

From The Sneeze to 9/11 and Beyond: A Brief History of American Documentary

A paper by Joel Katz for *The Conference on the Arts in America*
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I. The Problem of Documentary

The problem with documentary (or nonfiction) film is that it is supposed to provide a representation of “the truth.” But what is “the truth?”

The term “documentary” originates from the French term *documentaire*, which signifies movies of ordinary life, exotic places, or current events. The term was first used in English by John Grierson, a Scottish social scientist and filmmaker, who called documentary “the drama of the doorstep.” The word suggests that the camera works as an uninflected, neutral, even scientific observer of events, giving the viewer an untainted and uncontaminated view of the world, of what is “real”. It is as if the camera is a fly’s eye view, revealing the authenticity of its subject in a way that is naïve and pure. Experiencing this authenticity, the viewer feels privileged to have so pure and purely voyeuristic a window into that which is often unseen or rarely so carefully observed.

But things never really work so purely. As soon as the camera is aimed, it not only captures a rectangular view of the world, but it also excludes that which lies beyond the perimeter of its gaze. Actions become altered by the presence of the camera, contaminating that which is observed. This recalls the law of physics called Heisenberg’s Uncertainty Principle, which states that one can identify either the speed of a moving object, or its location, but never both at the same time with absolute accuracy. As the accuracy of one measurement increases, the accuracy of the other diminishes, and the instruments of measurement themselves may disturb the result. Each cut made in the edit room not only

leaves out part of the filmed record, but also implies relationships, histories, and narratives constructed from those portions that remain.

The first recorded film of movement was done by an American, Thomas Alva Edison. “The Sneeze” was recorded in 1894 by Edison in the world’s first motion picture studio, the so-called “Black Maria” in West Orange, New Jersey. This short film (it is less than a minute in length) also has the distinction of being the first copyrighted piece of motion picture film, and also is sometimes cited as the first close up.

This very first piece of recorded film brings forth many of the problems of trying to identify exactly what a “documentary” is. Is this a documentary of a man sneezing? If we accept that the sneeze was an authentic one – it may have been induced by sniffing pepper or another nasal irritant – the film indeed ‘documents’ a purely physiological reaction of the human body, recorded in real time. Yet we must also consider that the man who sneezed was brought into Edison’s Black Maria Studio expressly for the purpose of filming him and was presumably positioned under the most favorable light in a particular position. In this sense, he is an ‘actor’ – and in the purest definition of documentary, there are no actors – only subjects.

Ever since, documentary has been fraught with such contradictions. Edison later filmed newsreel footage claiming to represent Theodore Roosevelt’s storming of San Juan Hill in Puerto Rico in the Pine Barrens of New Jersey, and other examples of license and subterfuge with “reality” abound.

D.W. Griffith’s monumental “The Birth of Nation”, completed in 1915, was essentially a dramatic feature film. Yet some of the scenes of the marches of the Klu Klux Klan were of actual Klan members in their own environment, giving these scenes a convincing documentary-like feel. Griffith’s successful

interweaving of documentary-like elements into a dramatic narrative was but one of the many innovations pioneered in this film. Critics often commented on how the great realism of staging, costuming, and sets gave some of the scenes an aura of authenticity reminiscent of Matthew Brady's famed photographs of the Civil War.

The film was an enormous success and was the first movie ever to be shown in the White House, for President Woodrow Wilson in 1917. Wilson famously declared it to be "like writing history with lightning." Shortly after the film's release there was a great resurgence of the Klan, with burgeoning enrollments and a regained national visibility. It is said that the film is still used for Klan recruitment to this day.

II. Nanook

The first feature length documentary film was made in 1922 by the American Robert Flaherty, often referred to as "the grandfather of documentary." Frequently cited as the seminal work of the documentary genre, "Nanook of the North" was about – and filmed in collaboration with -- the Inuit people of northern Canada. After Paramount and four other U.S. studios turned it down, the film was financed by one French company, Revillon Frères (a fur business), and distributed by another, Pathé. It was such a worldwide hit that an ice cream sandwich was named after it – known in Germany as a Nanuk, and named after the film's protagonist.

In terms of neutral representation of 'the truth', "Nanook" is largely a failure. For purposes of the film, Flaherty arranged for the Inuit to hunt walrus with spears and canoes, a practice they had long ago abandoned in favor of rifles. Later on there is a scene of Nanook and his family building an igloo in the tundra. It was too dark to film inside the igloo as it became enclosed, so Flaherty had them build a special igloo with half the wall removed.

It is as a family-based drama that “Nanook” is highly successful, and this is the largest contribution that Flaherty made to the genre with this film. Rather than try to present a broad sociology of the Inuit community, Flaherty focuses on a single family and dramatizes their struggle for survival. The audience hook is established in the opening scene as Nanook’s family adorably crawls out of a kayak one by one.

With Nanook’s full consent and participation, the film reconstructs a way of life that had already been erased by the onset of industrialized society. Yet Nanook’s role is no longer that of the neutrally observed participant – he and his family have, in fact, become actors.

III. American Documentary from the 20’s through the 50’s

As film technology still remained cumbersome and very expensive during the 1930’s and 40’s, documentary film in the U.S. was produced under three different auspices, none of which resemble today’s independent films: government-sponsored works, industrial film, and newsreel footage.

Amongst the most memorable of the government-sponsored works were those of Pare Lorentz, who was appointed by President Theodore Roosevelt to establish the United States Film Service in 1938. Under Lorentz’ direction, USFA documentaries focused attention on the waste of human and natural resources in the United States in the 1930s. Films such as “The Fight for Life”, “The River”, “Power and the Land”, “The Plow That Broke the Plains” took on themes such as urbanization, the plight of the small farm, and public health issues. Also a poet, Lorenz brought a new literary sensibility to documentary that had rarely been heard before. The script for “The River” was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize in poetry in 1938.

Far from poetry, industrial film has been one of the most consistently produced and critically overlooked genres of film. While it is arguable whether films such as “Sumatra, Island of Yesterday” (produced by Goodyear Tire & Rubber Corporation, 1926), “Yes, Bananas” (United Fruit Company, 1952), or “Pearl of the Orient” (Coca-Cola Corporation, 1953) can properly be considered as documentary films is debatable, yet their role in shaping the American public’s ideas about industry, culture, and faraway lands is indisputable. Often the same or slightly altered versions of such films were used as educational tools in public school classrooms, and you will sometimes observe the same camera takes in films credited both to the United Fruit Company and Encyclopaedia Britannica Films.

Commercially produced documentary for television was exemplified by Edward R. Murrow’s “See It Now” series on CBS, which ran from 1951-58. Many of Murrow’s broadcasts were considered breakthroughs for the television medium. “This is Korea...Christmas 1952”, for example, was produced on-location “to try to portray the face of the war and the faces of the men who are fighting it.” Murrow most famously played a role in the downfall of Senator Joseph McCarthy, by broadcasting a critical piece on McCarthy’s anti-Communist campaign in 1954.

Perhaps the first inkling of independent documentary cinema as we now know it came with Maya Deren’s “Divine Horsemen”. Providing a fascinating journey into the world of Haiti's Voudoun religion, “Divine Horsemen” explores the rituals of the Rada, Petro and Congo cults. Because Deren was a Voudoun initiate, she was able to take her camera and recorder where few had gone before or since, putting an entirely new spin on the ethical dynamics of documentary making.

Deren lived in Haiti for over 10 years and filmed many hours of footage. Between 1947-1951, she shot thousands of feet of 16mm footage with a hand-

wound Bolex camera, as well as recorded many hours of music and ritual with a wire recorder. However she died before footage could be edited together. After her death, the film was edited by Teiji and Cheri Ito and finally released in 1985. A book by the same name on the same subject, written by Deren, is also available.

IV. New Technology in the 1960's

It was technological changes in sound recording and camera mechanics that heralded a new era in documentary filmmaking in the early 1960's. Americans Ricky Leacock and Robert Drew pioneered use of sound recording that unlinked the camera from the sound recording device by a cumbersome "umbilical" wiring. From France in 1963 came the Éclair NPR, a camera that was mechanically quiet enough to make synchronous sound recording on location viable, as well as allowing fast, easy changes of the film magazine.

While the French *cinéma vérité* school advocated acknowledgement of the camera's presence, permitting and even inviting interaction between the observer and the observed, the American counterpart called *Direct Cinema* expounded an observational approach with a minimum amount of intervention, attempting to capture 'life as it happened'. The renowned historian of documentary Eric Barnouw, in his book Documentary: A History of the Non-Fiction Film (Oxford University Press, 1974), sums up these differences as follows: "The direct cinema artist played the role of uninvolved bystander; the *cinéma vérité* artist espoused that of provocateur."

The main proponents of this American school included the Maysles brothers, Frederick Wiseman, Robert Drew, Ricky Leacock, and D.A. Pennebaker. Pennebaker's 1967 "Don't Look Back", for example, documents a very young Bob Dylan on one of his first music tours. Not only does the film feature Dylan in concert footage, but the new lightweight equipment also permitted Pennebaker

to capture many candid moments of the musician practicing, negotiating, and joking around in airports, vans, and hotel rooms.

Of the filmmakers from this era, perhaps the most prolific has been Frederick Wiseman. His first and possible most notorious was “Titicut Follies”, made in 1967. Titicut Follies was the name given to a talent revue at a state mental institution for the criminally insane in Bridgewater, Massachusetts, just outside of Boston. Wiseman’s film documented the talent show, but in doing so exposed miserable conditions and widespread mistreatment that the institution’s inmates endured. The film so upset state officials that they successfully repressed the film’s distribution for nearly 27 years, on the grounds that it showed full frontal nudity. Although the film was eventually broadcast on public television, it is still not available in general distribution.

Using a flat, objective style characterized by long takes, fairly minimal cuts and no narration, Wiseman’s subsequent films tend to examine institutions and social structures. Their typically generic titles read like an inventory of social concerns: “Hospital”; “Welfare”; “High School”; “Juvenile Court”. Now in his 70’s, Wiseman has produced over 30 films.

Almost simultaneous with the advent of lightweight, field portable synch sound film equipment came the equivalent in video. In 1965 SONY Corporation released the PortaPack, the first completely mobile synch sound video rig. Although the original PortaPack cost about as much as an inexpensive automobile, had a fairly crude black and white camera that was umbilically connected to a very heavy recording deck using rather unreliable half-inch open reel tape, it suddenly breathed a populist possibility into a medium that had previously been controlled entirely by corporations.

It was the Korean born sculptor, performance artist, and provocateur Nam June Paik who brought the first PortaPack to the United States in 1967. Paik spent a number of years in Germany experimenting with electronic music prior to coming to the U.S., and he became a key figure in the Fluxus movement which included other luminaries of the arts of the time, most famous amongst them Yoko Ono. The legend goes that in a sort of religious canonization of the new video age, Paik used his PortaPack to record a procession of the Pope who was visiting New York at the time, and then played the footage back in an artist's bar later that evening.

The PortaPack was quickly adopted by two different types of groups. On the one hand there were the artists, who, like Paik, wanted to explore this new electronic medium for its formal and creative possibilities. On the other hand were socially concerned activists and chroniclers of the political and cultural upheavals of the era. This latter group often formed into collectives who shared both the cost of purchasing the still-expensive equipment, but perhaps more importantly shared the vision of how to use this new medium that they hoped would democratize the news media, wresting it from corporate control and breathing a new populist possibility into the nation.

It is of great significance that the technical developments in both film and video that made them viable as lightweight, mobile and portable devices capable of chronicling "life as it happened" came during the era of greatest social unrest that America had ever seen. During these same years the Vietnam War reached its crest of activity, ushering in an unprecedented level of public protest, demonstrations, and university campus uprisings. The Black Panthers, the Young Lords, and other groups fought for the rights of people of color with a radicalism, hubris, and style that had never before been seen. The nation was rocked by a series of assassinations that began with Malcolm X in 1965, continued with that of Martin Luther King in 1968, and ended with that of Robert

F. Kennedy later that same year. There was a proliferation of hippies, drugs, sex, and Rock and Roll; Bob Dylan, Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, and James Brown.

The spirits of these times made an indelible imprint on the activities and mindset of the documentary communities. Collectives founded to chronicle these movements flamed in and out on a monthly and yearly basis, including Videofreex, The Ant Farm, People's Video Theater, Raindance Collective, and many others. One of the most esteemed of these was the Newsreel group, first established in 1967 in New York as a group of radical filmmakers and activists. Newsreel is virtually the only of these groups still in existence, now surviving as two splinter organizations, California Newsreel in San Francisco and Third World Newsreel in New York.

The populist, radical, free-thinking and socially concerned impulses which graced the founding of many of these groups infused the documentary community with a distinctly Left-leaning spirit that has remained very influential to this day.

V. The Eighties and Nineties

Errol Morris' 1988 film "The Thin Blue Line" opened up a host of debates that documentary had been leaning towards for some time but had never before taken on so straightforwardly. "The Thin Blue Line" chronicles the case of the shooting of police officer Robert Wood in a small town in Texas. Randall Adams, the accused, has already been imprisoned and on death row for 11 years by the time Morris camera finds him, and David Harris (the accuser) is in prison on unrelated charges. Adams contends that on the evening in question he ran out of gas, was picked up by Harris in a stolen vehicle and then the two of them went to a movie together, smoked some marijuana and drank some beer. Morris' film painstakingly takes testimonial from each of the involved parties with the clinical demeanor of a legal deposition.

Yet Morris' film departs from conventional documentary tradition in a number of regards. First there is the sweeping, insistent orchestral score by composer Philip Glass that pervades the entire film, even the testimony. Next there are the re-enactments of the crime scene. These are not shot in a style that resembles verité in the slightest – instead, they have the lush and self-conscious production values of a feature film. They also depict multiple perspectives, illustrating both Adam's and Harris' points of view -- leaving the film's viewers to act like a juror to judge the veracity of each.

The aspect of the film's life that is most surprising and controversial, however, is not the film's stylistic conceits, but how successful it was both as a commercial movie and as a piece of social justice advocacy: eventually Adams was acquitted by the U.S. Supreme Court and released from prison. "The Thin Blue Line" launched an era in which documentary film began to play a significant role both as a commodity item and as a factor to be watched on the cultural radar.

A year later Marlon Rigg's highly controversial 1989 "Tongues Untied" breathed new energy into the debates about what could properly be considered documentary. A highly personal essay about what it means to be Black and gay in America, Riggs' piece includes poetry, performance, staged vignette, and first person, on-camera autobiographical storytelling. Because it received \$5,000 in Federal funding through a National Endowment for the Arts regional re-grant program, "Tongues Untied" became a lightning rod for debates on the floor of the U.S. Congress about what were "appropriate" programs for governmental support.

"Tongues Untied" was attacked on the floor of the U.S. Senate by Jesse Helms (a Right-wing Senator from North Carolina who was extremely influential and powerful in Congress in the late 80's and early 90's), and was often mentioned in

a list of works targeted by the Right wing as “corrupt” or “not reflecting the values of mainstream America”. The inclusion of a frontal nudity of a black man, or of two black men kissing, seemed to be more that certain sectors of American society could stomach. “Tongues Untied” also became a crossover hit that reached far beyond the black, gay male audience that Riggs originally intended it as ‘narrowcast’ for. The program was aired on national Public Television, showed in innumerable festivals and conferences, and even received limited theatrical release. That it is often referred to as a documentary is indicative of how much the boundaries of the genre had begun to expand and change.

“Hoop Dreams” (1994), directed by the Kartemquin Films team Steve James, Peter Gilbert, and Frederick Marx, represented a completely different set of relations between subject and filmmaker. While the filmmaking team was entirely white, their subjects were William Gates and Arthur Agee, two African-American Chicago teenagers who pin their hopes on getting out of the inner city on careers in basketball. We follow the subjects for a period of nearly 5 years, as they go through high school, start college, and play basketball. Quite unlike “Tongues Untied”, the filmmakers themselves disappear transparently into the background. Though both a critical and a commercial success, “Hoop Dreams” failed to receive even a nomination for an Academy Award, an oversight that prompted the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences (the organization that administrates the Academy Awards) to overhaul its nomination procedures.

VI. Television Documentary

One of the most ubiquitous public television documentarians is Ken Burns, who made his breakthrough film “Brooklyn Bridge” in 1981. His subsequent PBS (Public Broadcasting System) series on the Civil War, Baseball and Jazz have helped to shape viewers notions about what documentary is, and he has become a virtual institution in the world of PBS documentary. Burns’ works are

meticulously researched, well funded, and well publicized. In 1995 he struck a deal with General Motors Corporation to be the primary financier all of his work over a ten-year period of time.

While Burns' works have helped raised the standard for journalistic and historic veracity in documentary reporting, I would argue that they have provided very little innovation in documentary form. The Burns toolkit – a deep baritone narrator, long slow pans over archival documents, and readings of original texts by actors – has been much imitated, and even reproduced with astonishing accuracy by Burns' brother Rick Burns, whose documentary series on the history of New York City felt that it was made from precisely the same mold.

Two current public television series focus more specifically on independent production. "P.O.V" – "Point of View" – focuses on the first person, independent filmmaker, often telling his or her own story in a diaristic form (it was on P.O.V. that "Tongues Untied" was shown). "Independent Lens" casts a somewhat broader net, but also concentrates on one-off, independently produced programs (my own film "Strange Fruit" was carried on "Independent Lens" in 2003). In recent years private, cable television networks have been highly influential in documentary production, with HBO at the forefront of these. In her recent announcement of her retirement as president of the PBS, Pat Mitchell noted that HBO's budget for advertising for a single of its series ("The Sopranos") exceeded that of production for the entire PBS system.

VII. "My Pet Goat" and Beyond

The so-called "documentary renaissance" of recent years has been spearheaded not by works produced for television, but by films that have had major theatrical release. Michael Moore's "Fahrenheit 9/11" is probably the most notorious of these, but they were preceded by many other films, including his own "Roger &

Me” (1989) and “Bowling for Columbine” (2002; winner of Academy Award for Best Documentary that year).

The famous “My Pet Goat” scene from Michael Moore’s “Fahrenheit 9/11” depicts President George Bush reading a children’s story to a group of pre-school children as the attacks on the World Trade Center were underway. Moore’s film was not successful in its quite obvious political agenda of blocking the re-election of President George Bush, nor did it receive attention from the Academy Awards committee. Yet “Fahrenheit 9/11” won Best Picture at the Cannes International Film Festival in 2004 and has gone on to become the most commercially successful documentary film ever, earning well over \$100 million in the U.S. alone.

As with the “My Pet Goat” scene, Moore’s success in this film is finding footage that gives the viewer the feeling that he or she is privy to that which should not be seen, or at least that which has not been seen elsewhere. By showing Bush and others preening for the camera before interviews and speeches, Moore accomplished a “Wizard of Oz” kind of unmasking of leader’s foibles.

“Fahrenheit 9/11” was both championed by the Left and savagely attacked by the Right for its supposed journalistic inaccuracies. Writing for Slate.com, Christopher Hitchens, a formerly liberal writer for The Nation, called the film a “sinister exercise in moral frivolity.” Whether or not one agrees with Michael Moore’s politics and ethics, it seems rather indisputable that he has placed documentary on the public’s radar in a way that it has never been before.

VIII. Media Literacy

A number of the most highly acclaimed American documentaries of recent years embody the investigations of “media literacy”, a concept that has been very much in currency in the U.S. and elsewhere during the last decade. Films such as “Control Room”, “Outfoxed”, and “Fahrenheit 9/11” each in their own way

critique or comment upon the representations created by more mainstream media.

Media literacy has been the subject of study of numerous conferences, papers and educational foundations over the last decade, and has been described as a virtual movement. There is even a Center for Media Literacy, based in Santa Monica, California, whose website (www.medialit.org) contains dozens of links to articles about media literacy and related subjects.

Expanding traditional conceptualizations of literacy, media literacy has been defined as “the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and communicate messages in a wide variety of symbolic forms” (Aspen Institute, 1993). It is a term used by a growing number of scholars and educators to refer to the process of critically analyzing and learning to create one's own messages-- in print, audio, video, multimedia, and the internet, with emphasis on the learning and teaching of these skills through using mass media texts in primarily school-based contexts (Piette, 1997; Hobbs, 1994; Brown, 1991).

The debates over how to shape and teach media literacy have been extensive and vigorous. Some of the questions under debate concern whether media literacy education protects children from negative media influences, whether the focus should be particularly on popular culture texts, and whether or not media production should be an element of media literacy education. It seems reasonable to expect that as the principles of the media literacy become more popular and widely understood that we will see an increasing number of documentaries that embody its critical gaze at mainstream media.

IX. Alternative Means of Production and Distribution

While on the one hand documentary has recently been breaking its own records at the box office, on the other it remains a genre that continues to be explored

and pushed into new formal territories. While the term “independent” has become rather broad and, some would argue, contaminated by the box office, there is a vibrant community of “truly” independent filmmakers out there making works that attempt to push boundaries in terms of form and method of distribution. Festivals such as the Black Maria Film Festival and the Flaherty Film Seminar specifically seek, promote, and celebrate works that push formal and aesthetic boundaries.

Filmmakers such as Travis Wilkerson, Barbara Hammer, Paul Chan, and Holly Fisher use experimental techniques to explore issues as diverse as a 19th century mining strike in Butte, Montana (Wilkerson’s “An Injury to One”); the role of artists during the French Resistance (Hammer’s “Resisting Paradise”); the role of ordinary Iraqi citizens in the Iraq war (Chan’s “Baghdad in No Particular Order”), and human rights in Burma (Fisher’s “Kalama Sutta: Seeing is Believing”). These are works that primarily show in museums, festivals, and the occasional art-house cinemas.

Pushing the bounds of alternative forms of distribution are films such as Robert Greenwald’s “Uncovered: The Whole Truth About the Iraq War” and “Outfoxed”. Greenwald usually does not expect his films to show in theaters or on public television. Instead, he depends on a large, informal network of distribution over the internet through not-for-profit organizations such as MoveOn.org, who have thrown series of “house parties” to show the films and raise money for various Left-wing causes. While Greenwald’s films are not particularly innovative in the formal sense, they have paved new territories in the realms of activism and reaching audiences.

X. Conclusion: A Renaissance, or a Return?

This year’s Oscar winning documentary short “Mighty Times: The Children’s March” was the subject of great controversy due to the accuracy of its historical

re-enactments. Although re-enactments are a staple of documentary filmmaking and are explicitly allowed by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, some are questioning the ethics of Bobby Houston and Robert Hudson's use of re-enactment in portraying the 1963 civil rights protest by thousands of children in Birmingham, Alabama. The filmmakers recreated scenes using vintage cameras and distressed film stock, shooting with more than 700 extras, trained dogs, period automobiles and fire engines, all in Southern California where they are based.

Frieda Lee Mock, the executive committee chairwoman of the Academy's documentary branch, pointed out that Mr. Houston and Mr. Hudson's failure to disclose their use of re-enactments called into question the nature of reality implied by the use of the term documentary. Mr. Houston and Mr. Hudson, whose company is called Tell the Truth Pictures, say they are scrupulous in their attempt to recreate history as accurately as possible.

Curiously, the debate about this 2005 documentary recalls the very roots of the documentary medium. Were Thomas Edison's re-enactments of the storming of San Juan Hill "too accurate?" Were Robert Flaherty's scenes shot with Nanook -- that were clearly re-enactments -- too accurate? Or were they acceptable within the realm of representation? These are some of the debates that still animate the documentary community.

What raises the stakes in these arguments from being that of merely philosophical to being highly consequential is that in the last five years, documentary has become a widely bankable commodity. In the U.S. alone, "Fahrenheit 911" has sold over \$119 million in ticket sales, and many millions more on the worldwide market. In a field that was once populated by highly principled, typically Left-wing idealists who were resigned to a life of bare survival at the bottom end, or modest income if at the top, documentary

filmmakers are now under increasing pressure to produce films that have the same kinds of emotional payoffs and high production values as fictional and even Hollywood films.

What has this done to the documentary field in the U.S.? In many ways it has had an extremely salutary effect. To look at some of the documentaries that have come out in the past five years – Andrew Jarecki’s “Capturing the Friedmans”, Jeffrey Blitz’s “Spellbound”, Errol Morris’ “The Fog of War”, Nathaniel Kahn’s “My Architect”, Jehane Noujaim’s “Control Room”, Robert Greenwald’s “Outfoxed”, and Morgan Spurlock’s “Supersize Me”, to name a few – is to look at some of the most extraordinary and satisfying products the medium has produced. Being a documentary filmmaker is now considered both sexy and potentially lucrative – two attributes that go hand in hand in American culture.

On the other hand, this new-found popularity has perhaps diluted the idealism of documentary’s idealistic traditions rooted in the 1960’s. Like so much else in American culture, the tentacles of capitalism have wrapped their arms around the moral and ethical center of a tradition.

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Capturing the Friedmans

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by Ken Burns

www.florentinefilms.com

Corporation with a Movie Camera

(examines the hidden messages of the industrial film genre)

by Joel Katz

www.cinemaguild.com

Divine Horsemen

Women Make Movies

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Fahrenheit 9/11

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The Fog of War

by Errol Morris

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Harlan County, U.S.A

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Hoop Dreams

by Steve James and Frederick Marx

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Journey to Bananaland

by the United Fruit Company

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By Holly Fisher

zacho@mindspring.com

My Architect
by Nathaniel Kahn
www.myarchitectfilm.com

Nanook of the North
by Robert Flaherty
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Nitrate Kisses
by Barbara Hammer
www.wmm.com

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www.thinkfilmcompany.com

Supersize Me
by Morgan Spurlock
www.supersizeme.com

Tongues Untied
by Marlon Riggs
www.frameline.org

Turn it On, Tune It In, Take It Over
By David Shulman
(history of early public access TV)
Cinema Guild
www.cinemaguild.com

Other Resources:

Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers
www.aivf.org

California Newsreel
www.newsreel.org

Center for Media Literacy
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Third World Newsreel
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