

Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Acknowledgements | VII |
| Preface | XIII |
| I Introduction | 1 |
| 1 Introduction | 3 |
| 1.1 Poverty Fiction Theory: Related Work | 3 |
| 1.2 Short Note on African American Film History | 8 |
| 1.3 Documentary Theory: Photo Criticism | 10 |
| 1.4 Toward an Alternative Critical Documentary | 13 |
| 1.5 Summary and Critical Assessment of Susie Linfield's Position Regarding Documentary Photography | 14 |
| 1.6 Literary Journalism: A Short Sketch of Its Origins | 20 |
| 1.7 Characteristics of Literary Journalism | 21 |
| 1.8 Literary Journalism: Related Work | 23 |
| 1.9 Empathy | 23 |
| 1.10 Reality and Authenticity | 25 |
| 1.11 Sociological Perspectives on Poverty | 26 |
| 1.12 Outlook: Social Policy 1990–2010 | 33 |
| II The Underclass Revisited: 1991–1996 | 37 |
| 2 The Function of Innocence—Alex Kotlowitz's <i>There Are No Children Here</i> (1991) | 39 |
| 2.1 It Is Not Culture | 40 |
| 2.2 Nobody Is Born a Criminal | 42 |
| 2.3 Style as an Argument? | 46 |
| 2.4 Conclusion | 48 |
| 3 Between Clichés and Nuanced Knowledge—Coming of Age in John Singleton's <i>Boyz N the Hood</i> (1991) | 51 |
| 3.1 Approaches to Poverty in <i>Boyz N the Hood</i> | 51 |
| | IX |

| | | |
|----------|---|------------|
| 3.2 | Teachers, Policemen | 54 |
| 3.3 | Neighborhood Violence | 58 |
| 3.4 | Messages | 59 |
| 3.5 | Realism and the Film's Aftermath | 61 |
| 3.6 | Conclusion | 63 |
| 4 | Realism and Violence—Allen and Albert Hughes's <i>Menace II Society</i> (1993) | 65 |
| 4.1 | "...and Menace for All" | 65 |
| 4.2 | Growing Up as "America's Worst Nightmare" | 66 |
| 4.3 | Newspaper Reception | 70 |
| 4.4 | "This Is the Truth. This Is Real." | 74 |
| 4.5 | Conclusion | 75 |
| 5 | The Unjust Sadness of Poverty—Jonathan Kozol's <i>Amazing Grace</i> (1995) | 77 |
| 5.1 | Socio-Criticism | 77 |
| 5.2 | The Mott Haven Virtuous Poor: Melodrama, Moralism, Piety, and Pity | 85 |
| 5.3 | Kozol as a Person | 90 |
| 5.4 | Conclusion: Socio-Critical Dominance | 91 |
| 6 | Poverty, Power, Fantasy—Mary Ellen Mark's <i>A Cry for Help: Stories of Homelessness and Hope</i> (1996) | 93 |
| 6.1 | Into Fantasy | 94 |
| 6.2 | Texts and Agency | 99 |
| 6.3 | Conclusion | 103 |
| 7 | Escaping the Pull of Poverty?—Sapphire's <i>Push</i> (1996) | 105 |
| 7.1 | The Culture of Poverty Hypothesis in <i>Push</i> | 106 |
| 7.2 | How <i>Push</i> Challenges the Culture of Poverty Hypothesis via Structural Criticism | 107 |
| 7.3 | The Special Role of Race | 110 |
| 7.4 | Precious's Coming of Age: Agency vs. Horatio Alger | 111 |
| 7.5 | The Importance of Self-Esteem | 113 |
| 7.6 | Realism and Voyeurism: Poverty as a Spectacle? | 114 |
| 7.7 | Incest | 115 |
| 7.8 | Conclusion | 116 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| III Ambivalent Constructions: 2003–2011 | 121 |
| 8 The Inescapable Logics and Agony of Modern Poverty— Adrian Nicole LeBlanc’s <i>Random Family</i> (2003) | 123 |
| 8.1 Intimate Poverty | 123 |
| 8.2 Detailed Observations of Children’s Emotions | 125 |
| 8.3 Early Experience of Unreliability and a Life Devoid of Rules . . | 127 |
| 8.4 An Empathetic View of the Adults | 132 |
| 8.5 The Complexity of Poverty | 133 |
| 8.6 Outside Intervention’s Potential | 134 |
| 8.7 Conclusion | 139 |
| 9 The Power of Proximity—Poverty from within in Brenda Ann Kenneally’s <i>Money Power Respect: Pictures of My Neighborhood</i> (2005) | 141 |
| 9.1 Raw and Real | 141 |
| 9.2 <i>Money Power Respect</i> as an Example of Socio-Critical Poverty Documentary? | 145 |
| 9.3 Socio-Critical Markers | 146 |
| 9.4 Conclusion: Recasting Poverty Photography | 152 |
| 10 Poverty, Race, Pathology? Lee Daniels’s <i>Precious</i> (2009) | 155 |
| 10.1 The Controversy: Enforcement of Pathological Stereotypes . . | 155 |
| 10.2 Beyond Stereotyping and Horatio Alger Formula: Socio-Critical Potential | 157 |
| 10.3 Conclusion: A Stimulus to Reflect About Poverty | 160 |
| 11 The Poor Black Male Between Stereotype and Socio-Criticism—Sappho’s <i>The Kid</i> (2011) | 163 |
| 11.1 Stereotyping | 163 |
| 11.2 Empathy and Innocence | 166 |
| 11.3 Conclusion | 167 |
| IV Conclusion | 169 |
| 12 Conclusion | 171 |
| Works Cited | 173 |