Chapter 10

Documentary, Experimental and Animated Films
Documentary

• Presents facts in a trustworthy manner
• Events can be staged
• Can be misleading, inaccurate or partisan
Types of Documentary

• Compilation films
• Interview or talking-heads documentaries
• Direct-cinema or cinema verite
• Nature documentaries
• Portrait documentaries
• Combination
Boundaries Between Documentary and Fiction

• Fictional films are assumed to be imaginary, although they may refer and comment on actual events.

• Fiction film are typically staged, rehearsed, filmed and re-filmed.

• Some films seek to blur the lines between documentary and fiction films.
Types of Documentary Form: Narrative

• Similar in form to fiction films
• Often focuses on a central character or group of characters
• Characters may have a goal they are attempting to achieve
Grey Gardens | Dir. David and Albert Maysles | Narrative Direct Cinema Documentary
Types of Documentary Form: Categorical

- Categories are groups that organize knowledge and can be formal or not.
- Categorical documentaries show all the categories and subcategories of a subject.
- Development is usually simple.
- Exciting or broad categories, patterned film techniques and mini-narratives can keep the subject interesting.
Types of Documentary Form: Rhetorical

• The goal is to persuade the audience to adopt or act on an opinion.

• Addresses viewer openly, trying to move the viewer.

• Subject is usually a matter of opinion.

• Often appeals to our emotions rather than facts.
Types of Documentary Form: Rhetorical

• Types of Rhetorical Argument

  • Arguments from source: arguments will come from reliable sources of information.

  • Subject-centered: employs arguments about it’s subject matter, using examples, enthymemes, and common beliefs.

  • Viewer-centered: arguments that appeal to emotions.
FIVE WEEKS EARLIER...
Experimental Film

- Willfully nonconformist, challenging notions of what a movie can show and how it can show it.

- Frequently explores self-expression and experimentation outside mainstream cinema.

- Can use narrative, abstract or associational form.
Narrative Form

- Independent of the studio system
- Personal expression
- Experimentation with narrative
- Anti-narrative
Meshes of the Afternoon | Dir. Maya Deren | Anti-Narrative Experimental Film
Abstract Form

• Organized around colors, shapes, sizes or movements of the images.

• Often uses theme and variations.

• Goal is to make the viewer notice relationships and elements they wouldn’t normally notice.
Ballet Mecanique | Dir. Ferdinand Leger | Abstract Experimental Film
The Dark Tower | Dir. Stan Brakhage | Abstract Experimental Film
Associational Form

• Ideas and expressive qualities group images that may not have any logical connection.

• Like metaphor and simile used in poetry.

• Images are typically grouped into larger sets, each which is a distinct, unified part of the larger film.

• Repeated motifs reinforce associational connections.
To Parsifal | Dir. Bruce Baillie | Associational Experimental Film
The Animated Film

• Not filmed in real time

• Spans all types of films: narrative, documentary and experimental

• Types include drawn, cut outs, clay, model, pixilation, and computer imaging

• Can be mixed with live action