



Doing Documentary Work New York Public Library Lectures in Humanities

By Robert Coles

Oxford University Press. Paperback. Book Condition: New. Paperback. 288 pages. Dimensions: 8.0in. x 5.3in. x 0.6in. Sitting in his study, William Carlos Williams once revealed to Robert Coles what he considered to be his greatest problem in writing a documentary about his patients in New Jersey. When I'm there, sitting with those folks, listening and talking, he said to Coles, I'm part of that life, and I'm near it in my head, too. . . . Back here, sitting near this typewriter--it's different. I'm a writer. I'm a doctor living in Rutherford who is describing a world elsewhere. Williams captured the great difficulty in documentary writing--the gulf that separates the reality of the subject from the point of view of the observer. Now, in this thought-provoking volume, the renowned child psychiatrist Robert Coles, author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Children in Crisis* series, offers a penetrating look into the nature of documentary work. Utilizing the documentaries of writers, photographers, and others, Coles shows how their prose and pictures are influenced by the observers frame of reference: their social and educational background, personal morals, and political beliefs. He discusses literary documentaries: James Agee's searching portrait of Depression-era tenant farmers, *Let Us Now...*

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