

Documentary and
fictional aspects of
the film fahrenheit 9
11 essay



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“ In feature films the director is God; in documentary films God is the director. ”(web quotes) This quote by Alfred Hitchcock contains some truth, but in past decades the documentary genre has become more than just factual information about real people and places. It has become a mode for opinion and bias. In Michael Moore’s Fahrenheit 9/11, the “ creative use of actuality” (film ed.

Grierson) in its editing, style and source information all serve Moore’s argument and thus the directors view. Documentaries are films that inform truth with factual evidence in contrast to narratives that employ fictional events. The conventions of this genre are what make it creditable and serious.

Non scripted interviews, narration, objectivity and actual footage are some of it key tenets. With this being stated, logic would dictate that any deviation from these conventions could jeopardize the film’s documentary credibility. This is the basis of what makes Fahrenheit 9/11 controversial Critics hold that Moore’s film uses flimsy and misleading evidence. He manipulated images and words to shape a perspective and finally does not offer a balanced view to the audience. Evidence of this can be found in David Kopel’s Fifty-nine Deceits in Fahrenheit 9/11. He argues with a list of fifty nine counter facts that discredit Moore’s.

An example listed in the article states that Saudis left the U. S. Only after air travel was opened for the general public contrary to what Moore says in the film. (independent). Second, the manipulation of images can be seen as a fictional representation of reality. Many of the raw video footage Moore takes

from news outlets are edited with his argument in mind. Being that the Bush administration's wrongdoing and tying it to the war in Iraq.

(video) Word play is another important role in the film. Moore gives limited visual evidence for aural claims he makes in the film. Also viewers typically do not criticize the narrator's claims in a documentary.

The final fictional aspect of *Fahrenheit 9/11* is objectivity. The consensus that a documentary will show a balanced agenda is not the case for this film. From the start, the viewer is subject to the perspective of a highly partisan filmmaker in an attempt to indict the president and the Iraqi war.

Moore shows and says nothing to offer a competing side. This includes the personal interviews, video clips and himself narrating. By shaping reality through Moore's point of view, the film employs the listed above techniques as what could be called propaganda. (muse) However, among these fictional characteristics is truth to support the film's overall message. First is source information, second are interviews and third is narration. These three aspects add credibility to Moore's piece and give it the gritty documentary image he seeks to convey. Moore achieves this with source information to support his claims.

The use of hand-cams, domestic video footage, newspaper clipping and news footage are the film elements. This gives us that journalistic reality that's believable. He also uses footage shot by other sources other than him which helps convince the audience that it was created outside of the director's controlling vision. muse) The use of statistics is also prevalent throughout the entire film, This gives a serious tone to the subject.

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The shock factor is used to show images and video not otherwise shown on domestic news outlets. Iraqis piled in a back of a truck are an example of the gritty reality that Moore wants to share. Interviews with member of congress, military and family are shown as well to add a different angle but always supporting his view. These sources are presented as reliable and in some sense unedited even though that is not the case. (movie) The second such argument is the interviews of the people in the film. Moore visits the homes of families that were most affected by the war.

The intimacy of being in the home of adds a depth of realism making it hard for the viewer to be detached. This emotional device serves Moore's purpose of creating sympathy for all have been affected negatively by the Iraqi war. This can also include his interviews of congressman on Capitol Hill. Both styles of interviews are direct with Moore asking questions. In these interviews the audience simply tags along behind Moore in contrast to the "fly on the wall" method of Direct Cinema.