9. Documentarist as . . . Chronicler

**Definition(s):**

Chronicler = Historian = Looking backward for footage and other material, rather than always generating new footage.

**Key Concepts & Issues:**

The “compilation film” acquired new status as newsreel footage began to accumulate. Televisi on as an important source of support for compilation documentaries. A flurry of new techniques:

- “Photo animation”—using camera movement across still photos
- Use of other still images (e.g., engravings, cartoons, paintings, posters, tapestries, illuminated manuscripts, ) to illustrate the sound track, usually consisting of VO and music
- Use of objects and locations (e.g., palaces, sculptures, architecture) to illustrate the sound track
- “In the first two postwar decades, the film chronicler learned to consider almost any historic relic or artifact a potential narrative instrument.”

The fall of the newsreel, and--

The rise of film reporting by anthropologists.

Going new places:

- Under the sea (e.g., Jacques Cousteau)
- Within the human body (via X-ray cinematography and miniature cameras)
- Outer space

**Key Filmmakers:**

A wide range of folks and institutions:

- Erwin Leiser (*Mein Kampf*, 1960; *Eichmann and the Third Reich*, 1961)
- Paul Rotha (*The Life of Adolf Hitler*, 1961)
- NBC’s *Victory at Sea* (1952-53)
- CBS’s *Twentieth Century* (1957-66)
- National Film Board of Canada’s *City of Gold* (1957)
- Stanley Hawes’ establishment of the Commonwealth Film Unit in Australia (sent by John Grierson)
- Joris Ivens’ (there he is again!) missionary-like work in Bulgaria, Poland, China, Mali, Cuba, and Chile
- Jean Rouch and his anthropological approach
- Disney Studio and its “anthropomorphizing” animal life in live-action films
- MANY others

[In-class example]

Jacques Richard’s *Henri Langlois: Phantom of the Cinematheque* (2005)—a very dense chronicler-type documentary that takes multiple viewings to absorb it all; a wide array of sources