

The re-enactment of two documentaries: the cove and bowling for columbine

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



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Introduction

The prime focus of this essay is to discuss the re-enactments of documentaries. For the purpose of analysis, two documentaries were selected that includes *The Cove* (2009) which is directed by Louis Psihoyos and *Bowling for Columbine* (2002) directed by one of the most controversial directors Michael Moore.

Re-enactments are considered as the past incident and actions that are of significant importance. However, different directors and filmmakers utilised the technique of re-enactments in their own way. Some described that by utilising the re-enactments, documentaries could achieve historical accuracies. While others believed that it is used to exaggerate history, therefore, the essay will evaluate the re-enactments upon which the documentaries are based upon. Further documentary film theory would be embedded in the two documentaries, which would explain the components of history, the genre of documentary and its impact in the society (Stam, 2017).

The Cove

The Cove (2009) is a documentary that highlights a group of people that fought bravely to stop the mass slaughter of dolphins and to shed the lights on increasing dolphin hunting in their small village called Taiji, Japan. It was directed by Louis Psihoyos and film has won Oscar for its brilliant documentary work. It is observed that for any documentary to be regarded as high quality, there must be three elements present in that documentary. The first element is that documentary should possess a set up to bring the mental and emotional attention of people towards the documentary. The second element is that the documentary should be able to guide its audience through a journey that could invoke a mental and emotional connection with the audience of the documentary. Finally, the third element includes the unavoidable ending to the documentary that could conclude the characters and documentary (Margulies, 2019). Director Louis Psihoyos has included all these three elements in the documentary The Cove that it was able to make a deep connection with the audience and gain such high success.

Throughout the film, the director's views have been convincingly spread through every action and showcased the one-sided nature of the film. The director of the Cove consistently made a claim about the inhuman activities related to the dolphin hunt but throughout the story, the second side was never given a chance to explain their views. Director Louis Psihoyos is one of the influential photographers of National Geographic and has the knowledge to attract the audience by including the human touch (Psihoyos. com. 2019). Therefore, in his movie the Clove, Psihoyos addressed the human incidents

to make it more captivating for the audience. However, human experience in its documentary is being filmed in Hollywood, Psihoyos adds his opinion to the incident throughout the film. Therefore, the question of how this subjective film has been able to make such a huge success in Hollywood. However, after a brief analysis of documentary films history with different documentarians, it was analysed that a major portion of all the documentary displays subjectivity to the full extent. After the release of the film, it was emerged as the trend to include subjectivity into films to represent the idea that the pure truth in the documentary is a covered-up belief (Schneider, 2017).

The Cove, where the slaughtering of dolphin took place, is monitored by the policemen of Japan. Furthermore, the cove is surrounded by all the jagged cliffs. It was due to these difficulties; it became almost impossible for everyone to capture behind the scenes. The film has bad people and good people throughout the story. Furthermore, chase scenes, investigations and secret missions have created a sense of thriller throughout the film. It was explained right at the start of the film that there lies a conflict among policemen and group present at the Taiji. The group was constantly being watched over by the policemen and on many different occasions, confronted them to arrest the people of that group. Therefore, fear and panic were raised among the people of that area, for filmmakers and audience watching the film because of the strict Japanese law. In the law of Japan people have to wait for almost months in order to have the chance to explain to the system about the reason for arrest in the first place (Smith, 2015).

The film started with the usual suspense and thriller movies. At the initial phase of the film, the group decides to deviate from the authorities to watch over the fishermen that are creating a mess at the river. The documentary showcases a high level of technology for the covert operations of against fishermen. With the use of such high-quality technologies such as infrared and underwater cameras, the documentary was able to attract the attention of the audience and give a sense of reality to this film. O'Barry, one of the leading characters of the documentary, was previously known for the training of Dolphins (Nugroho, 2018).

It is explained by O'Barry in the film that the smile of dolphins that used to entertain the crowds in the TV shows is only a disguise that is used by the dolphins to hide their true emotions. Throughout the film, the director has introduced different filmmaking techniques to add a real sense to the film and to connect this documentary with the emotions of the people (Nugroho, 2018). The director has also included different sounds and music to dictate the mood of the film. The film has introduced the character of O'Barry as a prolific and brave hero that is a symbol of goodness throughout the film. All the in the film, the audience was left to constantly thinking about the situation of O'Barry that whether or not O'Barry will accomplish his mission to expose the dolphin slaughtering or will the government be able to capture O'Barry. With the help of the documentary evidence that includes the International Whaling Commission conference along with the point of view of major animal experts to further strengthen the bond of documentary with reality. Moreover, the high technologies utilised in the film was able to

enhance the situation of dangers to make it more look like an action film. Despite the fact that many people perceive this film as either boring or thinking that the documentary would cause their minds to shift away from their personal point of view. However, the director of the movie emphasised upon the fact that the problem of dolphin slaughtering is a big issue and what people can do to play their role is to at least shed light upon the issue to grab the attention of higher authorities (Nugroho, 2018).

However, judging by the director opinion does not seems to appropriate for the people. This is because of the reason that to judge a situation; people must be presented with both side of the story. Despite director displays some of the scenes in the documentary that directly attacks the culture, values, and policies of Japan upon which they are being raised in the society. Due to this reason, many people reflect their bad feelings about the situations that are present in the film. The film has portrayed Japan in a very bad manner by displaying a scene of Japan that causes the people of the countries to experience the emotions of anger and hatred about Japan (Butterworth et al., 2017).

Moreover, by the way, the film has been presented, it causes people to invoke their emotions of anger, guilt, suspense, and moral superiority towards Japan. Along the journey with the documentary, the director has manipulated the mind of people to think negatively about Japan and consider the people of Japan to be uncivilised. It is identified that most of the situations presented in the movie are to earn more money rather than to display the thoughts of the director. It is for the money, the film has

introduced several issues of Japan, as it is observed that the more money will bring more prosperity to Hollywood. With such an exceptional amount of impact that the film has brought upon the people, it set as a platform by the director to raise the issue of dolphin hunting in Taiji. However, the incident in the Cove is still happening. With the help of this film, it is required to take urgent steps are needed to stop this filthy act. Also, the film calls upon the fact that more viewers are needed to raise this concern. The Cove was a huge success although that remains in the mind of the people due to its utter truth about the slaughtering of dolphins (Newman, 2015).

Bowling for Columbine

In the film *Bowling for Columbine*, the director has presented several anti-political, persuasive and critical perspective to identify the issue of gun control. Directed by Michael Moore in 2002, the film is considered to be one of the most prominently written documentaries. The aim of the documentary was to evaluate the situation of Columbine High School, where a shooting massacre has occurred. In the shooting incident, two students that were named as Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold from the Columbine High School took over the school by the storm. These students enter the school with the idea of killing people. Also, they managed to kill fifteen people and almost put in danger the lives of twenty one people by severely injuring them. However, the films to evaluate a big issue called gun control to investigate the gun ownership laws and regulations in the state (Ramsey, 2015).

However, the film of the controversial director Michel Moore faced a lot of criticism despite the fact that it was supported utterly by the facts. In the

film, Michael Moore presents the issue of gun violence in the country in such a way that people are forced to accept the reality presented in the film. The film highlights several dragged information about the most densely populated area of the country and exploring the issues that relate to the second amendment of the guns. Moore began this film with his normal routine by displaying the unbiased situations in the country. The scene in the film when Moore wanted to open an account in the North Country Bank and that bank offers Moore a gun while making fun of the situation has enabled the director to dictate about the issue related to gun violence. Furthermore, the scene has also depicted the fact that lack of law and regulations about gun ownership in the country (Bergman, 2016).

Furthermore, the director of the film has utilised several techniques to grab the attention of the audience and to convey the main theme of documentary to audiences. The introduction of techniques such as sarcasm and music has allowed the director to create an emotional connection between audiences and every situation of the film. Furthermore, with the introduction of the song by Louis Armstrong, director of the film was successful in humiliating the government of America that portrays themselves as the wonderful world but the reality is the exact opposite (Anderson, 2015). Scenarios in the film where people were dying, being shot for no reason and the existence of interracial people that that holds the gun in their hand portrays a total massacre of government in the country. However, one thing was unique in this movie, and that is, the director adopts a subjective style to convey the message. Instead, Moore chose to emphasise on the political conditions and

political leaders by invoking the sense of hatred among the people with these political leaders and situation. By choosing not to overthrow his opinion in the film, Moore gave more room to people to completely follow their instincts about the situation (Fisher, 2019).

The film was able to make the audiences more troubled during every instant of the situation. Especially the scene where the 911 calls portray the video of the Columbine High School corridor scene. The scene gave the audiences with the first-hand experience of the situation that occurred in the Alma Mater. Due to this scene, a feeling of distressed aroused among the audiences with the scene of students dying and lying in the corridor. Then suddenly, the scene cuts there and display the footage of the original incident that took the place of April 20, 1999 (Columbine and Moore, 2019). The footage displays the students scared making every effort to save themselves from this cruel scenario. However, with continuous fires and explosions from the bombs causes the audiences to feel deeply connected with the incident and moved by this massacre. Furthermore, this situation also demonstrated the law and order situation in the state, causing people to feel further upset about the incident and the government (Columbine and Moore, 2019).

After this intense scene in the high school, director of the film immediately switch the screen with the famous incident of the Charlton Heston, the NRA president of that time. In the scenario, the president was holding the gun in his hand put the aims towards the crowd and deliver his famous five words “ From my cold hands”.

Immediately after this scene, a voiceover plays explaining that after just ten days of the incident, a pro-gun rally was initiated by the NRA despite being aware of the current scenario in the community. However, this NRA incident was very far away from reality, but director utilises his position to disgust the politicians. Although the president utters those five words, it was on a completely different section of history. This NRA president incident occurs almost eight months after the incident at the high school. Nevertheless, Moore uses this scene to its advantage to arouse the negative feeling of the crowd towards the law and order of the country (Clarke and Brassett, 2015).

In the first section of the movie, the director continuously emphasises upon the facts for why gun violence has increased rapidly in the United States. Moreover, Moore uses several instances of history to confirm the claims he makes. To display the law and order situation of the United States, Moore starts by explaining the fact that there is almost the same amount of gun ration present in the United States and Canada. However, the United States has a gun violence ratio of about three times that of Canada. To further emphasise upon this situation, Moore compares the history of Europe with the United States to highlight the cruel history of the United States with violence (Bradshaw, 2012).

To further insult the NRA president Charlton Heston, Moore arranged an interview with the president and asked rude questions about the situations. At first, however, the president was not responding to false claims of the president, but Moore uses this silence to his advantage and gives the president with very cruel remarks. Agitated by the situation, the president

signalled that the interview is over and leaves the podium. Moore further utilised this situation to his advantage and conveyed a wrong picture of the NRA president in front of the whole audience to disgust the NRA (Kleck, 2017).

When the final scene of interviewing the president was over, Moore introduces further voiceovers to describe the state of gun violence in the country and the NRA. The documentary tends to highlight the main facts on the reasons behind the increasing gun violence in the country. Moore has directed the film with absolute genius and utilises where necessary the music together with brilliant sound effects to engage the audience with the content of the documentary. Furthermore, with different video and audio clips combine with intense interviews and animations has been embedded by the director to convey the message of the film to audiences. With such brilliant techniques that Moore pour into this documentary, the documentary has been specially built for the new generations. However, it is a fact that Bowling for Columbine has been able to highlight the main issue of the gun violence to the fullest and considered to be an effective and organised documentary for all types of audiences, especially for young generations (Bradshaw, 2012).

Conclusion

The discussed essay focuses on the documentary re-enactments with the help of documentary film theory. For the purpose of analysis, two documentaries were selected that includes The Cove (2009) and Bowling for Columbine (2002).

With the analysis of *The Cove*, it was concluded that the director has adopted the subjective style and make attempts to manipulate the people about the country of Japan by giving them a one-sided view of history. On the other hand, *Bowling for Columbine* manipulated the people about the NRA president. However, the director has adopted an objective style in the documentary and allow people to decide about the incident.