



# Interactive Documentary



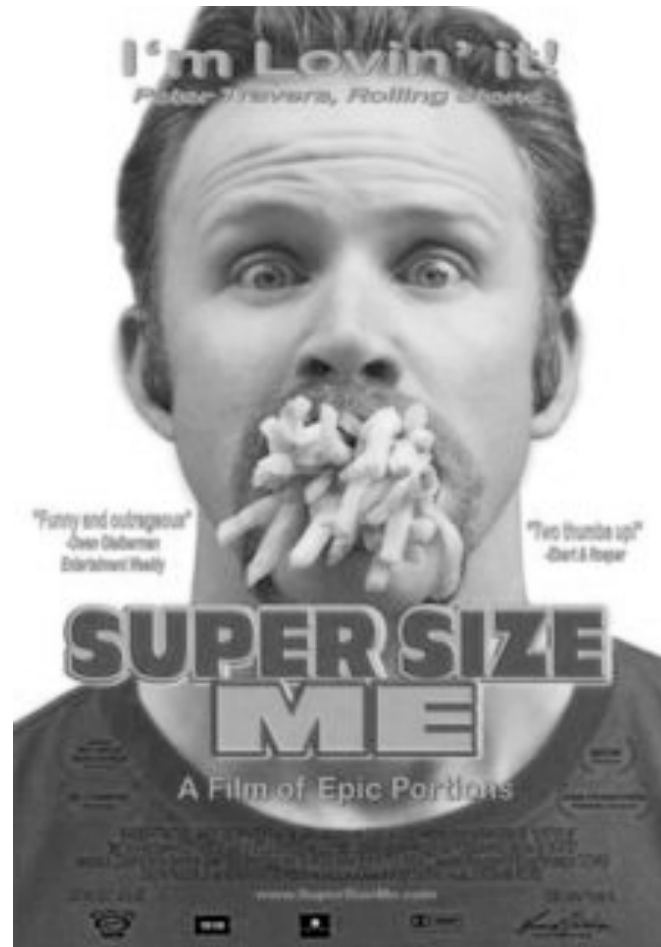
Bowling for  
Columbine  
Michael Moore  
2002





Aileen: Life and Death  
of a Serial Killer,  
Nick Broomfield  
2003

Super Size Me  
Morgan Spurlock  
2003





An Inconvenient  
Truth  
Davis Guggenheim  
2006

## **(Re)Thinking** Documentary

The documentary film is a distinctive form of moving image culture, linked to the cultural history of photography

The "myth of photographic truth": media can never make an unmediated copy of reality

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Sturken and  
Cartwright (2001)  
*Practices of Looking*

## **(Re)Thinking** Documentary

"The documentary is a negotiation between reality on the one hand and image, interpretation and bias on the other."

"The documentary structures unstructured moments through a journey."

"Documentaries are performative acts."

Bruzzi, S (2000)  
*New Documentary:  
A Critical Introduction*



## **(Re)Thinking** Documentary

"Documentaries explore (...) people and (...) situations."

Rabiger, M (2004)  
*Directing the  
Documentary*

"The documentary implies some kind of social criticism."

"Documentaries need a good story."

Documentaries are a piece of art work."

## Thinking **Interactive** Documentary

Problem:

“New media forms pose a fundamental challenge to the principle of narrative coherence, which is at the core of traditional documentary.”

Whitelaw, M (2002)  
'Playing Games with Reality'

## Thinking **Interactive** Documentary

*(?) How can New Media contribute to the documentary genre?*

(!) Particular strengths of New Media (see books of e.g. Manovich, Lister, and Bolter and Grusin):

- Variability
- Hypermediality
- Multimediality
- Interactivity
- Infinitivity

## Thinking **Interactive** Documentary

- media rich & enticing: different media types, alternative points of view/angles
- interactive & multi-linear: exploring v watching; individual trajectories through the material, facilitates exploring, playing, browsing

## Thinking **Interactive** Documentary

- hyperlinking & contextualising : embedding the production in a web of relevant links
- delivery for a range of different platforms (convergence)
- continuous updates, changes, and configurations (e.g. customisation)
- collaborative approach: feedback, participation, comments

## Thinking **Interactive** Documentary

The Future of interactive documentary:

Products will range from simple hypertextual systems (Websites) to more complex and discrete productions (DVD, installations)

Technical conversion facilitates conversion of genres: entertainment, journalism, fiction and 'true' documentary might merge to a new cultural form

## Thinking **Interactive** Documentary

Example: the [**korsakow system**]

<http://www.korsakow.com/ksy/>

Korsakow projects are:

- interactive; the viewer can influence the flow of scenes
- rule-based; the author decides about the rules
- generative; order of scenes is calculated while watching

## Projects

**13. Stock (13th. floor)**, Thalhofer, F and Mensing, K [DVD]

**Young Refugees** - documentary for children: to be young and refugee [online]

**9/11**, National Geographic Channel [online]

**360degrees**, The US Justice System, Picture Projects [online]

**Sonic Memorial** , 9/11 audio installation, Picture Projects [online]

**AIDS in Africa**, Interactive Feature, New York Times, [online]

**Class matters**, Interactive Feature, New York Times, [online]



## Bibliography

**Bruzzi**, Stella (2000), *New Documentary: A Critical Introduction*, London: Routledge

**Chapman**, D (1998) 'Downloading the Documentary' ed. Wayne, M, *Dissident Voices*, London: Pluto Press

**Rabiger**, Michael (2004), *Directing the Documentary*, Oxford: Focal

**Sturken**, Marita and Cartwright, Lisa (2001), *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

**Whitelaw**, Mitchell (2002) 'Playing Games with Reality' [online]  
<http://creative.canberra.edu.au/mitchell/papers/PlayingGames.pdf>

**Winston**, Brian (1995), *Claiming the Real: The Documentary Film Revisited*, London: BFI

All **Hyperlinks**: <http://del.icio.us/UELuk/InteractiveDocumentary>