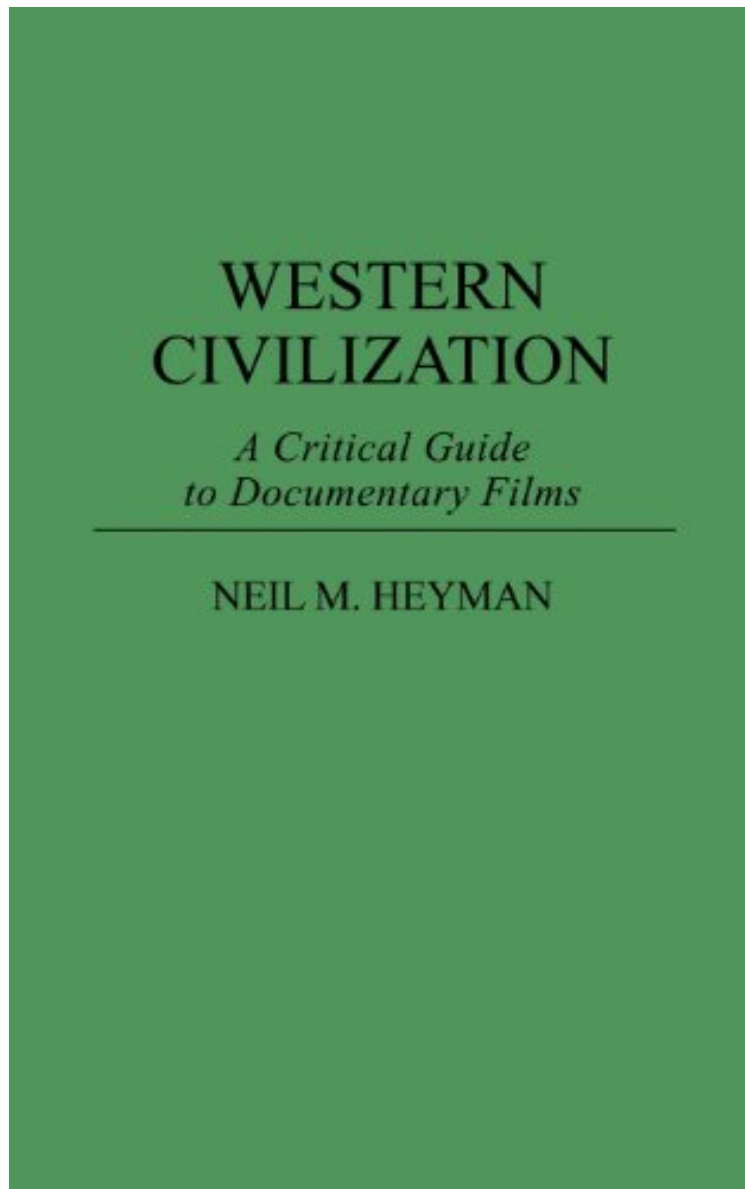


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# Western Civilization: A Critical Guide to Documentary Films

*Neil Heyman*

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## Films:

Offering critical reviews of over 170 widely available documentaries, this book provides a unique guide for instructors teaching the History of Western Civilization and specialized European history courses. Coverage is from ancient times to the post World War II era. Selecting films that instructors would be likely to consider using, Heyman provides lengthy critical evaluations. Each evaluation includes a brief summary, a letter grade from A to D, a discussion of the film's technique, a consideration of its organization, and in most instances, a specific statement of its strong and weak points. Many evaluations include specific indications of how a film can be integrated into a course on Western Civilization. Information is also provided on length, release dates, and where films can be obtained. Arranged chronologically, chapters cover films on major time periods or topics such as the Renaissance or Fascism and Nazism, enabling instructors to choose films that will illustrate specific teaching topics in European history.

From Booklist Critical reviews of 173 documentaries suitable for use in Western Civilization courses are arranged in chronological order here. Each entry includes length, year of production, color or black-and-white designation, producer or distributor, and name of the series of which the individual film may be a part. A letter grade is assigned to each film that reflects the author's assessment of its relative worth for classroom use. These grades range from A ("excellent film") to D ("inferior film") and are further explained in the preface. A summary of a line or two characterizes each film, followed by a critical essay of several paragraphs. There are indexes by subject, series, and title. Although many of the films included are parts of larger series familiar to viewers of public television (e.g., *The Ascent of Man*, *Civilisation*, and *A Walk through the 20th Century with Bill Moyers*), the lack of contact information beyond the name of the producer or distributor is a drawback. Though the author mentions the names of several university audiovisual departments where the films are available for rental, and the titles of several film locator reference books, more complete contact information would be preferable. While past eras are well covered in the selection of films, the post-World War II period is represented by only a handful of entries, most of which are episodes from *Europe: The Mighty Continent*, a 1976 television series. There have been a number of worthwhile documentary series about events after 1945 that might have been included, such as *Vietnam: A Television History* or *Eyes on the Prize*. Those criticisms aside, there doesn't seem to be a comparable source. This work does fulfill its stated purpose, and academic and high-school libraries supporting Western civ courses may want to consider. "Critical reviews of 173 documentaries suitable for use in Western Civilization courses are arranged in chronological order here...there doesn't seem to be a comparable source...academic and high-school libraries supporting Western civ courses may want to consider."-Booklist/Reference Books Bulletin "Heyman presents useful and critical reviews of a significant number of historical documentaries. His well-organized book proceeds from prehistory to the post-WW II era chronologically according to the films' subject matter...A useful reference guide."-Choice? Heyman presents useful and critical reviews of a significant number of historical documentaries. His well-organized book proceeds from prehistory to the post-WW II era chronologically according to the films' subject matter...A useful reference guide.-Choice? Critical reviews of 173 documentaries suitable for use in Western Civilization courses are arranged in chronological order here...there doesn't seem to be a comparable source...academic and high-school libraries supporting Western civ courses may want to consider.-Booklist/Reference Books Bulletin

From the Back Cover Since January 28, 1975, Eduard "Billy" Meier has been at the center of an intense international controversy both within the UFO community of supporters and between believers and skeptics. Meier contends that he is in direct personal contact with aliens from the star cluster Pleiades. He even claims to have flown aboard the Pleiadian spacecraft with his alien contact, "Semjase", visiting other worlds. To support these amazing claims, he has produced thousands of pages of "contact notes" along with photographs, film footage, and Pleiadian rock and metal samples. The aliens allegedly contact Meier at a commune in Switzerland called the Semjase Silver Star Center, which in many ways resembles a religious cult with Meier as its leader. To help substantiate Meier's claims, his American supporters have subjected his photographs and samples to laboratory testing, touting the results as positive proof of Meier's honesty. Intrigued by this tantalizing story, renowned UFO researcher Kal K. Korff conducted his own in-depth investigation. Korff traveled to Switzerland, where he went undercover inside the Meier camp. The result is *Spaceships of the Pleiades*, a fascinating account of the most documented UFO case of all time, a work that includes many previously unpublished Meier photographs and evidence long suppressed by Meier and his supporters.