

## Midterm

1. **Robert Flaherty**
  - Significance
  - Impact
  
2. **City Symphonies**
  - Characteristics
  - Difference to Dziga Vertov
  
3. **Propaganda**
  - Triumph of the Will > characteristics
  - Prelude to War > characteristics
  
4. **Trust in Documentary films**
  
5. **Ethical, Emotional, Demonstrative Proofs**

## Paper and Research

- Research:
  
- History of American Film (Vol. 8, 9, 10): call #: 791.430973 H295h
  
- Pipeline: <https://pipeline.sbccc.edu>
- SBCC Library Catalogue Database:
- SBCC Article Database:
  - Gale Virtual Reference Library
  - Academic Search Premier
  - Project Muse
  
- Internet Movie DataBase: [www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com)
- [www.Rottentomatoes.com](http://www.Rottentomatoes.com)
- [www.metacritic.com](http://www.metacritic.com)
- [www.boxofficemojo.com](http://www.boxofficemojo.com)
- [www.sensesofcinema.com](http://www.sensesofcinema.com)
- <http://www.greencine.com/central/primers>
- <http://www.filmreference.com/>

## Bill Nichols' Documentary Modes

- **Poetic Mode:** social actors not full characters; no voice over; place and time may not be continuous; source material transformed by the filmmaker; subjective impressions.
- **Expository Mode:** rhetorical argument; attempts to convince the viewer of what is presented; voice-of-god narration (male authoritative voice); voice organizes the images; impression of objectivity; often large claims about the world, not individuals.
- **Observational Mode:** observe without intervention; no staging or reenactments; "truth is revealed in the world"; viewer is more active, needs to interpret the images and sounds; voyeuristic.
- **Participatory Mode:** interactive, engages with the social actors; records events and the interactions with the filmmaker; records the alteration of the world because of the filmmaker; interviews; filmmaker is visible to the audience.
- **Reflexive Mode:** interaction and construction of documentary is made evident to the viewer; *how* the world is represented; questions the 'truth' of documentary.
- **Performative Mode:** emphasizes the subjective and affective dimension of the world; creates an emotional response with the viewer; audience understands through the emotion.

## Direct Cinema in the U.S. > late 1950s to 1960s

A new "Truth Claim" > Observational Mode  
A desire for a new cinematic realism

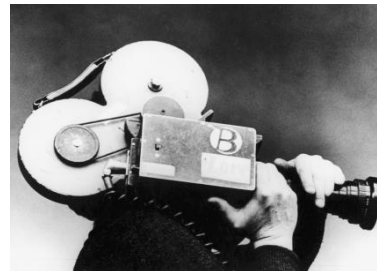
**Direct Cinema** > U.S.  
**Cinema Verite** > France

### Goals:

- Capture a selected selection of reality
- Use light weight equipment
- Capture footage as events are happening
- Provide a feeling of "being there"
- Find the "truth" in the event

### Technological innovations:

- Lighter equipment > use of plastic parts
- 16mm. Instead of 35mm. > WWII docs
- Cameras made less noise: Éclair NPR (Noiseless Portable Reflex)
- Film that could be exposed in low light conditions (up to 1000 ASA)
- Light magnetic tape sound recorders: Nagra
- Crystal synchronization: cable



Nagra portable audio recorder

## Direct Cinema in the U.S.

### Characteristics:

- Immediacy and intimacy with the subject
- Concern with human life, as opposed to institutions, governments, etc.
- Usually told in chronological order
- Usually a moment of crisis, with a beginning, middle, and end > adds drama, and allows the subject to be less conscious of the camera
- "Crisis structure" > climax at the end of the film
- Feeling of spontaneity / "Fly-on-the-wall"
- Filmmaker is not seen and does not interact with social actors
- No narrator
- Primacy of editing over cinematography
- Uncontrolled filmmaking > control in editing
- Often long takes
- Camera operator is often the director
- Decisions are made in the moment
- Camera follows social actors wherever they go
- No script
- No staging
- Revealed reality



## Direct Cinema in the U.S.

### Drew Associates / through TV > ABC > series *Close Up!*:

- Early 1960s
- Robert Drew (producer)
- Richard Leacock
- Don Allen Pennebaker
- Albert and David Maysles



19 films produced

- Primary (1960)
- Eddie (1961)
- Jane (1962)
- Crisis: Behind the Presidential Commitment (1963)

Later

- Don't Look Back (D.A. Pennebaker, 1967)



## Direct Cinema in the U.S.

### Considerations:

- Does the filmmaker get close enough?
- Or too close?
- Can the social actor disregard the camera?
- Is the social actor performing for the camera?
- Does the camera cause the crisis?
- Is the film a construction or a slice of reality?
- Are the social actors represented fairly?
- Can we trust the representations?



## Cinema Verite in France Early 1960s



Same technology and similar approach as Direct Cinema

But, **Cinema as a Catalyst**

- Filmmaker is part of the film, and interacts with the social actors
- Filmmakers can discuss the results of the film, in the film

Kino Pravda = Cinema Verite // Reflexive cinema

Eric Barnouw:

"The direct cinema documentarist took his camera to a situation of tension and waited hopefully for a crisis; the Rouch version of cinema verite tried to precipitate one."

"Direct cinema found its truth in events available to the camera. Cinema verite was committed to a paradox: that artificial circumstances could bring hidden truth to the surface"

## Cinema Verite in France > Early 1960s



- **Direct Cinema:** “Truth” (authenticity) is possible because of the unobtrusive camera > fly-on-the-wall.
- **Cinema Verite:** this unobtrusive camera will not reveal any authentic behavior/attitude from the social actors – only when the camera and the filmmaker confront the social actors will a possible truth be revealed
- The camera is then a catalyst for authenticity
- When confronted by the camera, the social actor cannot act



**Jean Rouch:** Ethnographic films > films that present other cultures with a minimum of interpretation, ex: Les Maitres Fous (1955)

Chronicle of a Summer ( Edgar Morin and Jean Rouch, 1961, France) > looking at France in a time of change, as a different culture

Classical Hollywood is falling apart in the 1960s:

- The Trip (Roger Corman, 1967)
- Easy Rider (Dennis Hopper, 1969)
- About different cultures in the U.S. > about the cultural and ideological divisions
- Produced for \$375,000
- Earned over \$50 million at the box office

This encouraged Hollywood to embrace the youth market.

Music became crucial as it was in the The Graduate

Youth cult explosion was extremely brief  
But it led to Concert Documentaries

## Youth Films



## Concert Films in U.S.

1960s > increase awareness of a Youth Market

- Monterey Pop (D.A. Pennebaker, 1968, USA)
  - Monterey Pop Festival of 1967
  - Multiple camera operators: Richard Leacock, Albert Maysles and others
  - The Mamas & The Papas, Simon & Garfunkel, Jefferson Airplane, The Who, Jimi Hendrix
- Woodstock (Michael Wadleigh, 1970, USA)
  - Best Documentary Oscar
  - Martin Scorsese was one of the editors and assistant director



## Don't Look Back (D.A. Pennebaker, 1967, USA)



### **Week 9 Questions:**

Email responses to [filmst121@sbcc.edu](mailto:filmst121@sbcc.edu)

**Minimum 500 words, no attachments, do not rewrite the questions but # each question.**

- Explain the difference between Direct Cinema and Cinema Verite. How are they similar? How are they different?
- How is Direct Cinema stating that authenticity can be achieved in a documentary film? Provide an example.
- How is Cinema Verite stating that authenticity can be achieved in a documentary film? Provide an example.
- What was your reaction to Don't Look Back?
- Is this film more closely aligned with the characteristics of Direct Cinema or with those of Cinema Verite? Explain.