

CHRONOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF NON-FICTION/DOCUMENTARY FILM, MAIN ELEMENTS AND THEIR SUBDIVISIONS

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Abstract: Starting from this, the text that follows will aim to place on a scientific reason, and on the other hand, it will open up realistic contemporary problems which arise from the research part of it.

Through a series of scientific works and books that will be used the theoretical support of the thesis and through personal involvement in the three projects mentioned above, I will try to give a clear distinction between these three notions: nonfiction movie, fiction movie and documentary in order to subsequently connect them all in an unbreakable relationship, a link that will show how the process is going on:

"Chronological development of Non-fiction/Documentary Film, main elements and their subdivisions" . In the text that follows, it will consist of quotes, examples and definitions from the theorists, who will be certainly listed as well. And for the rest of the notions, I will use a method of designing different options, knowledge and theories with which I will enclose a series of definitions that in my case are my design, more precisely and arrangement arranged by theorists whose theoretical foundations I use.

Keywords: non-fiction, documentary, film, elements, subdivisions

CHRONOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF NON-FICTION/DOCUMENTARY FILM, MAIN ELEMENTS AND THEIR SUBDIVISIONS

In this text, I will put the main features of the documentary film. On one hand, we will see the ways, approaches, tools and other elements that tend to influence the film from the point of view of the 'Form'.

On the other hand, we will consider how the chronological development of the documentary contributed to the use of these first to develop the 'Content'. And even on occasions, we will mention elements of approaching the boundaries of the Documentary and the Feature film.

Of course, the main interest is to explain the documentary film, its field of action and of development and the laws that apply to it. But this is almost impossible to get without taking into account actual developments in certain periods of the history of film.

Hence all the comparison, projections and conclusions that will be brought about for the documentary film, in this chapter they will be considered through the point of view of the feature film. In order to arrive to a clearer picture, which are the most important elements that have undergone changes and evolutions from the aspect of the Form, and which are the main elements of changes from the aspect of the Content.

I will mention, in order to check all aspects, we must consider the question of 'form' and 'content'.

DOCUMENTARY AS GENRE

One of the most basic elements of Documentary film is:

Absence of Fictionalizing Elements, or we can explain this as "Film which through certain conventions/dialogue creates the illusion that the events depicted were not controlled by the filmmakers."

But to make this DIALOGUE between the creators and the audience at all possible. Not to say that it can be expressed through the Grammar of Film Language, the creator will have to use the following 4 elements. I will name those elements as „4 functions of non-fiction film“ (Neither peculiar to documentary nor exclude that which is not documentary).

1. To record, reveal, or preserve;
2. To persuade or promote
3. To analyze or interrogate
4. To express

From here on, a question arises: Is there Realism in documentary?

Chronologically, from the very first pictures we have, there was a tendency for the film to stretch to the Recreation films of historic events. A small anecdote would be the event that took place in my city Bitola when the arrival of the Sultan Mehmed 5th Reshad in 1911 was filmed by the Brothers Manaki, who are the first cameramen in the Balkans and in Macedonia. For that occasion, they had set up a camera, their famous camera 300, to record the

arrival of Sultan Mehmed 5th Reshad. Certainly, this mass scene was packed with extras as soldiers and well-intentioned people. Notwithstanding this event, the arrival of the Sultan in a city was itself a major event, and in the end, all the honors of reception would have been made. But of course, the same fact that this will be memorized on moving images, it contributed to even greater organization of the event. The camera was set up and it was filming, but it seemed that something went wrong, because when one of the brothers checked if everything was fine with the film, he realized nothing is right. There is no footage on film. Somehow, they managed to convince everyone, including the Sultan, that they need to shoot one more take.

This fact itself is incredible in many aspects, First, the Manaki Brothers kept their heads on their shoulders. Because if they developed a film without the Sultan on it, it would have been a huge problem. Second, it is a totally scripted documentary footage filmed in the beginning of the 20th century. And third, this suggest that later on in the film industry, there will be a need for more takes.

Well, it can be freely said from here that „ Fiction as part of documentary process“

At the same period in America there is the Beginning of film industry included recreations of the 1907 film about “Teddy” Roosevelt on an African hunting trip by William Selig, in this film Selig hires African Americans out of Chicago to portray “native” Africans and films an actor stalking through a jungle who then shoots a “aged” lion on camera. Result is that Roosevelt viewed as hero and “the great white hunter.”

Is there Realism in documentary?

This issue itself opens a series of questions, so because of that we decide not to distance ourselves and we will start with one basic division.

A division of 5 Types of Documentary

Primitive non-fiction

Travel/Adventure Doc.

Camera as Observer

Didactic/Teaching Doc. ("propaganda")

Television doc. / Internet – Webcasting

This basic partition will serve us as a starting point of ‘Reference’ because of the fact that as we move in the chronology of film development, the boundaries will intertwine more. So, where there was a discussion about one type of genres and one division, and another subdivision or subgenre, on other places they would have been in reverse order. But I hope that step by step, we will solve everything.

PRIMITIVE DOCUMENTARY

Of course we will start with a film of the ‘Lumiere Brothers films’. From their very first footage in 1895, there is a cooperation between the form and the content. In the very first images where we look at workers leaving the factory, we can say it is only about observing of a specific location, without some serious interventions in terms of content. On the other hand, in a similar way, shooting the passengers as they arrive on a boat, a situation that we can perceive like an observation of an event, apart from the objectivity of the camera, it can not but notice the communication between subjects – people, with the camera and the cameramen. The very gesture of the individuals from the recorder passengers influence the content. If we continue to analyze the further footages of this era, the recording ‘Feeding of a small child’, or ‘Irrigation of the Garden’, these are footage in which the content itself can be seen as a content in a controlled environment. And in terms of framing, composition and in terms of content. The shots themselves have a beginning, a middle and an end. From here it can be said that the beginnings of a script in Documentary Film are slowly born. The fact that we have controlled conditions does not take us further away from Non-Fiction film, on the contrary, they lead us to the deeper beauty of it.

On the other hand, in Russia we have Dziga Vertov and his Film-Truth (Kino-Pravda) from 1922 to 1925 and the master piece of 1929 -- The Man with the Movie Camera

DZIGA VERTOV

Dziga Vertov – Russian socialist and filmmaker

- Part of “Futurism” Movement in Europe
- Technology as a means to capture daily experience – Soviet reality
- Began films as part of publication, Film-Truth (Kino-Pravda) from 1922 to 1925

- Emphasized 2 themes: camera as extension of “eye” and “truth”
- “I am cinema-eye”+ “Show bits of truth on the screen”

"Man with the Movie Camera" opens with an empty cinema, its seats standing at attention. The seats swivel down (by themselves), and an audience hurries in and fills them. They begin to look at a film. This film. And this film is about--this film being made. The only continuing figure -- not a "character" -- is the Man With the Movie Camera. He uses an early hand-cracked model, smaller than the one Buster Keaton uses in "The Cameraman" (1928), although even that one is light enough to be balanced on the shoulder with its tripod. This Man is seen photographing many of the shots in the movie. Then there are shots of how he does it -- securing the tripod and himself to the top of an automobile or the bed of a speeding truck, stooping to walk through a coal mine, hanging in a basket over a waterfall. We see a hole being dug between two train tracks, and later a train racing straight towards the camera. We're reminded that when the earliest movie audiences saw such a shot, they were allegedly terrified, and ducked down in their seats. Intercut with this are shots of this film being edited. The machinery. The editor. The physical film itself. Sometimes the action halts with a freeze frame, and we see that the editor has stopped work. But that's later--placing it right after the freeze frame would seem too much like continuity. If there is no continuity, there is a gathering 3 rhythmic speed that reaches a crescendo nearer the end. The film has shot itself, edited itself, and now is conducting itself at an accelerating tempo."

All this effort by Dziga Vertov to bring the camera closer to the human eye, if analyzed from a point of view of scriptwriting, and even if there was not a clear scenario for this film. Clearly, there is a lot of controlled and planned intent of shooting. On the other hand, the editing as I said before, complements the planning of footage. And what is that if not use of tools of scriptwriting in making a documentary film.

The film 1929 -- The Man with the Movie Camera is a guide to the next subdivision, and that is

AVANT GARDE / ACTUALITIES

And one of the most typical examples can be taken.

- 1925 – Ballet Mécanique by French artist Fernand Léger and American artist Dudley Murphy

This film clearly shows the strong use of stylization of the form. So the very content of the film can be said to be taken into captivity of the 'Form'. And on the other hand, we can say that the 'Content' in this case is a product of visual solutions that come out of the stylization of the Form. In both cases, the use of planned images is clear in order to achieve the desired dialogue with the viewer. And that's exactly the task of the film scenario, even if it's done in the phase of Editing.

In the same period, while in Europe there were diametrically different systems of communication between the viewer and the creator of the work and the work itself as such. Viewed from the angle of our interests, we can present it as setting the boundaries between Non-Fiction and Fiction.

At the same time through the ocean in America, there is a beginning of

TRAVEL/ETHNOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTARIES.

Main principles of these films are - "Exotic" location/people/cultures

Therefore Filmmaker imposes his/her culture on exotic cultures.

And that's how „Nanook of the North (Robert Flaherty, 1922)“ is born.

Many say that this is the first Documentary Film.

Beside that there is B&W, shot silent, no handheld camera, daytime shooting only, intertitles used to explain/comment on subjects.

This is undoubtedly one of the most special films in many aspects. From the very beginning of the film, we understand the history of the film. In fact, his creator, cameraman and director Robert Flaherty had already recorded all that traveling experience. But at the time of developing the material became unusable.

So the subjects that were previously subject to admiration and observation, turn into the main actors in the story of the New / Old film. With only this small step, Robert Flaherty opens the Pandora's box of the Documentary film more specifically on the use of the planned Scenario and the general scenario of documentaries.

From here on, the Mixing of the Form for the Need of the Content and vice versa represents only one more element for the creation of Documentary Films. Therefore, the boundaries between documentary and feature films will be even more difficult to define. And instead of getting stuck in those labyrinths, in the following examples, we will see how the Documentary film is reflected in the making of Feature Films and vice versa.

The fact Revillon, French distributor accepted the film (American companies were hesitant) tells us how serious this film was.

Therefore, it was well received in theatres making documentary form and Flaherty popular in mainstream market.

CAMERA AS OBSERVER

- Free Cinema (1960s, England)
 - No narration
 - Handheld camera
 - No apparent staging
 - Still mostly B&W
- Direct Cinema (1960s-70s, US)
 - Ex. D. A. Pennebaker – made political work *Primary* (1960, about the Democratic Presidential Primary in Wisconsin) and *Crisis* (1963, about the desegregation of the University of Alabama),
 - *Don't Look Back*, 1967 – 1st behind the scenes documentary on music stars -- Bob Dylan's British Tour

Exactly this film possesses a universal balance between Form and Content. Although in that era, the movements in Free Cinema and Cinema Verite and the feature films imposed similar affinities. This film so organically balanced the stylized documentary form with the "Accident" of the script. Certainly, playing with the fact that it is a rising music star. From here, the whole film arena itself is a concert tour where the surroundings of young musicians are perfectly normal. And even though we suspect that it is a totally random noncontrolled environment where the script is just being written, for which we will not be deceived, we must take into account that the creator clearly knows what quality is of his advantage. So, this gesture of the script or coincidence of the content is not at all naive. I would say that the inclusion of Equilibrium between "form" and "content" is one of the most sophisticated decisions taken by any movie maker.

Today we can not turn on a music channel without seeing a realistic show that is based on 90% of the idea that this movie brings. Only for digression I would mention that after half a century from this film of the "most modern" music channels we can notice TV reality shows that use the same form and content formulation as this film.

Only the crucial difference in them is that the content is in the pledge of the form, in contrast to the mentioned film where the form and content are organically encountered.

- People living their lives and not just telling about them
- Cinéma Vérité (1960s, France)

CINÉMA VÉRITÉ

- "Film Truth"
 - Style of film making developed by French film directors in the 1960's
 - Production techniques did not depend on star quality actors, sets, props, casts of thousands, special effects and big budgets which was the trend in Hollywood films
 - Used non-actors, small hand- held cameras, and actual homes and surroundings as their location for a film.
 - Unrehearsed situations.
 - Filming done unobtrusively so the subjects of the film would forget the presence of the camera and "just be themselves."
 - Goal to show life as it really is using the film as his artistic medium.

DIDACTIC/TEACHING DOCUMENTARY

- 1930s, England
 - John Grierson, coined term, "documentary" when describing Robert Flaherty's second film, *Moana* (1926)

Moana is a 1926 American documentary film, or more strictly a work of "docufiction" that was directed by Robert J. Flaherty,

As in the earlier *Nanook* (and his later film, *Man of Aran*), Flaherty went well beyond recording the life of the people of Samoa as it happened. He followed his usual procedure of "casting" locals whom he considered potentially photogenic performers into "roles", including creating fictitious family relationships.

In Moana, at a time when Samoans were typically wearing modern Western-style clothing under the influence of Christian missionaries, Flaherty persuaded his performers to don traditional tapa cloth costumes (made from the bark of the paper mulberry tree, in a process shown in some detail in the film); the "maidens" went topless. The idea of controlling the script with this author is known to us from his film Nanook of the North. And even though this author almost uses the same methods in creating his film, he sets a foundation of a brand-new branch in the Non Fiction Films. And also, to repeat that with this film he provokes John Grierson, to create the coined term, "documentary".

– Teach about social issues

- John Grierson, -- headed Film Unit of the Empire Marketing Board established to create documentaries which promoted the production and transport of Food throughout the British Empire
- Usually Expository style (voice-over) but Grierson used interviews of people telling their lives

PROPAGANDA DOCUMENTARY

- 1935 – Triumph of the Will – Leni Riefenstahl

Triumph of the Will (German: Triumph des Willens) is a 1935 German propaganda film directed, produced, edited, and co-written by Leni Riefenstahl. It chronicles the 1934 Nazi Party Congress in Nuremberg, which was attended by more than 700,000 Nazi supporters

The film contains excerpts from speeches given by Nazi leaders at the Congress, including Adolf Hitler, Rudolf Hess and Julius Streicher, interspersed with footage of massed Sturmabteilung (SA) and Schutzstaffel (SS) troops and public reaction. Hitler commissioned the film and served as an unofficial executive producer; his name appears in the opening titles. The film's overriding theme is the return of Germany as a great power, with Hitler as the leader who will bring glory to the nation. Because the film was made after the 1934 Night of the Long Knives (on 30 June) many prominent Sturmabteilung (SA) members are absent—they were murdered in that Party purge, organised and orchestrated by Hitler to replace the SA with the Schutzstaffel (SS) as his main paramilitary force.

Triumph of the Will was released in 1935 and became a prominent example of propaganda in film history. Riefenstahl's techniques—such as moving cameras, aerial photography, the use of long focus lenses to create a distorted perspective, and the revolutionary approach to the use of music and cinematography—have earned Triumph of the Will recognition as one of the greatest propaganda films in history. Riefenstahl helped to stage the scenes, directing and rehearsing some of them at least fifty times. Riefenstahl won several awards, not only in Germany but also in the United States, France, Sweden and other countries. The film was popular in the Third Reich, and has continued to influence films, documentaries and commercials to this day. In Germany, the film is not censored but the courts commonly classify it as Nazi propaganda which requires an educational context to public screenings

The film begins with a prologue, the only commentary in the film. It consists of the following text, shown sequentially, against a grey background:

Triumph of the Will is sometimes seen as an example of Nazi political religion. The primary religion in Germany before the Second World War was Christianity. With the primary sects being Roman Catholic and Protestant, the Christian views in this movie are clearly meant to allow the movie to better connect with the intended audience.

Triumph of the Will premiered on 28 March 1935 at the Berlin Ufa Palace Theater and was an instant success. Within two months the film had earned 815,000 Reichsmark, and Ufa considered it one of the three most profitable films of that year. Hitler praised the film as being an "incomparable glorification of the power and beauty of our Movement." For her efforts, Riefenstahl was rewarded with the German Film Prize (Deutscher Filmpreis), a gold medal at the 1935 Venice Biennale, and the Grand Prix at the 1937 World Exhibition in Paris. However, there were few claims that the film would result in a mass influx of "converts" to fascism and the Nazis apparently did not make a serious effort to promote the film outside of Germany. Film historian Richard Taylor also said that Triumph of the Will was not generally used for propaganda purposes inside the Third Reich. The Independent wrote in 2003: "Triumph of the Will seduced many wise men and women, persuaded them to admire rather than to despise, and undoubtedly won the Nazis friends and allies all over the world.

Although most of the recordings are rallies and parades if we analyze deeper, the compositions, the motion of the cameras and everything else, almost all of them are controlled. The fact that it's a complete soundtrack also points to planning in terms of telling the story.

From here, the documentarity of the form is certainly in the function of the essence of the story. The story itself is used with skillful tools even by editing. The main function of this propaganda film, to impose a sense of excitement and attachment to the viewer to notify the "Religion" that promotes this film is certainly used with tools that are well known in the feature film.

U.S. PROPAGANDA DOCUMENTARY/ FILMS

- New Deal documentaries
- F.D. Roosevelt's recovery program creates relief agency -- Resettlement Administration (RA)
- RA creates Motion Picture Unit to educate and "sell" public on need for "New Deal" programs
- Goal is to promote policies for impoverished farmers, laborers and families during Depression
- Pare Lorentz – professional writer and film critic becomes main director of RA films
- Hollywood opposition to government supported film industry
- Denied Lorentz access to film archives
- Denied access to distribution outlets and theaters
- 3000 theaters eventually show film

Significant to mention, of course, is the film

The Plow That Broke the Plains is a 1936 short documentary film which shows what happened to the Great Plains region of the United States and Canada when uncontrolled agricultural farming led to the Dust Bowl. It was written and directed by Pare Lorentz. The film was narrated by the American actor and baritone Thomas Hardie Chalmers.

The film was sponsored by the United States government(Resettlement Administration) to raise awareness about the New Deal

The stylization of these films on the one hand and the fact that are written by writers on the other, clearly speak of the role of the film scenario in their creation. But the skillful use of forms close to the documentary film of the time with the combination of bold editing open new fields for the development of documentary films that have been used up to this day.

PARE LORENTZ AND THE RA

- Films highly stylized and orchestrated
- Used editing to create visual metaphor (poetic)
- Music for mood
- Composer Virgil Thomson – wrote the musical scores for the films
- 1938 – The River

The River is a 1938 short documentary film which shows the importance of the Mississippi River to the United States, and how farming and timber practices had caused topsoil to be swept down the river and into the Gulf of Mexico, leading to catastrophic floods and impoverishing farmers. It ends by briefly describing how the Tennessee Valley Authority project was beginning to reverse these problems.

- Wins best-documentary for Venice film festival
- Film shows the affects of flooding along the Mississippi and its tributaries
- Influences Hollywood interest in "realism" during this period resulting in films such as The Grapes of Wrath (1939).

U.S. DOCUMENTARIES

- Office of War Information
- Commissioned films prior to and during WWII
- "Why We Fight" Series / Prelude to War (Frank Capra, 1941)

Why We Fight is a series of seven propaganda films commissioned by the United States government during World War II to justify to U.S. soldiers their country's involvement in the war. Later on, they were also shown to the U.S. public to persuade them to support U.S. involvement in the war.

- Narration used (omniscient narrator)
- Graphics---animation (Disney)

- Used previously shot footage found in archives
- Shot very little new footage
- Like projects such as Leni Riefenstahl's Nazi doc. Triumph of the Will
- Films focused on "political education" of American civilians enlisted in the military

MODES OF DOCUMENTARY

- Reassembled / Archival
- Expository
- Voiceovers
- Interviews
- Diaristic – popular form at present
- Personal essay
- Reflexive – made aware of documentary form
- Participatory documentary
- Filmmaker / director and "subjects" create film together

ASSEMBLED / ARCHIVAL

- Esfir Shub – subtitler and editor of foreign film in Russia
- 1927 – The Fall of Romanov Dynasty

Fall of the Romanov Dynasty (1927) is one of Shub's most famous surviving films and what many film historians classify as the first compilation film or Soviet montage. Shub traveled to Leningrad in 1926 to obtain the footage she needed for the film. She spent two months examining more than 60,000 meters of film (much of which was damaged) and chose 5,200 meters to take back to Moscow. She made the film because there was no visual record of the Russian Revolution. The movie is made up of stock footage and film that Shub shot herself to make up for the lack of documentation. The film covers the years 1912 to 1917, recounting the moments before, after and during World War I, and then ending with the October Revolution.

Of course, in the creation of this work, we have a very interesting approach, primarily the directing, and the editing, and the creation of this work is used with a huge amount of already recorded archived material. So for this work it is most appropriate to say that the script is written during the editing. Hence the form that is required by the existing recordings, the director skillfully edits it to get the desired content. Naturally, by inserting a narration that is much closer to the feature film during this time. So from this combination, this document was put to an era.

NEW MODES OF DOCUMENTARY

- Technological changes lead to various forms of non-fiction film
- Silent films more conducive to reassembled or archival films
- Non-tripodal camera – creates freedom for directors to go to varied locations
- Style changed making the films more observational
- Observational practices
- Reflexive style of filmmaking
- Diaristic documentary styles
- Participatory practice in filmmaking
- Engages more actively with the world of the filmed subject
- Less purely ethnographic film

TELEVISION DOC. / INTERNET -- WEBCASTING

Qualities include

- Color video
- Handheld camera
- Digital graphics
- Not limited to daytime shooting
- Broadcasts on
- TV

- MTV’s The Real World
- Internet
- OlympuSAT digital platform broadcasting network will host the Documentary Channel which will show unedited non-fiction film

NEW DEVELOPMENTS USING DOCUMENTARY FORM

v Self-Reflexive / Fictional Documentary

This is Spinal Tap (1984)

This Is Spinal Tap is a 1984 American rock music mockumentary comedy film directed, co-written, scored by, and starring Rob Reiner, and co-starring Christopher Guest, Michael McKean, and Harry Shearer. The film portrays the fictional British heavy metal band Spinal Tap. The film satirizes the wild personal behavior and musical pretensions of hard rock and heavy metal bands, as well as the hagiographic tendencies of rock documentaries of the time. The three main members of Spinal Tap—David St. Hubbins, Derek Smalls and Nigel Tufnel—are played by actors McKean, Shearer, and Guest, respectively. The three actors play their musical instruments and speak with mock English accents throughout the movie.

Parody of rock-documentaries, Gimme Shelter (1970)

Gimme Shelter is a 1970 American film directed by Albert and David Maysles and Charlotte Zwerin chronicling the last weeks of The Rolling Stones' 1969 US tour which culminated in the disastrous Altamont Free Concert.

The counterculture era documentary is associated with the Direct Cinema movement of the 1950s and 1960s. It was directed by The Maysles Brothers who are strong figures of the era.^[2] The movement revolves around the philosophy of being a "reactive" filmmaker, recording events as they unfold naturally and spontaneously rather than investigating the subject matter through documentary techniques such as interviews, reconstruction and voiceover.

- Succeeds by imitating codes and conventions of documentary style

For the end, we will mention a very exceptional film Kids (1995)

- Written by 21-year-old Harmony Korine

- Directed by 52-year-old Larry Clark

Kids is a 1995 American independent coming-of-age film written by Harmony Korine and directed by Larry Clark. It stars Chloë Sevigny, Leo Fitzpatrick, Justin Pierce, Rosario Dawson, and Jon Abrahams, all in their film debuts. Kids is centered on a day in the life of a group of teenagers in New York City and their hedonistic behavior towards sex and substance abuse (alcohol and other street drugs) during the height of the AIDS epidemic in the mid-1990s.

It is clear that this is a Feature Film but the way in which Documentary elements in the form and expression of this film are so strong that it intervenes even in the very essence. In other words, the story itself is constructed to create a universal sense of connection of the audience with the story, and this would only be possible as a symbiosis of the dramaturgy of this scenario and the director's decisions on the stylization for the execution of the same. So that although it's a totally-staged feature film, documentary elements meet almost every scene.

With this film I will finish this modest chronological review.