* informed, entertained and educated while simultaneously indicating Shell's own position in the vanguard of modernity (Howarth 1997).

Anstey shared John Grierson's view that documentary must both criticize the agents of state and represent the interests of the exploited

worker. He became frustrated and unhappy with the rate of progress at Shell and resigned to pursue his ideology.

Anstey found his opportunity with the Gas, Light and Coke Company, and (along with Arthur Elton) brought to the screen *Housing Problems* (1935), which focused on the plight of a Stepney (in London's East End) slum dweller. In doing so, he sparked a new approach to documentary filmmaking. *Housing Problems* marked the beginning of Anstey's long commitment to social change. The film was well received, although Joris Ivens, a fellow documentary filmmaker, commented in hindsight:

There have been cases in the history of documentary when photographers became so fascinated by dirt that the result was the dirt looked interesting and strange, not something repellent to the audience. In my opinion [...] *Housing Problems*, fell into this error of exotic dirt. You could not smell these London slums.
(Ivens, 1969)

However, John Betjemen, film critic of the *Evening Standard*, praised this new style of filmmaking and in 1935 wrote movingly of these 'films without sex'. Betjemen came later to admire Anstey's perceptive gifts as a critic with the BBC and *The Spectator*.

Grierson, too, later praised *Housing Problems*, and noted that both Anstey and Elton had taken 'the documentary film into the field of social problems, and keyed it to the task of describing not only industrial and commercial spectacle, but social truth as well' (Grierson, 1966: 215).

Housing Problems convinced Anstey of the power of documentary, and he followed it with *Enough to Eat?* (1936), an examination of the problem of malnutrition. Pushing for social change, Anstey claimed that the film was a contribution to ongoing national research on nutrition and nutritional issues. Its success can be attributed to the media coverage it received, rather than the quality of the filmmaking displayed. *The Catholic Herald*, for example, wrote:

The film does not show the terrible ravages that undernourishment has created in England. Director Edgar Anstey has chosen the better method of revealing the tragedy of poverty and the consequent

semi-starvation which is the result of a cheap diet chosen more for its filling qualities than for its nutritive value.

(*The Catholic Herald*, October 10, 1936)

Like Grierson, Anstey believed that documentary could act as an effective medium of communication between the government and the working classes. During World War II, while at Film Centre, he made an abundance of films for the Ministry of Information to encourage more intensive cultivation of urban gardens and mixed farms throughout Great Britain.

It was during this time that the Scientific Film Association was formed. Anstey and Arthur Elton were convinced that film had a singular power to impart information. Anstey believed passionately that the scientist and the technologist shared the imagination and insight of the artist, and after the war he and Elton created the International Scientific Film Association to disseminate a wider corroboration of their outlook.

Anstey, like Grierson, had established himself at the forefront of documentary production. From the early 1940s he largely settled into the role of producer. His appointment as Films Officer and Producer in Charge to the British Transport Commission in 1949 allowed him to use his gifts and abilities to satisfy his vision for documentary film.

STEVEN R. FOXON

See also: Elton, Arthur; *Enough to Eat?*; Granton Trawler; *Housing Problems*; *Industrial Britain*; *March of Time*

Biography

Born February 16, 1907, in Watford, England. Educated at Watford Grammar School and Birkbeck College, University of London. Married Daphne Lilly (Canadian documentary filmmaker NFBC) in 1949. Joined Grierson's Empire Marketing Board Film Unit after answering to an advertisement in *The Times* in 1931. Started the Shell Film Unit in 1934. Joined the *March of Time* Film Unit, initially as London Director of Productions, later Foreign Editor in New York from 1936 to 1938. Member of the Board and Producer at Film Centre (UK), 1940–8. Regular member of BBC radio programme 'The Critics', from 1949

to 1966. Organized and acted as producer-in-charge of British Transport Films (BTF) from 1949 to 1974. In 1956 and in 1967 served as Chairman of the British Film Academy. President of the International Scientific Film Association from 1961 to 1963. Won an Academy Award for *Wild Wings* (1965) in 1966. Chairman, British Industrial & Scientific Film Association from 1969 to 1970. Board of Governors at the British Film Institute from 1974 to 1975. Chairman of Children's Film Foundation Production Committee from 1981 to 1983. Died September 25, 1987, in London, England.

Selected films

- 1931 *Industrial Britain*: editor
- 1934 *Granton Trawler*: editor
- 1935 *Housing Problems*: director/producer (with A. Elton)
- 1936 *Enough to Eat?*: director
- 1943 *Crown of the Year* (Ministry of Information): associate producer
- 1947 *Caller Herrin'* (Scottish Home Dept): producer
- 1950 *Berth 24* (BTF): producer
- 1954 *Elizabethan Express* (BTF): producer
- 1957 *Journey into Spring* (BTF): producer
- 1961 *Terminus* (BTF): producer
- 1965 *Wild Wings* (BTF): producer
- 1970 *Site in the Sea* (BTF): producer
- 1975 *Age of Invention* (BTF): producer

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Antonio, Emile de

Emile de Antonio is best known for his innovations in the approach to documentary filmmaking. His works engage viewers in pointed political discourse through the clever arrangement of images, historical footage, interviews, text, sound, and other elements compiled to create a story without the use of a narrator. Although he came to filmmaking in his forties and made relatively few major films, de Antonio is a significant figure in the history of documentary. Nearly all of his films are explorations of the Cold War, its legacies, and its effects on US culture and values systems.

Perhaps the most fascinating thing about de Antonio's work is his challenge to the idea of truth being told about historical events. De Antonio is quite willing to accept that any story may have as many explanations and meanings given as it does witnesses. The notion of direct address of the witness championed by de Antonio is a simple principle with extremely complex implications for the understanding of history. This concept was well illustrated by his pioneering use of found footage. Television images are used to strengthen the inherent arguments about power and human nature that surface in his work.

De Antonio's first film was formulated in this way. *Point of Order* (1964) used historical footage of the McCarthy hearings to illustrate the trajectory of the tale. De Antonio employed distinctive editing techniques to create meaningful juxtapositions. He continued to explore the recontextualization of previously filmed material for the next few films, honing his skills in the compilation images. Although this is interesting as a formal technique, it is even more intriguing when the content is considered as well. The films of Emile de Antonio are largely about sociopolitical concerns, and this is well supported by the use of the televised image as a storytelling device. In a 1971 interview de Antonio spoke of his impetus for creating the film:

The Army-McCarthy hearings were a peak in American political theater. And there were lessons derived from it [...]

You get something like the Army-McCarthy hearings on television—in all its body, all of it—and something is revealed about the nature of our governmental structure, our society, where the real power is [...] because the whole thing about American politics is that it's a game, a game whereby you hide what's really happening from the American people while its happening. And that's part of what the film is all about, to show that game.

(Weiner 1971: 9)

This concept continued to propel de Antonio's work throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

Among de Antonio's best-known works is 1968's *In the Year of the Pig*, a film comprising found footage from many diverse sources designed to illustrate the high-level confusion of the Vietnam War. De Antonio skillfully organized images to raise difficult questions about the nature of US involvement in the war. Composed of his own interviews and new footage—combined with material gleaned from a detailed study of footage shot by the National Liberation Front, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the French Army, the American Broadcasting Company, and the BBC—*In the Year of the Pig* examines a complex issue from many angles. At the time of the 1971 *Film Quarterly* interview, de Antonio spoke of the impact of the news media and the war that was still underway.

There is nothing as bad that's happened concerning the war as the networks' coverage of it, because it seems as if they're covering the war whereas in fact, they're not. The networks have made the American people, in a final way, comfortable with the war—because it appears between commercials, every day; it's become part of our quotidian existence, like armpit commercials. There's never the question asked, 'Why are we doing this? What is this war about?' It's never suggested by anything that occurs on television that we should even be interested in that type of question. Television is a way of avoiding coming to terms with the fact that we're in this war.

(Weiner 1971: 7)

It is intriguing that this statement has continued relevance today.

Perhaps the most unique of de Antonio's films is *Painters Painting* (1972), in that it is unlike any of his other work. This exploration of several artists' thoughts and concerns in their working environments is still compelling today for its direct approach to the artists and their processes. His first film in 35mm, this work sought to create a synthesis of form and content as it used this collage style of filmmaking to look at several artists who worked in collage painting. De Antonio stated:

This is a film about the System of the art world in the words of the people in that world: [Willem] de Kooning, [Robert] Motherwell, Jasper Johns, Andy Warhol, Robert Rauschenberg, Frank Stella, Barney Newman [...] and so on. Most of these are people I've known and who are friends of mine, but the film also includes the collectors, the manipulators, and the museum people and how an art market is created.

(Weiner 1971: 14)

The film is entertaining and insightful, like other de Antonio works, but its political inquiry is less overt than in the rest of his catalog.

Emile de Antonio remains an important figure in documentary filmmaking. In recent memory, his works have taken on a renewed sense of social poignancy and verve. As documentary film has become more mass produced and widely screened throughout the world, the significance of de Antonio is heightened.

TAMMY A. KINSEY

See also: *In the Year of the Pig*

Biography

Born 1919. Studied history at Harvard University. Figure in New York art scene. Began making films aged forty. Pioneered use of found television footage as documentary filmmaking tool. Died 1989.

Selected films

- 1964 *That's Where the Action Is*
- 1965 *Rush to Judgment*
- 1968 *In the Year of the Pig*
- 1969 *America is Hard to See*

1970 Millhouse: A White Comedy
 1976 Underground
 1989 Mr Hoover and I

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Apted, Michael

Michael Apted has been involved in documentary filmmaking since the early 1960s. He has long been known for his patient, probing interviews and the simple truths revealed through them. Apted is perhaps best known for his Up series, a remarkable continuation of a project he worked on as a researcher in 1963. Directed by Paul Almond for Granada TV, this film (Seven Up) was the start of an idea that is clearly and uniquely Apted. Fourteen British boys and girls were interviewed for this work, and the thoughts and hopes of seven-year-olds were revealed. Apted endeavored to continue this notion in 1970, when he interviewed the same set of youngsters (now fourteen years old) in his Seven Plus Seven. At seven-year intervals, Apted has interviewed these same people, producing 21 Up (1977), 28 Up (1985), 35 Up (1991), 42: Forty-Two Up (1998) and 49 Up (2005). This is unlike any other cinematic endeavor on record, and although a few of the original fourteen have dropped out of the project, those who remain have become very close to Apted and to each other. This careful study of human life, its simplicity, joys and sorrows, is indeed an epic documentary project.

Amid the years of this ongoing cinematic task, Apted has worked as a director for both independent and Hollywood features as well as continuing his documentary work. In 1985 he released *Bring on the Night*, a document of musician Sting and his tour experience, both backstage and in concert.

Apted's interest in political and social issues is evident in much of his work. His 1992

documentary, *Incident at Oglala*, explores the controversial case of two murdered Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agents on the reservation at Pine Ridge, South Dakota, USA and the incarceration of Native American Leonard Peltier for these crimes. The film painstakingly investigates witnesses' accounts of the events of July 1975, showing testimonials from the legal proceedings, surveying evidence, and interviewing various players. Apted ultimately provides a study not only of the events themselves but also of the way in which people respond to the pressures of accusation, the role that race plays in such a case, and the notion of justice itself. Apted's 1994 film *Moving the Mountain* continues with this political framework as it explores the Tiananmen Square student demonstrations of June 1989 in Beijing, China. The 1997 project *Inspirations* is not overtly political, yet it investigates ideas themselves in a very critical manner, a kind of creative activism at play in the film. Apted interviewed artists about the specifics of their process in art-making, with attention paid to the exercise of problem solving. Musician David Bowie, pop art painter Roy Lichtenstein, glass artist Dale Chihuly, dancer Edouard Locke, actress Louise LeCavalier, architect Tadao Ando, and ceramicist and poet Nora Noranjo-Morse answer questions regarding the nature of their creativity and the origins of their ideas. In an interview with Pamela Klaffke, Apted explained his views on filmmaking and art:

You have to have a vision. That was why I was so interested in having an architect [in the film]. I felt a real sense of camaraderie with him because I felt both of our jobs are very public jobs, very collaborative, very man-management, very political jobs. It's a form of art, but not what I would call pure art of the blank page, the oil, the clay, the glass or whatever. It is a sort of art, but a wider view of art being a film director than being a composer, poet, painter or sculptor—because there are so many hands on your work.

(Klaffke 1998)

Apted continues this tack of social and political observation in his new serial documentary, *Married in America*. A production of A&E Television Networks, this 2002 work represents the second time Apted has used the notion of

returning to a subject as a method of storytelling. *Married in America* explores the lives of nine diverse couples, including racially mixed pairs, those who were previously married or of different religions, and a lesbian couple. All of these couples live in or near Los Angeles, New York, or Birmingham, Alabama. Surely this regional specificity will allow for closer examination of the social issues at hand in these places and the things they create in these relationships. Apter intends to visit the couples, whether they remain together or not, to see what has transpired in their lives. Of interest to him is the question of 'family values' rhetoric in a society filled with divorce and single-parent households. Do age and class differences, past relationships, and family pressures complicate these unions in similar ways? (Chocano 2002). The institution of marriage itself is examined here. Are there things that make a marriage work in today's world? Can the success of a union be predicted from the interactions between the people involved? Are the struggles of the early years always beneath the surface as the relationship continues? Apter is intrigued by these simple human dramas that shape society's attitudes. The second series was made in 2006.

TAMMY A. KINSEY

Biography

Born February 10, 1941, in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, England. Worked as a researcher for Granada TV. Member of the Directors Guild of America since 1978. Received the International Documentary Association (IDA) Award for 28 Up in 1985. Vancouver International Film Festival Best Documentary Feature Award, 1994, for *Moving the Mountain*. In 1998, 42: *Forty-Two Up* received the Flaherty Documentary Award. Awarded the Doubletake Documentary Film Festival's Career Award in 1998. International Documentary Association's Career Achievement Award, 1999. Special Jury Award, Florida Film Festival, 2000, for *Me and Isaac Newton*. President of the Directors Guild of America, 2003–9.

Selected filmography

1963 7 Up
1970 7+7 (14 Up)

1977 21 Up
1985 28 Up
1985 *Bring On the Night*
1991 35 Up
1992 *Incident at Oglala*
1994 *Moving the Mountain*
1997 *Inspirations*
1998 42: *Forty-Two Up*
2002 *Married in America* (TV)
2005 49 Up
2006 *Married in America 2* (TV)

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Arcand, Denys

Denys Arcand made his first film, *A l'est d'Eaton/East of Eaton* (1959), with Stéphane Venne when he was eighteen years old. A few years later, while studying history at the Université de Montréal, he codirected *Seul ou avec d'autres/Alone or with Others* (1962) with Stéphane Venne and Denis Héroux. *Seul ou avec d'autres* was a docudrama on the life of university students. Although Arcand did not intend to pursue a career as a filmmaker at that time, he applied for a summer job at the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) and was hired to research and write a screenplay for a documentary on the founder of Québec City, Samuel de Champlain. He was eventually hired to direct the short film *Champlain* (1964) and two other shorts on the history of New France, *Les Montréalistes/Ville-Marie* (1965) and *La route de l'ouest/The Westward Road* (1965). After working on a few generic shorts in the late 1960s, such as *Volleyball* (1966), he made his first feature-length documentary, *On est au coton/Cotton Mill*, *Treadmill* (1970), an examination of the textile industry in Québec. The film was deemed subversive by NFB commissioner Sydney Newman, and banned from distribution until 1976.

The controversy surrounding *On est au coton* brought attention to Arcand, and he was given

the opportunity to direct three fiction films in the private sector: *La maudite galette/The Damed Dough* (1971), *Réjeanne Padovani* (1973), and *Gina* (1975). The latter offers an intriguing commentary on the then censored *On est au coton* by presenting a fictionalized account of the shooting of the documentary.

Before leaving the NFB to work in the private sector, Arcand had shot a film on the provincial electoral campaign of 1970. Released in 1972, *Québec: Duplessis et après .../Québec: Duplessis and After ...*, argues that the right-wing ideology of Maurice Duplessis, who dominated the Québec political scene from 1936 until his death in 1959, was still present in the political discourse of 1970, even in the supposedly left-wing platform of the separatist Parti Québécois. With this film, Arcand managed to attract criticism from both sides of the political spectrum. He returned to the NFB in the late 1970s to make his last documentary, *Le confort et l'indifférence/Comfort and Indifference* (1981), on the failure of the 1980 referendum on Québec's independence (sixty percent voted against Québec's sovereignty). Arguing that pro-sovereignty Premier René Lévesque (in power from 1976 to 1985) misread the population's seeming enthusiasm for separation from Canada, Arcand was reproached by nationalists for his claim that residents of Québec were more interested in personal gratification than social and political issues.

Since the 1980s, Arcand has worked exclusively in fictional film. *Le déclin de l'empire américain/Decline of the American Empire* (1986) and *Jésus de Montréal/Jesus of Montreal* (1989) enjoyed tremendous success both in Canada and abroad.

From *Champlain* to his latest fiction film, *The Age of Ignorance* (2007), Arcand has consistently adopted a dialogic approach to his material, always articulating at least two discourses simultaneously as a means of 'problematizing' any simplistic reading of his subject matter. For instance, although *On est au coton* carries out a Marxist examination of working conditions in textile mills, it also undermines Marxist teleology by demonstrating the proletariat's inability to improve its circumstances. Similarly, in *Le confort et l'indifférence*, he exposes the weaknesses of both the separatist project and the federalist status quo. Arcand rarely provides solutions in

his films, but never fails to make his audience think.

ANDRÉ LOISELLE

Biography

Born 1941. Studied history at the Université de Montréal. Directed several documentaries before turning exclusively to narrative/fictional film, 1980s.

Selected films

- 1964 *Champlain*: director, screenwriter
- 1965 *Les montréalais/Ville-Marie*: director, screenwriter
- 1965 *La route de l'ouest/The Westward Road*: director, screenwriter
- 1965 *Montréal un jour d'été/Montréal on a Summer Day*: director, editor
- 1966 *Volleyball*: director, editor
- 1967 *Parcs atlantiques/Atlantic Parks*: director, editor
- 1970 *On est au coton/Cotton Mill, Treadmill*: director
- 1972 *Québec: Duplessis et après ... /Québec: Duplessis and After ...*: director, editor
- 1976 *La lutte des travailleurs d'hôpitaux/The Struggle of Hospital Workers*: director
- 1981 *Le confort et l'indifférence/Comfort and Indifference*: director

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Ark, The

(UK, Dineen, 1993)

The Ark of the title refers to the Regent's Park Zoo in London. Shot over the course of a year, Molly Dineen's four-part series won a BAFTA for its portrayal of the zoo as it struggled to find both financial security and a resolution to the often conflicting demands of being both a center of scientific research and a popular visitor attraction.

As producer, photographer, and director, Dineen is central to all aspects of the film. As in her previous work, Dineen uses a minimal contextualizing voice-over and develops an informal, dialogic relationship with her subjects. Dineen's direct interjections are also fairly minimal and used only where necessary to draw out further revelations. These are often interspersed with long observational sequences that reveal the workings of the zoo, and interactions between the staff and between keepers and animals. However, Dineen's presence is clearly announced. The 'performance', both in terms of her own interventions and direction, as well as her subjects' response to her and the camera, provides the dynamic on which she builds her narratives (Bruzzi 2000). By creating such clearly authored films, Dineen makes transparent the constructed nature of documentary filmmaking and, to a certain extent, avoids the more extravagant claims for objectivity that normally accompany observational approaches. Rather than an attempt to disguise her presence, the films are a record of the developing and fairly informal relationship between Dineen and her subjects.

Episode one, *Survival of the Fittest*, establishes the basic financial crisis facing the zoo. The second episode, *Natural Selection*, illustrates the logistical problems facing the zoo after a round of layoffs, and the next phase of cost cutting—the reduction and dispersal of the animal collection. The *Political Animal* covers the complex negotiations surrounding the arrival of two giant pandas and establishes the growing struggle over the future of the zoo, underscored by the open challenge to management by a dissident group of keepers and the Fellows of the Royal Zoological Society. The last episode, *Tooth and Claw*, shows the final confrontation between the reform group and management, which leads to the departure of David Jones, the zoo's director.

The role and fate of public and cultural institutions in the face of neo-liberal economic theory was a central theme in the political discourse of the 1980s and 1990s. *The Ark* creates an intriguing picture of the internal workings of a venerable and seemingly unshakeable organization under threat in the shifting economic sands of the period. However, the wider issue of the place of zoos in relation to contemporary cultural mores and environmental concerns go unexamined in *The Ark*. Dineen's focus here, as in her other work, is primarily on character. As

she states, 'Through focusing on the human drama and trying to tell a story through character[...], you can portray more of life's transparent complexities and contradictions' (MacDonald and Cousins 1998: 365). In the crisis that overtakes the zoo, Dineen's sympathy appears to lie with the keepers, due mainly to their clear dedication to their work and attachment to the animals. Yet, they are presented either as relatively passive in their acceptance of layoffs, or—in the case of those who organize to oust management—inappropriately conspiratorial. The dedication of the keepers is most dramatically revealed in the twenty-four-hour battle to save a sick koala bear. This emergency is contrasted with the ruthless politicking of senior management and the reform group of keepers and Fellows. However, David Jones, the zoo's director, who oversaw the cuts to the staff and collection, becomes a figure who, in turn, is treated with increasing sympathy as his own job is threatened. The eventual death of the koala is tellingly juxtaposed with news of Jones's redundancy.

Dineen's expressed determination to treat all sides with equanimity and to avoid stereotyping makes her appear uncomfortable at times with the very real conflicts made manifest as the crisis develops. Her frequent reappearance in the final episode to seek the views of the world-weary, apolitical Senior Keeper of Birds, David Robinson, is perhaps indicative of the need to find expression for her own neutral stance to the situation (Bruzzi 2000). Much of Dineen's work, such as *Home from the Hill* (BBC2, 1985) and *In the Company of Men* (BBC2, 1995), is overtly constructed around her relationship with male characters. This is also apparent in *The Ark*. Although the female staff members are approached, these interactions tend to be relatively formal in tone and lack the more familiar, even flirtatious, manner of her dealings with some of the central male figures. Her sympathetic treatment of Jones is perhaps symptomatic of the 'glorifying and exonerating of masculinity' (Bruzzi 2000: 169), which, it could be argued, is an underlying tendency in much of her earlier work. The final shots show the zoo's disused Bear Mountain, portrayed as a desolate wasteland. Shot in this way, this highly symbolic indicator of the zoo's wellbeing appears to reflect Dineen's own uncertainty about the situation, after the status quo has been disrupted by Jones's dismissal.

If Dineen's approach consciously glosses over the details and wider implications of the zoo's crisis, her ability to develop close relationships with her subjects, and to entreat them to speak openly about themselves before the camera, allows for a revealing glimpse of the zoo to be communicated. The Ark is also memorable for the finely observed relationships between the keepers and their animals, providing moments of real affection and humor.

DAVID CHAPMAN

The Ark (UK, RTO Pictures for BBC2, 1993, four episodes of 59 mins). Photographed, produced, and directed by Molly Dineen. Executive producer, Edward Mirzoeff. Associate producer, Margaret Young. Sound by Phil Streater. Edited by Edwards Roberts with Heather Morley. Graphics by Christine Büttner. Music by John Keane.

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Ascent of Man, The

(UK, 1973)

The Ascent of Man (1973), BBC TV's critically acclaimed major television documentary series of thirteen fifty-minute parts, is a television history of scientific ideas from prehistory to the late twentieth century. Its central organising metaphor is the optimism of the 'long childhood' of the growth of human intelligence. The BBC saw the series as the scientific counterpart of Civilisation, its impressive series on Western art and architecture. The Ascent of Man was written and narrated to camera by the late Dr Jacob Bronowski, a scientific humanist whose aim throughout was to portray science as an historically contextualized human achievement and progress, made possible by evolving human biology and intelligence, and not as a dry, abstract, and depersonalised array of scientific

theories and facts. For example, in Part Five, 'The Music of the Spheres', Bronowski humanises mathematics: 'Calculation was an endless delight to Moorish scholars. They loved problems.' Similarly, in Part Six, 'The Starry Messenger', he observes: 'There are good Renaissance reasons—emotional, rather than intellectual—that made [Copernicus] choose the golden sun' as the centre of the universe. Late in life, Bronowski wrote: 'All that I have written [...] turns on the same centre: the uniqueness of man that grows out of his struggle (and his gift) to understand both nature and himself' (O'Connor and Robertson 2003).

Although remembered mainly as a scientist and mathematician, Bronowski was also an accomplished writer and poet. His first book, *The Poet's Defence* (1939), examined the relationship between scientific and poetic or human truth. Bronowski's integration of biology and physics is the central motif of *The Ascent of Man*. In the final chapter of the book of *The Ascent of Man* series, Bronowski states that he moved from physics to biology when it occurred to him that 'justice is part of the biological equipment of man', that we are 'ethical creatures' and that 'knowledge is not a loose-leaf notebook of facts'. In his *Science and Human Values* (1956, revised 1965), Bronowski addressed the two-culture debate between science and humanism. He believed that through science the human mind has always sought to find unity in the chaos of nature. Bronowski's instinct for presenting his ideas as strong, interesting narratives is central to his desire to make abstract and normally difficult notions lucid, and to facilitate narrativity he organised the vast amount of content thematically. Sir David Attenborough, Director of Programmes for the BBC when the series was made, commented, 'Bronowski was nothing short of inspired [...] He] understood that one of the secrets of programme-making is great story telling'.

Permeating Bronowski's script is his rejection of the subject-object dualism that characterised scientific rationality up to the nineteenth century and that was discarded in the twentieth century with the revolution in philosophy towards a relational reality. In *The Ascent of Man* he states, 'Physics becomes [...] the greatest collective work of art of the twentieth century.' In Part Eleven, 'Knowledge or Certainty', Bronowski prioritises humanity over scientific preoccupation in an unforgettable sequence where, as he

wades into the ashes pond at Auschwitz death camp, he says to the camera, 'We have to cure ourselves of the itch for absolute knowledge and power. We have to close the distance between the push-button order and the human act. We have to touch people.' He then reaches into the water and pulls up a handful of mud in a sequence of stop-motion shots. The effect, in context, is a sudden, emotionally charged move from cognition to emotion. Another example from Part Eleven is when Bronowski states to the camera, 'There is no absolute knowledge. And those who claim it, whether scientists or dogmatists, open the door to tragedy. All information is imperfect. We have to treat it with humility. That is the human condition; and that is what quantum physics says. I mean that quite literally.' His statement is followed by actual images of what the world would look like if seen successively through each band of the electromagnetic spectrum, not only from infrared to ultraviolet but also through the radio waves of radar, X-rays, and the electron microscope. He concludes that, in seeking the ultimate image of reality, there is no ideal wavelength: 'Even the hardest electrons do not give a hard outline. The perfect image is still as remote as the distant stars.'

Responses to the series also reflect the old tension between Education and Media Studies over assumptions that television is so constrained that it can say nothing that is not intrinsically superficial. This is part of the continuing contest for cultural authority between conceptual knowledge derivable from the printed word and the kind of knowledge of actuality derivable from pictures. Prior to making *The Ascent of Man*, Bronowski had shown considerable ability in both writing and broadcasting for television and radio and he believed that the written word had advantages over the audiovisual medium in the amount of detail of data that can be presented. However, as both poet and scientist, Bronowski was interested in successfully reconciling abstraction and actuality: previously in the BBC's *Insight* he had won a reputation for being able to express abstract and difficult ideas in science (e.g. entropy), mathematics (e.g. probability), human intelligence, and philosophy. He similarly approached *The Ascent of Man* with a strong sense of the need for television to acquit itself as a medium capable of effectively representing abstract ideas. The title of the series is ironic: the work of male

scientists abounds but the contribution of women to the history and philosophy of science is lacking.

Critically, *The Ascent of Man* is still regarded as a tour de force among television documentaries. Christopher Dunkley of the *Financial Times* wrote that it was the 'most colossal concept I have ever come across in television', and the *Daily Telegraph* described its form as 'splendid'. Another observed that *The Ascent of Man* is a series 'looked up to by every producer of factual, educational programmes', and that it is made 'in a style much copied since'.

BRUCE HORSFIELD

The Ascent of Man (UK, BBC TV, 1973, thirteen episodes of 50 mins).

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Aubervilliers

(France, Lotar, 1945)

Aubervilliers was made early in the post-World War II period by the director Eli Lotar. The French provisional government under Charles de Gaulle had some communist representatives, and the Fourth Republic, the Marshall Plan, and the prosperity and baby boom of the late 1940s and 1950s were yet to come. In the film, the narrator asserts that the ruins of Aubervilliers, a suburb of Paris, 'are not the brand new ruins of the war', but rather 'ancient, commonplace ruins, the mere ruins of workers' misery'.

Appearing ten years after Anstey and Elton's *Housing Problems*, Aubervilliers embraces the documentary forms of its time. Shot with no synchronous sound, it relies on commentary and music to maintain its discursive function. The narrative is driven by both the commentary and a song performed by Germaine Montero, both written by Jacques Prévert. The essentially denunciative intention intertwines with nostalgia, irony, humanism, and optimism. This

approach recalls the feature films of French poetic realism. Lotar had previously worked as a cameraperson with Jean Renoir (*Une Partie de campagne*), Pierre Prévert (*L’Affaire est dans le sac*), Luis Buñuel (*Las Hurdes*), and Joris Ivens (*Zuiderzee*).

In a firm demonstration, sustained by striking and often shocking images, the film rises up in protest before misery, siding with workers and paying tribute to their strength and dignity. The commentary, as well as the song, salute repeatedly the ‘good children of Aubervilliers, good children of proletarians, good children of misery, good children of the whole world’. At the end, the voice-over states, ‘It is once again the simple, rude hand of the worker that will shake up this stiff and depressed world, this world that badly needs to change, that will finally change some day.’

The documentary strategy employed by Aubervilliers is threefold. An unconcealed camera presents shots and scenes that depict the general mood of the time. Short sequences are obviously reenacted, such as one of a girl walking to a water fountain. More specifically, persons working at home are filmed frontally, as if posing for a photographer, in a collaborative relationship. Their words, failing to be recorded, are reformulated off screen.

Aubervilliers is the major work of a minor filmmaker.

JEAN-LUC LIOULT

See also: *Housing Problems*; Ivens, Joris

Aubervilliers (France, Lotar, 1945, 24 mins). Directed by Eli Lotar. Codirected by Jacques Prévert and Joseph Kosma. Narrated by Jacques Prévert. Filmed in Aubervilliers, France.

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Australia

From the very birth of cinema, successive Australian governments had observed and developed strategies to explore and use the possibilities of film as a means of national pro-

jection. Before 1912 the Commonwealth government contracted private production companies to film official events and produce short nonfiction films for theatrical release. Following the appointment of an official cinematographer in 1912, the Cinema and Photographic Branch was established on a temporary basis with the brief ‘to film anything of interest’.

On 27 May 1913 the Department of External Affairs sent a letter to cinematographer Bert Ives: ‘Sir: in confirmation of my telegrams of yesterday’s date I have the honour to inform you that the Minister has approved of your appointment as cinematographer and photographer in this department at the rate of pounds five per week.’ Ives was now the official cameraman to the nation (he remained in the position until 1939), with the more specific brief to make films promoting Australia abroad and to record major events.

The new department developed along predictable lines. During the 1920s and 1930s the Melbourne Cinema Division increased its staff and produced newsreels and short features, much as the Empire Marketing Board under John Grierson would a decade later in Britain. Wheat, beef, and tobacco were featured in a series, ‘Know Your Country’, using a simplistic flat-on film style and using the mantra of Australia—‘the vast and rich land’.

From 1915 to 1930 approximately one reel of film per week was produced by the Branch for theatrical release. During the 1930s sound films were released less regularly. There are several of these in the National Film and Sound Archive Collection, including *This is Australia*, *Mineral Wealth*, and *Australian Sugar*. Such films were typically overburdened with long-winded commentaries that were still the official mode of address until the war years when there was something to be portentous about. The stereotypes of the nation thus projected were directly in line with the views of national character advanced by historians such as C.E.W. Bean and film studios (Efftee and Cinesound) producing epic and pastoral features or rural comedies like *Dad and Dave* (1932).

Documentary features were also intermittently produced, notably featuring the location cinematography of pioneering documentary-maker Captain Frank Hurley. Hurley was celebrated for his sweeping romantic nature still photography and film work in the heroic style of colonial painters like John Glover. Hurley

established an early international fame with his Antarctic films *Home of the Blizzard* (1913) and *In the Grip of the Polar Pack-Ice* (1917), which contained much sensationalisation of 'cannibal attacks', but was a huge touring success in England and the United States, as well as later tropical adventures documented in *Pearls and Savages* (1921).

The now-developed tradition of filming in exotic or dangerous locations would, sixty years later, be a feature of the political documentaries of Gil Scrine and David Bradbury (Chile: *Hasta Cuando?*, *Front Line*). During World War II it saw the rise of a generation of war correspondents. Damien Parer won the Academy Award for Best Documentary in 1942 for his coverage of Pacific action in World War II in *Kokoda Front Line* (Cinesound Review, 1942). Following an invitation by the Australian government, John Grierson visited Australia in 1940 to report on the setting up of a more responsive and creative film production arm of government along the lines of the Crown Film Unit.

Grierson strongly recommended the non-theatrical use of 16mm film for general purposes. The Commonwealth Government established the ANFB (Australian National Film Board) in 1945 with the principal task of overseeing the production and distribution of documentary films and the importation of overseas documentaries. The National Library, in collaboration with the state libraries, became the national distributor of 16mm films for nontheatrical, educational use.

Instead of being set up as an independent statutory authority along the lines of the Canadian National Film Board, the ANFB in Australia soon came under the direct control of the Department of Information. In 1946 Stanley Hawes was appointed to the new position of Producer-in-Chief, a position he held until his retirement in 1970. Hawes was effectively a Grierson appointment, having worked with the General Post Office (GPO) Film Unit in London and later with Grierson in Ottawa before accepting the new post in Australia.

The key films produced by the Film Division in this period were *Native Earth* (John Heyer, 1946), *Journey of a Nation* (John Heyer, 1947), *School in the Mail-Box* (Stanley Hawes, 1947), *Born in the Sun* (John Heyer, 1947), *The Cane Cutters* (Hugh McInnes, 1948), *The Valley is Ours* (John E. Seyer, 1948), *Goldtown* (R. Maslyn Williams, 1949), *Mike and Stefani*

(R. Maslyn Williams, 1951), and *Outback Patrol* (Lee Robinson, 1952). All of the films of this period were very much in the GPO Film Unit mold, but featured mobile and fluid camera work (influenced by the successful Cinesound and Movietone newsreels) and a keen sense of a plastic landscape moulded by heat and time to very different forms and vistas than the familiar European models. Cities might look much alike the world over but the documentary filmmakers of this period were concerned, in line with nationalist literary movements, to express the difference of the Australian landscape and its unique challenges. Thus, *School in a Mail-Box* (1947) dealt with the unique outback correspondence school systems developed to serve far-flung rural communities, and the oeuvre of the filmmakers taken as a collective expressed a coherent vision of Australia as a country where highly urbanised cities clung to the rim of a harsh and unrelenting (the favourite adjectives of voice-over) inland.

The outstanding filmmaker of this period was to be John Heyer, whose best work was with the ANFB and whose most iconic and successful work was *Back of Beyond* (Shell, 1954), a lyrical film about the overland delivery run of the mail and provisions truck driver, shot entirely on location often in the most difficult circumstances—a decision rewarded with some of the finest location cinematography of the period and an outstanding film dealing with a vanished outback world that still has resonance today.

The aims and styles of the ANFB production slate changed little throughout the 1950s and 1960s. The 1964 film *From the Tropics to the Snow*, however, dealt in a self-reflexive way with the efforts of a team of ANFB producers to showcase Australia's tourist attractions. It provided a humorous insight into the production system and it introduced many of the key figures of the postwar period. The film is now considered an essential research aid for any film historian rather than a great piece of documentary work, indicating an institution more interested in self-perpetuation than breaking new ground—or the rules.

Public broadcasting and documentary practice

The national broadcaster ABC (Australian Broadcasting Commission to 1983, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation thereafter)

provided both the training and the showcase for more innovative documentary practice from the introduction of television in 1956.

The tradition of Australia's Public Broadcaster as major producer of documentaries, inherited from the BBC in the early 1960s, continues today in diminished form. In the 1960s outstanding documentary filmmakers like director Bill Fitzwater (Boom Radio 1967) and Geoff Barnes (formerly head of documentary at the ABC) all shot their early films with the national broadcaster. Oscar-winning cinematographers Dean Semmler (*Dances with Wolves*) and John Seale (*The English Patient*) both trained as news and documentary cameramen at the ABC.

The best work of salaried ABC directors and crew was often to be seen in *cinéma vérité* documentary series such as *Chequerboard* (1968–72). Other series that used documentary techniques and often tackled major subjects were *A Big Country* (1968 until the early 1990s) and *Four Corners* (1961 and continuing), based on the BBC *Panorama* series, which on occasion continues with its one-hour format to produce and break major investigative stories, beginning with a controversial feature documentary on the Returned Services League (RSL) in 1963 and continuing to disturb the status quo to this day. As a documentary forum, *Four Corners* has consistently produced programmes that have effected more social and political change than any comparable series in the media history of the nation.

Outside the public broadcasters: independent documentary and dramatised documentary

Today, the market and creative development systems are now dominated by a near monopoly on larger budget film funding by the (Australian) Film Finance Corporation. Some documentaries continue to be produced by both the ABC and the multicultural broadcaster, SBS, under various banners (*The View from Here*, ABC) through the late 1990s, and some fine documentaries are still being produced in-house—notably and most regularly, the short weekly documentary series *Australian Story* (1996 and continuing).

Former ABC producers such as Jenny Brockie continue to contribute personal evocations of the Australian (mainly suburban) zeitgeist with series like *Our Street* (2000–1). Here, personal style

and involvement painted a striking series of portraits of Australia in *cinéma vérité* style, focusing on lives as far apart as those of the middle class in the larger coastal cities to the wilder eccentricities of hot and coastal Darwin.

The most influential free-to-air filmmakers of the period work outside the main channels as freelancers and include the writer Ian David, whose research and obsession led to the making of two dramatised documentaries of great influence, politically as well as aesthetically. The first was *Police State* (Chris Noonan, 1989), which mixed transcripts and newsclips to project a detailed and powerful vision of Queensland as a police state under the long-surviving rightist government of Joh Bjelke-Petersen. David writes dramatised documentary films that stylistically and thematically have much in common with Errol Morris's *Thin Blue Line* (1988) in their handling of suppressed materials and silenced witnesses. *Blue Murder* (Michael Jenkins, 1995) moved from a collagist approach to a more dramatised and character-driven style, documenting corruption within the New South Wales police force that had major legal repercussions and was partly responsible for the establishment of a Royal Commission. Few writers, however, have been as influential as David, and his writer-director (auteurist) mode of work remains the norm as well as the most likely to be funded under the rubric of 'director's vision' obsessively employed by all the major bodies (both Federal and State).

SBS and its independent production arm, SBSi, have also become key players in factual film production from experimental and arts programming to documentaries commissioned to reflect the multicultural remit of the channel. Arguably the most successful and important initiatives from SBS came with a season of documentaries on Aboriginal dispossession (*Unfinished Business*, 2000) from which grew the outstanding films *Stolen Generations* by Tom Zubrycki and Sally Browning, and *Cry from the Heart* by Jeni Kendall. Both films examined the disastrous effects of the policies of forced removal of Aboriginal children, which had been the subject of a national inquiry (published as *Bringing Them Home*, released in 1997). These and similar films on Aboriginality and cultural identity have been produced and screened by SBS at a steady rate and seem set to continue as a core

activity for the broadcaster as long as it survives under its current charter.

The independent sector up to the present

The most consistently interesting and provocative documentary-makers of the last two decades have been those filmmakers who engaged with the margins of political and social themes.

David Bradbury's documentary oeuvre has proved paradigmatic of many Australian filmmakers' fascination with international political trouble spots and the exotic. Works echoed the much earlier work of Frank Hurley and Damien Parer and the more recent outstanding work of frontline war zone cinematographers like Neil Davis, who was himself the subject of a film by Bradbury.

'Keep the camera rolling, no matter what', was Neil Davis's motto, and in 1985 he literally filmed his own death. Bradbury's powerful tribute, *Front Line*, was an account of the Vietnam War as seen through the camera of Neil Davis, and is a fine record, full of astonishing action footage of a life lived on the edge—Davis's own death and legend echoing Damien Parer's death while filming in a war zone forty years before. The more political films of Bradbury include *Public Enemy Number One* (1980), an examination of controversial Australian journalist Wilfred Burchett who chose to report from the 'other side' in the Vietnam War and whose unorthodox views and activities caused him to be labeled a traitor by many. Burchett was the first Western journalist to report on the devastating aftereffects of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima.

Nicaragua—No Pasarán (Bradbury 1984) tracks from 1978 the postrevolutionary Sandinista movement and the past, present, and future of this small Central American nation—another strongly personal portrait of a brutal military dictatorship made during a three-month visit to Chile. The footage reveals a country torn with civil strife and political unrest, military intimidation of the population, and indiscriminate arrests, murder, torture, and disappearances. Bradbury's personal involvement in his subjects and his sharp sense of irony are nowhere more apparent than in the opening scenes showing a wealthy right-wing couple in their Santiago mansion pontificating uninterrupted on the excellence of Augusto Pinochet's attitude to and actions against dissenters

(especially young students). Bradbury often narrates his own work, diary-style, and his work overall has a spare quality that makes overt political comment unnecessary. *South of the Border* (1988) examines how the political and economic struggle in Central America is expressed through the music of the people south of the US border. Bradbury later turned to more local Australian themes with films such as *State of Shock* (1989), which deals with a notorious court case involving the dispossessed semi-tribal Aborigines.

Tom Zubrycki is widely respected as one of Australia's leading documentary filmmakers. He has worked consistently over the last decades as director of a series of films with strong social and political themes. *Waterloo* (1981), *Kemira: A Diary of a Strike* (1984), and *Friends and Enemies* (1987) were all shot in an offhand style. The subjects were allowed free expressive rein and thus remained valuable documents of Australian union and class struggle in confrontations in what were primarily heavy industry and inner-urban settings. *Lord of the Bush* (1989), *Amongst Equals* (1990), *Homelands* (1993), and *Billal* (1996) continued Zubrycki's role as diarist of social upheaval and issues-based filmmaking. Later he was to become equally influential as a producer of equally edgy films ranging from the migrant experience, as relived through the filmmaker's return to a war-shattered former Yugoslavia in *Exile in Sarajevo* (1997, International Emmy 1998), as well as more quirky local subjects like *Dr Jazz* (1998), and social documents such as *Whiteys Like Us* (1999) and *Stolen Generations* (2000).

Arguably Zubrycki's own most 'international' film was also his most internationally successful: *The Diplomat* (2000) follows East Timor's freedom fighter and Nobel Peace Prize winner José Ramos Horta in the final tumultuous year of his campaign to secure independence for his country. This feature-length film takes up Ramos Horta's story in the final dramatic stages of his long journey—the fall of Indonesia's President Suharto, the referendum to determine East Timor's future, the overwhelming vote for independence, the devastating carnage that ensued, the intervention of United Nations peacekeepers, and Ramos Horta's final triumphant return to his homeland.

Dennis O'Rourke, the most internationally recognised of recent Australian independent documentary filmmakers began his career with

two films dealing with the early days of Papua New Guinea (Niugini) independence: *Yumi Yet* (1976) and *Ileksen* (1978), featuring striking handheld cinematography by Dick Marks. The films are distinguished by unusual access to key figures of power, such as the first Prime Minister of Niugini, Michael Somare.

O'Rourke had now attracted international funding as well as critical acclaim. His next film, *Yap ... How Did You Know We'd Like TV?* (1980), dealt with the total corruption of local Solomon Islands culture by a wholesale bombardment of American daily television (flown in daily from Los Angeles). The film revealed a sardonic streak in O'Rourke's later projects that became a recognisable trait in all his work as he moved into edgier territories with *The Shark Callers of Kontu* (1982), *Couldn't Be Fairer* (1984), and the fine *Half Life: A Parable for the Nuclear Age* (1985), which established O'Rourke as a world filmmaker whose filmmaking and sociological interests were now outrunning the Pacific Rim.

Nevertheless, O'Rourke returned to Niugini with *Cannibal Tours* (1988), a witty examination of European tourists juxtaposed with the 'authentic' lives of the Niuginians held up for their entertainment.

With (again government funded) *The Good Woman of Bangkok* (1991) O'Rourke became the centre of an international controversy as the film documented his relationship with a Thai prostitute, Aoi. The resulting outcries circled the globe through every means, both at academic conferences and at professional associations, and raised issues of gender, sexism, third-world politque, and exploitation.

O'Rourke's work continues to provoke and attract audiences and his film *Cunnamulla* (2000) played to a wide art house audience in Australia and garnered interest and acclaim internationally. Although it deals for the first time with O'Rourke's own very personal 'back-yard'—the people who live in the fast-failing outback town of Cunnamulla—the film, with all the irony and quiet savagery, is O'Rourke's best work.

Bob Connolly was another filmmaker to have developed his skills at the ABC (1964–78), first as a foreign correspondent and later as a documentary filmmaker. He and Robin Anderson (as cameraman-director and sound recorder, respectively) worked from a base of strict social observation and deep research, using on location

a remarkable degree of ability to relax and literally live with their filmic subjects. Anderson also had worked at the ABC, as a researcher, and both he and Connolly left to begin work as independent filmmakers with the masterful interweaving of themes of colonialism and kinship with *First Contact* (1983). The film was an anthropological study of the impact of the pioneering Leahy brothers in the New Guinea Highlands in the 1930s, leading to a consideration of both the cultural impact of their visit and the effects produced on Old Joe Leahy's scarcely acknowledged son, Joe, the child of a liaison with a tribal woman. This subject and associated themes developed further in three years of filming that produced Joe Leahy's *Neighbours* (1989) and the richly ironic and ultimately tragicomic *Black Harvest* (1992). These films, like the earlier part of the trilogy, won many international and local awards and enjoyed successful cinema releases, setting a pattern that has now become quite common for at least two or three major documentaries a year—creating a broad audience where none had really existed outside the academy since the 1950s. Anderson and Connolly have become the exemplars of the nonpurist anthropological style that has helped raise both public appreciation and, in association with independent cinema owners, much broader cinema screenings and good box office returns for most of their films in the commercial film market. Their success has also interacted with that of other equally accessible filmmakers' works, notably those of Dennis O'Rourke, in being able to guarantee good audiences by strength of reputation alone.

Rats in the Ranks (1996) was also the product of Connolly and Anderson's ability to win the trust of their subjects. This film, also running for a long season in cinemas before becoming a bestselling video, deals with the machinations and power struggles in an inner-city municipal council led by a Machiavellian mayor who will do anything to stay in power. The extraordinary access to all parties to the back-room death struggles leading up to an internal party schism and the next election are as powerful and revealing as Pennebaker and Hegedus' *War Room* (1992) (which, along with *Rats in the Ranks*, makes a perfect Australian political primer).

Equally successful and also the result of nearly a year of filming is *Facing the Music* (2001), another multiple award winner that also

penetrated the independent cinema market, indicating that Connolly and Anderson now had a steady following and a 'brand name' among audiences. Shot inside Sydney University's Music Department and focusing on the travails of Department Head Professor Anne Boyd (herself also a noted Australian composer), this film actually treads deeper waters of unconscious irony than even the filmmakers may have realised. Their portrait of a threatened university department reveals a group of apparently self-serving academics—and, in one shocking scene, a young woman composer is both verbally and artistically assaulted by a teacher. However, the positioning of the film seems to be on the side of the 'threatened' teachers. What are perceived by the filmmakers as the strengths of the focus of the film, the professor and the role of the music department, are never interrogated.

The subsequent selling of the film by the filmmakers as unproblematic suggests that Australian documentary or its audiences are not necessarily possessed of a wide range of analytical or comparative tools. If shot and screened in Europe, for example, this film might well have been pitched as a satire on academic self-absorption and the dysfunctional approach taken by so many teachers working in 'creative' departments to their very *raison d'être*, the hapless students. For these reasons, of course, *Facing the Music* is the most tantalising and intriguing work yet from Australia's leading *cinéma vérité* team.

Few documentaries have dealt in detail with the supposed Australian national obsessions of sport and drink. Remarkably, only one major documentary has penetrated the mystique of a sporting club, but Michael Cordell's *Year of the Dogs* (1997) manages to sum up an Australian ambivalence to sporting heroes with *cinéma vérité* filming and a laconic and undercutting editorial style. As with the work of Connolly and Anderson's and Dennis O'Rourke's later projects, *Year of the Dogs* proved a success at cinemas. Audiences were composed in roughly equal parts of sports enthusiasts and those in search of the more complex pleasures of the well-made *cinéma vérité* film in a society where subjects are often surprisingly candid and articulate about their obsessions.

Although the supposed wry, self-deprecating defining characteristics of Australians are not always in evidence in documentary (feature films have appropriated that territory), two films have

become small national treasures by stressing the darker aspects of living in contemporary Australia: David Caesar's *Bodywork* (1989) and Mark Lewis's *Cane Toads* (1987).

Bodywork is a cool and subtle gaze at the undertaking profession and Australian attitudes to death and what follows, shot in a *Candide*-like (wide angles) shooting style. The international success of the film is in part due to Caesar's great directorial control over the carefully composed 'look' of the film. Caesar uses the interviewees as *dramatis personae* and often interviews two or more at a time to increase the sardonic effect. This documentary, still very influential as a model for film students of the full possibilities of the carefully constructed documentary, led Caesar directly into a career as a maker of sharp and satirical feature films.

Cane Toads, too, was a success and won numerous awards. It took a bleak view of the disastrous attempts of overly optimistic scientists to solve ecological problems. The film is about the introduction in the 1930s of the *Bufo Marinus* (Cane Toad) to Queensland (in semi-tropical northern Australia) to control small insects annoying the crops. Toads multiply and then assume a horrific and unending advance from the northern Australia slowly throughout the nation. Bleak, yet very funny, *Cane Toads* remains influential and indicates a road down which Australian documentary may profitably stray.

JONATHAN DAWSON

See also: *Cane Toads*; *Good Woman of Bangkok*, The; Heyer, John; O'Rourke, Dennis

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Austria

The origins: 1895 to 1918

In the summer of 1895, a moving pictures machine was installed for the first time in Prater, an amusement quarter that continues to exist in Vienna today. Five machines were placed in a 'Kinetoscope Hall', where documentary pictures from American Thomas Alva Edison and his assistants were exhibited (Fritz 1980). The Viennese Prater was one of the first sites of the Habsburg monarchy Austria-Hungary where moving pictures were projected, and Prater was a popular film location during the beginnings of film history. On March 26, 1896 Eugene Dupont, collaborator of the firm Lumière, organized the first public performance in Austria: documentary films about Vienna were shown in the building located at Kärtnerstraße 45 (later in the contiguous building number 39). The work of Charles Moisson, principal operator of Lumière, was presented there. In the exhibition programme were the films *Feuerwehr-Centrale am Hof*, *Kärtnerstraßs Le Ring*, and *Freudenau, Sattelraum nach dem Pisek-Rennen*. Pictures of Prater—such as *Der Volksprater*, *Der Prater*, and *Die Hauptalle* (Main Avenue)—were

among the scenes that Alexander Promio and his assistant and interpreter Alexander Werschinger were shooting in Vienna on behalf of Lumière in mid-April 1896. These pictures belong to the earliest examples of Austrian cinematography. The company Pathé Frères produced in 1908 two documentary films: *Blumenkorso in Mai/Flower Parade in May*, and *In der Prater Hauptallee/In Prater's Main Avenue* (Büttner and Dewald 2002: 22).

Pioneering documentary films, which have been referred to in this way only since 1926, joined images together without tying them into a story. Different film types, such as newsreels, scientific films, and educational and cultural films, were later developed from this technique. At the beginning, the camera viewer played the role of a passive observer; later, the camera viewer was converted into a tourist or researcher (Büttner and Dewald 2002). The camera reflected the world exactly as it was: the Viennese locations filmed between 1896 and 1910 by Lumière, Pathé, and other directors staged representation rooms for the Viennese bourgeoisie. The Opera House, the 'Ring', the 'Trabrennplatz', and the 'Burgmusik' staged theatrical rooms in the film *Wien um 1908/Vienna around 1908* (Pathé Frères) within the frame of related patterns between time and behavior. The early documentary film showed principally the large city and the bulk as admiring spectacles in themselves. In this sense, in the film presented in 1896 by Lumière (*Kärtnerstraße 45*), *Verkehr bei dem Cinematographen/Traffic in the Cinematographer*, the spectators convert themselves into their own performers. 'Open to the public' is an understood political, institutional kind of openness that serves only to create a specific audience (around 1900, only four percent of the inhabitants were elective). The early (documentary) film created a carefully selected image of the city and therefore did not show only a sensory real picture in which the spectacle is based. At the turn of the century these early film pioneers were followed by other filmmakers who produced 'scientific films'. As examples we can cite the ethnologist and anthropologist Rudolf Pöch (1870–1921) and the Viennese teacher Alto Arche. The first attempts took place from 1904 to 1908. The beginnings of 'racial research' in Austria are associated with the ethnographic film pioneer, the Viennese doctor, and Pöch. The central themes of Pöch's first film about the so-called

Buschmaenner der Kalahari/Kalahari Bushmen, produced between 1908 and 1909, were technical aspects of specific works, such as culling and trampling on grass and bulbs, fabricating ropes, and/or sparking a fire. The external characteristics of the people created by Pöch's camera categorized him as a specific 'people classifier'.

In 1909 the first Austrian full-length documentary film was shown as an independent film in Viennese movie theaters: *Die Kaisermanoever in Maehren/The King's Manoeuvre in Moravia*. The film *Se, Majestaet Kaiser Franz Josef I auf der Gemsjagd/His Majesty Kaiser Franz Josef I at the Gem Hunt* was shown in the Viennese Prater in the cinematographic exhibition 'International Hunt Exhibition Vienna 1910' (Pathé Frères 1909). Besides feature films, film pioneers such as Anton and Luise Kolm (*Der Faschingzug in Ober-St Veit/The Carnival Train at Ober St Veit*, and *Der Trauerzug Sr Exzellenz des Buergermeisters Dr Karl Jueger/The Funeral Procession Sr Exzellenz of Mayor Dr Karl Jueger* (1910)), regularly produced documentary films. In 1910 Graf Alexander 'Sascha' Kolowrat—who later founded Sascha Film—also began to produce documentary films (*Die Gewinnung des Erzes am steirischen Erzberg in Eisenerz/Ore Extraction at the Ore Mountain of Iron Ore* (1912)). Hans Theyer shot cultural films about glassblowers, painters, and carpenters; his works led to the creation of the 'Central Office for Scientific and Educational Cinematography'.

This function of the documentary film had also been used to give pictures another conscious meaning, which was deliberately created, particularly during wartime. In August 1914 the war department commissioned film producers Sascha-Filmfabrik, Wiener Kunstfilmindustrie-Gesellschaft, and Österreichisch-Ungarische Kinoindustrie-Gesellschaft, to produce war film propaganda based on war archives. The first series of the *Kriegs-Journal/War Journal* produced by Wiener Kunstfilm appeared in September. At the end of 1914 Sascha-Film in cooperation with Philipp und Pressburger and the Österreichisch-Ungarische Kinoindustrie-Gesellschaft presented a war newsreeler titled *Österreichischer Kino-Wochenbericht vom nördlichen und suedlichen Kriegsschauplatz/Austrian Weekly Report from Northern and Southern War Theater*. Until 1918 field cinema was limited to showing the world upstanding

images and frontline experience could no longer find visual expression.

In 1918 the UFA (Universumfilm Aktiengesellschaft) started production on documentaries in Berlin with a popular scientific content. This concept was imitated in Austria by Kurt Köfinger in his tourist films of the 1920s and later in the controlled propaganda documentary films of the Wien-Film (1938–45). The newsreels combined the characteristics of newscast and chronicle documentaries in their thematic mixture of politics, sports, and culture, which were sometimes presented in newsreel cinemas (from 1936 as nonstop cinemas in Vienna and also in Linz, Salzburg, and Innsbruck). The Viennese documentary film was presented as a 'war journal' for the first time in 1914, followed in 1930–3 by Sascha-Messter-Wochenschau/The Sascha Messter Newsreel, an international newsreel production based on the Austrian 'Selenophon' technique (Selenophon, together with Gustav-Mayer-Film, produced a newsreel from 1930 to 1932), and from 1934 to 1938 by Oesterreich in Bild und Ton/Austria in Vision and Sound.

Austro-Fascism/The Third Reich: 1933–45

In 1927 cameraman Rudi Mayer shot a three-piece documentary about the burning of the palace of justice in Vienna. The ten-minute documentary, titled *Die Schreckenstage in Wien/Time of Horror in Vienna*, shows objectivity: the destruction of a national institution is in the foreground, and the film compares the national values (order, security) with the crowd's bestiality (disorder, chaos).

On a traumatically staged world picture, the burning of the palace of justice represents a sign of imminent danger of civil war and collapse of the government's power and control. From this historic event of 1927, documentary practices and styles were invaded by Austro-Fascist propaganda concepts, which eventually became the rigorous standard-type for newsreels and documentary films (Achenbach and Moser 2002). Documentary films had to be systematically concerned with increasing the credibility and authenticity of the government's image. Just three weeks after the parliament's release, the Dollfuss-Regime deliberated on a central organization for film propaganda. One of the most important productions of this propaganda machine was the Austro-Fascist newsreel

Oesterreich in Bild und Ton (OEBUT)/Austria in Vision and Sound. It was created through the initiative of the federal chancellor, Engelbert Dollfuss, and was produced between June 1933 and March 1938 by the Vaterländischen Tonfilmgesellschaft of the film company Selenophon Licht- und Tonfilm Ltd. OEBUT worked principally on the establishment of the authoritarian regime's legitimacy, with its principal objectives being to spread Catholic values, reinforce Austrian identity, and counteract annexation to the German Reich.

Beginning in November 1934 all movie theaters had to show a 'cultural movie' in their preliminary programs. These were sometimes art and nature documentaries but often they were also propaganda movies about racial doctrine, political parties, and military matters. The newsreel became the most important propaganda instrument during wartime and its screening became mandatory every night at every showing of a film. The centerpoint of these educational and advertising short films was always Austria—its cultural, scientific, and political autonomy, together with its tradition and historical legacy.

Marshall Plan movie and 'documentary films' 1945–65

During the first two decades of the postwar period, documentary productions were characterized principally by the creation of cultural and propaganda films that were produced either for the Wiener ECA-Mission (Economic Cooperation Administration), the local office for the distribution and translation of the European Recovery Program (ERP), better known as the Marshall Plan, or for important cultural performances (screen adaptation of operas and plays).

The Österreichische Produktivitätszentrum (OEPZ, Austrian Center for Productivity), founded in the spring of 1950, is a direct outcome of the American reconstruction program. The OEPZ 'film office' section was established in 1951 on the initiative of the US administration, in line with the 'technical assistance' to effectively disseminate the pedagogy of 'productive managing and working' among the Austrian population. The 'Marshall Films', distributed by the OEPZ, promulgated a capitalistic Europe befriended by America (Reichert 2000: 83).

The Information Officer of the European film unit commissioned diverse documentary

filmmakers to produce regional documentary films aimed at building consensus on specific local and regional needs. Austrian Georg Tressler, film officer of the ECA-Mission, was one of the most relevant documentary film producers of that time (Buchschwenter 2003). The films *Gute Ernte/Good Crop* (1950), *Hansl und die 200,000 Küchen/Hansl and the 200,000 Kitchens* (1952), *Traudls neuer Gemüsegarten/Traudl's new Vegetable Garden* (1952), *Ertagreicher Kartoffelanbau/Fruitful Potato Cultivation* (1952, exhibited at the Documentary Film Festival in Venice), *Wie die Jungen Sungen/How the Boys Sang* (1954), and *Rund um die Milchwirtschaft/On the Dairy Farm* (1954), followed the same objectives as the Marshall Plan films from Tressler, focusing on educating the public about effective management techniques, promoting identification with the concept of 'productivity improvement', and propagating the extension of US economic aid to broader population spheres.

An old-fashioned, pedagogical film type dominated so-called cultural films until the 1960s. This type of film is still produced today, mainly for government-commissioned TV productions such as tourist promotional films and Austrian historical reportage. These films were dependent on subsidies because they were not commercially viable.

About 680 cultural films were produced during the period from 1945 to 1961. Most of them fell more in line with the style of the National Socialist (NS) cultural films than with the artistic evolution of international documentary films. Tourism promotion was the principal motivation for regional and federal supporters. In this sense, Hans Pebahl produced the popular documentary film *Und neues Leben blüht aus den Ruinen/And New Life Blooms in the Ruins* in 1953. In this film, as in other postwar films, the reconstruction of the old cultural monuments was overvalued. This overvaluation was based on restorative cultural meaning, which simultaneously devalued contemporary culture. In award-winning films such as *Wege in die Zukunft/Roads to the Future* (Erich Pochlatko, 1959) and *Die andere Seite/The Other Side* (Bruno Loetsch, 1958), a gentle voice-over commented on pleasant pictures which ritualized the NS suppression.

In 1955 prizes for documentary films were awarded for the first time. The films were divided into two categories: the first comprised those

films that bore representation of existing subjects; the second category consisted of the documentary films that went beyond the central theme, looking for creative, imaginary or artistic interpretation (Reichert 2000: 84). Most movie theaters had to close at the beginning of the 1960s because of low demand caused by the introduction of television—‘culture for the masses’. Documentary films experienced a decline in the market too. With a high value placed on civic education from the projection of cultural images, the National Funding Policy for Documentary Production was dedicated exclusively to the screen adaptation (in the studio) of diverse performances presented at the Viennese Burg Theater between 1955 and 1965.

The New Documentary Film

At the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s there was little structure to the production and commercialization of independent documentary films in Austria. From the 1970s a tendency to produce films called ‘New Documentary Films’ was identified, but they had only marginal importance in film evolution. Most of these films were produced in private studios by individuals who financed the productions with their own money earned through work in another field (Blümlinger 1986). In this way Michael Pilz, who worked for three years on his five-hour film essay, *Himmel und Erde/Sky and Earth* (1979–82), and lived for one year of that time with the miners whom he filmed, could perform a project of this kind as an independent producer. The controversial film *Bonjour Capitaliste* (1982) from Werner Grusch, which deals with the colonization of white tourists in black Africa, was also financed by private resources.

The Film Advisory Board of the Board of Education, founded in the 1970s, could implement a policy for the promotion of documentary films only until the creation of the Oesterreichischen Filmförderungsfonds (OEFF, Austrian Film Promotion Fund). The cultural film thereby faded into the background. In the early 1970s Ferry Radax, who had been involved with documentary film production since the 1950s, created some outstanding artist portrayals. Through great exertion, he achieved the outstanding formal depiction of the painter Hundertwasser (1965), for which he was awarded with the Austrian State Prize. Other films

include Konrad Bayer (1969), Thomas Bernhard (1970), Ludwig Wittgenstein (1975), and *Japan oder die Suche nach dem verlorenen Reis/Japan or the Search for the Lost Rice* (1981/82).

At the end of the 1970s the Filmladen (film store) and the Medienwerkstatt (media workshop) were founded and a longer-term structure for independent documentary film and video work finally could be created. Ruth Beckermann was cofounder of the rental business ‘film store’, which began in 1977 with an appropriate structure for commercialization and public distribution of documentary films beyond Austrian television. At the beginning of the film rental business, a series of so-called ‘Flugblattfilme’ (flight sheet films) about sociopolitical and work-political themes came into existence. In this sense, the film from Josek Aichholzer and Ruth Beckermann, *Auf amol a Streik/Amol on Strike* (1978), expounded the problems of a more than three-week-long strike in Semperit in Traiskirchen. The film was presented at numerous union meetings and was enthusiastically received. The fight for the former Viennese slaughterhouse Sankt Marx was documented in 1977 by ‘Video Group Arena’ in the film *Arena besetzt/Arena Occupied*. The same year saw the start of the collective work *Wir kommen wieder/We Come Back from Syndikat der Filschaffenden*, about the Austrian movement against atomic power plants. From many Medienwerkstatt productions emerged important experimental and sociopolitical video work. From 1983 to 1984 Niki List filmed—without any public financial support—on 16mm/SW *Mama Lustig*, a sociocritical documentary about the daily life of a disabled young person, which caused a sensation across Austria.

Margarethe Heinrichs’ films, called ‘solidarity films’, were devoted to production conditions in the revolutionary Latin American countries, unlike the ethnographic-oriented films about black Africa from director Grusch. The 16mm film *Traum des Sandino/Sandino’s Dream* (1981) and the television reportage *No Pasarán/They Won’t Get Through* (1984), both subsidized by the government, describe without any formal experiments the literacy campaign in Nicaragua and the exploitative conditions in the so-called Third World. The development of new documentary films has a connection with sociopolitical tendencies—essentially in the ‘Neue Linken’ environment. They were involved with

daily life, the world of workers, and emancipation projects. The primordial objective for the film organization for documentary production was that the values of socially and politically segregated people, which were already faded out by the mass media, became visible.

Historical archaeology in the present context

In the 1980s the infrastructure of political groups (peace movement, Third World, anti-nuclear power, anti-racism) and the search for opposing ideas gradually broke down. Since then, a new trend in content and form has emerged: an orientation toward contemporary issues, but also toward ordinary life and subjective themes. Since the early 1980s, the Austrian film has practiced historical archaeology, which has been so meaningful that it revived the film category and the past started to open up to the present (Beckermann and Blümlinger 1996). 'Wien Retour—Franz West 1924–34' (1983) was the first Austrian documentary film to deal with contemporary history. The film *Erzschmerz/Ore Pain* (1983), produced by Bernhard Frankfurter on behalf of ORF, tried for the first time to expose the lengthy repression of fascism through some miners' experiences.

Axel Corti, motivated by the taboos of historical development during the NS period, produced films such as *Die Verweigerung/The Refusal* (1971), *Der Fall Jaegerstätter/Fighter's Fall* (1972), and *An uns glaubt Gott nicht mehr/God Does Not Believe in Us Anymore* (1985) with documentary film elements. Some techniques were the provision to the spectator of information about date and place; newsreel material insertions, which gave the film a realistic note; and the use of black and white, which provided a more authentic reference. This mixture of fiction and reality may serve to remind the audience that the time portrayed was real and did not exist only in films. In the 1980s other documentary producers besides the remarkable Corti, such as Josef Aichholzer, Ruth Beckermann, Karin Berger, Karin Brandauer, Eduard Erne, Bernhard Frankfurter, Andreas Gruber, Johanna Heer, Margareta Heinrich, Egon Humer, Wilma Kiener, Dieter Matzka, and Werner Schmiedel, undertook a memorial documentary work that the Austrian feature film was not capable of accomplishing because of melodramatic fictionalization. In

1997 Ruth Beckermann received the Bibliothèque prize at the Festival Cinema du Reel in Paris for the documentary film *Jenseits des Krieges/Beyond War* (1996), which became very popular at the Armed Forces Exhibition.

In the film produced by the multimedia performer Andre Heller and the documentary producer Othmar Schmiederer, *Im toten Winkel/On the Dead Angle* (2002), the eighty-one-year-old Traudl Junge recounts the time when she was working as private secretary to Adolf Hitler. The film was presented in February 2002 at the Berlin Film Festival, garnering a great reception by the media and was distinguished with the 'Audience Prize'.

In the 1980s 'oral history' projects, which relied on the presence of primary witnesses and on the authenticity of the on-camera effect, became more popular within the documentary field. Angela Summereder used a radically different semidocumentary technique for relating an historical court case. The case was staged in the film *Zechmeister/Carousing Master* (1981). The film does not reconstruct a 'case' per se, but recreates the history of a patriarchal law dominated by male representatives. The film *Zur Lage/To the Circumstance* (2002), filmed by four directors (Barbara Albert, Michael Glawogger, Ulrich Seidl, and Michael Sturminger), is an ethnological study of the conservative and reactionary thinking that emerged in Austria after the change of government.

The globalization of documentaries

Numerous documentary productions of the last decade led filmmakers out of the country: *Megacities* (1998) by Michael Glawogger was the most successful Austrian documentary of the 1990s. Glawogger links his observations to portrayals of individual inhabitants in the film, which was shot in four 'megacities'—Bombay, New York, Mexico City, and Moscow. *Megacities* refuses to relate the social condition of individual persons to complex structures.

One of the most successful contemporary documentaries is *Hundstage/Dog Days* (2002), produced in Austria by Ulrich Seidl. *Dog Days* consists of five independent stories of Viennese suburbs that are arranged and interwoven. It is a feature film that cleverly makes use of the documentary style of reality TV. *Dog Days* was awarded the Grand Jury Prize at the Vienna

Film Festival. Ulrich Seidl became famous for his provocative documentaries in which he exposed the unpleasant side of the Austrian soul. In his second film, *Der Ball/The Prom* (1982), he staged the preparation for a high school prom and thereby exposed the class conceit, smugness, narrow-mindedness, and prudish behavior of a town. In *Good News* (1990), he documented the living conditions of foreign newspaper salesmen. *Die letzten Männer/The Last Men* (1994) is a TV drama about men with no self-confidence who look for a mail order Thai bride. In *Tierische Liebe/Animal Love* (1995) Seidl examines the intimate relationship of Austrian pet owners with their pets, while *Models* (1999) tells of the daily degradation of a photo model's life.

During the last decade of the twentieth century, Nikolaus Geyrhalter's films found a significant cinema audience. The film *Pripyat* (1999), awarded numerous international prizes, tells the story of survival in the dead zone around the former atomic power plant Chernobyl, evacuated in 1986. *Elsewhere* (2000), Geyrhalter's magnum opus, compress twelve twenty-minute episodes, one for every month of the year 2000, filmed at a remote, supposedly untouched, place on the globe. It is intended to show that there may not be a single place on Earth that is unaffected by tragedy. 'Phantom rides' was the name given to those films (like rollercoaster rides, railway journeys) that created a subjective experience by installing the camera onto a moving object. Martin Bruch created in his film *Handbikemovie* (2003) a phantom ride of a special kind: the audience 'sits' on the handlebars of the tricycle on which the film producer, suffering from multiple sclerosis, moves himself around.

It could be concluded that the sensibility for symbolic images and the interest in different

political cultures were developed during the second half of the 1970s, when the 'newer' documentary film, which displaced the antiquated 'cultural film' of the 1950s and 1960s, made its appearance. Since the 1980s counter-cultural references to established cultures and societies have been gradually expanded. During the last decade of the twentieth century, a clear rejection of subjective-essayistic documentary productions emerged. In this sense, in the era of medium format reality TV, Austrian documentary film production was characterized by the need to visualize 'reality'.

RAMON REICHERT

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B

Back of Beyond, The (John Heyer, 1954)

One of the most successful documentary films ever made in Australia, *The Back of Beyond* was also one of the most significant productions of the Shell Film Unit during the 1950s. A dramatized documentary in the tradition of *Night Mail* and *Fires Were Started*, it won critical acclaim at international film festivals and was the most widely seen Australian film of the era, due to extensive nontheatrical distribution at home and overseas.

The *Back of Beyond* was produced, written, and directed by Tasmanian-born John Heyer, who had left the Australian National Film Board in 1948 to lead the newly formed Australian Shell Film Unit. Given a brief to make a 'prestige' documentary that would capture the essence of the country, he undertook an extended three-month trip into the Outback, traveling through the Central Australian desert before returning to Sydney to prepare a detailed shooting script with the assistance of his wife, Janet, and writer Roland Robinson. Narration and dialogues were written in collaboration with the poet and playwright Douglas Stewart.

The *Back of Beyond* follows mailman Tom Kruse along the three hundred miles of the Birdsville Track between Marree, South Australia, and Birdsville, in southwest Queensland. His two-week journey in a 1936 Leyland truck takes him across hazardous terrain to deliver the post and supplies to remote outposts, crossing sand dunes, flooded creeks, and featureless plains. Dramatized scenes with locals playing themselves alternate with fictional reenactments, such as the story of two girls losing their way in the desert following the death of their mother on

an isolated farm. The narration alternates between the commentary, spoken by Kevin Brennan and a chorus of voices—the mailman, women chatting on two-way radio, and an Aboriginal man reflecting on the abandoned Lutheran mission where he grew up—and the Birdsville policeman's laconic diary entry. The poetic, multilayered quality of the soundtrack is matched by the music of John Kay and complemented by the strong picture composition of cinematographer Ross Wood.

The Outback, the ostensible subject of *The Back of Beyond*, is seen in both a realistic and romanticized light. Beyond the obvious themes of communication (the mail run) and the battle against the elements, the film touches on some of the complexities of Australian identity, including not only indigenous people but also characters such as one of the very last Afghan camel-drivers in Marree. Heyer has a touch for comedy, a feel for evocative locations, and an eye for surreal details and recurring leitmotifs. Although some elements, such as the dubbed dialogues, might now seem somewhat wooden, the achievement of the film is the subtle interweaving of disparate story elements into a satisfying whole. Regarded as a minor classic of the genre, it was awarded the Grand Prix at the 1954 Venice Film Festival before being screened across Australia in theatres, town halls, schools, and traveling vans.

JOHN BURGAN

See also: Australia; Heyer, John

Back of Beyond (Australia, Shell Film Unit, 1954, 66 mins). Distributed by National Film and Sound Archive, Australia. Produced and directed by John Heyer. Script by John Heyer, Janet Heyer and Roland Robinson. Cinematography

by Ross Wood. Music by Sydney John Kay. Edited by John Heyer. Sound by Mervyn Murphy and John Heath. Commentary and dialogues by Douglas Stewart and John Heyer. Narrated by Kevin Brennan. Cast: Tom Kruse, William Buttler, Jack the Dogger, Old Joe the Rainmaker, the Oldfields of Ettadina, Bejah, Malcolm Arkaringa, the people of the Birdsville Track. Filmed on the Birdsville Track between Marree, South Australia, and Birdsville, Queensland.

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Bang Carlsen, Jon

Best known for his radical approach to the staging of documentaries, Jon Bang Carlsen has played a prominent role on the Danish film scene since about 1980, and remains one of Denmark's most innovative documentarists, with a number of feature films behind him as well.

Bang Carlsen's documentaries often focus on the daily lives and rituals of people whom viewers would consider either ordinary or marginal. Often living outside his native Denmark, Carlsen is drawn to other cultures and landscapes, and a number of his documentaries were shot in other countries—in the United States (*Hotel of the Stars* (1981) and *Phoenix Bird* (1986)), Germany (*Ich bin auch ein Berliner* (1990)), Ireland (*It's Now or Never* (1996), *My Irish Diary* (1996), and *How to Invent Reality* (1997)), and South Africa (*Addicted to Solitude* (1999), *My African Diary* (2000), and *Portrait of God* (2001)). Each of his films forcefully evokes a sense of place as an integral part of its storytelling, and Carlsen often uses long takes, dwelling on faces and settings as part of a highly controlled visual style.

Carlsen's unconventional views on the staging of documentaries date from the very start of his career and were given their fullest expression in his film essay *How to Invent Reality* in which he outlines his method and explains its underlying logic. Casting as his actors people who essentially play themselves on screen, but speak

the lines he has written for them, Carlsen deliberately blurs the boundaries between documentary and fiction, uninhibitedly transforming the data other documentarists might prefer to record unchanged. He argues: 'I don't want to be a hostage to life's coincidences in my work. I allow myself to rearrange reality in order to express the inner life of my characters' (*How to Invent Reality*, 1997). However, these transformations are not gratuitous. The lines of dialogue he writes are tailor-made to suit the people speaking them, so that their words come across as natural and unrehearsed expressions of their own experience. At the same time, this staging of reality is an act whereby the filmmaker becomes a part of—and illuminates—what he films. As Carlsen puts it, 'My films are not the truth. They are how I sense the world. Nothing more' (*How to Invent Reality*, 1997).

In some cases, the viewer is entirely unaware of the degree to which the action has been staged and the dialogue written by the director. This is true, for example, of *Before the Guests Arrive* (1986), in which a woman who runs a small seaside hotel and her only employee are shown preparing the place for the approaching season. The viewer has every reason to believe that the two women are spontaneously expressing their own thoughts during their dialogue. On the other hand, with *It's Now or Never*, about an ageing Irish bachelor who is searching for a bride, the observant viewer will notice the rapidly changing camera positions and realize that the action must have been carefully orchestrated as a series of shots, just as if the film were a work of pure fiction.

In Jon Bang Carlsen's own words:

Whether you work with fiction or documentaries, you're telling stories because that is the only way we can approach the world: to fantasize about this mutual stage of ours as it reinvents itself in the sphere between the actual physical world and the way your soul reflects it back onto the world. For me documentaries are no more real than fiction films and fiction films no more invented than documentaries.

(Bang Carlsen 2003)

His most recent works depart somewhat from the staged documentaries in that his interviewees do in fact tell their own stories—for example,

inmates in a South African prison describe how they imagine God in *Portrait of God* (2001). However, the director is just as present here as in his earlier works, in that he tells of his own life in a voice-over, speaking in the first person:

When I was a boy I often lay for hours staring up into the summer sky for a hole into heaven or a lazy angel daydreaming on a cloud who'd forgotten old God's strict orders never to be seen by us people from down on this earth.

In middle age my search for God had taken me all the way to southern Africa, but his trail was as fleeting as the banks of mist that rolled in from the Atlantic to mist up my windowpane as I tried to create a portrait of a person, who might only be a rumour.

(*Portrait of God*, 2001)

In one way or another in all of Jon Bang Carlsen's work the subjective experience of the filmmaker is deliberately made a central part of the film, and the director's own doubts and ongoing, tentative explorations are as much the subject of the documentary as are the people whose stories unfold before the camera.

RICHARD RASKIN

Biography

Born September 28, 1950, in Vedbæk, Denmark. Worked in theatre, then entered the National Film School of Denmark, from which he graduated in 1976. Published books of essays and poetry and has lectured extensively at film schools and universities throughout Europe. Won numerous national and international awards for his films. Lives in both Denmark and Ireland with his wife and four children.

Selected films

1979 *A Rich Man*
 1981 *Hotel of the Stars*
 1984 *The Phoenix Bird*
 1986 *Before the Guests Arrive*
 1990 *Ich bin auch ein Berliner*
 1996 *It's Now or Never*
 1997 *How to Invent Reality*
 1999 *Addicted to Solitude*

2001 *Portrait of God*
 2002 *Zuma the Puma*
 2004 *Confessions of an Old Teddy*

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Barclay, Barry

Barry Barclay established his unique place in the history of New Zealand culture during 1973 to 1974, when a six-part documentary series called *Tangata Whenua* aired on New Zealand television. Since then he has enhanced his significance with completion of the first feature film directed by a Maori male (Ngati, 1987), a book on issues associated with indigenous representation (*Our Own Image*, 1990), social activism (resulting in increased New Zealand on-air funding for Maori-produced and -targeted film material for local broadcast television), and *The Feathers of Peace* (2000), a mixture of documentary and drama that carries local history studies into controversial terrain.

What unites Barclay's filmmaking, writing, and activism is his respect for community and his advocacy for the integrity of indigenous communities. Early in his career he began working for John O'Shea's Pacific Films, a breeding ground for filmmakers inclined toward an independent point of view. Along with the trade films and television commercials that were Pacific Films' primary source of income, Barclay made documentaries and feature films with O'Shea's backing from the 1970s until *Te Rua* (1991), when the director and the producer had a falling out. With the appearance of *The*

Feathers of Peace, Barclay's public profile has again increased; out of the limelight, he has also been involved in further efforts supporting Maori training and filmmaking.

Despite funding and policy obstacles, Barclay has creatively developed filming strategies designed to accommodate cultural sensitivities. Chief among these has been a set of practices designed to make documentary subjects feel comfortable throughout the filming process, from the extensive use of lenses to keep cameras as far as possible away from subjects while they are speaking, to the synching of sound and image via the clapperboard at the end, rather than the beginning, of takes. He also argues that the Western medium can accommodate indigenous narrative strategies. Taking Ngati as an example, he speaks of its emphasis on the community rather than the individual, with a narrative structure that avoids single heroic figures in favor of group interaction. From Te Rua, he cites moments involving Maori oral practice and traditions that would be clear to an audience familiar with them, but which could not be read in the same way by most non-Maori audiences. In the docudrama *The Feathers of Peace*, using text from legal testimony of the day as well as other historical documents, he gives nineteenth-century characters the opportunity to speak, following the example of marae practice.

For Barclay, the heart of a movie is its metaphor; until he has his metaphor, he says, the film cannot be made. Simultaneous with making the *Tangata Whenua* series, Barclay was a member of Nga Tamatoa, a group of young Maori organized around undermining social institutions that prevented Tino Rangatiratanga (self-determination) at every level. Although Barclay is modest about the extent of his involvement in a left-wing group that critiqued the television establishment that allowed Barclay to make his films, Barclay agreed with Nga Tamatoa's ideological premises. He was among the earliest members of Te Manu Aute, a group that, like Nga Tamatoa, focused on media control.

Our Own Image, the most important published statement of his philosophy so far, is in part a gift to Native Americans and First Peoples, made after Barclay attended a film festival of indigenous people's work. Among Barclay's most interesting points in this short book is the distinction between 'talking in' and 'talking out'. The latter could refer to an indigenous group trying to speak to a dominant culture, but

'talking in' refers to the opportunity for a group within the nondominant culture to speak in its own terms rather than in those of the dominant culture, without regard for whether the dominant culture understands (Barclay 1990: 75).

Not a speaker of Maori himself, Barclay has said that he thinks 'a Maori filmmaker is someone Maori who identifies as Maori and is proud to use the camera as a Maori for Maori purposes, at least some of the time', adding that 'it's good fun to do other things as well' (Read 2000-1: 3). To be Maori is to have a strong awareness of the spiritual; to be a filmmaker is to be aware of film's 'access to [...] visceral communal icons' (ibid.: 4).

As Barclay moved away from television toward feature filmmaking, he also turned away from lobbying for political change. In the late 1990s, however, Barclay returned to political activism in a spectacular way. He picketed one of Aotearoa's (New Zealand) funding bodies, camping out on the median in the boulevard in front of their office building. His private campaign gained widespread public attention. Barclay himself benefited through funding for *The Feathers of Peace*. At least one Maori filmmaker acknowledges Barclay as a force behind funding and other policy changes that have increased opportunities for Maori filmmaking, along with exhibition possibilities encompassing mainstream audiences.

Throughout his career, Barclay has mentored other filmmakers, particularly young Maori who have trained with him. Along with Merata Mita, he has called for and tutored in workshops to train Maori, as well as internships and apprenticeships. Like Mita, he and his work have been well received in Hawaii, and he has used his speaking opportunities there to discuss indigenous filmmaking as he perceives of it. For example, in 2001, he gave a keynote address in which he developed his concept of 'indigenous cinema', or 'fourth cinema'. Unlike 'Hollywood, arthouse, and Third World cinema' (Read 2000-1: 1), fourth cinema should be committed to using its viscerally persuasive powers to raise consciousness of ethical issues, particularly through giving indigenous peoples their own voice (Turner 2002: 11).

Barclay has developed and articulated his philosophy regarding the representation of indigenous groups through his own films, in interviews and talks, and in his own published work. He has influenced archival protocol, government

funding, and public opinion through his work and action. Barclay's oeuvre is at least as well appreciated overseas as it is in his home country, where he has often raised issues that others wish to forget.

HARRIET MARGOLIS

See also: Australia

Biography

Born 1944 in the Wairarapa, an agrarian area near Wellington, New Zealand, of Ngati Apa, Scottish, and French descent. Trained in Australia to be a Roman Catholic priest (1960–7). After making the Tangata Whenua series lived and worked in Sri Lanka, England, France, and the Netherlands, before returning to Aotearoa, (New Zealand), and making Ngati. Media Peace Award, 2000. 'FirstLegacyAppreciation Award', Hawaii Film Festival, 2001.

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Basic Training

(US, Wiseman, 1971)

The first of three films about the United States Armed Forces made by American documentary filmmaker Frederick Wiseman, *Basic Training* documents the standard eight-week training for new army inductees and enlistees at Fort Polk, Kentucky, before being shipped out to Vietnam. The processes of institutional indoctrination and maintenance of power, primary aspects of institutional functioning explored in Wiseman's other films, are emphasized in the film's vision of the military machine. As commanding officer Lt Hoffman puts it bluntly in his welcoming speech to the men early in the film, 'The best way to go through basic training is to do what you're told, as you're told, and there'll be no problems.'

In the brief montage sequence that opens the film, the new inductees are immediately stripped of their individuality. The opening shot is of the men arriving on a bus, from which they walk unhurriedly to the barracks, dressed in a variety of civilian clothes. In the second shot they are assigned bunks by number. In the third shot they are measured for uniforms, the tailor calling out measurements. Next come three shots of men having their hair cut short, all the same, a recurrent Wiseman image signifying loss of individuality and absorption into an institutional system. Then there is one quick shot each of fingerprinting, ID photos being taken, and one man, in answer to an interview question, giving his social security number, his identity now only a statistic. At the end of this opening sequence, the men are in uniform, a striking contrast to their varied appearance just a few moments before.

The music in the film further emphasizes the loss of individuality within the larger group. The function of music is established early on in *Basic Training*, when the commanding officer and his entourage smartly march into a room to welcome the trainees accompanied by the musical fanfare of 'The Caissons Go Rolling Along'. The entire film is punctuated with shots of the men drilling, keeping time to marching tunes. In these shots the camera frequently tilts down to isolate in close-up the legs and feet of the men,

showing that no one is allowed to march to the beat of a different drum.

When Lt Hoffman tells a black private that 'the Army's not just one man, it's millions of people', and that he must work with the group, he echoes the social message of virtually every classic Hollywood war movie, but with a crucial difference, for while the classic war films depict the compromise of individualism as a noble sacrifice necessary for the war effort, Wiseman views the military as unacceptably dehumanizing. In one particularly striking shot in *Basic Training*, the soldiers march in the foreground as if 'beneath' a large American flag waving in the background. Here, Wiseman finds a visual expression of the extent to which the individual is subject to the state—a point ominously reiterated in the image of the soldiers entering a transport plane shot from a position within or under it, the dark, jagged edges of the plane's bay doors suggesting a giant maw about to consume the men.

Basic Training also offers a disturbing view of masculinity in its suggestion that violence is innate in men and easily nurtured by the process of basic military training. The men readily cheer each other on ('get him from behind', 'hit him in the head') as they fight in pairs. Even after the whistle blows, signaling that the combatants should stop, we see one pair continue on, their potential for violence now fully aroused. In the toothbrushing scene, several of the men are shown, in effect, foaming at the mouth, and in the scenes of bayonet practice, the men seem reduced to animals, 'grunts' abandoning language for screams of violence. Several scenes make the connection between firearms and the phallus. On the firing range, a demonstrator fires his weapon from his crotch, accompanied by a crude joke from the instructing sergeant, and one trainee is visited by his family, who concentrate their attention and conversation on his rifle, 'fetishizing' it and investing it with unmistakable phallic implications.

Much screen time is devoted to the hapless Private Hickman, a trainee who has trouble with everything from executing the to-the-rear march, to making his bed. Attempting to learn something as simple as reversing his direction while marching, behind him we see the other men drilling with increasing uniformity and competence. Just as they tend to march in the opposite direction from Hickman within the frame, so the lack of ability by this one individual in the

foreground sets him up as a foil to the many in the background, all of whom are quickly becoming professional soldiers. (Their growing proficiency also provides Wiseman with a visual way of 'marking time' in the film.)

For Wiseman, Hickman is emblematic of the misfit literally out of step with society, scorned by his comrades as a result. The weakest link, he is threatened with a 'blanket party', a military hazing ritual in which a blanket is thrown over the victim before he is beaten, thus rendering him unable to name his attackers. Hickman's response, we discover, is to attempt to overdose on drugs. Finally, Hickman evolves from a comic figure to a tragic one, for he represents that spark of human imperfection that is all but ruthlessly eliminated as the men become trained soldiers.

BARRY KEITH GRANT

See also: Wiseman, Frederick

Basic Training (US, 1971, 89 mins). Distributed by Zipporah Films. Produced, edited, and directed by Frederick Wiseman. Cinematography by William Brayne. Sound recorded by Frederick Wiseman.

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Basse, Wilfried

Wilfried Basse's oeuvre bridged the gap between German avant-garde filmmaking of the Weimar Republic and the conventional educational filmmaking propagated during the Nazi period. When he started out in 1929, he counted prominent avant-garde artists such as Kurt Schwitters and other members of the Kestner Society

as his friends. He dissociated himself from the Bauhaus aesthetic.

Basse's main filmic interest was people in their everyday surroundings, whom he observed from a short distance. His first film, *Baumblütenzeit in Werder* (1929), about a crude spring fair near Berlin, was noted for the satirical tone it employed with regard to human foibles and inadequacies. The film garnered comparisons to George Grosz and Heinrich Zille for Basse.

Basse used a small, handheld camera that allowed for great immediacy and intimacy in shooting. This was illustrated by *Market in Berlin* (1929), which depicts the hustle and bustle of a Berlin peasants' market. The film's style was praised by many reviewers; others, Siegfried Kracauer among them, criticized it for its lack of an overt political message. The same could not be said of *Das Rote Sprachrohr* (1931), a portrait of a communist agitprop company. Inspired by Russian formalism, this film was Basse's experiment with a specified screenplay and indoor shooting with studio lighting.

Basse's primary work was *Deutschland—zwischen gestern und heute* (1932–4), which demonstrated how historical developments determine the present. While Basse was editing the film, the Nazis came into power. Reviewers criticized the lack of Nazi ideology in the film, while audiences seemed to avoid the film exactly because they expected Nazi propaganda. Nevertheless, it was awarded a gold medal at the Venice Film Festival in 1935.

Suspected of communist sympathies, Basse and his production company faced numerous obstacles. For the rest of his career he worked with the Reichsanstalt für den Unterrichtsfilm (RfU, Reich Institute for Educational Films), for which he shot nearly forty films. Since these films were not publicly shown, they were not censored. In fact, the RfU worked independently, free of Nazi control. During this time, Basse's films focused on topics relating to handicrafts and sports. In 1940 he was commissioned to make a film about genetic diseases—*Erbkrank—Erbgesund*—Basse's only overt concession to the Nazi regime.

ULI JUNG

Biography

Born on August 17, 1899, the son of a banker. After several failed attempts at various

professions, turned to filmmaking due to the influence of the films of Hans Cürlis. Formed his own production company in 1929. The Nazis' takeover brought about political difficulties, which led him to the Reichsanstalt für den Unterrichtsfilm, to which he was one of the most prolific contributors. Assigned to oversee the slow-motion photography for Leni Riefenstahl's film, *Olympia*, 1936. Died June 6, 1946.

Selected films

1929	<i>Baumblütenzeit in Werder</i>
1929	<i>Market in Berlin</i>
1929	<i>Wochenmarkt auf dem Wittenbergplatz</i>
1930	<i>Der wirtschaftliche Baubetrieb</i>
1931	<i>Mit Optik 1,4—Kamerastudien von Wilfried Basse</i>
1931	<i>Das Rote Sprachrohr</i>
1930–32	<i>Abbruch und Aufbau</i>
1932–34	<i>Deutschland—zwischen gestern und heute</i>
1934	<i>Glückliche Heimat</i>
1934–35	<i>Bunter Alltag</i>
1935	<i>Der Böttcher baut einen Zober</i>
1935	<i>Der Kohlenmeiler</i>
1936	<i>Roggenernte</i>
1936	<i>Hausbau</i>
1936	<i>Dachschiefer</i>
1936	<i>Der Schuhmacher/Wie ein Schuh entsteht</i>
1936	<i>Tabakbau in der Uckermark</i>
1936	<i>Handweberei</i>
1936	<i>Wie ein Ziegelstein entsteht</i>
1936	<i>Wie ein Pflasterstein entsteht</i>
1936	<i>Ein Brief wird befördert</i>
1936	<i>Braunkohle-Tagebau</i>
1936	<i>Ein Kohlenschleppzug auf dem Mittelrhein</i>
1936–40	<i>Erbkrank—Erbgesund</i>
1937	<i>Kugelstoßen</i>
1937	<i>Schwälmmer Bäuerin am Spinnrad</i>
1937	<i>Perspektivesches Schen</i>
1937	<i>Städtische Feuerwehr</i>
1937	<i>Dämmen einer Schornsteingruppe</i>
1937	<i>Kurzstreckenlauf</i>
1937	<i>Weitsprung</i>
1937	<i>Schwimmen</i>
1937–40	<i>Vom Korn zum Brot</i>
1938	<i>Junge Löwen im Zoologischen Garten</i>
1938	<i>Junge Paviane im Zoologischen Garten</i>
1938	<i>Junge Bären im Zoologischen Garten</i>

- 1938 Das Anlernen junger Pferde zum Zuge
- 1938 Schwäbische Kunde
- 1939 Ein Tag auf einer fränkischen Dorfstraße
- 1939 Deutschland—gastliches Land
- 1939 D-Zug fertig zur Fahrt
- 1939–40 Der Jockey

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Bataille du rail, La

(France, Clément, 1946)

La Bataille du rail (The Battle of the Rails) began as *Résistance fer*, a short film relating the contribution of the cheminots, the French railway workers, to the struggle against German occupation. This documentary, among a series of projects commissioned in 1945 to celebrate the *Résistance* by the Comité de Libération du Cinéma Français, made such a strong impression on the producers that they asked the director, René Clément, to turn it into a feature-length film. Professional and amateur actors were hired, stories of resistance in the railways were collated by the writer, Colette Audry, and German prisoners of war were brought in. La Bataille du rail was released in 1946 and gained instant acclaim as the most moving account of the *Résistance*.

La Bataille du rail is a rather disjointed film, half-documentary and half-fiction, where its transformation from a court-métrage to a ninety-minute, full-length feature is quite apparent. It is rather chaotic in its loose structure and confusing in its script. The odd juxtaposition of fiction to a documentary is nevertheless what makes La Bataille du rail so special. As a docu-drama, it acquires unique qualities of being a

detailed and dramatic account of the plight of railway men trying desperately to derive all sorts of obstacles to prevent the movement of trains through sabotage, diversion, and cooperation with the Maquis, the armed resistance to German occupation.

The film spans the four years of the war and can be divided into two sections. The first part is a documentary using actors; it explains the resistance to German occupation in the railways during these years, in particular its effect on the movement of trains between the occupied zone in the north and the 'free zone' in the south of France. The considerable risks taken by the workers of the SNCF, the nationalized French railways, are described in detail, almost in a didactic manner: the sabotage of the rolling stock, the meticulous deception of the German army officers, and the ensuing reprisals are narrated with an acute sense of patriotic duty and drama.

The second part of the film is set in the aftermath of D-Day and describes the attempts by the cheminots, allied with the Maquis, to stop a heavily armored train taking German reinforcements to the front line, ending with its dramatic derailment. The film becomes much closer to a work of fiction than a documentary. It finishes with scenes of triumph, greeting the arrival of the first train in a liberated France, the ultimate symbol of a nation freed by the sacrifice of its railway workers.

La Bataille du rail received the award for best film at the 1946 Cannes festival, and René Clément received the award for best director. It is still considered to be the first film that managed to capture the spirit of the *Résistance*, the heroism of a nation, and the dangers involved in resisting German occupation. Undoubtedly the circumstances of its release explain its success, among a public desperately looking for a film that would capture the emotional intensity of such acts of bravery. It is also a fine and rare example of French neorealism, not unlike the Italian postwar films, in its unique blend of reality and fiction and in its attempts to reach humanity in the most inhumane circumstances of war against an occupying army.

René Clément envisages acts of resistance in the SNCF as a patriotic epic and relies quite heavily on the 'feel-good' factor that prevailed after the war, hence its considerable success. The film does not, however, demonize German occupation—there is even some sympathy for

the German soldiers relaxing on the side of the tracks where their military convoy is stranded, a sharp contrast with the violence unleashed in the attack that follows.

La Bataille du rail portrays a collective struggle, where there is no hero, where the fight for survival from both sides is described with a sense of the unavoidable. It ignores the real divisions that existed during these years among the French population. There is also little reference to the involvement of Allied troops or of the Gaullist resistance. Patriotism is mixed with socialist undertones: these acts of bravery are those of the cheminots, who symbolize the working class as the driving force in resisting German occupation.

The style of Clément is a cold assessment as well as a tense account of resistance by railway workers: there is some of Eisenstein's sense of drama in the languishing whistling of a steam engine during the summary execution of cheminots suspected of sabotage, and in the accordion rolling down the side of the track after the spectacular derailment of the German convoy. The photography of Henri Alekan contributes greatly to the dramatic effect of the film, and La Bataille du rail will establish him as one of the greatest photographers in black and white for the cinema. He had already collaborated on *Beauty and the Beast* with Jean Cocteau and worked with Wim Wenders in 1983 on *The State of Things* and on *Wings of Desire* in 1987.

La Bataille du rail transformed the career of René Clément from that of a minor documentary filmmaker to one of the prominent directors of his generation. Born in 1913, he made short documentary films during the 1930s and 1940s, in particular *Ceux du rail* in 1942, which gave him an insight into the railway industry that would be useful when filming *La Bataille du rail*. Until the late 1950s Clément confirmed his stature as a world-class director, receiving an Oscar for *Au-delà des grilles* in 1948 and *Jeux interdits* in 1952.

Clément belongs to the generation of directors left behind by the desire for change demanded by the *La nouvelle vague* advocates, who criticized his filming technique for its lack of subjectivity and its detachment from reality. His last noticeable success, *Plein soleil*, released in 1960, inaugurated a slow decline in a career that had been prolific and successful, until his last film, *Jeune fille libre le soir*, which came out in 1975, the year before his death.

La Bataille du rail remains the film for which he is best known.

YVAN TARDY

La Bataille du rail/The Battle of the Rails (France, 1946, 85 mins). Distributed by L.C.J. Editions et Productions, 2002. Produced by La Coopérative générale du cinéma Français, 1946. Directed by René Clément. Script by René Clément. Photography by Henri Alekan. Music by Yves Baudrier. Dialogues by Colette Audry. Filmed in black and white. With Jean Clarieux (Lampin), Jean Daurand (Cheminot), Jacques Desagneaux (Athos), François Joux (Cheminot), Latour (Cheminot), Tony Laurent (Camargue), and French railway workers.

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Battle for Our Soviet Ukraine, The (USSR, Dovzhenko, 1942–3)

The Battle for Our Soviet Ukraine (*Bitva za nashu Sovetskuiu Ukrainu*) is an account of the German Army Group South's invasion of the Ukraine and its repulsion in the Great Patriotic War. Produced for the Central and Ukrainian Newsreel Studios, the film was begun in early May 1943, completed on October 6, and released on October 25, 1943. Often attributed to Alexander Dovzhenko, the nominal directors were his wife, Julia Solntseva, and Jacob Ovdeyenko. However, although credited only as 'supervisor', bucolic sections link to Dovzhenko's earlier feature films, particularly *Earth*. The contrast between these lyrical scenes showing, in an idealized manner, what life was like before the invasion, and the starkness of the war footage, gives the images of destruction much of their impact.

Dovzhenko, with a number of other documentarists, remained in Moscow when the bulk of film production, along with much of industry that stood in the path of the invading forces, was evacuated to the east. He also spent time in liberated areas of the Ukraine, so he saw firsthand more of the effects of war than many of his colleagues. The authenticity that Dovzhenko's team managed to convey is remarkable. The film is put together with a freedom from the bureaucratic interference that filmmakers working on fiction production experienced, allowing Dovzhenko greater latitude than if he had gone to Alma Ata with the others.

Dovzhenko's feelings about the invasion are summed up in a letter to his wife dated June 4, 1942 (Marshall 1983: 152), in which he wrote that although Hitler would be defeated, the Ukraine had been ruined. Despite this pessimism, he and his team made another documentary, *Victory in Right-Bank Ukraine* and the Expulsion of the German Aggressors from the Boundaries of the Ukrainian Soviet Earth (released in May 1945), which contained material on reconstruction. Of the two films, *The Battle for Our Soviet Ukraine* is more harrowing, with many shots of dead bodies, including children, and the devastation in the reconquered areas is brought home vividly.

This graphic depiction of despoliation and despair runs contrary to Graham Roberts's (1999: 136) characterization of wartime Soviet documentary as 'a mirror image of reality', projecting confidence in a time of tragedy. Dovzhenko's diary indicates that before its release he was skeptical about the film's likely official reception, as it ran counter to the positive portrayals depicted in the bulk of Soviet films. He feared that it might be banned altogether, or marred 'by cutting the difficult and unheroic scenes'. His more subtle conception of the complexity of war—'the grandiose woe of retreat and the incomplete joy of advance' (Dovzhenko 1973: 91)—was at odds with the simplistic official ideology.

The original title was *Ukraine in Battle*, but the addition of the word *Soviet* served to lessen the nationalistic interpretation by stressing the common struggle of all the Soviet peoples. The political message was that the Ukraine was still part of the Soviet Union. The sensitivity of the nationalism issue can be gauged by the fact that while working on *The Battle for Our Soviet Ukraine*, Dovzhenko also wrote the script for

Ukraine in Flames (not to be confused with *The Battle for Our Soviet Ukraine's* US release title). It had a similar theme to *The Battle for Our Soviet Ukraine*, but its perceived nationalism blocked its realization and blighted Dovzhenko's career.

Many contemporary reviewers claimed that there were twenty-four camera operators, although in fact twenty-nine are credited on *The Battle for Our Soviet Ukraine* and twenty-five on *Victory in Right-Bank Ukraine*. Both films feature footage taken by German forces that was later captured, providing a more rounded depiction of the conflict. There was enough material to allow adherence to the one-hundred-and-eighty-degree rule, with Germans usually attacking from left to right and the Soviet forces from right to left. Interspersed are speeches from party and army leaders, including Nikita Khrushchev, head of the Ukrainian Communist Party, and direct-to-camera witness accounts from ordinary people with harrowing stories to tell. Considering the disparate origins of its elements, *The Battle for Our Soviet Ukraine* displays a remarkable coherence. Jay Leyda (1983: 377) proclaimed it 'an inspiration to every artist who works in the documentary film'.

Dovzhenko was dismayed by the indifferent reception that the film received in the United States when it was released there in the spring of 1944. He noted in his diary entry for April 8, 1944: 'She [the United States] didn't even want to look at the blood she is buying with her canned bacon' (Dovzhenko 1973: 105). This was a sentiment that echoed his government's demand for the opening of a second front, and the feeling that the Soviet Union was being asked to make enormous sacrifices while its allies stood by.

Critical opinion in the United States was indeed lukewarm. While acknowledging the unvarnished presentation and the effectiveness of the battle sequences, many of the reviews were carping, with negative comments on the clarity of the photography, the quality of the translated commentary, and the tendency of the pictures of devastation to have a certain sameness. These blasé assessments of the film's lack of technical polish ignored the far from ideal circumstances of production.

The British *Kinematograph Weekly*, by contrast, while noting the 'family resemblance' of films depicting the effects of occupation, could still concede that *The Battle for Our Soviet Ukraine*

was ‘a vivid indictment of German brutality’, and highlight its depiction of suffering and the realism of the battle sequences. Similarly, *Monthly Film Bulletin* considered that of the many documentaries originating from the Soviet front, few had ‘been so vivid or poignant as this’. The difference in tone perhaps reflected the relative complacency of a country that had not experienced invasion, compared to one whose civilian population had itself suffered from direct attacks, and thus could empathize with the misery of those subjected directly to the German war machine.

TOM RUFFLES

See also: Russia/Soviet Union

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Battle of Chile, The

(Cuba, Guzmán, 1975–7)

Patricio Guzmán’s *The Battle of Chile* marks the end of a brief but intense period of revolutionary filmmaking in his native country. In the late 1960s and early 1970s Chilean feature and documentary filmmakers joined together in support of Popular Unity, a coalition of left-wing parties, producing work that protested the endemic poverty in their country. Guzmán’s film covers the political upheaval of 1973 from the

election of Salvador Allende in February to the coup in September that overthrew the political changes effected by the Popular Unity and forced Guzmán and his colleagues to work in exile.

The *Battle of Chile* is composed of three parts, ‘The Bourgeois Insurrection’ (1975), ‘The Coup d’État’ (1977), and ‘Popular Power’ (1979). Part One covers the election of Allende and the ensuing middle-class revolt. Part Two covers popular demonstrations in support and opposition to Allende. It also treats strategic debates within the left. Part Three focuses on later mass organization efforts. The film opens with some of the last footage shot by Guzmán and his crew: Allende is killed in the bombing of the La Moneda Palace and the Popular Unity party is effectively overthrown by the military coup supported by the middle class. With the denouement established at the outset, *The Battle of Chile* is set up to be studied more than experienced as a surprising narrative. Guzmán intended the film, while polemical, to be more analytic than propagandistic: ‘From the very beginning, our idea was to make an analytical film, not an agitation alone’ (Burton 1986: 51). After this opening shot, the film moves back to February, when the crew began filming, shortly before the narrow election of Allende.

Led by cinematographer Jorge Müller Silva, *The Battle of Chile* was shot with a team of handheld cameras by Guzmán and his team of collaborators, called *El Equipo Tercer Año* (The Third Year Group). The group participated in extended technical and theoretical discussions before filming began, defining five ‘fronts of struggle’ to focus the project (Pick 1980: 46–9). This allowed the cameramen to focus on capturing certain events effectively rather than worry over which events to record or neglect. From Guzmán’s account, the more polished shots of the film were the result of his collaboration with Müller, where he would survey ongoing events while relaying specific filming strategies to Müller: ‘Since I tried to anticipate for him what was about to happen, I could tell him to pan, to lower the camera, to raise it, instructing him to make certain movements that are much more readily identified with fictional than with documentary filmmaking’ (Burton 1986: 57).

Even with this preplanning and improvised direction, the nature of the subject meant that the group had a limited amount of control over

what they were able to film or, in some cases, found themselves filming. The filmmakers often captured planned events, such as governmental meetings, protests, and funerals, but as frequently taped unexpected developments.

Distinct scenes are often bridged by voice-over commentary, but the majority of analysis is provided by interviewed subjects. This one camera, one soundman style of filmmaking is most commonly known as direct or observational cinema. Here, the cameramen aim more to record as much of what unfolds before them than to produce polished shots. The editors of *The Battle of Chile* seem to have selected which scenes to include based on their impact or historical significance much more than their technical perfection. Shots with a shaky axis or blurring pans are often left in the film. In one scene, amidst unrest in the streets, the camera sweeps past the marquee of a movie theater. It announces that *Violent City*, starring Charles Bronson, is showing in Metrocolor. This brief reference to mainstream feature filmmaking reminds the spectator of the rhetorical, stylistic, and substantive differences between the type of cinema exemplified by *The Battle of Chile* versus this American feature. Moving past the marquee, the camera reveals an urban landscape lit with fire, running crowds, and the sounds of an ambulance. The fact that *Violent City* is showing in a truly riven, violent city jolts the spectator into recognition that, though certainly not shot in 35mm or Metrocolor, *The Battle of Chile* is a real document not to be conflated with Hollywood filmmaking. A more insistent reminder of this comes later.

In the most famous scene of the film, which closes Part One and opens Part Two, Argentine cameraman Leonardo Henricksen is shot and killed by a Chilean Army officer during the aborted coup in June. Here, the camera focuses on an officer who looks directly at the camera and fires; the image loses its balance and turns black.

Although the observational method of filmmaking employed in *The Battle of Chile* frequently produces objective shots that neither explicitly support nor oppose Allende, the left-wing political interest that was the impetus behind the project is more forcefully present in certain scenes, sometimes even in the shooting style. While the filmmakers begin by covering both sides of the electorate prior to Allende's election, often interviewing families at home in addition to mass demonstrations, afterwards the

filmmakers appear more frequently and more intimately with Allende's sympathizers. Guzmán and his colleagues frequently film amidst leftist demonstrations, interviewing participants in the middle of crowds. They also travel with and interview workers on truck beds en route to union meetings. The right wing is shown in more formal settings or, if on the streets, from a greater distance. At a meeting of the American Institute for Free Trade Unionism (a group funded indirectly by the CIA, which encourages managers in the transportation sector to oppose Allende's policies), an unidentified speaker is shot in a low-angle close-up. His face monstrously fills the screen, with deep black nostrils flaring and a gaping mouth. Words that may already displease the viewer are colored even more insidiously by this stylistic choice.

In an interview, Guzmán states that the film was made to support Popular Unity, but none of its constitutive parties, mostly notably the Communists and Socialists, in particular. This was typical of Chilean documentary in this period, which was galvanized by a manifesto by Miguel Littín, another filmmaker and head of Chile Films, the national film production company. Littín called for the development of a leftist cinema that would valorize the workers and labor leaders who fought for Allende's reforms. Although Guzmán follows the principles that Littín outlines, *The Battle of Chile* was made without the help of Chile Films, which was too unstable to support the project.

The Battle of Chile, while shot by Chileans, received a great deal of international support in terms of production. French documentary filmmaker Chris Marker provided the film stock with which the picture was shot. After shooting was complete, fearing the destruction of his footage, Guzmán smuggled his film to Cuba following Allende's assassination. *The Battle of Chile* was edited in Cuba at the Cuban Institute of Film Art and Industry (ICAIC). With the help of solidarity campaigns, the film was distributed around the world and became the most prominent testament of the coup. Guzmán and other Chilean filmmakers went on to produce a startling amount of work in exile (one hundred and seventy-six films, fifty-six of which were features between 1973 and 1983), becoming the most successful Latin American 'cinema of exile' in this period.

See also: Guzmán, Patricio

The Battle of Chile/La Batalla de Chile (Chile, El Equipo Tercer Año/ICAIC, 1975–9, 315 mins). Directed by Patricio Guzmán. Produced by Chris Marker. Cinematography by Jorge Müller Silva. Edited by Pedro Chaskel.

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Battle of China, The

(US, Capra, 1944)

Sixth in the 'Why We Fight' series produced by the US Army during World War II, The Battle of China builds on The Nazis Strike (1943), Divide and Conquer (1943), and The Battle of Russia (1944) through collaboration among Hollywood's top hands. Frank Capra, one of America's premier theatrical filmmakers, directed the film, stamping it with his recognizable personal style. Anatole Litvak, another influential Hollywood figure, codirected and oversaw production, without credit in both cases. Julius Epstein handled writing, William Hornbeck edited, Dimitri Tiomkin composed original music, and Anthony Veiller narrated. All worked together on the earlier documentaries.

Lacking Germany's propaganda machinery, Japan offered meager film footage for Capra to exploit for propaganda purposes. While some scenes in The Battle of China originated in Japan, Capra turned to stock Hollywood theatrical footage to help offset the deficit. The film states, 'Certain non-combat stock scenes were used from historical pictures', but never identifies theatrical footage. Where documentary film ends and Hollywood stock begins is deliberately indistinct.

The Battle of China appropriates and makes use of several stock patriotic symbols and images. Visual and auditory cues, such as the 'V for Victory' symbol superimposed on a ringing Liberty Bell, solicit predictable audience response. A rousing bugle call summons the troops, over an image of a road sign pointing to Tokyo. Thematic elements emphasize similarities, real and imaginary, between China and the United States. Confucius represents the Golden Rule and Sun Yat Sen becomes China's George Washington. While General Chiang Kai-Shek marches, Patton-like, across the screen, Madame Chiang addresses Congress. 'China's war is our war' is the resounding theme.

The Battle of China permits neither balance nor misinterpretation. The Chinese, with 'indestructible spirit', proceed on their 'Homeric journey to freedom', while their 'courage never faltered'. Through simplistic graphics, Chinese military disasters become 'trading space for time', while 'feverish' or 'blood-crazed' Japanese soldiers 'outdid themselves in barbarism', perpetrating a 'nightmare of cruelty'. The 'oldest and youngest of the world's great nations', filmgoers are assured, fight 'side-by-side', 'civilization against barbarism', 'good against evil'. In the process, this film demonstrates effective propaganda. In 2000 The Battle of China won the National Film Registry award of the National Film Preservation Board.

MICHAEL S. CASEY

See also: Battle of Russia, The; Capra, Frank; Litvak, Anatole

The Battle of China (US, Army Signal Corps, 1944, 65 mins, black and white). Produced by War Department. Directed by Frank Capra and Anatole Litvak (uncredited). Music composed by Dimitri Tiomkin (uncredited), performed by

Army Air Force Orchestra. Edited by William W. Hornbeck (uncredited). Narrated by Anthony Veiller.

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Battle of Midway, The

(US, Ford, 1942)

The first US combat documentary to receive wide commercial distribution during World War II, *The Battle of Midway*, was a project largely without precedent. As might be expected of a work sanctioned by the US Navy and President Franklin Roosevelt, the film commemorates the heroism of American forces in battle and illustrates the vital link between home front and war front at an early stage of US involvement in the war. Director John Ford, who was on leave from Hollywood as head of the Field Photographic branch of the Office of the Coordinator of Information (later the OSS), also experiments with formal elements and incorporates themes of importance to his work as a fiction filmmaker. In this regard, *The Battle of Midway* seems no less deeply personal a work for the political calculations that shaped its making.

Ford had previously supervised the production of training films for new recruits and reconnaissance films for the high command, but the three-day battle at the Pacific Ocean atoll of Midway, 1,100 miles northwest of Pearl Harbor, in early June 1942 provided Ford with an opportunity to extend his wartime work in a new direction. Accepting an assignment to photograph the defense of the US Naval Air Station at Midway, Ford navigated the shoals of military, governmental, and studio bureaucracies to retain control over the footage, shifting post-production from Washington to Los Angeles on the Twentieth Century Fox lot. Speculations about the distribution of Ford's new documentary was a topic of much comment in the Hollywood trade press in late summer, leading up to the release of *The Battle of Midway* by the

War Activities Committee and Fox in September. Seven first-run houses in New York ran the film, as did six in Los Angeles; eventually five hundred prints were circulated nationwide. The following March, *The Battle of Midway* was among four films named Best Documentary by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Remarkably, *The Battle of Midway* devotes little of its eighteen minutes to explaining the wider causes and significance of the battle, a turning point in the Pacific campaign. We learn nothing about the arrangement of naval and air forces on the eve of battle or the tactical maneuvering on either side, including the crucial decoding of cables that alerted US officials to a feint of Japanese forces toward the Aleutians and the pending Midway air attack. Instead, the film offers a series of impressions of the Midway outpost and its occupants before, during, and after the battle, emphasizing the natural beauty and serenity of the islands and surrounding waters, the ominous stillness of an evening watch as silhouetted soldiers stand guard before a setting sun, the perceptual disorientation and confusion produced by the bombing and strafing of the islands, and the resilience and determination of the American marines tested by the attack.

Ford's account of the battle, moreover, does not shy away from images of destruction—billowing black smoke against a cobalt sky; gutted buildings; twisted metal, wreckage, and rubble; the injured and the dead—and a concluding account of burial at sea functions as an elegiac counterpoint to a more aggressively martial coda in which victory is asserted and the costs to the enemy are enumerated. Alfred Newman's musical score, incorporating familiar military and national anthems and hymns, is crucial to the overall rhythmic effects. In this regard, *The Battle of Midway* seems less journalistic than musical in design, indebted, as Tag Gallagher has suggested, to nineteenth-century battle compositions, with different musical markers signaling striking shifts in tone.

Contemporaneous reviewers found *The Battle of Midway*'s combat footage—shot in 16mm Technicolor by Ford and Jack MacKenzie, his twenty-year-old first mate, from their post on Midway's Eastern Island—particularly compelling. (Additional air and sea photography was provided by Kenneth M. Pier, who accompanied pilots off the USS *Hornet*, and brief footage of an 'Ohio family' at home was supplied

by cinematographer Gregg Toland.) The footage was assembled by editor Robert Parrish in two extended battle passages marked by free-hand camerawork and expressively disjointed cutting, with the descent of planes and multiple explosions interspersed with the reactions of marines returning anti-aircraft fire. At times, the image track seems to slip its sprockets, as a visible frame line optically registers the force of the concussion, and a sense of geography is lost amid the smoke and floating debris. Early in the assault Ford was knocked unconscious by one such explosion and received a flesh wound, for which he was awarded the Purple Heart. Reports of this, circulated by the press, only served to enhance the perceived authenticity of the film as a photographic document.

Ford's experiments with vocal commentary proved more controversial. Soliciting scripts from screenwriter Dudley Nichols and MGM executive James Kevin McGuinness, based on personal notes, Ford supervised the reading of the commentary by four actors—Donald Crisp, Irving Pichel, Henry Fonda, and James Darwell—the last two of whom were currently at work on *The Ox Bow Incident* on the Fox lot. Above and beyond conventional scene-setting, the commentary dramatizes, and works to bridge, the gap between depicted events and their presentation to the viewer, a function most conspicuously evident when Darwell, speaking as if an American mother watching the Midway footage, expresses urgent concern for the well-being of the young pilots far from home.

Some critics at the time found the commentary overly intrusive or sentimental; Darwell's dialogue, in particular, was thought an unwarranted Hollywood touch. Ford, however, who claimed to have wanted to make the film for 'the mothers of America', never expressed regret about these choices, and Parrish recalls that audiences at Radio City Music Hall were audibly moved by it. Certainly the selection of this particular quartet of voices was not gratuitous; Fonda and Darwell evoke the poignant leave-taking scene from Ford's film version of *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940); Crisp and Pichel likewise use Ford's adaptation of *How Green Was My Valley* (1941), with its wistful memorial view of a Welsh mining family. Strands of 'Red River Valley', lifted from the soundtrack to *The Grapes of Wrath* for the evening watch in *The Battle of Midway*, reinforce these associations. Trading in heightened emotion, certain

moments on the soundtrack thus demonstrate possible points of intersection between combat narratives and domestic melodrama, genres then sharing the screen of movie houses. They also serve a wider project of reimagining community ties between home front and battle front under the pressure of a global war.

CHARLES C. WOLFE

The Battle of Midway (US, United States Navy, 1942, 18 mins). Distributed by Reel Media International, Twentieth Century Fox Film Corp., and the War Activities Committee. Directed by John Ford. Written by John Ford, Dudley Nichols, and James Kevin McGuinness (as James K. McGuinness). Produced by John Ford. Original music by Alfred Newman. Cinematography by John Ford, Jack MacKenzie, and Kenneth M. Pier. Edited by John Ford and Robert Parrish.

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Battle of Russia, The

(US, Litvak, 1944)

The Battle of Russia was the fifth installment in the group of American World War II propaganda films known as the *Why We Fight* series. The films in the series, a total of seven, fall into two major groups: those that provided historical background for the events in Europe and Asia

(Prelude to War (1943), The Nazis Strike (1943), Divide and Conquer (1943), and War Comes to America (1945)), and those that detailed specific campaigns of the war and the respective allies involved in those campaigns. The Battle of Russia, along with The Battle of Britain (1943) and The Battle of China (1944), form the latter group. The Battle of Russia, like the other films in this subgroup, was intended to educate the audience about a nation and ally to which most Americans were traditionally adverse. The resulting film is one of the only pro-Soviet films ever produced by the US government.

Although most of the credit for the Why We Fight series has traditionally, and justifiably, been given to Frank Capra, these films were collaborative projects, and thus it is important to recognize all of those involved in the production of The Battle of Russia. Capra received producer credit for the film and, by all accounts, worked closely and intensively with director Anatole Litvak to give the film its shape and orientation. Eric Knight, who headed a team of seven screenwriters, is largely responsible for the film's verbose scripted narration, which was spoken by Walter Huston. The score for the film was done by Hollywood veteran Dmitri Tomkin and drew heavily on Tchaikovsky as well as traditional Russian folk songs and ballads. Although collaboration was obviously important to the genesis of The Battle of Russia, it is important to reiterate the important role that Litvak and Capra played in combining the elements of the film into a cohesive whole. As a compilation film, The Battle of Russia's footage is derived from various sources, including newsreels, amateur filming, and fiction films. From these disparate sources Litvak and Capra, along with veteran editor Walter Hornbeck, created a cogent report on the Russian people and their battle against Hitler's army.

The film itself consists of two parts, the first dealing with a history of the Russian people up to and including the peak of the Nazi invasions of Russia (December 1941). The second part of the film begins with winter falling on the Nazi invaders and goes on to detail the heroic Russian counterattack launched during that winter, which not only drove the Germans back, but also, as the film's narrator pointedly reminds us, 'shattered the myth of Nazi invincibility', and thus boosted the Allied hopes for an eventual defeat of Hitler and his forces. To illustrate all of this, the second part focuses especially on two

decisive battles: that at Leningrad and that at Stalingrad.

Formally, The Battle of Russia is the epitome of the compilation film. Shots and sounds are recontextualized in such a way as to present the images as supportive of the film's argument, without a questioning of the image itself; thus, viewers take footage from Alexander Nevsky (Eisenstein, 1938) as representation of historical fact. This phenomenon is achieved in The Battle of Russia not only through skillful montage but also through the employment of a unifying voice-over that dominates the film's soundtrack. Thomas Bohn points out that voice-over narration is present in seventy-five percent of the film, well above contemporary theoretical protocol, which called for no more than two-thirds of the visual track to be accompanied by narration. Nonetheless, the narration in The Battle of Russia is not excessive. The material presented was both complex and obscure to the film's audience, and at no point does the film's propagandistic tone break down into obvious repetition. Besides the prominent narration, the film's informative mode demanded an abundance of animated effects to illustrate tactical concepts such as 'wedge and trap' and 'defense in depth', as well as troop movements and other military maneuvers.

Thematically, the film falls in line with the messages presented throughout the Why We Fight series: Germany's invasion of Russia represents an encroachment of the 'slave world' into the 'free world' of Russia, with a fascist army threatening a peace-loving, pious, and proud people. The depravity of the Germans is reiterated throughout the film with constant reminders that German soldiers were literally raping and pillaging their way through the Russian countryside. However, as the film's most famous line, 'Generals may win campaigns, but people win wars', indicates, the film is concerned with showing how the spirit of a people can defeat even the mightiest army. The film's concluding shots, showing the Russian army along with the armies of all of the Allies marching off to presumable victory, underscore the idea that the United States and Russia are 'in this together', and thus point to the film's true goal, that of propagandizing unity with the heretofore (and afterwards as well) adversarial Russians.

The success of the film in achieving this goal is illustrated by the film's popularity, which extended beyond the military audience for which it

was initially intended. The Battle of Russia was the second of the Why We Fight films to receive an Academy Award nomination for Best Documentary feature. The film was also popular abroad, with Stalin ordering hundreds of prints to be shown in Russian theaters. Like all propaganda films, though, *The Battle of Russia* served its historical purpose and was quickly dated as an artifact of government policy. The necessary propagandistic elisions that the film presents (not mentioning the word communist once, the avoidance of any mention of the Stalin–Hitler nonaggression pact, and the praise for the piety of an officially atheist state), made the film unsuitable for postwar policies. The film was too good at sympathetically portraying Stalin and Russia, and was withdrawn from circulation during the Cold War, making it one of the most ironically effective propaganda pieces in documentary history.

CHRISTOPHER MEIR

See also: *The Battle of China*; Capra, Frank; Litvak, Anatole

The Battle of Russia (US, 1944, 80 mins). Distributed by Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation, Questar Pictures, and the War Activities Committee of the Motion Pictures Industry. Produced by Frank Capra. Directed by Frank Capra and Anatole Litvak. Written by Julius J. Epstein, Philip G. Epstein, Rober Heller, Anatole Litvak, and Anthony Veiller. Edited by William Hornbeck. Original music by Dimitri Tiomkin. Non-original music by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. Commentary by Walter Huston.

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Battle of San Pietro, The

(US, Huston, 1945)

The Battle of San Pietro, a documentary about one battle in Italy in the Allied campaign in World War II, is the most critically acclaimed wartime documentary ever produced under the auspices of the US War Department. The film makes use of maps, charts, and voice-over narration to provide an account of this battle. The more lasting contribution of *The Battle of San Pietro*, however, emerges from its meditation on the experience of the infantryman, and its larger insights into the destructiveness of war and the resilience of the human spirit.

The Battle of San Pietro bears the unmistakable stamp of its director, writer, and voice-over narrator, the Hollywood filmmaker John Huston. Before the war, Huston had been primarily known as a screenwriter, but his talents as a director were proven after the release of *The Maltese Falcon* (1941). Along with Frank Capra, William Wyler, John Ford, and others, Huston was one of several prominent filmmakers enlisted in the American war effort. Huston made three war documentaries for the US Army Pictorial Service: *Report from the Aleutians* (1943), *The Battle of San Pietro*, and *Let There Be Light* (1945). The latter film, about veterans under treatment for various mental problems resulting from combat, was suppressed by the War Department until 1980 (Simmon 2000: 58).

Huston was sent to Italy in 1943 to document the triumphant entry of American forces into Rome, but the ground offensive met stiff resistance from the Germans and slowed to a halt north of Naples. Huston was reassigned to make a film 'that would explain to American audiences why U.S. forces in Italy were no longer advancing' (Huston 1980: 109). American forces had moved into position at the foot of the Liri Valley, through which meandered the main road to Rome. The German defenses had taken position in and around the little village of San Pietro, and were about to offer some deadly resistance to Allied advances.

The film begins with a two-minute introduction by General Mark Clark, who led the US Fifth Army into the Liri Valley, explaining that San Pietro was key to the region and that in light of the importance of the objective, casualties were 'not excessive'. It is widely assumed that Clark's introductory words were designed and

tacked on by the War Department to counter the film's implication that casualties were excessive. According to William Nolan, however, Huston wrote the opening narration for Clark, thinking that Clark would have it reworked for his own purposes. Huston was surprised when Clark used the speech unaltered: 'Now, there was this four-star general repeating, word for word, the strategy of the campaign as I saw it [...] and me just a dogface in it! I guess he didn't know any more about what was going on than I did' (Nolan 1965: 51).

In part the film chronicles the progress of, and military strategy employed in, Allied attempts to take San Pietro and the surrounding hills. The film's finest points are to be found elsewhere, however. Huston's film unit, with its 35mm handheld Eyemo newsreel cameras (Haskew 2000: 82), was attached to the 143rd Infantry Regiment of the 36th Texas Infantry Division. The Battle of San Pietro manages to convey the men's experience through footage that captures the violence of battle, including numerous close-ups of men's faces, shots of the many casualties as they lie on the battlefield or are wrapped in shrouds, and narrated accounts of the extreme danger of the infantry attacks. The 143rd Regiment alone required 1,100 replacements after the Battle of San Pietro (Huston 1980: 115). Huston has said that he made the film to express admiration for the courage and fortitude of the common foot soldier.

Where Frank Capra's wartime documentaries are highly propagandistic, Huston was unable or unwilling to hide his strong misgivings about the war. The Battle of San Pietro archly and subtly demonstrates the war's effect on the townspeople, on the town, on San Pietro's artistic and cultural treasures, and on nature itself. It does so in part through what has been called 'one of the most memorable voice-over narrations in film—both in script and delivery' (Simmon 2000: 59). After shots of the broken town of San Pietro, we see a pock-marked statue of St Peter as well as the ruined church of St Peter's, its dome missing to reveal the sky above. In voice-over Huston intones something apparently taken from a tourist guidebook: 'Patron Saint, Peter, point of interest, St Peter's, 1438, note interesting treatment of chance!'. Toward the film's end, Huston sums up with shots of men digging graves and slow pans across the faces of the survivors:

The lives lost were precious lives—to their country, to their loved ones, and to the men themselves [...] many among these you see alive here have since joined the ranks of their brothers at arms, who fell at San Pietro. For ahead lay San Battore, and the Rapido River, and Cassino, and beyond Cassino more rivers, and more mountains, and more towns, more San Pietros, greater or lesser, a thousand more.

(The Battle of San Pietro, 1945)

Toward the film's end we see a montage of images of children emerging from the rubble, some smiling, some obviously frightened but too curious to remain in hiding. James Agee objected to the 'emotional sales pressure' of the music of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir here. Nonetheless, he called the scene 'radiant with illimitable suggestions of meaning and mystery' and 'the first great passage of war poetry that has got on the screen' (Agee 1945). We see shots of the people of the village returning to their daily routines, carrying water, plowing, and sowing seeds. Huston's narration tells us that although the prime military aim had been to defeat the enemy, the people looked upon the Americans as their deliverers. We see a religious procession, and the voice-over narration ends the film: 'And the people pray to their patron saint to intercede with God on behalf of those who came to deliver them [...] and passed on to the North with the passing battle.'

Upon finishing the film, Huston showed it to a group of officers, who pronounced the film 'antiwar' and decided to withhold distribution. Huston told the officers that if he ever made a picture that was pro-war, he 'hoped someone would take me out and shoot me' (Huston 1980: 120). The Battle of San Pietro presented the battle not as a strategic victory, but as a small battle in a costly and continuing campaign. General George C. Marshall asked to see the film, and later pronounced that all army trainees should see it to become better prepared for the shock of battle. Huston was promoted to major. The Battle of San Pietro was released in 1945, however, after the Allied victory, and having been cut from five to three reels. Although it did not fulfill its original military objective, it remains one of the most humane and artful war documentaries ever made. As James Agee wrote

in 1945, 'it is in every way as good a war film as I have seen; in some ways it is the best'.

CARL R. PLANTINGA

See also: Huston, John

The Battle of San Pietro (US, John Huston, 1945, 33 mins). Produced by the US Army Pictorial Service. Directed, written, and narrated by John Huston. Cinematography by Jules Buck, John Huston, and other Signal Corps cameramen. Music by Dmitri Tiomkin, performed by the Army Air Force Orchestra, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, and St Brendan's Boys Choir.

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Battle of the Somme, The

(UK, Urban, 1916)

Of the various documentaries made under official auspices during World War I, The Battle of the Somme has rightly assumed a key place. It broke all box office records, as thousands were turned away in the first week despite its having opened simultaneously at over thirty London cinemas. More than one theatre was exhibiting it to ten thousand people a day, and the Finsbury Park Cinema attracted over fifty thousand people in that first week. Thereafter, one hundred prints were distributed around the provinces, and within two months hiring fees had been scaled down from £40 a week to £8 for three nights, bringing it within reach of the smallest cinemas. Bioscope complained of unfair competition when music halls hired it instead of limiting themselves to shorts, but it drew many into the cinema for the first time. Still more

important, it provided a huge stimulus for the idea of a British film archive. Langford Reed noted that in 1913 both Copenhagen's Royal Library and the Louvre had established film sections, similar archives existing in the Vatican, Madrid, and New York. Meanwhile, the British Museum resisted because film was combustible and impermanent. However, the press considered it unthinkable that Somme prints should not be preserved for posterity.

The film covers the first phase of the Somme offensive, which was to last about four months, with an advance of some thousand yards at the expense of more than half a million British casualties. This opening phase, and the huge preparations that had been necessary, generated footage enough for a feature-length propaganda film, although disjointedness betrays its opportunist origins. Both the Germans and French produced their own Somme films, the former claimed by *The Times* to be technically superb. It focused on the devastation wrought on French towns by Allied guns, and German care for enemy wounded. The two German attacks were obvious fakes. The film allegedly 'followed the British model as closely as possible', and certainly the French version did so. This began with preparations: 'long files of marching soldiers and vast stores of ammunition', then trenches 'full of soldiers ready to leap out', the attack, and numerous Germans surrendering.

French troops, who had bled too freely at Verdun to be able to make their expected contribution on the Somme, have little place in the British film, but there is an image of enduring French peasant women, toiling within view of a military camp that proclaims the ever-present hazards of war. The film is especially distinguished by the amount of attention given to casualties. Topicals, no longer free from censorship, were shorn of 'realistic horrors of war' by either civil censor or service departments, leaving *Cinema's* reviewer unprepared for the Somme film's images of 'war, rich with death'. These same images continue to shape people's understanding of the war, because the 'over the top' sequence has been used repeatedly as television producers' shorthand. Indeed, it was passed off, in the official compilation *America Goes Over* (1927), as US Signal Corps' filming of the Doughboys' 'Jump-off' at St Mihiel in September 1918. A contemporary letter to *The Nation* quoted the *Manchester Guardian*: 'Two years ago the public exhibition of horrors like this

would have been condemned as an indecency.' Its writer, wondering what could have happened in the course of those two years, resented the soldiers' suffering being turned into entertainment. Others, notably the Dean of Durham in a letter to *The Times*, protested 'against an entertainment which wounds the heart and violates the very sanctities of bereavement'. However, the *Daily News* gloated that the provinces were devouring it 'with an eagerness which must be not a little disturbing to the Dean of Durham', and bereaved *Times* readers found his objections 'squeamish and sentimental'.

John Raphael, *Era's* Paris correspondent, focuses on those 'over the top' scenes, the core of the film since without them people would have been unconvinced by the remainder. Apparently an officer friend gave him an eyewitness account of their filming, when the cameraman 'was actually crouching in that foremost trench, protected by nothing but a few sandbags, and operating through a hole'. These scenes were almost certainly staged, though his remarks may result from confusion rather than a desire to tell a good story or offset rumors of faking. Faked or not, they worked powerfully on many people. 'My God, they're dead', cried one woman; at another cinema 'two men fainted, but not a single woman'. Elsewhere 'a woman felt faint, but after a sip of water outside insisted on returning to the theatre and seeing the film through'. On the whole, audiences seem to have been awe-stricken at feeling themselves witness to youthful vitality extinguished by unseen forces; however, one evening-gowned flapper complained: 'It is rather too sad. They ought to cut out the gruesome bits.'

That 'gruesome bits' were included at all was doubtless due to the need to make some acknowledgment of the appalling casualty lists, and of public resentment that official films had revealed so little. Thus, this film purports to let people in on war's grim secrets while still keeping them from the truth. Malins knew how mild it was. Even so, he had feared 'that some of the dead scenes' might offend. Graves's 'certain cure for lust of blood' had to be avoided if the film was not to provoke demand for an end to the carnage. At the same time thrills were needed to draw the public; the trick was to offer glimpses of war's grimness before sending them home, cheered with the prospect of victory. Malins discovered that editing involved 'discretion, diplomacy and tact' with so many interests to be

served and 'so much [...] at stake'. The central ploy was to translate death to willing and glorious sacrifice. This was the rhetoric used in Lloyd George's statement that accompanied the film, canny enough to infect responses from some of the bereaved: 'I never understood their sacrifice until I had seen this film.' It was blazoned on countless happily smiling faces of men marching up the line, earnest in their belief in what they were doing. The authorities, far more skilled in mass psychology than in handling world affairs, understood that people wanted to be persuaded: it was so much easier to cope with loss if the bereaved could believe in the cause and its leaders. However, the justness of a cause is not sufficient to maintain people's commitment to it; they must believe that it will prevail. Raphael was one among many who found the film worked wonderfully in this respect. Although he had never doubted final victory, the film made him feel safer and more confident than ever: 'Look at the German prisoners as they pass on the film and you can see that Germany knows that she is fighting a losing fight.' To his selective eye, personal shabbiness proclaims their loss of morale, whereas there is not 'a dirty or unshaven man' among the British (the German film showed Germans brushing their uniforms). British citizens smile while Germans cringe, and the 'poor fellow whose own leg is badly smashed, giving up the corner he has found to rest it in to a fainting German prisoner', typifies the chivalry of troops assured of their own superiority.

Another resource for victory on display was British hardware—guns of many calibers being shown in action. Here is the neat evasion used in TV coverage of the Gulf War. Audiences marvel at the technology, losing sight of end results: people blown to pieces or shredded by shrapnel. There was also targeting of the many munition workers seeking relief in the cinema. Pre-battle sequences include great stacks of shells that not only acknowledge the logistics of conflict but also the hard work being done at home to sustain the army in the field. This is both a pat on the back and an exhortation to continued effort. The aim is to balance humanity with technology. As 'Blanche' says in the *Bystander*, the horror of modern war is that people become cogs in a destructive machine. Naturally, it is the Hun who has robbed war of its romance, and a main objective of the struggle is to reeducate him. This shows on screen when, 'a German prisoner,

sitting dazed among his enemies, is offered a cigarette by a British soldier'. In a moment, as someone put it, 'his face is beautifully lit—lit with the sudden glory of the truth that men are men, and in their humanity triumphant over any process that would make them less than men'.

There were complaints that the film was sometimes screened in incongruous company, even farce, but it was often slotted at short notice into existing programs. Whatever the circumstances, it is clear that the film was never viewed passively, although there is evidence that audiences had generally lost their old demonstrativeness. People shouted excitedly when they recognized someone on screen. At the Maida Vale Palace one interruption came from 'a wounded Gordon [who] saw himself being medically attended at Minden Post'. There were also more formal commentaries: Lieutenant F.R. Holmes, later to accompany one of the cinemotors touring the country, lectured at the Scala in 'a breezy, pleasant, chatty manner'. At Norwich and elsewhere parties of wounded were taken to see the film, and many of them would have had no trouble in filling out the gaps left by editorial reticence. One wounded soldier in a Shaftesbury Avenue cinema broke down when he saw 'the dead Devons lying on the battlefield, with the battery of artillery moving forward. He sobbed like a child and a nurse led him out of the theatre'. *Cinema's* reviewer noted how dozens of wheels passed the bodies without any desecrating them, but perhaps the wounded soldier was an artilleryman, who knew that gun teams could hardly avoid sprawled bodies as they careered along corduroy tracks. Besides, the fastidiousness of men and horses (who prefer not to trample on bloodied corpses) succumbs to the terrors of shellfire.

There are various other moments when front-line experience would have taken viewers behind the film's glib narrative. Even scenes of soldiers' ablutions, reassuring to mothers with soldier-sons still young enough to forget to wash behind their ears, would remind the trench soldier of the scarcity of clean water up the line. If he had been in any large attack, he would probably imagine General de Lisle's pep talk on the eve of battle not in the clichéd terms recorded by Malins, but more like Brigadier-General Tuxford's distortions about German war on the wounded, which had fighting mad troops screaming 'Remember the Llandovery Castle!'

Some deconstruction of the film's narrative has been undertaken by Smithers, who points to a dozen questionable episodes. Most striking is the July 1 mine explosion at Hawthorn Redoubt, which is followed by a shot of what purports to be the resulting crater. It probably represents the aftermath of a July 5 explosion, and its later repetition smacks of editorial carelessness. What was probably editorial calculation was the inclusion of that moment of irritation as 'one of the English "Tommies" gives a German prisoner a dig in the ribs'. The American trade paper *Variety*, seeing the film as a potential 'gold mine', proposed the omission of this moment of 'actual feeling' and some rearrangement. American audiences demanded a stronger narrative, and Charles Urban, handling British official documentaries in America, achieved this by splicing in sections of Britain Prepared and shots of an American Field Ambulance (interest was apt to lapse without an American presence). Titles were rewritten, 'eliminating what we should call British patriotism', and the resultant seven-episode serial proved highly successful with American audiences. It was shown in sixteen thousand theatres in twelve thousand towns from coast to coast, and by the end of 1917 some sixty-five million people had paid to see it.

GORDON WILLIAMS

The Battle of the Somme (UK, British Topical Committee for War Films sponsored by War Office, 1916, 79 mins). Produced by William Jury. Cinematography by J.B. McDowell and Geoffrey Malins. Edited by Charles Urban and Geoffrey Malins. Filmed in France.

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BBC: The Voice of Britain

(UK, Legg, 1934–5)

BBC: The Voice of Britain was the first General Post Office (GPO) Film Unit film to use synchronized sound. It featured appearances by H.G. Wells, J.B. Priestley, G.K. Chesterton, George Bernard Shaw, and even a brief showing by the young filmmaker Humphrey Jennings (as a witch in Macbeth).

As early as 1932, the Empire Marketing Board (EMB) was approached by the BBC to produce a film advertising and celebrating the new national broadcaster. 'They informed the EMB that, after an examination of the field, they were satisfied that Mr Grierson and his EMB Film Unit were best qualified to make the particular type of film they desired' (Post Office memorandum to the Select Committee, undated 1932, in Rotha 1973: 128).

In many ways BBC: The Voice of Britain was the first film internationally to make clear the power of any major broadcasting institution, as well as spelling out the Reithian ideals that informed her public face. The irony of yet another government body making such a project is invisible in the film itself. Nevertheless, the film gives some clues as to why Legg, in his subsequent career, was to be so favoured by large institutional backers including, after the war, that ultimate global player, the United Nations. Grierson biographer Forsyth Hardy commented: 'The GPO film is admittedly diverse, but not only is there a plan behind the diversity but an individual approach is established and maintained. The film dramatises its material but humanises it as well' (Hardy in *Cinema Quarterly* vol. 3, no. 4, 1935).

The plan of the film is a straightforward, now classic, one for the 'behind the scenes' film: the film diary of a day's broadcasting activity at the BBC, itself less than ten years old at the time of the shoot.

The set-up of the film is equally normative. The popular cinematic trope of the sleeping (British) countryside is used to convey a land whose natural voice the BBC had, in the mind of the literary and intellectual world, rapidly become. An early morning service conducted by the Reverend Dick Sheppard is the first of the BBC programmes (that day) to 'gently wake the land'. This lyrical and elegiac mode, later often referred to as the 'ecclesiastical', using musical and poetic thematics and images quite unself-consciously, was to be more fully worked out in later films such as *Coal Face* (1935) and *Night Mail* (1936). In these films the words of poet W.H. Auden and the music of Benjamin Britten were woven into the visual montage in what was to become the paradigm of early British public documentary (the GPO and the Crown Film Unit) style and the bedrock of the BBC's own characteristic (and schooled) Documentary House Style for the next fifty or more years.

Paul Rotha saw no particular signs of personal style in the film, however. Writing of a group of films made in the mid-1930s, he stated: 'None of them had any individual characteristics of direction. Any of these three directors [Evelyn Spice, Stuart Legg, and Edgar Anstey] could have made any of the three films' (Rotha 1933).

Apparently, there were many periods of funding crisis in the making of the film. This might have been expected in Arthur Elton's first (public) filmmaking intersection with the perpetually beleaguered world of public broadcasting. Elizabeth Sussex reported that according to *World Film News*, in May 1936, the actual cost of the shoot through to the final release print was between £7,000 and £8,000.

JONATHAN DAWSON

See also: Legg, Stuart

BBC: The Voice of Britain (UK, GPO Film Unit, 1934–5) 56 mins, black and white). Directed, scripted, and edited by Stuart Legg.

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Benoit-Lévy, Jean

Jean Benoit-Lévy was a filmmaker, screenwriter, and one of the most important producers of French educational and scientific films before World War II. Deprived of his professional position by the anti-Jewish statutes promulgated by the Vichy government in 1940, he sought refuge in the United States in 1941. There, by refocusing and redefining his contribution to educational films, he became a teacher, an author, and an executive officer for the United Nations. He continued his dedication to the importance of film in mass education.

His vision of film is based on his strong family values and the late nineteenth century's scientific outlook, imbued with positivism. He began his career as assistant filmmaker just before World War I, a time when Europeans were adjusting to the political, social, and educational challenges of mass society. Benoit-Lévy was introduced to the promising new technology by his uncle, Edmond Benoit-Lévy, a lawyer and pioneer of French cinema. The family shared a commitment to the republican ideals of equality, rationality, modern teaching, social reform, and progress.

Benoit-Lévy perceived film as both an art and formidable educational tool. His films testify to his preoccupation with applied scientific knowledge—particularly in medicine, hygiene, and engineering—to improve the living conditions of ordinary people, especially children. He believed that everyone had the right to live a healthy and rewarding life. His films on professional training and craftsmanship are tributes to technical skills and beauty.

He was well acquainted with the small group of talented avant-garde filmmakers of the late 1920s who connected formal research and

social documentary. In 1945–6 Jean Benoit-Lévy would consult this group, which included John Grierson, Alberto Cavalcanti, Paul Rotha, and others, when he reflected on the role and the orientation of future film production for the United Nations Film Board.

In his work during the 1920s and 1930s Benoit-Lévy's position was reformist, opposed to the revolutionary and authoritarian solutions that flourished during his lifetime. He was attached to traditional values, a strong work ethic, and individual freedom. Nevertheless, he believed that state intervention was necessary to ensure adequate ongoing funding for educational film production, as well as to create a centralized institution dedicated to documentary film exchanges. Furthermore, he was convinced that France had an international cultural influence in this field that should be maintained and strengthened. He was well known in France, a person of stature among the cultural elite of the interwar period, and well acquainted with government officials. The war completely disrupted his personal and professional life. The deprivation he suffered and his exile contributed to his being almost forgotten.

Benoit-Lévy made more than three hundred films, many commissioned by institutions and ministries. As an educational film expert, he wrote articles and reports. His proposal to further the use of film in the school system was ambitious: the development of a new pedagogy (*pédagogie cinégraphique*) that would involve a connection between filmmaker, teacher, and student. Moreover, different kinds of educational and social films were required, because learning was not restricted to the classroom. In accord with several documentary filmmakers of his time, Benoit-Lévy believed that film audiences should be educated to appreciate different genres. His friend, Germaine Dulac, called this *éducation cinégraphique*. His films were shown in both nontheatrical and theatrical networks. For the latter, he used the category 'films éducatifs spectaculaires', which included such films as *Pasteur* (1922).

He referred to films *de vie* (films of life) to describe more precisely what documentary films should be. Films of life were 'documents of life'; they not only express human activities but 'transfer life itself to the screen'. They had a profound social function. During the interwar period he focused on educational and scientific

films but also made eleven feature films. For many of those, he worked with Marie Epstein as a writer-director team. The most well known, *La Maternelle* (1933) and *La Mort du cygne* (*Ballerina*, 1937), follow his film of life (documentary) approach. The truth and reality of social issues could be addressed through a free creative process.

In 1941 Benoit-Lévy and his family came to New York with the help of the Rockefeller Foundation. Unwilling to compromise his vision of film to participate in the American commercial film industry, he taught film studies at the New School for Social Research alongside many refugee scholars. It was during his teaching tenure that he wrote *Les Grandes Missions du cinéma*, published in 1945. Film was an autonomous art with its own laws, technique, and means of expression. He believed that logic and visual and intellectual clarity were indispensable to filmmaking. The aesthetics and the editing—beauty and drama—contributed to the *idée-force*, the main idea, which must always be immediately accessible.

He was also convinced that cinema had a social and civic mission. This idea was not new, but it was forcefully repeated as the war was ending and social concern predominated. Then Benoit-Lévy insisted on freedom more than in his prewar writings. Film was a most powerful medium for the diffusion of human thought. After World War II the discourse was about film bringing people closer together to learn, to discover, and to understand the world.

SUZANNE LANGLOIS

Biography

Born in Paris in 1888, to a middle-class family originally from Alsace. Trained at the Laboratoires Pathé and Gaumont, then began his career as an assistant in 1910. In 1922 founded his company, the Édition française cinématographique, dedicated to producing educational films. In 1945 named Director of the Film and Visual Information Division of the United Nations Department of Public Information. Appointed director of the United Nations Film Board in January 1947. Left the UN in 1949 but maintained a lifetime commitment to the ideals of international cooperation and mass education. In 1958 the International Council for

Film and Television (ICFT) was founded under the patronage of UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and he was elected its first delegate-general. Died in Paris in 1959.

Selected films

- 1915 Les Vainqueurs de la Marne: director
- 1920 Le Travail du potier: director
- 1922 Pasteur: producer (Jean Epstein, director)
- 1925–30 L'École départementale primaire et professionnelle de Vitry-sur-Seine: director, producer
- 1933 La Maternelle: codirector, cowriter, producer
- 1935 La haute fréquence médicale: director, writer, producer
- 1935 Le Maroc terre de contrastes: director, producer
- 1937 La Mort du cygne/*Ballerina*: codirector, cowriter
- 1948 La Charte des peuples/The People's Charter: director
- 1955 Ballets de France: director

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