ANALYZING THE TERM „NONFICTION MOVIE"

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Abstract: A walk through the labyrinth of 'nonfiction movie', 'fiction movie', and 'documentary film' will let us clearly see the phases, procedures and processes, called "Analyzing the term „nonfiction movie"
By analyzing each of these notions, one theoretical basis will be set up for each to be used as a thesis of questioning. In the literature and semantics of grammar of language in this part of the world, this tool is known as 'Slovenska Antiteza'; so in order for this thesis to possess credibility, the idea of doing it is by setting the Thesis and Antithesis to come to conclusions.
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ANALYZING THE TERM „NONFICTION MOVIE"

What is a „nonfiction movie", What is a „nonfiction", What is a „movie"and what is their meaning.

Non-fiction or nonfiction is **content** (sometimes, in the form of a **story**) whose creator, in **good faith**, assumes responsibility for the truth or accuracy of the events, people, or information presented

Film, also called a movie, motion picture, theatrical film, or photoplay, is a series of still images that when shown on a **screen** create an illusion of motion images.

This is the most basic aspect of the analysis of the term as such, and for the purpose of this thesis we will go deeper into more aspects in explaining the 'nonfiction movie'.

There are two main questions which we will be considering this term. The first deals with a semantic question which deals with definitional problems. The first of these is (a) how does one define "non fiction film" and what films fall into that category. Obviously the answer to the first part will to some degree restrict the answer to the the second part.

There are two main aspects through which we can analyze this term. Of course, we will begin with an explanation first of all, and that is the semantic aspect of the word 'nonfiction movie', thus we will define which movies are entering this category.

The second aspect of the interpretation of the term will be through the prism of the nature of belonging and prejudice that can be very easily associated with this term. In a word, this would be described as use and abuse of the term.

If we go back to the definition that is in the beginning of this chapter:

Non-fiction or nonfiction is **content** whose creator, in **good faith**, assumes responsibility for the truth or accuracy of the events, people, or information presented.

It clearly states what the term Non-fiction is all about. Thus, the terms CONTENT and CREATOR, and 'assumes responsibility from the truth or accuracy of events' and their correlation will always be found in the most basic to the most favorable classification in these movies. The exact term that we are working on is coined, and the second part of it is FILM.

Film, also called a movie, motion picture, theatrical film, or photoplay, is a series of still images that when shown on a **screen** create an illusion of motion images.

Knowing the fact that under the term film we deal with an entire branch of art, and more than a century in which the term occupies an important role in the arts, industry and even the science of mankind.

In order to get clearer picture of the explanation of the nonfiction movie, beside the semantic analysis of this complex concept, we must go into a deeper analysis, of course through the Grammar of Film Language prism.

Of course, films as such can be divided into both Narrative and Non-Narrative. But in this part, I will just mention that this division in this thesis will be considered in the deeper layers, because of the very fact that such a division can be considered as a subdivision in every subsequent subdivision. In other words, this is mentioned in this section only to make it clear that this division is not the topic of discussion in the nomenclature and the explanations that are now the subject of research.

The second question deals with the nature of bias and prejudice. Even here we can see the problems of definition raising its ugly head. For a example a word like "discrimination" not long ago had a positive meaning which we still find in phrases like "he is a very discriminating person". One can easily "skew" things by choice of word. Words

like "Taiwan" and "Formosa" refer to the same piece of real estate, but indicate some difference in political orientation. Many racial and ethnic groups also have double terms – one which is offensive and one which is not. Italians and "wops" Jews and "Kikes" and so on.

Words have (a) denotational or referential meaning, (b) connotational meaning and (c) emotional aspects to them. Reference meaning deals with what the word refers to, denotational meaning.

Many people talk about the "arbitrary" nature of words saying "a word means whatever you want them to. That isn't quite true, there needs to be agreement on what words mean otherwise there is no communication (which some people may argue there isn't – but the very fact they can argue over it means that there has been some agreement. In a story a man hires a serving girl and says he wants to be called "master of all master". The house is to be called "High Topper Mountain" The cat is called "white faced simany", fire is called "hot cockalorum" and water "pondalorum"

One of the things that often develops are special languages (cants- often seen as a secret language – particularly of the underworld in which ordinary words have different meanings , paroles, argots, jargons – technical vocabulary of a given occupation) – all terms with special meanings which are associated with specific occupations or trades (port, starboard), there are social variations in language (fourth floor) which differ from other social dialects, there are geographical variations (Oklahoma pin/pen). Academicians are prone to writing in "special languages" with their own vocabularies which often use words with "technical definitions" (myth)

Now we talk about "the language of film". The question that needs to be considered here is how does one bias or skew film language? Much of film studies deals with the way in which directors and cinematographers constantly make choices relative to lenses, film stocks, composition, lighting, set decoration, costuming and so on. Each of the choices that are made imply a kind of bias. So it should be clear that bias is very possible in images as well as in words. Since all films make choices can there be any film which is non biased (Is there such a thing as a non biased film?)

Of course, when we look at the concept of Grammar of Film Language there are issues and goals that should be our priority. In the majority of the literature and studies from the Grammar of Film Language, we can notice that categorization, divisions and definitions of the GOLF principles themselves appear most often from the perspective of analyzing the images as the smallest units and further on to every single whole of the images.

Starting from this aspect of Grammar of Film Language, which certainly strives to analyze the terms first, through the cinematography, editing, to the final stage of directing (or to refer to it as conscious editing). This aspect is so strong that the root of the science itself is, in a fact, the foundation of this science lie on the Grammar of Film Language aspect.

For example, we can decide to make a movie in black and white technique or color. The possibilities offered to us in the supply of lenses are much more than 2. And each one of these lenses offer other features. For every take, the director and cinematographer should decide which lenses to use. It all opens a string of possibilities. Every take represents a composition of what the director wants and together with the cinematographer they determine the position of the camera, focus, lighting, and other elements that open a huge number of possibilities.

All these possibilities will be called Variables. So that the Variables available to the Director and Cameraman make their use or abuse affect the results that would come out of them. All of these variables are inextricably linked to the grammar of the Film Language. But it does not mean at all that we cannot go into the Grammar of Film Language through the screenwriting aspect. After all, I am a screenwriter and this thesis aims to engage the screenwriting aspects of "nonfiction movie". As soon as the images as such can be analyzed, why not embark on the analysis of words as the main tool for us script writers.

The words, if we start back in the history of philosophy are, of course, those who initially enacted various duties of man and nature, and later, we use them as such for the explanation of new terms describing new conditions.

In fact, the term Variable is a term that serves to describe how many opportunities we have at a given moment.

Just a moment, and we will get back to the word Variable

For a small digression, I will show a pattern of .....

In order for us to understand how all living organisms are related, they are arranged into different groups. The more features that a group of animals share, the more specific the group is. Animals are given scientific names so that people all around the world can communicate about animals, no matter what language they speak (these names are traditionally Latin words). Animals belong to a number of different groups, starting with the animal kingdom.

Example 1 - <u>Tiger</u>   Example 2 - <u>Orang-utan</u>
Kingdom: Animalia (Animal)   Kingdom: Animalia (Animal)
Phylum: Chordata (Vertebrate)   Phylum: Chordata (Vertebrate)
Class: Mammalia (Mammal)   Class: Mammalia (Mammal)
Order: Carnivora (Carnivore)   Order: Primates
Family: Felidae (Cat)   Family: Hominidae (Great Apes)
Genus: Panthera   Genus: Pongo
Species: Panthera tigris (Tiger)   Species: Pongo pygmaeus (Orang-Utan)

I use this example of nomenclature in the living world from two aspects. First of all, the scientific nomenclature as such is the basis of each thesis, and the same is encountered even in the numerical sciences like Physics and Mathematics. This phenomenon probably entails the roots of the development of our civilization, when the sciences as such are built on the basis of narrative explanation and the title of the basic concepts and their development to more specific ones.

And secondly, to see the fact that up to one branch in this case, until the third division;

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It is about the same kingdom, Phylum and Class in order to have significant differences in the more divisive divisions.

Order: Carnivora (Carnivore)   Order: Primates
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A similar division and subdivision will be encountered in the nomenclature of the films, but unlike this division that is a part of the exact science, in films, although it is a scientific approach, we must be aware that it is about art. Hence in the nomenclature, division, grouping and analyzes we will use boundaries which I would call amoebic. In other words, to make groupings and subdivisions and to analyze films in certain frames, we will have to use the term Variable.

The term "variable" is used to indicate the variety of choices that are possible. For example one can chose to make a film in color or in black and white. Color is one variable and black and white is another. The choices that are possible in lenses for example are far more than two. Lenses have many focal lengths and each one has its own characteristics. On every shot, the director and film director need to make a decision about which lens to use. Decisions need to be made about composition which has almost limitless variables in that "domain". Part of the decision about composition will involve for example, the distance between the camera and subject which when coupled with lens produces a huge number of possibilities.

NON FICTION FILM Genre is a word, which like all other words, needs to be defined. It implies a "type" of "film" (but not stock). Once we define "genre" we can define a number of sub groups. Consider something like the Linnean classification in biology which is a kind of taxonomic classification. (Things are done in levels)

So the genre can have sub genre Crime films Prison prison (Is an X a kind of Y? If yes a sub group) The number of genres depends on how one defines the term, as does the number of genres and subgenres. Consider genres like "comedy" "drama" "musicals" etc. Do "crime films" fall under dramas? Or is it possible to have a prison film which is a comedy? The problems are very complicated.

A QUESTION OF GENRE AND CLASSIFICATION
The question of classification of films into types constitutes a debatable practice. There are those who would claim that classification into types or more properly "genres" is significant only for marketing purposes. Others have proposed only three genres: fiction, non fiction and experimental. Even with only three there is
Structural Classifications
Functional Classification
Well, the question I am sort of raising is with non fiction film is really non fiction. By virtue of the particular choice of material, narration or what have you the film must of necessity have a bias and in many instances the bias is an

opinion rather than anything based on scientific evidence. It is sort of like the religious approach - for those who don't believe no proof is possible and for those who do, no proof is necessary. Films like The Thin Blue Line (The Thin Blue Line is a 1988 American underlined documentary film by Errol Morris, depicting the story of Randall Dale Adams, a man convicted and sentenced to death for a murder he did not commit.)

This film clearly speaks of an event that happened and tells of a factual situation. Despite the 'documentary' of the content, the creators decided to use a very interesting tactic of storytelling, a rather specific narrative structure. Hence the style of presentation is a rather controlled narrative structure. This way of storytelling influences the documentary of the film. With the fact that the viewer is dragged into a tangled structure of storytelling, however it is intriguing, every one of the audience doubts about whether this is true, whether this is Non Fiction. Well, all these are involved in reenactments which of course are debatably accurate and may have little relationship to the things that happened. Is Inherit the Wind (Inherit the Wind is a 1960 Hollywood film adaptation of the 1955 play of the same name, written by Jerome Lawrence and Robert Edwin Lee, directed by Stanley Kramer.)a non-fiction film because it is based on a real event being re-enacted (bit not saying so? Whereas Zelig is a "real" documentary (at least in terms of style) even though the life it documents is completely false. So where does documentary begin and fiction leave off?

Some have said there are only three genres: fiction, non fiction and experimental. Even with these three, some films are hard to fit into a category as we will discuss later.

Many of the books on non fiction films tend to equate non fiction with documentaries but in a sense, there may be as many "sub genres" to non fiction as there are in fiction films. Documentary may be just one kind.

We need also to consider the question of "form" and "content". How does the structure of something indicate the content (with or without bias, if such a thing is possible). One of the questions we need to examine is whether or not non fiction films differ from fiction films in form and/or content.

Consider a film like Zelig which is a "documentary" in the sense it is a biographical film in a specific style. But it is a biography of a non existent person.

Zelig is a 1983 American film written and directed by Woody Allen and starring Allen and Mia Farrow. Allen plays Leonard Zelig, a nondescript enigma, who, out of his desire to fit in and be liked, takes on the characteristics of strong personalities around him. The film, presented as a documentary, recounts his intense period of celebrity in the 1920s and includes analyses from contemporary intellectuals.

The documentary in this film is a style of presentation rather than an essence. In other words, if we penetrate deeper into the analysis of this film from the aspect of the story, and we analyze the story as such a typical story. Written and directed by Woody Allen, in which he occupies the main character Zelig, played by the director himself. On the other hand, all the elements of visualization of the film, such as framing, choice of position of the camera, objectives, composition, up to editing of video and sound. All of the elements are totally 'documentary'. If we remember that we mentioned in the previous chapters that Variables/Opportunities that the director has available are numerous. Here, we see a clear example of using a 'documentary' approach, but only in the style of presenting the essence. On the other hand, the essence that is transmitted through the story is fictive. However, in many written reviews about this film, we can find out that it is a Mockumentary Film.

What about narrative films based on real events? Biopics for example. Is Night and Day (about Cole Porter) a documentary Suppose that we want to to make a documentary film about a crime which happened some years ago in Queens? I will use reenactments and so on. A woman and her boyfriend kill off her husband for insurance money. The boyfriend, a salesman, gets the husband to sign without knowing it. Alas it has already been made. It is called Double Indemnity.

Despite the fact that the film Double Indemnity and its script are a work of Billy Wilder and Raymond Chandler, even the author of the book, James M. Cain. And it's a film-noir, and the visualization technique of this film gives us an impression that from the very beginning it is about a feature fiction film. In fact, this film Double Indemnity was selected for preservation in the National Film Registry. In 1998, it was ranked #38 on the American Film institute's list of the 100 best American films of all time, and in 2007 it placed 29th on their Anniversary list. All this clearly indicates that this is a feature film. However, for a slight digression and certainly comparison with Woody Allen's documentary, we will uncover the facts that the story of the film is based on.

„James M. Cain based his novella on a 1927 murder perpetrated by a married Queens, New York woman and her lover whose trial he attended while working as a journalist in New York. In that crime, Ruth Snyder persuaded her boyfriend, Judd Gray, to kill her husband Albert after having him take out a big insurance policy – with a double-

indemnity clause.The murderers were quickly identified, arrested and convicted. The front page photo of Snyder's execution in the electric chair at Sing Sing has been called the most famous news photo of the 1920s."

In this film it is a clear that it is a feature film compared to the 'documentary' of Woody Allen. From the presentation side and the style, there are elements of a feature film, and in the creation of the story, or the essence of the story, the authors retain themselves more to the actual events.

Therefore, it follows - Part of the question of defining is what criteria are used in definition of "non fiction films" The sub genres may be things like documentaries, educational films, art films, and so on.

We begin by looking at some early films – many of which are non fiction. Some are debatable. The early film of the workers leaving the factory is an interesting one. They are actually the workers and that is the Lumiere's factory. The workers, however, knew they were being filmed and so the question is are we watching a documentary or a scripted fiction film in which a real event is being reenacted?

In another sense we can see the film showing "Sandow, the Strong Man".

A film from 1896. This film is 45 seconds long, in which one of the first body builders, Mister Sandow is posing. This is a video presentation of his body and his muscles. And how would we classify this? Is this a fiction or non fiction film? Is it documenting his performance? In that regard all films with performances are documentary since they document the performance?

In the case of, for example, opera singers, many people interested would like to know in what films specific singers appear as performers. Kirsten Flagstad one of the great Wagnerian sopranos appears in The Big Broadcast of 1938 singing Brünhilde's Battle Cry (Hei ya to ho) from the 2nd act of Wagner's Die Walküre (the opera from which comes the "Ride of the Valkyrie" used so effectively in the helicopter scenes in Apocalypse Now).

When it comes to this film, there is no doubt that it is a Feature film, and the scene of the performance of the body is from the movie 'Sandow, the Strong Man'. If we only abstract the opera item from '2nd act of Wagner's Die Walkure' as an excerpt from the film 'The Big Broadcast' for comparison. When showing the body and the muscles as a performance would be a documentary approach, even on the side and the content of the first film, singing in directed conditions, in all elements needed for an opera, and the controlled conditions for them would be a documentary approach completely equal as in the first case.

While no one would argue the Big Broadcast of 1938 is a non-fiction film, there are non-fiction elements in it.

An interesting question can be raised as well between the difference between a play and a circus. What kind of distinctions can you draw between them?

The film, Nanook of the North and Robert Flaherty can be discussed Anthropology and is divided into two major areas, Physical and Cultural anthropology. Physical anthropology studies people as biological organisms, while cultural anthropology deals with social and behavior patters. Like other words, "culture" as a word has multiple meanings even among anthropologists/ Cultural anthropology itself is divided into three areas: archaeology, linguistics and ethnography/ethnology. Archaeology deals with past cultures through their material culture. Linguistics deals with language. Ethnography is a writing about a specific groups of people like "The Cheyenne" or "The Towo of Northern Australia". Ethnography looks at specific cultural institutions such as religion, social organization, folklore and so on cross culturally (that is to see it looks at these areas in different cultures).

Physical
Cultural
Archaeology
Linguistics
Ethnography
Ethnology

Ethnographic films then, are films which set out to record the way of life of a given people. There is little doubt that ethnographic films are clearly a kind of non fiction film. There are numerous problems associated with them.