

A documentary film

[Entertainment](#), [Movie](#)



In modern world, social dimensions are manifested in the ability of media to control the circulation of ideas about economic and political events, social problems and ethical issue.

Documentary films play a special role in filmmaking unveiling vital problems of modern mankind or informing the audience about historical or social events, outstanding personalities and their historical significance.

It is known fact that people copy or borrow their identities from the media, and very often social images are misrepresented and just exploited by the media. In this case, the aim of documentary genre is to inform the audience about current problems and social troubles. The genre of documentary appeared at the beginning of XX century.

The documentary film movement had a great impact on filmmaking during the 1930s and 1940s, and was a response to social and economic conditions faced by many nations around the world.

Taking into account British filmmaking, critics suggest that: “ the movement and its leader played a pivotal role in stifling the growth of a critical British filmculture, and in establishing a realist paradigm which critically marginalised the avant-garde” (Aitken, 1998, p. 1).

Getting the message across, not just through ascetic lectures but getting the right images as well documentaries can speak volumes to a greater number of people across the globe. Where documentaries are largely responsible for promoting the culture, one can still trust their power to reverse it to bring a certain outlook of current events avoiding unnecessary blames and aggression.

There are no strict guidelines for producers to follow. Alan Rosenthal (2002) admits that: “ In the last twenty years, tremendous changes have taken place in documentary and nonfiction filmmaking, including changes in subject matter, form, and the very way in which documentaries and industrial films are made” (p. 1).

In general, the main idea of the documentary is to portray the real social and historical images and social problems. According to Michelson (1984): “ In fact, the film is only the sum of the facts recorded on film, or, if you like, not merely the sum, but the product, a 'highermathematics' of facts” (Michelson 1984: 84 cited Bruzzi, 2000, P. 11).

The documentary genre is based on the idea to create “ the authentic representation of the real” (Bruzzi, 2000, p. 9). This is achieved through specific techniques and methods which help to recreate authentic atmosphere in order to appeal to emotions of viewers and their feelings through emotional tension and deep experience.

The remarkable feature of modern documentary films is that producers select techniques and cinematographic tools according to plot development and meaning of the film. Usually, the plot structure of documentaries is clearly set out, with few diversions of sub-plot and with fairly obvious contrasts of characters.

It can consist of several frames which force the viewer to rethink the events and interpret them in a different manner according to behavior and thoughts of the narrator (Bruzzi, 2000).

Similar to fiction genre, the main thematic elements of documentaries include: theme and focus which frame events and facts depicted in the film. The themes of documentaries can be interpreted as responses towards problems and issues under discussion.

Evaluating the themes, producers try to unveil important problems which marked the film. For instance, in the documentary “ Bowling for Columbine”, Michael Moore portrays extreme violence and hostility of modern youth toward other people based on wrong media images and social indifference.