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rather than construct a vivid sense of the particularities to a given corner of the world. The mode also affords an economy of analysis since points can be made succinctly and pointedly in words. Expository documentary is an ideal mode for conveying information or mobilizing support within a framework that pre-exists the film. In this case, a film will add to our stockpile of knowledge but not challenge or subvert the categories by which such knowledge gets organized. Common sense makes a perfect basis for this type of representation about the world since common sense, like rhetoric, is less subject to logic than to belief.

Frank Capra could organize much of his argument for why young American men should willingly join the battle during World War II in the *Why We Fight* series, for example, by appealing to a mix of native patriotism, the ideals of American democracy, the atrocities of the Axis war machine, and the malignant evil of Hitler, Mussolini, and Hirohito. In the black and white alternatives of a "free world" versus a "slave world," who would not choose to defend a free world? Common sense made the answer simple—to the predominantly white audience thoroughly imbued with a "melting pot" belief in American values.

Some fifty years later, Capra's appeal seems remarkably naive and overblown in its treatment of patriotic virtue and democratic ideals. Common sense is less an enduring than a historically conditioned set of values and perspectives. For this reason some expository films that seem classic examples of oratorical persuasiveness at one moment will seem quite dated at another. The basic argument may still have merit, but what counts as common sense may change considerably.

THE OBSERVATIONAL MODE

Poetic and expository modes of documentary often sacrificed the specific act of filming people to construct formal patterns or persuasive arguments. The filmmaker gathered the necessary raw materials and then fashioned a meditation, perspective, or argument from them. What if the filmmaker were simply to observe what happens in front of the camera without overt intervention? Would this not be a new, compelling form of documentation?

Developments in Canada, Europe, and the United States in the years after World War II culminated around 1960 in various 16mm cameras such as the Arriflex and Auricon and tape recorders such as the Nagra that could be easily handled by one person. Speech could now be synchronized with images without the use of bulky equipment or cables that tethered recorders and camera together. The camera and tape recorder could move freely about a scene and record what happened as it happened.



Victory at Sea (Henry Solomon and Isaac Kleinerman, 1952–53)

Like *Night and Fog*, *Victory at Sea* returns to the recent past to tell the story of World War II. Made as a television series for CBS, it adopts a commemorative stance. It recalls battles and strategies, setbacks and victories from the perspective of the survivor or veteran. It celebrates naval power and its contribution, giving scant attention to the ground war or the civilian consequences that are at the heart of *Night and Fog*. Both films, however, rely on compilation of footage shot contemporaneously with the events to which the films now return. Compilation films invariably alter the meaning of the footage they incorporate. Here, both films use footage for purposes that are possible only to those who reflect on the meaning of the past rather than report the occurrences of the moment.

All of the forms of control that a poetic or expository filmmaker might exercise over the staging, arrangement, or composition of a scene became sacrificed to observing lived experience spontaneously. Honoring this spirit of observation in post-production editing as well as during shooting resulted in films with no voice-over commentary, no supplementary music or sound effects, no intertitles, no historical reenactments, no behavior repeated for the camera, and not even any interviews. What we saw was what there was, or so it seemed in *Primary* (1960), *High School* (1968), *Les Racquetteurs* (Michel Brault and Gilles Groulx, 1958), about a group of Montrealers enjoying various games in the snow, portions of *Chronicle of a Summer*, which profiles the lives of several individuals in the Paris of 1960, *The Chair* (1962),

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about the last days of a man condemned to death, *Gimme Shelter* (1970), about the Rolling Stones' infamous concert at Altamont, California, where a man's death at the hands of the Hell's Angels is partially caught on camera, *Don't Look Back* (1967), about Bob Dylan's tour of England in 1965, *Monterey Pop* (1968), about a music festival featuring Otis Redding, Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, the Jefferson Airplane, and others, or *Jane* (1962), profiling Jane Fonda as she prepares for a role in a Broadway play.

The resulting footage often recalled the work of the Italian neo-realists. We look in on life as it is lived. Social actors engage with one another, ignoring the filmmakers. Often the characters are caught up in pressing demands or a crisis of their own. This requires their attention and draws it away from the presence of filmmakers. The scenes tend, like fiction, to reveal aspects of character and individuality. We make inferences and come to conclusions on the basis of behavior we observe or overhear. The filmmaker's retirement to the position of observer calls on the viewer to take a more active role in determining the significance of what is said and done.

The observational mode poses a series of ethical considerations that involve the act of observing others go about their affairs. Is such an act in and of itself voyeuristic? Does it place the viewer in a necessarily less comfortable position than in a fiction film? In fiction, scenes are contrived for us to oversee and overhear entirely, whereas documentary scenes represent the lived experience of actual people that we happen to witness. This position, "at the keyhole," can feel uncomfortable if a pleasure in looking seems to take priority over the chance to acknowledge and interact with the one seen. This discomfort can be even more acute when the person is not an actor who has willingly agreed to be observed playing a part in a fiction.

The impression that the filmmaker is not intruding on the behavior of others also raises the question of unacknowledged or indirect intrusion. Do people conduct themselves in ways that will color our perception of them, for better or worse, in order to satisfy a filmmaker who does not say what it is he wants? Does the filmmaker seek out others to represent because they possess qualities that may fascinate viewers for the wrong reasons? This question often comes up with ethnographic films that observe, in other cultures, behavior that may, without adequate contextualization, seem exotic or bizarre, more part of a "cinema of attractions" than science. Has the filmmaker sought the informed consent of participants and made it possible for such informed consent to be understood and given? To what extent can a filmmaker explain the possible consequences of allowing behavior to be observed and represented to others?

Fred Wiseman, for example, requests consent verbally when he shoots but assumes that when he shoots in public institutions he has a right to

record what happens; he never grants participants any control over the final result. Even so, many participants in *High School* found the film fair and representative even though most critics have considered it a harsh indictment of school regimentation and discipline. A radically different approach occurs in *Two Laws* (1981), about Aboriginal land rights, where the filmmakers did not film anything without both the consent and collaboration of the participants. Everything from content to camera lenses was open to discussion and mutual agreement.

Since the observational filmmaker adopts a peculiar mode of presence "on the scene" in which he or she appears to be invisible and non-participatory, the question also arises of when does the filmmaker have a responsibility to intervene? What if something happens that may jeopardize or injure one of the social actors? Should a cameraman film the immolation of a Vietnamese monk who, knowing that there are cameras present to record the event, sets himself on fire to protest the Vietnamese war, or should the cameraman refuse or try to dissuade the monk? Should a filmmaker accept a knife as a gift from a participant in the course of filming a murder trial, and then turn that gift over to the police when blood is found on it (as Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofsky do in their film *Paradise Lost* [1996])? This last example moves us toward an unexpected or inadvertent form of participation rather than observation as it also raises broad issues about the filmmaker's relationship with his or her subjects.

Observational films exhibit particular strength in giving a sense of the duration of actual events. They break with the dramatic pace of mainstream fiction films and the sometimes hurried assembly of images that support expository or poetic documentaries. When Fred Wiseman, for example, observes the making of a thirty-second television commercial for some twenty-five minutes of screen time in *Model* (1980), he conveys the sense of having observed everything worth noting about the shooting.

Similarly, when David MacDougall films extended discussions between his principal character, Lorang, and one of his peers about the bride price for Lorang's daughter in *Wedding Camels* (1980), he shifts our attention from what the final agreement is or what new narrative issue arises because of it to the feel and texture of the discussion itself: the body language and eye contact, the intonation and tone of the voices, the pauses and "empty" time that give the encounter the sense of concrete, lived reality.

MacDougall himself describes the fascination of lived experience as something that is most vividly experienced as a difference between rushes (the unedited footage as it was originally shot) and an edited sequence. The rushes seem to have a density and vitality that the edited film lacks. A loss occurs even as structure and perspective are added:

The sense of loss seems to identify positive values perceived in the rushes and intended by the filmmaker at the time of filming but unachieved in the completed film. It is as though the very reasons for making films are somehow contradicted by the making of them. The processes of editing a film from the rushes involve both reducing the length overall and cutting most shots to shorter lengths. Both these processes progressively center particular meanings. Sometimes filmmakers appear to recognize this when they try to preserve some of the qualities of the rushes in their films, or reintroduce those qualities through other means. ("When Less Is Less," *Transcultural Cinema*, p. 215)

The presence of the camera "on the scene" testifies to its presence in the historical world. This affirms a sense of commitment or engagement with the immediate, intimate, and personal as it occurs. This also affirms a sense of fidelity to what occurs that can pass on events to us as if they simply happened when they have, in fact, been constructed to have that very appearance. One modest example is the "masked interview." In this case the filmmaker works in a more participatory way with his subjects to establish the general subject of a scene and then films it in an observational manner. David MacDougall has done this quite effectively in several films. An example is the scene in *Kenya Boran* where, without paying heed to the camera but in accord with the general guidelines established before shooting began, two Kenyan tribesmen discuss their views of the government's introduction of birth control measures.

A more complex example is the event staged to become part of the historical record. Press conferences, for example, may be filmed in a purely observational style, but such events would not exist at all if it were not for the presence of the camera. This is the reverse of the basic premise behind observational films, that what we see is what would have occurred were the camera not there to observe it.

This reversal took on monumental proportions in one of the first "observational" documentaries, Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*. After an introductory set of titles that set the stage for the German National Socialist (Nazi) Party's 1934 Nuremberg rally, Riefenstahl observes events with no further commentary. Events—predominantly parades, reviews of troops, mass assemblies, images of Hitler, and speeches—occur as if the camera simply recorded what would have happened anyway. At two hours running time, the film can give the impression of having recorded historical events all too faithfully and unthinkingly.

And yet, very little would have happened as it did were it not for the express intent of the Nazi Party to make a film of this rally. Riefenstahl had enormous resources placed at her disposal, and events were carefully planned to facilitate their filming, including the repeat filming of portions of

Roy Cohn/Jack Smith (Jill Godmilow, 1994).
Photo courtesy of Jill Godmilow.

Godmilow's film, like many documentaries of music concerts, observes a public performance; in this case she records two one-man plays by Ron Vawter. Given that such events are understood to be performances in the first place, they allow the filmmaker to avoid some of the accusations that the presence of the camera altered what would have happened had the camera not been there.



some speeches at another time and place when the original footage proved unusable. (The repeated portions are reenacted so that they blend in with the original speeches, hiding the collaboration that went into their making.)

Triumph of the Will demonstrates the power of the image to represent the historical world at the same moment as it participates in the construction of aspects of the historical world itself. Such participation, especially in the context of Nazi Germany, carries an aura of duplicity. This was the last thing observational filmmakers like Robert Drew, D. A. Pennebaker, Richard Leacock, and Fred Wiseman wanted in their own work. The integrity of their observational stance successfully avoided it, for the most part, and yet the underlying act of being present at an event but filming it as if absent, as if the filmmaker were simply a "fly on the wall," invites debate as to how much of what we see would be the same if the camera were not there or how



Roy Cohn/Jack Smith (Jill Godmilow, 1994).
Photo courtesy of Jill Godmilow.

Godmilow makes use of editing to create a distinct perspective on Ron Vawter's performance as gay underground filmmaker Jack Smith and right-wing, anti-Communist (and closeted gay) lawyer Roy Cohn. By intercutting the two separate performances she draws increased attention to the contrasting ways in which the two men dealt with their sexuality during the 1950s.

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THE PARTICIPATORY MODE

The social sciences have long promoted the study of social groups. Anthropology, for example, remains heavily defined by the practice of field work, where an anthropologist lives among a people for an extended period of time and then writes up what she has learned. Such research usually calls for some form of participant-observation. The researcher goes into the field, participates in the lives of others, gains a corporeal or visceral feel for what life in a given context is like, and then reflects on this experience, using the

tools and methods of anthropology or sociology to do so. "Being there" calls for participation; "being here" allows for observation. That is to say, the field worker does not allow herself to "go native," under normal circumstances, but retains a degree of detachment that differentiates her from those about whom she writes. Anthropology has, in fact, consistently depended on this complex act of engagement and separation between two cultures to define itself.

Documentary filmmakers also go into the field; they, too, live among others and speak about or represent what they experience. The practice of participant-observation, however, has not become a paradigm. The methods and practices of social science research have remained subordinate to the more prevalent rhetorical practice of moving and persuading an audience. Observational documentary de-emphasizes persuasion to give us a sense of what it is like to *be* in a given situation but without a sense of what it is like for the filmmaker to be *there*, too. Participatory documentary gives us a sense of what it is like for the filmmaker to be in a given situation and how that situation alters as a result. The types and degrees of alteration help define variations within the participatory mode of documentary.

When we view participatory documentaries we expect to witness the historical world as represented by someone who actively engages with, rather than unobtrusively observes, poetically reconfigures, or argumentatively assembles that world. The filmmaker steps out from behind the cloak of voice-over commentary, steps away from poetic meditation, steps down from a fly-on-the-wall perch, and becomes a social actor (almost) like any other. (Almost like any other because the filmmaker retains the camera, and with it, a certain degree of potential power and control over events.)

Participatory documentaries like *Chronicle of a Summer*, *Portrait of Jason*, or *Word Is Out* involve the ethics and politics of encounter. This is the encounter between one who wields a movie camera and one who does not. How do filmmaker and social actor respond to each other? How do they negotiate control and share responsibility? How much can the filmmaker insist on testimony when it is painful to provide it? What responsibility does the filmmaker have for the emotional aftermath of appearing on camera? What ties join filmmaker and subject and what needs divide them?

The sense of bodily presence, rather than absence, locates the filmmaker "on the scene." We expect that what we learn will hinge on the nature and quality of the encounter between filmmaker and subject rather than on generalizations supported by images illuminating a given perspective. We may see as well as hear the filmmaker act and respond on the spot, in the same historical arena as the film's subjects. The possibilities of serving as mentor, critic, interrogator, collaborator, or provocateur arise.



Takeover (David and Judith MacDougall, 1981). Photo courtesy of David MacDougall.

The MacDougalls have evolved a collaborative style of filmmaking with the subjects of their ethnographic films. In a series of films made on Aboriginal issues, of which *Takeover* is a prime example, they have often served as witnesses to the testimonial statements of traditions and beliefs that Aboriginal people offer in their disputes with the government over land rights and other matters. The interaction is highly participatory, although the result can seem, at first, unobtrusive or observational since much of the collaboration occurs prior to the act of filming.

Participatory documentary can stress the actual, lived encounter between filmmaker and subject in the spirit of Dziga Vertov's *The Man with a Movie Camera*, Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin's *Chronicle of a Summer*, Jon Alpert's *Hard Metals Disease* (1987), Jon Silver's *Watsonville on Strike* (1989), or Ross McElwhee's *Sherman's March* (1985). The filmmaker's presence takes on heightened importance, from the physical act of "getting the shot" that figures so prominently in *The Man with a Movie Camera* to the political act of joining forces with one's subjects as Jon Silver does at the start of *Watsonville on Strike* when he asks the farm workers if he can film in the union hall or as Jon Alpert does when he translates into Spanish what the workers he accompanies to Mexico try to say to their counterparts about the dangers of HMD (hard metals disease).

This style of filmmaking is what Rouch and Morin termed *cinéma vérité*,

translating into French Dziga Vertov's title for his newsreels of Soviet society, *kinopravda*. As "film truth," the idea emphasizes that this is the truth of an encounter rather than the absolute or untampered truth. We see how the filmmaker and subject negotiate a relationship, how they act toward one another, what forms of power and control come into play, and what levels of revelation or rapport stem from this specific form of encounter.

If there is a truth here it is the truth of a form of interaction that would not exist were it not for the camera. In this sense it is the opposite of the observational premise that what we see is what we would have seen had we been there in lieu of the camera. In participatory documentary, what we see is what we can see only when a camera, or filmmaker, is there instead of ourselves. Jean-Luc Godard once claimed that cinema is truth twenty-four times a second: participatory documentary makes good on Godard's claim.

Chronicle of a Summer, for example, involves scenes that result from the collaborative interactions of filmmakers and their subjects, an eclectic group of individuals living in Paris in the summer of 1960. In one instance Marcelline Loridan, a young woman who later married the Dutch filmmaker Joris Ivens, speaks about her experience as a Jewish deportee from France who is sent to a German concentration camp during World War II. The camera follows her as she walks through the Place de la Concorde and then through the former Parisian market, Les Halles. She offers a quite moving monologue on her experiences, but only because Rouch and Morin had planned the scene with her and given her the tape recorder to carry. If they had waited for the event to occur on its own so they could observe it, it never would have occurred. They pursued this notion of collaboration still further by screening parts of the film to the participants and filming the ensuing discussion. Rouch and Morin also appear on camera, discussing their aim to study "this strange tribe living in Paris" and assessing, at the end of the film, what they have learned.

Similarly, in *Not a Love Story* (1981), Bonnie Klein, the filmmaker, and Linda Lee Tracy, an ex-stripper, discuss their reactions to various forms of pornography as they interview participants in the sex industry. In one scene, Linda Lee poses for a nude photograph and then discusses how the experience made her feel. The two women embark on a journey that is partly exploratory in a spirit similar to Rouch and Morin's and partly confessional/redemptive in an entirely different sense. The act of making the film plays a cathartic, redemptive role in their own lives; it is less the world of their subjects that changes than their own.

In some cases, such as Marcel Ophuls's *The Sorrow and the Pity* (1970), on French collaboration with Germany during World War II, the filmmaker's voice emerges primarily as a perspective on the subject matter of the film.



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Crumb (Terry Zwigoff, 1994)

Terry Zwigoff adopts a highly participatory relationship to the cartoon strip artist R. Crumb. Many of the conversations and interactions clearly would not have occurred as they do had Zwigoff not been there with his camera. Crumb takes a more reflective attitude toward himself and a more probing attitude toward his brothers as he collaborates with Zwigoff's desire to examine the complexities and contradictions of his life.

The filmmaker serves as a researcher or investigative reporter. In other cases, the filmmaker's voice emerges from direct, personal involvement in the events that unfold. This can remain within the orbit of the investigative reporter who makes his own personal involvement in the story central to its unfolding. An example is the work of Canadian filmmaker Michael Rubbo, such as his *Sad Song of Yellow Skin* (1970), where he explores the ramifications of the Vietnam War among the civilian population of Vietnam. Another is the work of Nicholas Broomfield, who adopts a brasher, more confrontational—if not arrogant—style in his *Kurt and Courtney* (1998): his exasperation with Courtney Love's elusiveness despite unsubstantiated suspicions of her complicity in Kurt Cobain's death compels Broomfield to film his own, apparently spontaneous denunciation of her at a ceremonial dinner sponsored by the American Civil Liberties Union.

In other cases, we move away from the investigative stance to take up a more responsive and reflective relationship to unfolding events that involve the filmmaker. This latter choice moves us toward the diary and personal testimonial. The first-person voice becomes prominent in the overall



Las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo (Susana Muñoz and Lourdes Portillo, 1985). Photo courtesy of Lourdes Portillo.

These two women filmmakers adopt a highly participatory relationship with the mothers who risked their lives to stage public demonstrations during Argentina's "dirty war." The sons and daughters of these women were among the "disappeared" whom the government abducted, and often killed, without any notice or legal proceedings. Muñoz and Portillo could not shape the public events, but they could draw out the personal stories of the mothers whose courage led them to defy a brutally repressive regime.

structure of the film. It is the filmmaker's participatory engagement with unfolding events that holds our attention.

Nicholas Necroponte's involvement with a woman whom he meets in New York's Central Park, who seems to have a complex but not entirely credible history, becomes central to the overall structure of *Jupiter's Wife* (1995). Similarly, it is Emiko Omori's efforts to retrace the suppressed history of her own family's experience in the Japanese-American relocation camps of World War II that gives form to *Rabbit in the Moon* (1999). Marilu Mallet offers an even more explicitly diary-like structure to her portrait of life as a Chilean exile living in Montreal married to Canadian filmmaker Michael Rubbo in *Unfinished Diary* (1983), as does Kazuo Hara to his chronicle of the complex, emotionally volatile relationship he revives with his former wife as he and his current partner follow her over a period of time in *Extremely Personal Eros: Love Song* (1974). These films make the filmmaker as vivid



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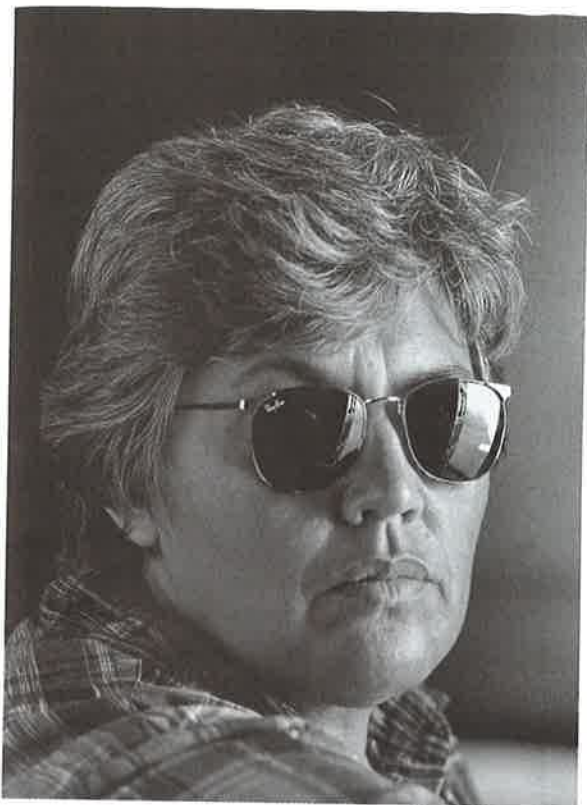


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The Devil Never Sleeps [El Diablo Nunca Duerme]
(Lourdes Portillo, 1995). Photo's courtesy of Lourdes Portillo.

Director Lourdes Portillo as a hard-boiled private eye. The film recounts her journey to Mexico to investigate the suspicious death of her uncle. Reflexive and ironic at times, Portillo nonetheless leaves the question of whether her uncle met with foul play, possibly at the hands of a relative, open.

a persona as any other in their films. As testimonial and confession, they often exude a power that is revelatory.

Not all participatory documentaries stress the ongoing, open-ended experience of the filmmaker or the interaction between filmmaker and subjects. The filmmaker may wish to introduce a broader perspective, often one that is historical in nature. How can this be done? The most common answer involves the interview. The interview allows the filmmaker to address people who appear in the film formally rather than address the audience through voice-over commentary. The interview stands as one of the most common forms of encounter between filmmaker and subject in participatory documentary.

Interviews are a distinct form of social encounter. They differ from ordinary conversation and the more coercive process of interrogation by dint of the institutional framework in which they occur and the specific protocols or guidelines that structure them. Interviews occur in anthropological or sociological field work; they go by the name of the "case history" in medicine



The Devil Never Sleeps

The filmmaker, in the course of an interview, in search of clues, and, ideally, the confession that will solve the mystery. Although she never obtains a confession, the sense that she *might* do so lends an air of narrative, film noir-like suspense to the film.

and social welfare; in psychoanalysis, they take the form of the therapeutic session; in law the interview becomes the pre-trial process of "discovery" and, during trials, testimony; on television, it forms the backbone of talk shows; in journalism, it takes the form of both the interview and the press conference; and in education, it appears as Socratic dialogue. Michel Foucault argues that these forms all involve regulated forms of exchange, with an uneven distribution of power between client and institutional practitioner, and that they have their root in the religious tradition of the confessional.

Filmmakers make use of the interview to bring different accounts together in a single story. The voice of the filmmaker emerges from the weave of contributing voices and the material brought in to support what they say. This compilation of interviews and supporting material has given us numerous film histories, from *In the Year of the Pig* (1969), on the war in Vietnam, to *Eyes on the Prize*, on the history of the civil rights movement, and from *The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter*, on women at work during World War II, to *Shoah*, on the aftermath of the Holocaust for those who experienced it.

Compilation films such as Esther Shub's *The Fall of the Romanov Dy-*



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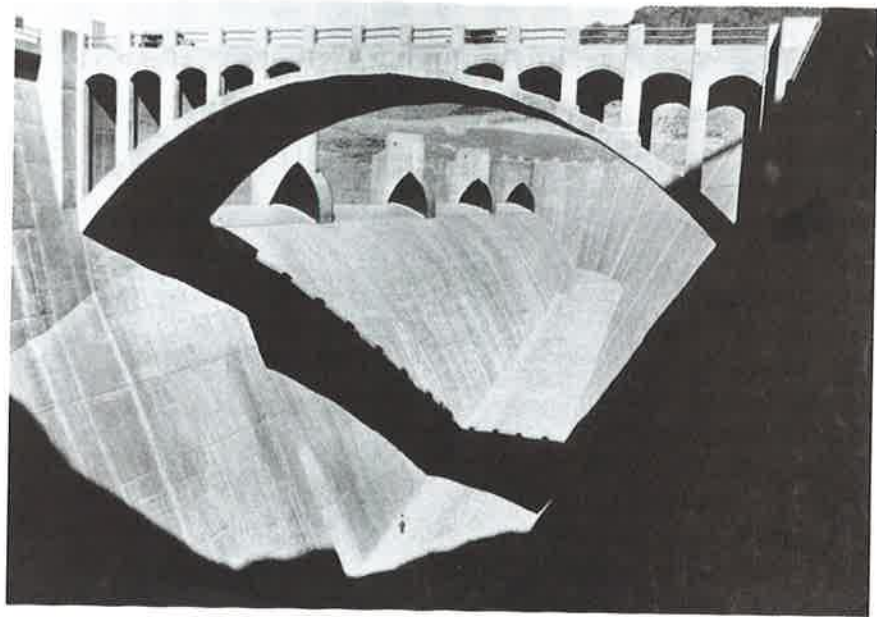
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nasty, which relies entirely on archival footage found by Shub and reedited to tell a social history, date back to the beginnings of expository documentary. Participatory documentaries add the active engagement of the filmmaker with her subjects or informants and avoid anonymous voice-over exposition. This situates the film more squarely in a given moment and distinct perspective; it enriches commentary with the grain of individual voices. Some, such as Barbara Kopple's *Harlan County, U.S.A.* (1977), on a coal miner's strike in Kentucky, or Michael Moore's *Roger and Me* (1989), dwell on events in the present to which the filmmaker is a participant, while adding some historical background. Some, such as Errol Morris's *The Thin Blue Line*, Leon Gast's *When We Were Kings* (1996), on the 1974 fight between Muhammad Ali and George Foreman, or Ray Mueller's *The Wonderful, Horrible Life of Leni Riefenstahl* (1993), on her controversial career, center on the past and how those with knowledge of it now recount it.

The experience of gays and lesbians in the days before Stonewall, for example, could be recounted as a general social history, with a voice-over commentary and images that illustrate the spoken points. It could also be recounted in the words of those who lived through these times by means of interviews. Jon Adair's *Word Is Out* (1977) opts for the second choice. Adair, like Connie Field for *Rosie the Riveter*, screened scores of possible subjects before settling on the dozen or so who appear in the film. Unlike Field or Emile de Antonio, Adair opts to keep supporting material to a bare minimum; he compiles his history primarily from the "talking heads" of those who can put this chapter of American social history into their own words. Like oral histories that are recorded and written up to serve as one type of primary source material, which this form resembles but also differs from in the careful selection and arrangement of interview material, the articulateness and emotional directness of those who speak gives films of testimony a compelling quality.

Filmmakers who seek to represent their own direct encounter with their surrounding world and those who seek to represent broad social issues and historical perspectives through interviews and compilation footage constitute two large components of the participatory mode. As viewers we have the sense that we are witness to a form of dialogue between filmmaker and subject that stresses situated engagement, negotiated interaction, and emotion-laden encounter. These qualities give the participatory mode of documentary filmmaking considerable appeal as it roams a wide variety of subjects from the most personal to the most historical. Often, in fact, this mode demonstrates how the two intertwine to yield representations of the historical world from specific perspectives that are both contingent and committed.



Cadillac Desert (Jon Else, 1997). Photos courtesy of Jon Else.

Cadillac Desert is another excellent example of a film that couples archival footage and the tradition of the compilation film with contemporary interviews that add a fresh perspective to historical events without resorting to a voice-over commentary. *Cadillac Desert* retraces the history of water use in California and its devastating impact on the inland valleys of the state.

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