

Bordwell and thompson the purpose of films media essay



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Introduction

According to Bordwell and Thompson (2004), the purpose of documentary film is to present the factual information about the world outside the film (128), in that case, the study of documentary is to present the 100% facts and the truths in current events and society. The component of “ truth” and “ reality” falls under few categories such as representation, formalism, textual meaning and subjectivity (Gierson, 2010). In cinematic documentary, there are few components applied in the movie, which allows us to recognize few particular features, which movies try to deliver to viewer. Every documentary has its own outstanding feature that makes it different from any other films. Example of cinematic feature will be the style of shots and editing, sound effect, dialogue, lighting, narrative structure and characterization. (Nichols, 2010)

In this essay, the defining feature of movies “ Food Inc” and “ Two Escobar” will be discussed and analyzed to generate more understanding and develop different perspective to those who have seen both movies. As well as considering the meanings (thematic implications) that are constructed by the use of certain cinematic features such as interviews, footages, shots, sound, characterization, narrative structure and setting.

Analysis 1 – Food Inc (film by Robert Kenner and Michael Pollam)

This type of documentary is considered as “ Expository mode of documentary” (Nichols, 1991). It means the filmmakers use several components such as narration, footages and interviews to preset an

explanation about a subject and leave the spectators with their own interpretation. The further justification on this mode will be illustrated in discussion below.

As the author opens the first three minutes narrative with statement “ the industry doesn’t want you to know the truth about what you’re eating, because if you knew, you might not want to eat it...”. This simple statement gives us a clue about how the story will go. “ Food Inc” is a documentary that exposes how major food companies have control over our food production. This movie examines how powerful these companies to give multi-layered influence in processing of our local grocery store.

In perspective, the ability to present to us an extensive outlook of the food industry attracted me the most about this documentary. In the beginning, there were shots of green lands, sunny and healthy pictures found on the wrappers and boxes of variety of products in supermarket which intentionally reveals marketing tactics to make its consumers to feel comfortable with the food they are consuming. It gives us the impression that those foods are coming from modest family owned farms.

As the narrative flows, the documentary feature is identified through the set of footages portray a domination of big companies that have reduced the food making industry into a mechanical factory process, where the unnaturalness of the system has caused virus and bacteria infecting our food. The epidemic of e. coli and salmonella are a small number of the direct and dangerous results of unchecked food management. The film’s first argument is simple, present food processing methods are environmentally

and economically unbalanced, plus dangerous to consumers' health. In a way, this movie knocks on health concerns like diabetes, other illness and death associated with products we consume and slowly changes our perspective. The movie left an emotional feeling of our food system being unsafe and our modern advances are consistently poisoning us.

Furthermore, it is an eye-opener into how far these food industry corporations will continue and it's not pleasing. There is Barbara Kowalcyk, a mother who lost her son to E. coli and received no proper response from anybody although a hint leads straightforwardly to the company that provided the tainted meat. Such circumstance has encouraged her and her families to turn out to be safer food system advocates and prevent the case from happening to other children. We somehow learned how powerful agricultural lobbyists can be. Another case is the crisis of obesity, which the company blames it as personal responsibility of individual and it is not because of their food production. Nonetheless, I am not surprised that none of the corporations would approve to be interviewed and give any responses to criticism through threats and legal action while keeping everything hidden from the public.

The Eric Schlosser from Fast Food Nation narrates a focal element of the film, concerning lack of consumer information and offering suggestions for what consumers can do to take control of their food sources. There were many stands up to speak up in this documentary at personal and financial risk. For instance, there is Joel Salatin of Polyface Farms and others who provided reasons to take a tour to the organic section of our grocers. Releasing the

strangle on many people and small business/farmers and become an informed buyer.

The film's second major argument is the movie has shown transparent sight through the shots and footages on how the food processing industry treated the illegal immigrants' workers from Mexico and other countries. The corporations forced them to work under terrible conditions in slaughterhouses. The immigrant authority cracks down the illegal workers instead of what we know as "responsible" company. This case is considered as a terrible action as we are aware that the workers are the one who worked hard and endless time in the food factories. In addition, these big and powerful companies oblige American farmers into practical poverty through rules against stockpiling seeds and demands for constant "upgrades" to their farms and automatically made them to loan money from banks. It was horrible event what goes on behind the scenes to which us to be far removed as consumers. As badly as the animals can be treated, so is the human being.

Additionally, another documentary feature was shown through a set of interviews conducted in the movie, from one of the executives at Stonyfield Farms to farmers who are both endeavoring to battle the industrialization of the food industry and those who are being brought down by it. The interviews involving farmers who sustain minor farms and healthy practices (cows still eat grass, not corn) are among the best segment. Author Michael Pollan was also interviewed, giving an indication of how the modern American food system works. He says that corn has become all over the place and it finds its way into just about every food.

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Furthermore, we clearly witness there are brief shots of animals being roughed around (particularly chickens and pigs) but no long and lingering shots of the actual industrial slaughter of numerous animals. These people have lost connection and become ignorant. This action happened due to the demand of meat packing industry that supplies meat to fast-food companies, which happen to have biggest number of customers. All they can think of is the production revenue. It is difficult to say all the things that the film does right; however, such documentaries demand a call to action. How effective a given film of this nature is depends on whether or not that call to action is answered by the audience. And we also cannot easily disregard the center shots using hidden camera of the chicken houses, both before and after the multinational companies pick up their birds, are distressing and shocking.

In my opinion, the filmmakers could earn much credit for crafting a film that is very upsetting, even without the extreme close ups of inhumane animal slaughter. Pollan and Schlosser's narration is informative and it keeps the film moving at a pace suited for theatergoers who find themselves typically bored by documentaries.

In conclusion, we are plunged into the conditions on how the reality of food production might touch our consciousness and change our eating behavior. However, I found this documentary is informative as the filmmakers did quite well investigation about transparency of food industry. It is not meant to scare us away, but it gives us better insight and knowledge to rethink how to shop and making better choices for our meal.

Analysis 2 – The Two Escobars (Zimbalist Duo)

The documentary features in the movie “ Two Escobars” are varied. The movie jointly draws some narrative fibers, numerous historical events, wide-ranging set of footage and an array of interviews. The remarkable item about “ Two Escobars” was the amount of contrast views and opinions that were shown concerning the two protagonists, Pablo Escobar and Andres Escobar. Pablo, a drug lord who used his dirty money to fund to Colombian soccer clubs, is portrayed as a notorious terrorist and a man behind many murders as well as an angel and savior for poverty by providing them soccer fields, medical clinic, education center and houses. And there is Andres, a star defenseman for the Colombian national team, is portrayed as a representative who constantly gave back to the community and put the image of his country on his shoulders.

The filmmakers present an outline on how to create an interesting and thought-provoking documentary. This film showed the significance of giving background information on the cultural and social setting of the subjects, as it helps explain reasoning and reactions to certain events. Without the information regarding Pablo and the crumbling of Colombian society, Andres’ story would not be as powerful. Although Andrés’s own personal integrity remained high, his career flourished while the other Escobar funded the national team. Former government leaders and relatives and associates of both men explain through the interviews and their statement illustrated by copious footage from key games and some shockingly violent crime shots. Nevertheless, it would still make for a good film, but would not get across as many social messages or deliver as hard-hitting impact.

As documentary feature, the filmmakers do an outstanding narrative job of the good and evil within Colombian soccer through these appositions. The dissimilarity representations of these characters gave the viewer numerous lenses through which to view the events surrounding them. Ultimate moments in sports history capture our attention and turn our logic upside down, for example in a footage where Andres Escobar was murdered for unintentionally scoring an own goal, lost their chance to winning the World Cup and transforming its negative image on the international stage. The meaning of football as national identity could cost a man's life because of one mistake and we can see how deep the connection between nation and soccer in Columbia.

In recent social context, it is inevitable that world of football plays a prominent role. The magnetism of football has become colossal and phenomenon toward people in worldwide. It doesn't matter how different the cultures, ethnicity, religions, and nations, football successively has built a huge friendship, togetherness in the green field. Football is not just a mere sport and entertainment, it is the ability to bond and strengthen our national fraternity, mentally and physically as a nation. Football is a foundation instrument of practicing honesty and cooperation that are reliable, a reflection for the society. The " Two Escobars" is a fascinating examination of the connection between sports, crime, politics and society. For Colombians, soccer is far more than a game: their entire national identity rode on the success or failure of their team.

To conclude, looking into the incident we could probably learn that the dramatic rise and fall of Colombian soccer was inextricably tied to the rise
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and fall of Pablo Escobar's role, considered by many the 'ruling party' of Colombia at the time. Sport in Colombia was not only reflecting the politics and personality of society, but also an undividable part of that society and the playing field an extension of the streets and offices where influential decisions are made.