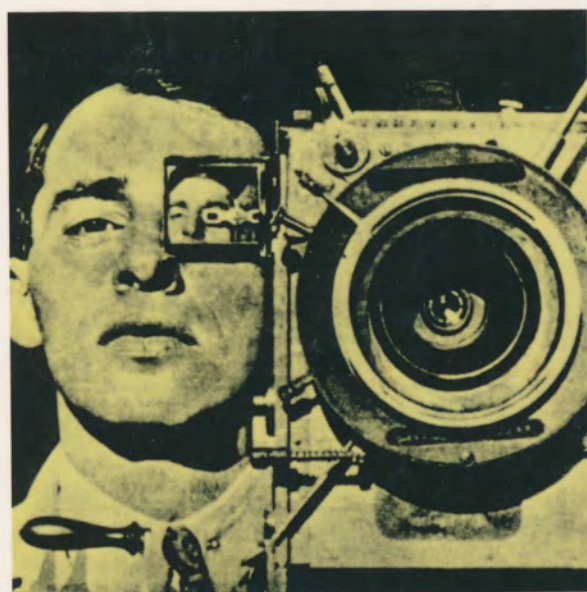


[documentary]

*a history of the
non-fiction film*



S E C O N D

R E V I S E D

E D I T I O N

erik barnouw



Braun, David L. Brown, and James Heddle, sounded a joyful note as it focused on the countless areas throughout the world, large and small, that had declared their determination to be nuclear free. The film became a powerful organizing weapon for the Nuclear Free Zone Movement and came to be seen on all continents.

A number of issues besides fractured atoms and a fractured environment challenged activist film makers, and resulted in many point-of-view documentaries, some of stunning power. Among them: *Smothering Dreams* (1980) by Vietnam veteran Dan Reeves, decrying the "ancient lies" about the glory of war that had from childhood on—even in family, school and church—prepared him to be an early and eager volunteer in a slaughter of Asians and Americans, decreed by ignorant men. *Fertile Memory* (1980), by Michel Khleifi, which makes tellingly clear how it feels, as a Palestinian, to live day by day under Israeli military subjugation and to be, in effect, an alien in one's homeland. *Ethnic Notions* (1986) by Marlon Riggs, a dazzling panorama of posters, songs, cartoons, and artifacts embodying America's racist history, all reviewed with such infectious vigor and humor, in a pulsingly rhythmic style, that Riggs rises far above the kind of animus he is portraying. He is consigning it all to the dustheap. *Tongues United* (1989), also by Riggs, in which he unleashes the same energy and virtuosity in a remarkable affirmation of homosexual love. *Not a Love Story!* (1981), in which Canadian documentarist Bonnie Klein determines to visit personally the parlors of the pornographic industry, is revolted, and speculates darkly on its social meaning. *Who Killed Vincent Chin?* (1988), by Christine Choy and Renee Tajima, painstaking documentation of a blatant miscarriage of justice flowing from ethnic animosities. *Are You Going to the Ball?* (1987), in which Soviet documentarist Nadezhda Khvorova, freed by *glasnost* from old constraints, indicts the intense preparation of pre-adolescent Soviet girls for gymnastic glory in the Olympics—a practice that has, the film shows, left some in physical agony. Says one ex-champion, still young: "My entire body is in pain . . . and now my time is over."

While many documentarists were tackling issues of the time, a far greater number seemed to be moving toward documentary as historic chronicle. The genre acquired growing stature during the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, and at the same time appeared to split into several distinct subgenres.

One of these had a novel aspect. The BBC television series *Civiliza-*



Smothering Dreams, 1980.

(Debra Schweitzer)

tion (1970) featuring art historian Kenneth Clark and directed by Michael Gill, was the model and catalyst. It was essentially a continuing exposition by Clark in which, to make his points, he could pop up at will in any part of the western world, pointing to some monument or artwork or artifact. There was no mention of months of travel needed for this—only an instant mobility, outdoing even the jet diplomacy of the time. The formula was promptly used again in another Michael Gill series—*America* (1972) featuring Alistair Cooke. It also became the basis for *The Ascent of Man* (1974) featuring Jacob Bronowski, directed by Gill in association with Adrian Malone, in which the entire world became the exhibit venue. Bronowski's narrative represented a shift in style. Clark and Cooke had been unhesitating, suave, even Olympian—which was, in a sense, appropriate to their omnipresence. Bronowski assumed a different persona. Often bending closely over some ancient stone inscription or parchment or mummy, passing his hand lovingly over a temple sculpture or delicate vase, he struggled for words to express his awe over each crucial step in the rise of humankind, and to analyze what it had involved. There was no sense of a prepared script. Clark and Cooke seemed well-rehearsed



“A helpful antidote to the spirit. . . Barnouw’s style has a clarity and precision that make his books delights to read.”

*Film Quarterly**

Now brought completely up to date, the new edition of this classic work on documentary films and filmmaking surveys the history of the genre from 1895 to the present day. With myriad social upheavals over the past decade, documentaries have enjoyed an international renaissance; here Barnouw considers the medium in the light of an entirely new political and social climate. He examines as well the latest filmmaking technology and the effects that video cassettes and cable television are having on the production of documentaries. Like the previous editions, *Documentary* is filled with photographs, many of them rare, collected during the author’s travels around the world. Covering the full course of the documentary from Louis Lumière’s first effort to such recent landmark productions as *Shoah* and the Ken Burns *Civil War* series, this book makes the growing importance of a unique blend of art and reality accessible and understandable to all film lovers.

*Praise for Previous Editions:**

“The whole panorama has been richly researched and compactly organized into easy prose by Barnouw, writing at the peak of his competence.”

Variety

“Erik Barnouw puts film history in the mainstream of human history as few others have done before. He reminds us of the powers of film to instruct, exhilarate, excite and deceive, and shows how these powers have been used in our time.” Daniel J. Boorstin

Erik Barnouw, now retired, was Chief of the Library of Congress’s Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division, and long headed Columbia University’s film division. His books include the prize-winning three-volume *History of Broadcasting in the United States*, as well as *Tube of Plenty*, *The Sponsor*, and *The Magician and the Cinema*.

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