Chapter 7 Documentary and Notification

The documentary has important roots in photography and painting

Then they started to talk about the cromagnon man and how they were able to capture life in the form of an image

The portrait is the most intimate documentary

The point is to liken painting to documenting life and what it was like at the time

Note of photography and painting

We have photos of abriham linocn but only a painting of Washington

We want to record realility do that people can experience what it was like at the time something was recored

In a way we are all documentaryiests making and creating images to share with each other through our photos and paintings

In the 1870’s someone set up a system of trip wires so that he could record a horse galloping to prove that a horse lifts all its hoves

Louis Lumiere and Thomas Edison both worked on capturing motion.

What excited the first movie audiances was seeing realistic shots of motion such as a train coming toward the camera

Upon seeing the film the audience even ducked to avoid being hit

In the 1950’s – 1960’s they experimented with 3D movies such as having a lion jump toward the screen at the audience

Not many dramatic fiction films are made in the same format because of the cost of filming on 70mm film for 3D movies

However in 2009 3D televisions became a big hit due to their accesabillity

The first attempts to make moving picture were documentary it was only until later that the dramatic story telling films hit the medium

In all forms of documentary you are also telling a story but it comes in the form of a factual kind

This method of deoumentary formed the basis for news media and reporters to convey messages to the masses

Recently it has become a practice to put up documentaroies as theatrical feature films against fiction films and comidy

As it stands the Oscars currently distribute awards for short and long documentary films

Seeing documentaries play a big roll in theater and television show an inherent interest for audiances to see or be told factual stories about the world

Despite success in other atmospheres documentaries have found the most success in television

This includes channels like, PBS, A&F, The history channel, WGBH and many more

It can also be noted that live broadcasts could be considered documentary under the broadest forms similarly channels like C-Span also exibit rel time examples of events. However they neglect the presence of a writer which creates a clear distinction for documentary

Cosumentary when broken to its latin roots can also mean a teaching, an instruction, or a warning Later in the seventeenth senturay the meaning of the word shifted to refer to something that is written that furnishes evidence

Again from its root document it can be determined that it is a record that determins fact such as a shipping manifest or a deed or contract

It was only in 1802 that the OED records the use of documentary as an adjective meaning it consists of documentary evidence when used in the context of film it becomes a noun again

So documentary contains the idea or intention that it is evidence establishing a fact

For our news example it would not nessisarily be considered a documentary because things are often cut or staged to show effect. This is a note of confusing reality with actuality in some cases depending on the context these two can exibit documentary or just purley be something that is real because it is happening

The essense of the documentary form is that it attempts to tell or show the truth in its totality

Often documentary’s commitment to this truth can result in some disturbing material. However this same disturbing imagry can be used to fabricate falsehoods or propaganda

Thus it is important to see documentary as a separate form from nonfiction narrative

In many cases things such as dramatized documentary tell stories that have the writers perspective in mind focusing on entertainment over documentary

In the case of history documentaries this can lead to telling the compelling story over the history of the event

In order to create a documentary idea that seeks to tell the truth in a visual narritve you must reseach factual pieces of evidence in any form first before an idea can fully form

Once you have a concept you have to reseachr it

Because documentaries need to be laid out in a format to tell a visual narrative with editors script writers and so forth they cannot be considered objective truth. It is the will of the maker that ultimately decides the narrative that is constructed for a documentary

Objective documentary this is the hardest form of documentary to produce because in the proction process you inherently alter the reality of things in front of the lens

Point of view documentary often has a declared point of view and seeks to tell a narrative based on that view

In POV documentaries the director has the most guiding power often this leads creators of documentaries to take the roll of writer/director in order to impart their full intention of the film

Scripted and unscripted approaches

Some themes or ideas often can only be unscripted such as watching a nature film or a live event. On the other hand scriupted documentaries often are better to save money because the director can plan to shoot only important information or shots

Reseach is incredibly important for a documentary and is often considered within the expensing of the film. This can help lead to knowing if you can find an old image that needs to be shown or take a shot of an important landmark or recreate an event

What is the role of the writer

It has to be kept in mind that the context of the film determins the role of the writer. In objective documentaries the writer often takes some form of the editor that decides how the shots should be arranged to tell a narrative. For example a nature film often has to give narrative to a lion stalking its prey. However the role of a writer becomes more involved in a dramatic documentary because the whole thing is constructed with diolouge sets and so on.

The proposal

This is the deal maker. This sets out the idea the potential and the promise of the film. This is often what producers have to go on because of the inherent risk of unpredictability

The treatment

The treatment for a document doesn’t differ much from other script writing processes. However in many cases it is used to showcase the intended idea or arrangement or structure of the documentary

Types of Documentary Technique

This can be a combination. However the more consitancy you have in your film the more the better the film tends to be

Reportage

Reportage is simply the act of reporting on what you see in the place and time that it happens

Often this puts the writer after the footage for things such as voice overs

Observation

This is a difficult form of documentary because you must introduce the camera in a way that it doesn’t skew the result

Interviews

This can be used as reseach or as footage for the edit. This takes the form of asking questions in an effort to get awnsers. This boils down from broad to specific questions

Investigative Documentary

This form of documentary is a technique of exposing and investigating things of controversy or other enlightenting topics that may or may not have been previously known by the common public. Often to effectively use this technique you will need access to often restricted areas content or information. In a lot of cases the interview process is used to verify information gathered on the subject. Narratively this technique is used as an expose to shed a light on topics or subjects that rewuire investigative reseach.

Narrative Documentary

This is one of the most appealing forms of nonfiction biography. This technique focuses on showing the life of an individual which has a natural narrative structure to it.

Dramatized documentary

This is a popular form of documentary on television. This is because you can cuntruct a narrative by reconstructing evidence in anyway that may be subtable such as excluding certain pieces of evidence to better tell a story.

Expository Documentary

This is a documentary that explains something such as a scientific method or how something is made

Propaganda

Propoganda is often created to persuade an ajenda by using information to impart an idea on an audience. Often this is used politically to gain foavor or to propogate an idea to the general public.

Other Documentary Applications

Expedtion Documentary

Simply this is a form of documentary used to tell the story of an expedition weither it be archeological or some form exploration such as mountain climbing

Travel documentary

Often this form of documentary is used to show what it is like to travel to exotic places.

Documentaries about making feature films

This focuses on the backstory of how a movie production came to be including interviews with people who worked on the film and the processes that went into making the film itself

Wildlife documentary

Simply this is a documentary that shows off a wildlife aspect such as an exotic animal or creature

Current affairs features

Often this showcases things that are current such as pollical viewpoints or more daring films that seek to show subjects such as evidence behind extrterestrials. In many cases this documentary form just juxtaposes two viewpoints and doesn’t lead to any one specific conclution

Writing commentaries

Narrative Voice over and post production

This is the most noticeable form of writing for documentaries. It always happens post script except in the case of dramatized documentaries. The process often follows a rough scratch form of the voiceover that is then rerecorded when the film reaches its final cut to make the length and emphasis of the voice over fit the visuals. However some directors cut footage in an attempt to emphasis the voiceover itself which is a big gamble because it can lead to reshoots.

Wall to wall commentary

Wall to wall commentary is often a fault in the documentary process because the images and the impact they provide should be able to invoke the same if not more feeling in the viewer. Similarly breaking commentary gives the audience a chance to better understand the realtion of the commentary to the visuals that are provided. A commentary should compliment the images that are being shown and not detract from it

Commentary Counterpoint and Commentaru Anchors

Another way to combat wall to wall commentary Is by setting up topic sentences of commentary that are then completed by the visuals

Dual Commentators

It is no requirement to have a documentary only use one voice. Often the use of multiuple voices leaves the option open to explore the phycological impact of voices on the audience. For instance the audience may find one commenters voice to be irritating while another’s pleasant greatly increasing the effectiveness of the commentary on the audience

Commentary clichés

Literal linking

Predictible phrases

Other specific exampes such as personifying animals or locations in wildlife documentaries

On camera/off camera combinations

This is simply the use of having both someone who is seen providing the commentary in the context of the documentary as well as a an off camera take on the series of events