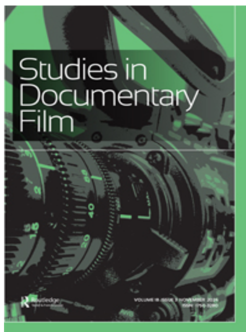


Studies in Documentary Film

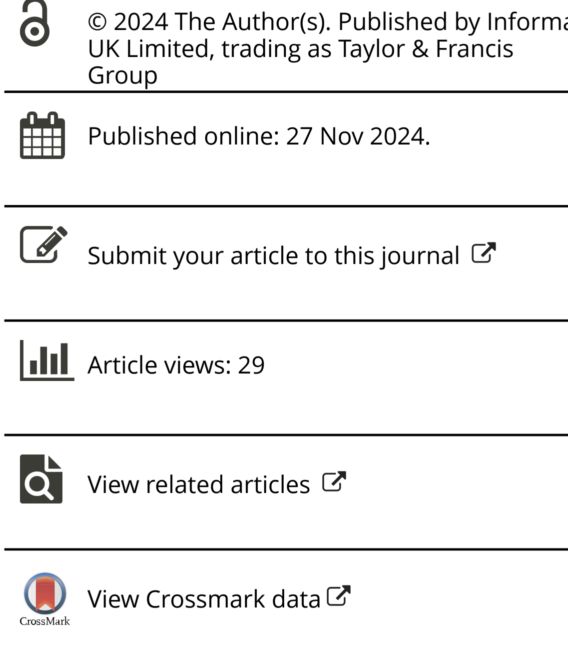
ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: www.tandfonline.com/journals/rsdf20

Archival reenactments: decolonising a documentary convention

James Harvey

To cite this article: James Harvey (27 Nov 2024): Archival reenactments: decolonising a documentary convention, Studies in Documentary Film, DOI: 10.1080/17503280.2024.2426306

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/17503280.2024.2426306



© 2024 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group

Published online: 27 Nov 2024.

Submit your article to this journal

Article views: 29

View related articles

View Crossmark data

Full Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at
https://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?journalCode=rsdf20

STUDIES IN DOCUMENTARY FILM
https://doi.org/10.1080/17503280.2024.2426306

Archival reenactments: decolonising a documentary convention

James Harvey

School of Creative Arts, University of Hertfordshire, Hertfordshire, UK

ABSTRACT

This article is an attempt to invigorate decolonisation discourse in Film and Media Studies, particularly with regard to Documentary Studies. It does so by centring a screen installation work, by a filmmaker whose formal preoccupations have returned repeatedly to the fictions and limitations of archival documents. *Peripeteia* (John Akomfrah, dir. 2012. *Peripeteia*. UK: Smoking Dogs Films.) imagines an encounter between two people, 'lost to the winds of history'. In its use of objects including sketches, photographs and written quotations, the film constructs an elliptical narrative with archival fragments. Locating its actors in a placeless landscape, wrenched from their point of origin and dependent solely on superficial images for context, *Peripeteia* reanimates its barely known subjects to perform a critique of the coloniality of the reenactment form, which has been used deceptively throughout the history of films defined as 'non-fiction'. Coining *archival reenactment* as a mode which (1) utilises a self-critical rehearsal of historical gestures to interrogate documentary film's archival function, and (2) employs archival fragments to both build and trouble the depth of its own representation, this article centres *Peripeteia* as a template for the decolonial critique of an over-familiar convention in the documentary mode.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 21 June 2024
Accepted 31 October 2024

KEYWORDS
Archive; decolonisation; ethnographic; fabulation; race; reenactment

This article is an attempt to invigorate decolonisation discourse in Film and Media Studies, particularly with regard to Documentary Studies. It does so by centring a screen installation work, by a filmmaker whose formal preoccupations have returned repeatedly to the fictions and limitations of archival documents. *Peripeteia* (John Akomfrah 2012) imagines an encounter between two people, 'lost to the winds of history'. In its use of objects including sketches, photographs and written quotations, the film constructs an elliptical narrative with archival fragments. This aspires towards what Saidiya Hartman has famously termed 'critical fabulation' (Hartman 2008, 11). Hartman's work is integral to this argument; it represents a desire to challenge, without escaping, 'the boundaries of the archive' (Hartman 2008, 8–9). It is Hartman's methodology

CONTACT James Harvey j.harvey4@herts.ac.uk School of Creative Arts, University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield, Hertfordshire AL10 9EU, UK

© 2024 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group
This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

that inspires the historical exposition of the next section, and which has, in turn, supported my framing of Akomfrah's work as a speculative contest between two distinct documentary modes. That is, while *Peripeteia* exists as short montage of archival fragments towards the visualisation of an imagined encounter, it also represents an interrogation of the way lives like those have been portrayed, historically. The form this interrogation takes, I shall argue, is the reenactment. Locating its actors in a placeless landscape, wrenched from their point of origin and dependent solely on superficial images for context, *Peripeteia* reanimates its barely known subjects to perform a critique of the coloniality of the reenactment form, which has been used deceptively throughout the history of films defined as 'non-fiction'. Coining *archival reenactment* as a mode which (1) utilises a self-critical rehearsal of historical gestures in order to interrogate documentary film's archival function, and (2) employs archival fragments to both build and trouble the depth of its own representation, this article centres *Peripeteia* as a template for the decolonial critique of an over-familiar convention in the documentary mode.

Katharina

Antwerp, 1520: the German painter Albrecht Dürer has spent the past month travelling north from Nuremberg, with his wife Agnes. The couple travel to the Netherlands following a successful trip to Aachen in Germany, to secure the patronage of Charles V, the newly crowned Holy Roman Emperor. They are enjoying the esteem that comes with him being a pioneer. One of the foremost exponents of printmaking outside Asia, Dürer's works gained popularity as print production was itself still just beginning to emerge across major cities. He is described as patient and gentle, but Dürer is not modest. The benediction gesture, direct address and darkening of his usually blonde hair in his *Self-portrait* (1500, oil on panel) is unmistakably Christ-like. He and his wife detest each other; he spends his money on the finer things and handles business very informally. He frequently leaves Agnes to stay with João Brandão – Portugal's trade commissioner, responsible for overseeing state affairs in Antwerp, a city which by this point had become one of the most important ports for international trade in northern Europe. Portugal is in a period of imperial expansion; over the past twenty years, it has established the first colonial trade route through India. Its relationship with Belgium currently is based on Antwerp's reputation as the foremost importer of sugar and spices on the continent. Antwerp is also increasingly one of the main arrival points for enslaved Africans, which Portugal had itself been involved in the trade of since the mid-fifteenth century. It was in this way, presumably, that Brandão – and, for that matter, Dürer – came across a woman named Katharina.[1]

Katharina worked in Brandão's home. There is nothing to suggest Dürer developed any sort of relationship with Katharina besides a silverpoint sketch he drew of her, which he includes in his notes on the journey (Figure 1). Erwin Panofsky will refer to the sketches contained in this notebook (which is about 7 × 5 in. in size) as betraying 'graphic precision' and a 'delicacy of the medium' (Panofsky 1955, 214–215). But Panofsky would also describe one of the figures in another of Dürer's art works as 'monstrous … like a cross between a Negro and an ape' (Panofsky 1955, 269). Dürer himself is quoted as describing African subjects inhumanely, particularly in his *Four Books on*

Figure 1. Dürer, Albrecht. 1521. *Katharina*. Silverpoint drawing on paper. 20 × 14 cm. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.

Human Proportions. The kind of aesthetic incongruence Dürer associates with black subjects leads him to prefer portrait perspectives when drawing them. This was so influential that he has been credited as the primary influence behind the side-profiling of (the admittedly few) black subjects in Western art for the next hundred years, at least. Katharina is notably different, though. Her head is turned no more than forty degrees, so both sides of her face are visible. Her gaze has been described as 'captivating', 'modest' and 'submissive' (Wolfthal 2013). It has been argued that this is the first portrait of a servant (though whether this is servitude or enslavement is disputed, due to the illegality of slavery in northern Europe at this time). A number of historical elements suggest the portrait of Katharina was for Dürer's own use and a level of prestige is apparently granted to her than the other, more objectified subjects in his notebooks. Her age ('20 jahr') is also written on the sketch. The personhood afforded her by the picture's title, too, has perhaps reserved a level of notoriety.

Without speculating further about Katharina (perhaps through the ongoing friendship between Dürer and Brandão's secretary, Rodrigo Fernandez d'Almada), this is all it is possible to know about her for sure. The frustration that comes, then, with locating

the kind of rarity that is a sixteenth century black subject in western Art, with so little to go off by way of historical narrative, is what motivates Akomfrah's attempt to make a film about her. *Peripeteia* was part of Akomfrah's first solo exhibition, 'Hauntologies', which was said to mark his turn away from mainstream film and television industry practices and a return to his more experimental concerns of the 1980s. What this means in practice is that the tired expositional burden of documentary convention is altogether absent, with the exception of a brief couple of inserts at the start: Katharina's portrait and another portrait, that of Dürer's *Head of a Negro Man* (1508) (Figure 2). This is thought to be the oldest portrait of an African man in European art. It was discovered in Dürer's workshop when he died and is now held by the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. The charcoal is too precious to survive permanent installation, but it has been recently exhibited as part of a Renaissance retrospective at the Rijksmuseum. *Peripeteia* brings Katharina and the anonymous man into the same space, locating them in the sort of romantic landscape popularised in a later period of German painting. The film opens

Figure 2. Dürer, Albrecht. 1508. *Head of a Negro Man.* Charcoal, 320 × 218 mm. Graphische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna.

with the Dürer sketches, describing their stories as 'lost to the winds of history'. An earlier analysis of the film argues that this confrontation with the flatness of pictorial representation is, albeit implicitly, making a case for film's superior ability to realise psychological depth (Harvey 2023, 138). This is above all realised through dependence on classical montage techniques. Intercutting between images, relationships are established between different times and spaces, sutured ultimately to the psyche of the protagonist through a returning facial close-up; her memory work is, in turn, implied. This is apparent from the outset, when the actors are first introduced alongside the sketches. Both portrayed solemnly navigating countryside spaces on what looks like a cold, dark, wet day; the very 'winds of history' are audible as Katharina is caught over her shoulder in close-up, turning back up a desolate road, hurriedly and determinedly. While neither is anchored by narration of any sort, they are full of endeavour, each possibly with somewhere to be and something to do. Katharina appears lost and fretful. A jump cut jarringly relocates her on the road, evoking a sense of the displacement. Her breath provides a kind of haptic audibility on the soundtrack, matching the small clouds escaping her mouth. As she gazes out onto the fields and skies, there is a cut to an old photograph of two women (Figure 3). The camera slowly zooms in on them. They wear only skirts, and one has a bag on her shoulder. They are resting outside a wooden dwelling. The face of one is obscured by sunlight; the other coolly leans back and rests her head on her fist. We learn from the closing credits that the photographs have been sourced from the Belgian Royal Museum of Central Africa, which is about 50 miles south of Antwerp. Perhaps one of these women is Katharina in her home, or even friends or family. After a few seconds, a cut returns us to a blurry close-up of Katharina, still panting. The image slowly retains focus and the

Figure 3. Peripeteia: use of archival photography sourced from The Royal Museum for Central Africa in Tervuren, Belgium. Archival imagery functions as recall, speculating backstory for Katharina.

breathing eases. Another cut to Katharina running down that desolate road from before, in slow motion this time, in wide shot as if viewed without her knowledge. A cut back to her close-up profile, as she looks down, frowning, as if in sudden realisation of something awful. Her head turns towards the screen, returning our gaze.

Unlike the more essayistic approach to montage which we find in many of Akomfrah's earlier films, *Peripeteia* relies on classical editing techniques to signify the recall of each character. Cutting between the action and the photographic inserts, we are encouraged to connect the juxtaposed spaces and times. This in turn functions to provide an explanation for Katharina's angst. Similarly, the combination of gesture, expression and the use of archival fragments realises a sense of psychical depth for the anonymous man. His blankness of expression is perhaps reminiscent of Edouard Glissant's argument for 'the right to opacity' (Glissant 1997, 189);[2] Glissant's argument would suffice were my own argument about performance alone. However, when taken as one element amongst a montage of archival objects, which are in turn motivated by a desire to restore subjectivity, opacity seems insufficient. For instance, the man's trudge through the landscape is intercut with fragments of Hieronymus Bosch's epic triptych, *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (1503–1515) (Figure 4). Begun before the sketches of Katharina and the man, by a painter working at the same time and in the same place as Dürer, Bosch's anonymous black figures would probably have been known to him. These figures are completely featureless but, in many cases, they are shown to be threatening and, in some cases, even sexually threatening. Again, we are presented with a racist trope that predates the start of European colonialism as well as the photographic and cinematic representations that will later follow. The primacy of montage in Akomfrah's practice encourages an association between the man and those fragments; the viewer inevitably juxtaposes the performance with them, associating something of the man's apparent feeling (or lack thereof) with those images. Later, when we see the photograph of the

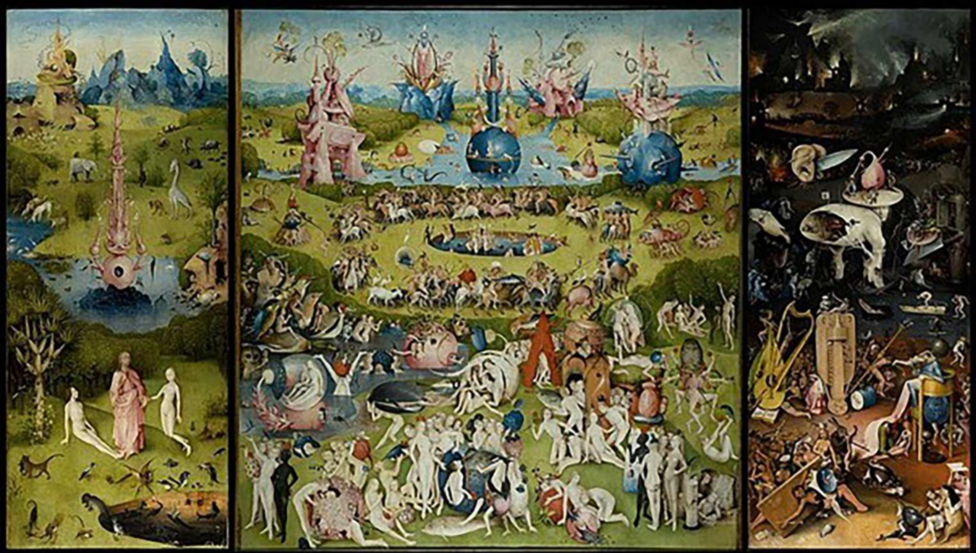


Figure 4. Bosch, Hieronymus. 1490–1500. The Garden of Earthly Delights. Triptych. Grisaille, Oil on oak panel. Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, Spain.

Figure 5. The reenactment of an archival photograph, speculating a relationship between Katharina and the anonymous man in *Peripeteia.*

man resting and being comforted on the leg of a woman, a scene which is then reenacted in the film-world, we are similarly encouraged to relate the two narratives, speculating some sort of connection, familiarity, or even source of interpersonal nurturing between the pair (Figure 5). The film ends shortly after this image of affection, jarring with the cold alienation of the landscape.

By bringing together Katharina and the anonymous man in the same space, *Peripeteia* becomes a dream-like exercise in possibility; a 'what if' for two figures who were both subject to impossible conditions in their own time and the limits of two-dimensional representation in the archive. *What if these people could meet? Or knew one another?* They become symbolic of the countless other enslaved racialised subjects in imperial Europe, isolated and denied connection with family and friends. There is an aching loneliness and despair apparent beneath the surface of these characters, despite the minimalism of their performances. And in this, with little by way of overt narrativisation, the film retains just enough of Glissant's opacity to restore a human ambiguity – an inner life that cannot be known, an admission of the limits of fiction and, perhaps, a commitment to an archival convention that prioritises fidelity to the record. Challenging the hollow nature of early representations while resisting outright fictionalisation, *Peripeteia* is too ambiguous to be a didactic history lesson and not nearly melodramatic enough to be a costume drama. I want to argue that it should be considered a kind of reenactment that is primarily concerned with using archival material to challenge the historical record (of absence). In its occupation of thresholds between fiction and non-fiction, *Peripeteia* exemplifies the reenactment's challenge to documentary convention. In Bill Nichols terms,

> Unlike the contemporaneous representation of an event – the classic documentary image, where an indexical link between image and historical occurrence exists – the reenactment forfeits its indexical bond to the original event. It draws its fantasmatic power from this very fact. The shift of levels engenders an impossible task for the reenactment: to retrieve

a lost object in its original form even as the very act of retrieval generates a new object and a new pleasure (Nichols 2008, 74).

In what follows, I refer to the *archival reenactment* of *Peripeteia* in order to analyse the film's attempt to take on this 'impossible task'.

Documentary truth and colonised subjectivities

Peripeteia has been grouped with other Akomfrah films, including *Tropikos* (2016), *Auto Da Fé* (2016), *Precarity* (2017) and *Mimesis: African Soldier* (2018), all of which confront archival absence with meticulously designed dramatisation (Harvey 2023, 117–123). *Tropikos* restages Britain's earliest imperial explorations in Africa, undercutting its quotation of colonial nostalgia landscapes with dissonant sounds and disturbing scenes of enslavement. *Auto Da Fé* collates a history of migrations stemming from religious persecution, thereby creating speculative linkages across its two-channel mise-en-scène. Both *Tropikos* and *Auto Da Fé* imagine the experiences of anonymous people involved in their respective events. Similarly, *Mimesis: African Soldier* provides a series of tableaux staging the uniformed soldiers of Britain's overseas territories who fought for allied forces during the First World War. These images are juxtaposed with archival footage of African and Asian members of the armed forces, underlining both their rarity and their flatness. A similar approach is taken in *Precarity* – which has the most in common with *Peripeteia.* This three-channel installation film attempts to destroy the mythology around jazz music pioneer, Charles 'Buddy' Bolden. Survived only by a single photograph of him with his band, all that is known of Bolden besides his contribution to the musical form derives from hearsay around his mental health. As with the hollow sketches of Katharina and the anonymous man, *Precarity* juxtaposes these archival fragments with speculative scenes of reenactment from the world in which he lived.

In each of these films, subjects are deprived of a diegetic voice; people are dressed in context-appropriate costume and move slowly, or not at all, in spaces where black subjects have been altogether ignored in historical writing and portraiture. Insofar as Akomfrah has attempted to portray something that has happened in the past with these films, we might associate them all with a history of documentary reenactment. These do not look like better known documentary reenactments, which might serve to return to an event in order to challenge the official record, or to reorient perspectives or to provide cathartic closure or release. The most obvious reason for this difference regards the physical and institutional sites within which Akomfrah's films exist today. Despite his earlier career, these later films are video installations, associated more with museums and galleries than with documentary film or television. While *Peripeteia* premiered inside a conventional cinematic black box at the 2012 Toronto International Film Festival, it has since been exhibited as an installation in galleries and museums. There are nevertheless three reasons why this should not prevent its use of reenactment from being associated with documentary discourses. Firstly, because Akomfrah's previous work has been so influenced by – as well as influential to – documentary film history. Secondly, because of the prominence of the documentary mode in contemporary art practices. This has been sometimes termed 'the documentary turn'. Okwui Enwezor's curation for *Documenta 11* in 2002 is cited as a turning point, in this regard. It is notable for my argument that among Enwezor's art/documentary selections was Black Audio Film Collective's

Handsworth Songs (Black Audio Film Collective, 1986), which, to this date, remains Akomfrah's most famous film. Artists associated with the documentary turn are said to draw on the referentiality of documentary conventions only 'to assert a lack of belief in the possibility of documentary' to realise 'the real' (Balsom 2012, 153). It is unsurprising that the reenactment is so commonly found in contemporary art works employing documentary conventions. Jonathan Kahana has described how its 'theatricality calls into question the authenticity' of the documentary image (Kahana 2009, 47). In a similar vein, Stella Bruzzi has argued that the reenactment's 'greatest asset is its ability to enact doubt' (Bruzzi 2020, 206). Restaging an environment and attempting to recreate an event, while at the same time pronouncing its artificiality, reenactments by definition cannot be mistaken for 'reality'. As Megan Carrigy has it, 'for a reenactment to be recognised *as* a reenactment, it needs to foreground that it is staging and performing an event that has already taken place' (Carrigy 2022, 6). In the contemporary art context, what is viewed as an essentially critical effect comes to connect works of the documentary turn with notions of political art. This is peculiar considering documentaries are by no means essentially political. Nevertheless, I intend to argue that there is good reason to associate either attempts to represent 'reality', or to challenge the efficacy of such a representation, with a particular kind of positionality.

The third reason I choose to position these films in this way is due to their address of the coloniality of reenactment *as* a documentary convention. What I mean by this is the ways in which *Peripeteia* can be seen to pronounce a historical and formal indebtedness to a form of colonial representation endemic to the documentary reenactment, thereby responding to a legacy of misrepresentation in different forms of documentary image. In its pronounced acknowledgement of two real-life subjects' absence in history books, it encourages a historicisation of two characters in a particular time and place. But the film then draws on the performatively constrained territory of documentary reenactment to challenge the voiceless subjects of art history and archival photography.

These challenges to documentary convention regard two different regimes of knowledge. The first is the documentary film's epistemic desire to retain, or attain, the truth of something that has occurred. Documentary is usually defined through this commitment to truth, actuality, reference to 'the real', and therefore its desire to construct 'veridical representations' (Plantinga 2005, 111). While reenactments are commonplace in contemporary documentary, though, it appears that the self-conscious undermining of the representation it shows its viewer is as relevant as the aspiration to attain the truth. This tendency increases in documentary films of the 1980s, which provokes Linda Williams to describe truth as 'the receding horizon of the documentary tradition' (Williams 1993, 11). Despite a growing acceptance of what might be described as a kind of postmodern relativism, Thomas Austin has argued that 'screen documentary as a regime of knowledge must … continue to confront its epistemological limits, the provisional nature of its hermeneutics, and the remainder which escapes its understanding' (Austin 2016a, 430). Truth itself remains a priority even if only as an aspiration. It is in this sense that reenactments often offer a purposeful mode of accessing truth, by amplifying the 'affective engagement' of spectators, which Nichols argues 'resurrects the past to reanimate it with the force of a desire' (Nichols 2008, 87–88). Such a desire is often testament to the way reenactment is now viewed as a challenge to the truth-claims of documentary indexicality, in order to aspire towards the revelation of a previously undisclosed truth.

Reenactment fundamentally blurs the line between the actual and the performed, embodying the broader ambivalent tendencies of documentary film, which purport both to show and contest what is known about a particular subject. They have perhaps become so conventional within the documentary mode due to this essential unsettling of knowledge around different subjects. However, reenactment was not always so overtly pronounced in documentary film. Much of what constitutes early documentary filmmaking is dominated by undeclared, covertly performed scenes of 'actuality'. Where the postmodern reenactment gifted documentary spectators a mechanism for withholding trust, the function of reenactment in colonial documentary could not be more different. It is instead all about creating and consolidating mythology. This is the second regime of knowledge these reenactments are concerned with challenging: that colonised subjects are known to film history. This is especially salient in the context of colonial and postcolonial narratives which are today forced to confront a legacy of imperial imagery, which was concerned above all with conveying a kind of knowledge detached altogether from the experience of its subject.

Akomfrah's late works seem to challenge a history of films which have been strangely labelled 'ethnographic documentary'. These films are typically authored by a non-native director, whose concern is to apply a 'colonial gaze' (Alloula 1986; Decker 1990; Shohat 1991; Williams 1989). Resulting works are surely more emblematic of their author's own ideological position than the real-life experiences of those the films show. Barbara Creed and Jeanette Hoorn have analysed the Lumière brothers' productions in North Africa and Indochina, arguing these films represent some of the earliest examples of 'the role that film and the media play during the process of viewing in the creation of intercultural subjectivities' (Creed and Hoorn 2011, 235). It is significant, too, that actuality films played a key role in the early evolution of film language (Creed and Hoorn 2011, 226), ensuring identical techniques for constructing preferred colonial subjectivities persist in documentary representations of otherness today. The delimitation of colonial subjectivities does not end with the film camera. Peter J. Bloom has argued that ethnographic film drew on 'the scientific authority of photographic representation to make arguments about the social and moral imperative to transform the colonial landscape' (Bloom 2008: xi). On the one hand, this worked to undermine traditional cultural practices in healthcare and religious ritual. On the other, indigenous cultural practices had, by this point in the colonising process, changed to such an extent that the desired exoticism of natives had sometimes disappeared altogether. This is exemplified in the work of American missionary Ray Phillips, who led a pioneering film screening series as a kind of 'social mobility' for black South Africans in the 1920s. Phillips was instrumental in the formation of film culture in South Africa, and this led to a desire to make films – a charge he would himself come to lead (Reynolds 2015, 110). But when Phillips sought to make an unfavourable comparison between the medical practices of South Africa with the United States, he was struck by the indigenous healer's western attire. This created 'an aura of inauthenticity that had to be countered through the reconstruction of now-defunct social forms' (Reynolds 2015, 113). Phillips had his crew persuade the man to wear something more 'authentic'.

Such falsehoods of deceptive reenactment persist through the actuality's transition into the Flahertian documentary film. As Colin MacCabe argues in his introduction to the edited collection, *Empire and Film*, 'the very form of the documentary can only be

understood in relation to the complex legacy of imperialism' (MacCabe 2011, 10). In the same collection, Lee Grieveson credits the establishment of new institutions of film production with the development of the documentary form itself. It is in this sense that he describes the documentary form as 'part of a wider governmental recourse to media for the purposes of shaping the attitudes and conduct of populations' (Grieveson 2011, 73–75). Grieveson captures both the aesthetic and ideological resonance of interwar imperial documentary film in his reference to André Bazin's thesis on the ontology of the photographic image, claiming that it attempts to 'mummify' change (Bazin 1960). This entanglement has been signalled by Fatimah Tobing Rony too, who has explained how classical film theorists exalted *Nanook of the North* (Robert Flaherty 1922) with 'the reality of a higher truth', arguing that cinema's 'strategies for encoding authenticity' through the scripting of a romanticised western cartoonish primitivism would come to inspire later documentary film – from the Colonial Film Unit's Griersonian legacy in Britain through to *cinéma verité* (Rony 1996, 15). Referring to Jean Rouch's *Moi, Un Noir* (1958), Jeffrey Geiger describes the ethnographic film camera as operating like a 'minstrels mask' (Geiger 1998, 7), evoking white disavowal and fetishisation of difference (Modleski 1991, 119). Rouch's film exhibits the documentary mode's codification of neutral observation, allowing even interventions like voiceover narration and overt direction, not to mention more subtle visual techniques and editing, to appear as though authored by the on-screen subject. At a 1961 roundtable discussion organised by UNESCO, following the removal of the Laval Decree, Rouch gave a speech celebrating the legacy of the Colonial Film Unit, as well as the Belgian Missionary Cinema and the Ethnographic Film Committee (which is the organisation Rouch himself founded). Of course, he referred to these in wholly positive terms as though Africa has been gifted cinema by its colonisers (Diawara 1992). While his films are an attempt to escape the exoticism of early ethnographic documentarists, Rouch's method was famously attacked by Ousmane Sembène, who argued that ethnographic films look at Africans as if they are insects. Rouch responded by defending what he saw as a humble mission (ethnographers are 'like a breed of unhappy monks', he said) (Rouch and Sembène 1982), neglecting altogether Sembène's concern for the lived experiences of African people in that moment. For all his apparent goodwill, Rouch's preservationist desires represented yet another strategy for encoding authenticity.

The legacy of Rouch and *cinéma verité* is generally far more favourable than this would let on, of course. Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino would credit the form with revolutionary potential, claiming it offers 'something that the system finds indigestible' (Solanas and Getino 1970, 6). Throughout Latin America in the late 1960s, a revolutionary cinema emerged which transgressed national boundaries and the appropriation of documentary forms, alongside a variety of other styles. This was seen to wilfully neglect bourgeois generic categories. The objective was to subordinate all that was filmic to the greater social mission. The camera became a weapon of visuality to be utilised against a contemporary regime, 'no longer interested in quality or technique' (Espinosa 1979, 26). In Roy Armes's *Third World Film Making and the West,* the adoption of the documentary mode is perceived as a rejection of the national film industry and a sign that 'the revolutionary fervour of the late 1960s has not led film makers to turn their backs on reality' (Armes 1987, 96). This distinguishes the Latin American Third Cinema from other 'third world cinemas', which were being theorised at the

time (Burton 1985). As Sembène so famously proclaimed, and Rachel Gabara has explained, African filmmakers working against the backdrop of newfound postcolonial independence 'worked to escape the bounds of the conventional documentary realism so often affirmed by European filmmakers documenting Africa from and for the outside' (Gabara 2010, 324). Gabara locates an unfavourable legacy within the documentary form, which clashes with the embrace of the mode commonly cited in Third Cinema theories. However, far from rejecting the non-fictional altogether, this encourages contemporary filmmakers from Africa and its diaspora to innovate with its conventions.

It is significant for my purposes that N. Frank Ukadike associates the emergence of documentary in African filmmaking with 'the decolonisation of the screen' (Ukadike 1995, 88). Ukadike's emphasis of the ways in which filmmakers including David Achkar and Jean-Marie Teno 'dismantle the myths of objective or subjective documentation' (Ukadike 1995, 95), is a reference to the subversion of the ethnographic legacy of colonial gazing upon African bodies. Maria Loftus has explained how filmmakers including Paulin Soumanou Vieyra and Safi Faye attempted to appropriate the ethnographic documentary form, decades prior to the examples Ukadike cites. Loftus refers to the ethnographic documentary's ability 'to represent and to highlight cultural specificities' and to 'be a tool of cultural introspection, both personally and nationally, a contemporary means of visiting the past and filling the void created by the official, disparaging colonial discourse' (Loftus 2010, 44). So resonant in this regard, Vieyra's films are referenced by Gabara, as an example of postcolonial African filmmakers' attempts to 'expand colonial cinema's narrow approach to nonfiction'. A British-Ghanaian who returns repeatedly to the legacy of African diasporic representation, Akomfrah fills his films with this self-same desire both to know a subject in their context but also to challenge the ways in which such subjects have been 'known' in film historically. *Peripeteia* achieves this by using reenactment to confront another documentary convention – that is, the use of archival materials as an index of truth.

On archival boundaries and fabulation

When we approach both the absence and presence of bodies from colonised places, in the context of place-oriented, ethnographic documentary, the images asks that we inhabit a position of bad faith. The spectator assumes a colonial perspective which subjugates an entirely non-consensual body, assigning that body a role it did not admit or accept knowingly. Such images continue to circulate as the most influential way of defining racialised subjects. They have gained, if not authentication, then at least a level of historical capital sufficient to limit the range of possible subjectivities thereafter. Early documentary images often fill the absences within the official historical archive. Akomfrah's own reflections are particularly compelling on this front:

> In some sense, of course, the archive does exist as a kind of official memory of place, a moment and so on. But the archive survives in a very complicated way for diasporic subjectivities. Someone made the point that diasporic lives are characterised by the absence of monuments that attest to your existence, so in a way the archival inventory is that monument. But it's contradictory because the archive is also the space of certain fabulations and fictions. So there needs to be critical interrogation of the archive. (Power 2011, 62)

It has been argued previously that this 'critical interrogation of the archive' is one of the most consistent threads running through Akomfrah's work (Harvey 2023, 9–12), and that the shift into museum spaces has resulted in an attempt 'to wrestle with how one insinuates a notion of the archival' (Austin 2016b). However, by attempting to engage with such a breadth of material, there is a possible neglect for what might be a productive tension between what Akomfrah aspires towards and what Saidiya Hartman has famously termed 'critical fabulation' (Hartman 2008, 11). This concept relates to writing that is concerned with critically engaging areas of historical silence; it seeks to replace these silences with a voice. In her more recent work, such as *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments* (Hartman 2019), Hartman is drawn to fictionalise the inner life of subjects for whom the archive holds little more than a trace. The form is a little like the one I aimed for with the opening of this article: mood and motivation is speculated upon; the speaker shifts between past and present tenses; there is a desire to highlight what would be typically considered redundant detail. Hartman's accomplished literary voice embellishes the supposed realities of her subjects. This is not to say she simply writes narratives that are 'based on a true story'; even arriving at a departure point for the writing process itself is clearly far more painstaking than conventional adaptation. In her much-quoted essay 'Venus in Two Acts', Hartman returns to her book *Lose Your Mother* (Hartman 2007) for a section regarding the murder of two girls by a slaver. In the essay, she describes her desire to breathe life into her subject, as though to restore a voice denied in history books as much as in reality. Hartman chose not to tell this story, 'because to do so would have trespassed the boundaries of the archive': 'Finding an aesthetic mode suitable or adequate to rendering the lives of these two girls … was beyond what could be thought within the parameters of history' (Hartman 2008, 8–9). Critical interrogation is synonymous with this trespassing of archival boundaries: we are breaching the parameters of history. Reenactment itself might be said to exist on this very threshold – between the archive which embodies history and that which lies beyond it.

More recently, Hartman has discussed needing to 'exploit the contradictions of the archive' (Hartman 2021, 129), as well as channelling, refiguring and countering subjects (Hartman et al. 2022, 90). In the decade that passes between her two books, she seems to overcome an initial fidelity to a historiographic convention which demands preservation of the archive as one found it. A parallel might be drawn too with Ariella Azoulay's description of the archive as 'imperial shutters' (Azoulay 2019, 79). For Azoulay, conflating the archive with history proper is an 'ontological violence' that leads to an 'epistemological violence': 'The regime of the archive shapes a world, not just distorts the ways it is perceived' (Azoulay 2019, 79). The two epistemic challenges with which this argument is concerned coalesce in Azoulay's text. The conventions of documentary film create an 'aura of authenticity' (Baron 2012, 103), which is really nothing more than a strategy for encoding authenticity in relation to the indigenous subjects of the colonial archive.[3] Documentary's veridical commitment has become more than a distortion of the other's reality; it has shaped an entire world in the eye of the spectator. It is little wonder, then, that Hartman and Azoulay turn to concepts like fabulation and potentiality, or Gil Z. Hochberg to 'archival imagination' (Hochberg 2021). Such critical frameworks are as concerned with signalling the colonial power of the archival system itself, as they are in filling its absences. In Tavia Nyong'o's terms, this is simply the tactical fictionalising of a world that is already false (Nyong'o 2019, 6).

Figure 6. *Peripeteia:* Katharina enjoys the landscape, complicating the kinds of affective registers determining black subjectivities in such spaces, providing an imaginative space of pleasure for the protagonist.

Despite the differences between the written and visual forms, the attempts of Hartman and others to agitate with the historical archive through imaginative fabulation has much in common with *Peripeteia.* Besides her name and Dürer's sketch, we have no way of accessing Katharina's world, the things she did, or felt or thought. In order to satisfy the curiosity provoked by the drawing, the film is forced to imagine in relation to the archival boundaries – which, moreover, Katharina has played no role in defining. The film speculates on the kind of tasks she might have had to undertake, in an unnamed rural location in northern Europe. When we see her skipping through the fields, the film imagines her enjoying the landscape as much as working in it (Figure 6). Similarly, despite the anonymity of the man, he is given new clothes and becomes a kind of rambler, with a large wooden staff to support his movement on this journey through the landscape. His expression evokes a deep pensiveness, or perhaps sadness. He appears to be looking for something, or someone. A narrative emerges as the two are brought together in the closing scenes: two people, robbed of what and who they know, with only each other, in an environment at once romantic and harsh. These are inferences are based on several viewings of the film, with many different contextual dimensions in mind. And this is essentially how reenactment works; in Nichols' terms, it is a retrieval of a lost object that leads to the finding of a new one. The retrieval of Katharina and the anonymous man as images leads to the finding of them as subjects with feelings and thoughts. Yet, when reminiscence is implied, their memories are connected to a particular way of life, which is in turn derived from a particular kind of imagery (Renaissance painting; ethnographic photography). It is in this sense that the reenactment remains determined

by the boundaries of the archive. The fiction is contained by what is known; but what is 'known' is, in turn, shown to be little more than a fiction. It might be argued that this commitment to the archival inventory distinguishes the archival reenactment from critical fabulation, in that it is the juxtaposition of archival material with the dramatisation which reveals the fictions and fabulations existing in that very inventory.

The tension produced here demonstrates the ability for the reenactment to enact doubt and to call into question the authenticity of documentary images. Despite this clear potential for reenactment to antagonise colonial imagery, it is still treated with suspicion by historians. Vanessa Agnew assumes an ambivalent position on the subject, challenging the form's dismissal by more elitist historians but ultimately remaining sceptical of what it can bring to historical understanding. It is, ultimately, viewed as an affective mode that reveals more about its practitioners than it does its subject (Agnew 2007). Tellingly, this ambivalence revolves around the 'crisis of authority' brought about by historical reenactment, which operates on two fronts: through the removal of the historian's privileged voice and through the prioritisation of 'authenticity' (that is, the reenactment's verisimilarity to the event it recreates). But what if there is no reliable source to which one can refer? Or worse still, what if the source to which the many refer is, in itself, unreliable? Is the authenticity of the reenactment not in fact being judged by a code constituted behind imperial shutters? Agnew is sceptical of the reenactment's 'body-based discourse'; the reanimation of the past 'through physical and psychological experience' apparently transgresses the parameters of history. Such critiques of reenactment, in the context of colonial representation, would appear to be yet another way of prohibiting not only what kind of knowledge is permissible but whose experience can be described as properly historical. Between historiography and documentary exists the archive: a space which would appear to embody the imperial gatekeeping function of the filmed image.

Returning to Dürer's pictures invites a consideration of the ways in which historical narratives are reliant on so called 'body-based discourse'. But what are the many biographical accounts of European renaissance artists if not body-based? Historians have always sought to account for motivation through recourse to personal circumstances, as much as social and cultural context, so trying to account for the life of the artist's subject would seem equally valid. The centring of affective experience is itself derivative of the *quattrocento* perspective; what is this Vitruvian centring of a human subject in a world, if not body-based? Theorists of the cinematic apparatus argued that this perspective still dominated four hundred years later, when cinema was invented, and that watching subjects on a screen provided a productive mode of identification for spectators (Baudry 1974). Is it not the case, then, that the critique of reenactment as a mode of historiography is only as valid as the critique of cinema as a mode of representation? I close this argument by turning to the decolonial critique of representation, which is one of the founding logics of coloniality as it exists through modernity. Challenging the place of colonial subjects in the archive with this imaginative, performative mode, which brings together two subjects *out of time,* provokes an important consideration of the relationship between historicity and temporality.

Fugitive temporality

Peripeteia is a very modest attempt to breathe life into two subjects, without recourse to melodramatic cliché or further narrational explication. I have argued that these are

attempts to reenact a scene from their lives; that to do so mirrors a lineage of postcolonial subjects by taking necessary liberties with archival boundaries. But what if these archival reenactments are viewed not only as ways of rewriting past wrongs but also of potentialising futures? When Ukadike wrote about the potential for African documentaries to decolonise the screen, he was not addressing the past but anticipating a form yet to come. In its challenge to ethnographic representation and historical parameters, this archival reenactment operates similarly. Katharina and the anonymous man appear as if from the pages of the notebook, confused and lost in a strange space which is not their own. *Peripeteia* becomes a way to speculate on the birthing of the drawings themselves, coming into being in a place which cannot imagine them so multi-dimensionally. Their filmic bodies rely on the few black bodies that have been painted up till this point, and on photographs from a time that has not yet come. It proposes a kind of futurity, enabled through the collision of two opposing temporalities – the backward pull of the archive and the material presence of reenactment. This is a 'decolonial option', of the sort encouraged by Azoulay and many of the others mentioned previously. It relies upon a rethinking of the archival as a governing temporality. This is why Akomfrah's archival reenactments are so disrespectful of the thick boundaries that typically keep very different times and spaces apart.

Peripeteia, like many of Akomfrah's late works, draws on the ethnographic documentary form as an archival forebear, which relied on the reenactments of colonised subjects. Resituating two subjects lost to the winds of history, from a period pre-dating the imperial scramble, in an impossible time, place and proximity, the film antagonises its many relevant institutional frames. Moreover, I have argued that the significance of its subversive reenactment regards its challenge to historiographic convention as much as documentary. In both cases, imaginative dramatisation with and against the archive operates as a decolonial option, in the sense theorised by Walter Mignolo in a series of works: 'there is nothing but options, options within the imaginary of modernity and options within decolonial imaginaries' (Mignolo and Walsh 2018, 224). Mignolo's opposition between the homogeneity entailed in the narrative of modernity, and the pluralism of what he calls 'decolonial imaginaries', implies a lack of options in systems of coloniality. Irrespective of how one tries to move, it is ultimately to the beat of the same drum. It is, he argues, an option to accept the narrative of modernity – that is, the notion that, at a certain point in time, 'we' abandoned traditions and arrived at new ways of doing, thinking and being. This substitution of the old with the new, in a way that speaks for others, from the north to the south, is analogous to coloniality. Modernity dictates a colonial logic of otherness towards colonised people. It does so through unyielding commitment to the Hegelian march of history, propagating myths about progress and civilisation. The entanglement between ethnography and film helped realise some of the most productive circulation of such myths. Its influence on documentary film has been profound.

The western narrative of progress fuels the humanitarian work performed by Ray Phillips in the 1920s and by Jean Rouch in the 1950s. These men chose the option of bringing film to Africa – they also chose not to hand over the materials. The ethnographic film archive leaves us with representations of lives, no less fabulated than the story of Katharina and the anonymous man. These images were committed to capturing the 'natural, more authentic humanity' of indigenous people (Rony 1996, 12). The ethnographic gaze is exemplary of the ways in which documentary has relied on indigenous people

to stand as an 'index of authenticity' (Rony 1996, 195). It parallels the early cinematic fetishisation of black voices as a synesthetic appeal to notions of the authentic (Maurice 2002, 32). Such authenticity relies on a presumed 'metaphysical stasis' (Snead 1994, 3) on the part of the on-screen body; one appears as one always has been and will therefore remain, evermore. *Peripeteia* reveals how, as some of the oldest existing images of black people in Western art, the case of Dürer's sketches represents a historic precursor to cinematic claims on authenticity. In order to challenge it, Katharina and the anonymous man escape the timelessness of their restrictive frames. To overcome the crushing imperial shutters of the archive, these characters disrupt the linearity of the historical record. Fred Moten's politico-aesthetic conception of *fugitivity* is perhaps the best way of describing the temporal dislocation occurring within this archival reenactment. Initially used as a way of describing the disruptiveness of queer, black art in the Harlem Renaissance (as a parallel to the emergence of jazz music), fugitivity is a quintessential condition of the black radical tradition (Moten 2003, 35). It describes a restlessness born of enslavement and its legacy, a refusal of social and aesthetic conventions, both inevitable and necessary. Fugitivity is described as 'a desire for and a spirit of escape and transgression of the proper and the proposed' into a 'black representational space' (Harney and Moten 2016, 131) which is defined against the 'putatively straight Euro-spatialization of time and Euro-temporalization of space' (Harney and Moten 2016, 210). The black representational space to which Moten refers runs counter to the representational regimes of western art; of ethnographic documentary; and of classical cinematic narration.

The fugitive narrative of Katharina and the anonymous man is a story that must be retold, quoted from archival fragments, performed through figurative likeness of body and landscape. Yet, in this telling that is also a re-telling, in its collapsing distances in space and time between the two subjects, the story is a kind of nonsense. And nonsense is 'fugitive presence' (Harney and Moten 2016, 1). This encapsulates so precisely the apparently aimless yet determined, fretful yet calm, full yet empty qualities of the film's subjects. Fugitivity provides a narrative import as much as it does define the temporal rupture occurring in the film's manipulation of times, places and bodies. A sense is restored to the nonsense; previously sensible convention is undermined.

Like Hartman's fabulation, fugitivity is not only a effective way of framing *Peripeteia*'s deployment of documentary modes – it is another of the decolonial options essential to challenging the gaps and falsehoods of the archival inventory. Since such theorisations have notably been conceived by racialised subjects whose labour carries the burden of personal experience, the positionality of thinkers like Hartman and Moten (as well as others mentioned here) is a direct challenge to the Eurocentric history of Documentary Studies itself. Drawing from the fields of Postcolonial, Decolonial and Black Studies, creating a more contextually relevant framework for the challenges posed by *Peripeteia* (and films like it),[4] my hope is this article itself promotes future challenges to the selective archives of documentary scholarship.

Notes

1. This narrative is pieced together with elements from Joseph Leo Koerner's 'The Epiphany of the Black Magus Circa 1500', in David Bindman and Henry Louis Gates Jr. (eds.), *The Image of the Black in Western Art*

Volume 3, Issue 1 (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010), pp. 7–92; and M. J. Montgomery, 'ALBRECHT DUERER'S "KATHARINA" (1521)', *Black Central Europe*. Available online: https://blackcentraleurope.com/biographies/albrecht-duerers-katharina-mj-montgomery/.

2. For a further analysis of Glissant's writings in relation to Akomfrah's work, see Asbjørn Grønstad's *Film and the Ethical Imagination* (2016: 151–160).
3. Baron's approach, like Azoulay's, is to some extent indebted to Jacques Derrida's *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (University of Chicago Press 2018). Catherine Russell's *Archiveology: Walter Benjamin and Archival Film Practices* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018) is another useful reference point in this regard.
4. Similar approaches can be located elsewhere, perhaps indicative of an artistic interest in Black artistic acts of reclaiming/reworking colonial-era portraits of Black sitters. Examples include film works by Mati Diop, Rosine Mbakam, Monica de Miranda.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Notes on contributor

Dr James Harvey is a Senior Lecturer in Film and Media at the University of Hertfordshire. His research is preoccupied with the politics and aesthetics of film and screen media, with an emphasis on documentary, artists' moving image and art cinema. He is especially interested in themes of race, coloniality and nation. James is the author of *John Akomfrah* (BFI Publishing/Bloomsbury, 2023), *Jacques Rancière and the Politics of Art Cinema* (Edinburgh University Press, 2018) and the editor of *Nationalism in Contemporary Western European Cinema* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

ORCID

James Harvey http://orcid.org/0000-0002-8619-9190

References

Agnew, Vanessa. 2007. "History's Affective Turn: Historical Reenactment and its Work in the Present." *Rethinking History* 11 (3): 299–312. https://doi.org/10.1080/13642520701353108.

Alloula, Malek. 1986. *The Colonial Harem*, trans. Myrna Godzich and Wlad Godzich. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Armes, Roy. 1987. *Third World Film Making and the West*. London: University of California Press.

Austin, Thomas. 2016a. "Interiority, Identity and the Limits of Knowledge in Documentary Film." *Screen* 57 (4): 413–430.

Austin, Thomas. 2016b. "Temporal Vertigo: An Interview with John Akomfrah." *Senses of Cinema* 79. https://www.sensesofcinema.com/2016/feature-articles/john-akomfrah-interview/.

Azoulay, Ariella. 2019. *Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism*. London: Verso.

Balsom, Erika. 2012. *Exhibiting Cinema in Contemporary Art*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Baron, Jaimie. 2012. "The Archive Effect: Archival Footage as an Experience of Reception." *Projections* 6 (2): 102–120.

Baudry, Jean–Louis. 1974. "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus." trans. Alan Williams. *Film Quarterly* 28 (2): 39–47.

Bazin, André. 1960. "The Ontology of the Photographic Image." *Film Quarterly* 13 (4): 4–9. https://doi.org/10.2307/1210183.

Bloom, Peter J. 2008. *French Colonial Documentary: Mythologies of Humanitarianism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
Bruzzi, Stella. 2020. *Approximation: Documentary, History and the Staging of Reality*. London: Routledge.
Burton, Julianne. 1985. "Marginal Cinemas and Mainstream Critical Theory." *Screen* 26 (3–4): 2–21. https://doi.org/10.1093/screen/26.3-4.2.
Carrigy, Megan. 2022. *The Reenactment in Contemporary Screen Culture*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
Creed, Barbara, and Jeanette Hoorn. 2011. "Memory and History: Early Film, Colonialism and the French Civilising Mission in Indochina." *French History & Civilization* 4:223–236.
Decker, Jeffrey Louis. 1990. "Terrorism (Un) Veiled: Frantz Fanon and the Women of Algiers." *Cultural Critique* 17:177–195. https://doi.org/10.2307/1354144.
Diawara, Manthia. 1992. *African Cinema: Politics and Culture*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
Espinosa, Julio García. 1979. 'For an Imperfect Cinema', trans. Julianne Burton, *Jump Cut*, 20, 24–26.
Flaherty, Robert. dir. 1922. *Nanook of the North*. US/France: Les Frères Revillon.
Frank Ukadike, N. 1995. "African Cinematic Reality: The Documentary Tradition as an Emerging Trend." *Research in African Literatures* 26 (3): 88–96.
Gabara, Rachel. 2010. "Abderrahmane Sissako: Second and Third Cinema in the First Person." In *Global Art Cinema: New Theories and Histories*, edited by Karl Schoonover, and Rosalind Galt, 320–333. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Geiger, Jeffrey. 1998. "The Camera and man: Colonialism, Masculinity and Documentary Fiction." *Third Text* 12 (42): 3–17.
Édouard Glissant, 1997. *Poetics of Relation*, trans. Betsy Wing. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
Grieveson, Lee. 2011. "The Cinema and the (Common) Wealth of Nations." In *Empire and Film*, edited by Colin MacCabe, and Lee Grieveson, 73–114. London: BFI Publishing/Palgrave Macmillan.
Harney, Stefano, and Fred Moten. 2016. *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study*. New York: Minor Compositions.
Hartman, Saidiya. 2007. *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
Hartman, Saidiya. 2008. "Venus in Two Acts." *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 12 (2): 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1215/−12-2-1.
Hartman, Saidiya. 2019. *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company.
Hartman, Saidiya. 2021. "Intimate History, Radical Narrative." *The Journal of African American History* 106 (1): 127–135. https://doi.org/10.1086/712019.
Hartman, Saidiya, Huey Copeland, Leah Dickerman, and Pamela M. Lee. 2022. "Between Visual Scenes and Beautiful Lives: A Conversation with Saidiya Hartman." *October* 180:81–104.
Harvey, James. 2023. *John Akomfrah*. London: BFI Publishing/Bloomsbury.
Hochberg, Gil Z. 2021. *Becoming Palestine: Towards an Archival Imagination of the Future*. Durham: Duke University Press.
Kahana, Jonathan. 2009. "Introduction: What Now? Presenting Reenactment." *Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media* 50 (1 & 2): 46–60.
Loftus, Maria. 2010. "The Appeal of Hybrid Documentary Forms in West Africa." *French Forum* 35 (2/3): 37–55.
MacCabe, Colin. 2011. "To Take Ship to India and see a Naked man Spearing Fish in Blue Water': Watching Films to Mourn the End of Empire." In *Empire and Film*, edited by Colin MacCabe, and Lee Grieveson, 1–20. London: BFI Publishing/Palgrave Macmillan.
Maurice, Alice. 2002. ""Cinema at Its Source": Synchronizing Race and Sound in the Early Talkies." *Camera Obscura: Feminism, Culture, and Media Studies* 17 (1): 31–71. https://doi.org/10.1215/02705346-17-1_49-31.
Mignolo, Walter, and Catherine E. Walsh. 2018. *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Modleski, Tanya. 1991. *Feminism Without Women*. New York: Routledge.
Moten, Fred. 2003. *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
Nichols, Bill. 2008. "Documentary Reenactment and the Fantasmatic Subject." *Critical Inquiry* 35:72–89. https://doi.org/10.1086/595629.
Nyong'o, Tavia. 2019. *Afro-Fabulations: The Queer Drama of Black Life*. New York: New York University Press.
Panofsky, Erwin. 1955. *The Life and Art of Albrecht Dürer*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Plantinga, Carl. 2005. "What a Documentary Is, After All." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 63 (2): 105–117. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0021-8529.2005.00188.x.
Power, Nina. 2011. "Counter-Media, Migration, Poetry: Interview with John Akomfrah." *Film Quarterly* 65 (2): 59–63. https://doi.org/10.1525/FQ.2011.65.2.59.
Reynolds, Glenn. 2015. *Colonial Cinema in Africa: Origins, Images, Audiences*. Jefferson: McFarland and Company Ltd.
Rony, Fatimah Tobing. 1996. *The Third Eye: Race, Cinema, and Ethnographic Spectacle*. Durham: Duke University Press.
Rouch, Jean, and Ousmane Sembène. 1982 'Like insects', CinémAction, 'Jean Rouch, un griot gaulois,' 77–78.
Shohat, Ella. 1991. "Imaging Terra Incognita: The Disciplinary Gaze of Empire." *Public Culture* 3 (2): 41–70. https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-3-2-41.
Snead, James. 1994. *White Screens, Black Images: Hollywood from the Dark Side*. London: Routledge.
Solanas, Fernando, and Octavio Getino. 1970. "Towards a Third Cinema." *Cinéaste* 4 (3): 1–10.
Williams, Amie. 1989. "Dancing with Absences: The Impossible Presence of Third World Women in Film." *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies* 17 (3): 44–56.
Williams, Linda. 1993. "Mirrors Without Memories: Truth, History, and the New Documentary." *Film Quarterly* 46 (3): 9–21. https://doi.org/10.2307/1212899.
Wolfthal, Diane. 2013. "Household Help: Early Modern Portraits of Female Servants." *Early Modern Women: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 8: 5–52.