

THE USE OF ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE IN DOCUMENTARY RHETORIC

by

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GLOSSARY

- Indexical Bond – Introduction to Documentary explains the indexical bond as follows:
“The indexical dimension of an image refers to the way in which the appearance of an image is shaped or determined by what it records...it is a document of what once stood before the camera as well as how the camera represented them.”
(Nichols 35-36)
- Social Imaginary – Bill Nichols defines the social imaginary as follows: “The social imaginary consists of those social relations members of one group imagine they have to their actual relation to another group. As a realm of the imaginary (rather than the symbolic where differences prevail over oppositions), these relations are image-based, not make-believe. They move toward either/or, them/us polarizations.” (Boundaries 30)
- Truth Claim – Documentary footage records an event that happened in historical reality (i.e., the event was not created or staged, such as fiction footage). The indexical bond between the footage and the event it represents is what gives documentary its truth claim. The recorded image becomes a piece of historical evidence “demonstrating the physical look of a historical event in a way no fictional likeness can ever duplicate however close its approximation.” (Nichols, Reality 117) However, documentaries place evidence into new contexts and give it new meaning in order to make an argument. Keath Beattie explains, “Of course, saying that a documentary representation makes a truth claim is not the same as saying that it presents truth.” (10)

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the ways in which archival footage are used in documentary rhetoric. Based upon Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, there are two types of proof: inartistic and artistic. I argue that there is an inherent truth claim to archival footage based on its indexical bond to the historical event it captures and suspends in time, which gives the footage merit as evidence. However, evidence alone is not absolute truth. All evidence is subject to interpretation and argument. Once archival footage is placed into the larger context of a documentary film to support or refute an argument about a particular historical event, it becomes artistic proof. I use examples such as the Zapruder and Holliday footage to demonstrate inartistic proof (the truth claim of footage), and the compilation films of Emile de Antonio and Esther Shub to demonstrate the use of Aristotle's three types of artistic proof: ethical, emotional, and demonstrative. The final section of this essay discusses my film, The Great Ocean of Truth, which is a compilation film, and its use of context to create meaning, and the importance of both inartistic *and* artistic proofs in documentary rhetoric.

INTRODUCTION

As a scientist, it is important to conduct research and experiments as objectively as possible. As a filmmaker, it is important to realize the subjective nature of interpretation and re-presentation of information. My scientific background nurtured the belief that I should approach a topic or subject of study as objectively as possible. Carrying this belief with me that objectivity was good and subjectivity was bad, I naïvely entered the world of documentary filmmaking. Now, after three years of study in this genre called documentary, I am still extremely naïve; however, I no longer have such a clearly defined position on objectivity and subjectivity. Although I am now inclined to agree with documentary theorists such as John Grierson, Walter Benjamin, and Bill Nichols in their assessments that it is impossible to remain purely objective in filmmaking,¹ I *do* still believe there is an objective truth claim in every recorded image.

According to Bill Nichols in Representing Reality, “At the heart of documentary is less a *story* and its imaginary world than an *argument* about the historical world” (111). It is the historical world that is the subject of interpretation. A documentary filmmaker does not simply present and report on the facts, but provides her own meaning and context to the images and facts of the topic. According to Stella Bruzzi:

Documentary film is traditionally perceived to be the hybrid offspring of a perennial struggle between the forces of objectivity (represented by the ‘documents’ or facts that underpin it) and the forces of subjectivity (that is the translation of those facts into representational form.) (39)

Assuming that the purpose of a documentary film is to provide an interpretation, or *argument* about certain facts contained in the historical world, one would be wise to

examine the rhetorical strategies of re-presenting the information. According to Aristotle, there are two types of evidence: that based on facts (inartistic proofs) and that based on feelings of the audience (artistic proofs).

A common way of presenting facts in a documentary is through the use of archival footage. However, archival footage can also be used to stir the emotions of the audience, depending on how it is used. This thesis examines the use of archival footage as both inartistic *and* artistic proof in documentary rhetoric.

THE TRUTH CLAIM

Archival Footage

The term “archival” is a derivative of “archive,” which the Oxford American Dictionary defines as “a collection of *historical* documents or records providing information about a place, institution, or group of people” (my italics). Thus, archival footage is footage recording information about an event occurring in the *historical* world. It is footage previously obtained by someone else for some other purpose. Documentary compilation films do not usually call into question the truth claim of the footage.

William Wees explains:

Compilation films may reinterpret images taken from film and television archives, but generally speaking, they do not challenge the representational nature of the images themselves. That is, they still operate on the assumption that there is a direct correspondence between the images and their profilmic sources in the real world.² (36)

Digital technology has now made it possible to falsify the truth claims of archival footage. A great example of this manipulation is the Hollywood narrative film Forrest Gump, 1994. Actor Tom Hanks appears in several famous archival news images. Most viewers recognize this manipulation of the footage and accept it as part of the mechanism of entertainment. However, in the documentary, non-narrative genre, this type of manipulation threatens the very basis of the truth claim of archival footage. Keith Beattie writes:

Truth claims reflect a tacit contractual agreement or bond of trust between documentary producers...and an audience that the representation is based on the actual socio-historical world, not a fictional world imaginatively conceived. (11)

The overt manipulation (i.e., insertion or removal of people or objects) of the archive changes the meaning of the footage. A documentary filmmaker must inform the viewer of overt manipulation, or she abuses the trust of the viewer. Although this is an important aspect of filmmaking today, this thesis does not take into account the potential for overt manipulation, and the discussion bases itself with the viewer, assuming that the truth claims of archival footage are based upon actual historical events.

The ways of using archival footage in documentary filmmaking are numerous, and archival footage appears in many films. However, the truth claim of the archival footage alone is often not enough to satisfy a viewer's inquisitive intellect. The questions we seek to answer, and the arguments we seek to prove, cannot be addressed by the footage alone.

According to Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, inartistic proofs are based on facts. In order to demonstrate facts, documentary filmmakers employ various tactics, one of which is the use of archival footage. When used as an inartistic proof, archival footage relies on the truth claim of a recorded image. André Bazin believes there is an undeniable indexical bond between the recorded image and the event recorded:

Only a photographic lens can give us the kind of image of the object that is capable of satisfying the deep need man has to substitute for it something more than a mere approximation, a kind of decal or transfer. The photographic image is the object itself, the object freed from the conditions of time and space that govern it. No matter how fuzzy, distorted, or discolored, no matter how lacking in documentary value the image may be, it shares, by virtue of the very process of its becoming, the being of the model of which it is the reproduction; it *is* the model. (14)

Brian Winston also argues that, “Contemporary positioning of photography as an art does not detract from the camera’s status as a scientific instrument” (37). Archival footage has a truth claim, but to what extent?

Caught on Camera: The Zapruder and Holliday Footage

Two of the most famous examples of footage caught on camera are Abraham Zapruder’s 22 seconds of the assassination of President Kennedy and George Holliday’s 81 seconds of the Rodney King beating. Their motivations for capturing these two important events were accidental and purely observational. The question, then, is what exactly does the footage show? Is it proof? If so, what is it proof of?

Zapruder Footage

Arguably, the Zapruder film is the most watched piece of footage ever recorded. It shows nothing more and nothing less than President Kennedy being shot. We want it to reveal the truth behind who killed him, and as we watch it over and over, we hope that history will change, or that we will miraculously find the answer to all the speculation (Bruzzi 18). All that the footage reveals is that Kennedy was shot; the images bear an indexical bond to the historical event as it happened. This lack of information is very disappointing because it explains nothing. We want a definitive answer to who did it and why, but the footage does not provide that information. Are the 22 seconds recorded by Abraham Zapruder considered a documentary film? Or is it simply footage?

I believe these 22 seconds should be categorized simply as footage. As discussed above, the purpose of documentary filmmaking is to present an *argument* about the

historical world. The 22 seconds alone present no argument, but when placed into a larger context with additional footage it becomes part of an argument within a documentary film. Several documentaries make use of this footage as their primary source of evidence, and it is the filmmaker's right, as well as the purpose of documentary to provide interpretation and context to the footage, but the footage alone remains a simple truth claim. It is a claim only that President Kennedy was shot, it is not proof of who killed him, or why. Those questions are left open to interpretation.

Holliday Footage

Like the Zapruder footage, George Holliday's 81-second recording of the beating of Rodney King by four Los Angeles police officers provides no context, leaving it open to interpretation. However, in this case, the footage seems to answer the questions of who and what, and became the primary piece of evidence in a court of law where its interpretation would determine the guilt or innocence of the four police officers.

The prosecution in this case relied heavily on the truth claim of Holliday's footage, that four white LAPD officers beat Rodney King. The defense, on the other hand, relied heavily upon context and interpretation of the footage, that events immediately prior to the recording proved the officers defended themselves rather than attacked Rodney King. As Paula Rabinowitz points out, "where the prosecution relied on the 'facts' of the visual text solely – what could be seen on the tape – without acknowledging the context of the tape ... the defense sought to recontextualize the tape by using a purely textual method" (210). The defense played the footage frame by frame,

and the attorneys provided commentary and explanation through the testimony of the experts they called to the stand.

The truth claim of the footage was not sufficient as an argument. The case was decided based upon the context and interpretation of the historical event, not the event itself. When interpreting an event between two interacting parties, context is very important. “No image can *show* intent or motivation” (Nichols, Boundaries 33). What happened before the recording began makes a great deal of difference to the interpretation of the images. The defense focused on what happened immediately before the recording began, which changed the interpretation of Mr. King’s actions from reactionary to aggressive. On a larger scale, however, Mr. King may have been reacting to the history of racial aggression by the LAPD toward black men in the area.

Like the Zapruder film, all that the Holliday footage does *not* explain disappoints us. “These few moments...can never answer the very questions we ask of them” (Nichols, Boundaries 18). And so, it was up to the rhetorical prowess of the attorneys arguing the case to convince a jury of the correct interpretation of the 81-second image recorded on March 3, 1991.

Not all footage captures events such as these, which represent much more than they reveal. All footage claims an indexical bond with its recorded historical event. These images do not explain or interpret anything, but do suspend them in time for analysis and interpretation. Each presentation of the recorded image by itself compels acknowledgment that the event represented by the footage took place in the historical world, and requires reasonable viewers to interpret the event in accordance with his or

her 'social imaginary.' By placing images (archival footage) into new contexts and providing new interpretations, documentary filmmaking works toward redefining a viewer's 'social imaginary.'

DOCUMENTARY PERSUASION

Documentary filmmaking is about interpreting the facts of the historical world and making an argument for that interpretation. We have established in the previous section that archival footage maintains a ‘truth claim.’

Aristotle’s inartistic proofs are based on facts, but the *artistic* proofs appeal to emotions. Bill Nichols explains artistic proofs:

These are the techniques used to generate the *impression* of conclusiveness or proof. They are a product of the orator or filmmaker’s inventiveness rather than something found elsewhere and introduced intact. (Introduction 50)

When used as an *inartistic* proof (fact), archival footage relies on the truth claim of a recorded image to support an argument. When used as an *artistic* proof, archival footage relies upon juxtaposition and the new context of the recorded image to support an argument. According to Aristotle, there are three types of artistic proofs: 1) ethical, generating an impression of good moral character or credibility; 2) emotional, appealing to the audience’s emotions to produce the desired disposition, putting the audience in the right mood or establishing a frame of mind favorable to a particular view; and 3) demonstrative, using real or apparent reasoning or demonstration, proving, or giving the impression of proving, the case (Nichols, Introduction 50).

So, how does one persuade a viewing audience to agree with her interpretive use of archival footage? By taking footage out of its original context and place in history, it becomes open for new meaning. In reference to three compilation films of Matthew Buckingham (Situation Leading to a Story, 1999; Amos Fortune Road, 1996; and The

Truth About Abraham Lincoln, 1992), Orla Ryan writes, “All three films are immersed in a negotiation of history and memory, recycling the past as a means of engaging with representations in the present” (16-17). The truth claim of the footage is still valid, but it is now interpreted in relation to all events occurring between the time the footage was captured and the present. Old documentaries become the material for new compilations (Vaughan 82). Each re-presentation of footage, with the passage of time and historical events, changes our ‘social imaginary.’ Ken Burns’ often bases his documentaries on historical topics. Ken Burns says:

History is not just about the past. History is about the questions the present asks of the past, and so our historical pursuits are very much a reflection not only of what went on before, but where we are now.
(Stubbs 74)

The use of archival footage in documentary rhetoric exploits the unavoidable link we all share with the past in order to make an argument in the present. Pure compilation documentaries use *only* archival material to make their case. So, how does archival footage in compilation films use each of Aristotle’s three artistic proofs?

Archival Footage as Artistic Proofs:
Ethical, Emotional and Demonstrative

Artistic Proof #1: Ethical

The ethical proof is one “generating an impression of good moral character or credibility.” A common use of archival footage is to support and illustrate the other form(s) of text, often voice-over narration and interview(s) (Beattie 125). Stella Bruzzi writes:

The conventional television use of archive is largely non-dialectical, the purpose of its retrieved archive being to demonstrate what has already been or is in the process of being signaled by other information sources such as the voice-over or the words of interviewees. (32)

Ken Burns, well known for his historical documentaries, uses various archival materials such as still photos, archival footage, and archival documents to support the audible texts of narration and interview. Archival footage has ‘assumed authority’ because of its truth claim (whether real or imagined). Therefore, when a narrator or interviewee in Ken Burns’ JAZZ (2000) tells us as viewers that Louis Armstrong played one of his best trumpet solos on a stage in a small jazz club, and we see images of Louis Armstrong playing the trumpet in what appears to be a small club, we are inclined to believe the filmmakers because we see visual “proof” of the event. In actuality, the image may have been of a different club, at a different time; but it is an *apparent* proof. Because of the archive material, both recognizable and not, the filmmakers have established their credibility, and we as viewers believe it is true.

A second example of apparent proof based upon credibility is the compilation film, The Atomic Café (1982). The Atomic Café differs from the JAZZ series in that it is considered a ‘pure’ compilation film; that is, there is no narration or interviews, and all footage seen in the film is either found or archival material. The text of the film relies solely upon the recontextualization of the images through juxtaposition. Keith Beattie writes:

Just as the US government sought to convince its audience of its position on nuclear weapons, so too the filmmakers of The Atomic Café seek through skilful editing of official footage to establish a preferred reading which subverts the government’s position... (142)

Although the film undercuts the claim to factual status of evidence of the pronuclear propaganda films that are the material for this film (Nichols, Reality 159), it establishes credibility in two ways. First, Kevin and Pierce Rafferty and Jane Loader use actual material produced by the U.S. government in the 1950s. They have not produced new footage, and they have not interviewed anyone, they only recontextualize the footage. By using archival footage, they create an apparent credibility because the propaganda does, in fact, exist, and was used as such.

Second, because the film was compiled in the 1980s, when the devastating effects of an atomic blast were (and still are) common knowledge, the viewing audience understands at once how ridiculous the propaganda is (i.e., instructions to “duck and cover” in the event of a nuclear blast). Eric Barnouw’s Hiroshima-Nagasaki (1970) “showed the intimate results of the atomic blast for the first time to the public. (Ellis & McLane 252) Viewers may or may not have personal memories of the propaganda films as they were presented in the 1950s, but a modern viewer recognizes the lack of credibility of the claims in the source material itself, which works as an apparent proof of the credibility of the filmmakers. Now that this credibility has been established, the viewer is more likely to accept the filmmakers’ more subtle commentary on the Cold War. As Stella Bruzzi writes:

The Atomic Café is more than a clever piece of counter-propaganda that reverses the original meaning of the archive it uses, it confronts its audience with the complex series of manoeuvres [sic] that sustained the Cold War and its accompanying propaganda. (39)

The filmmakers in these situations may or may not be credible, but they create the impression of credibility, which helps to persuade the viewers of the arguments made in these films.

Artistic Proof #2: Emotional

The emotional proof is one “appealing to the audience’s emotions to produce the desired disposition; putting the audience in the right mood or establishing a frame of mind favorable to a particular view.” This proof may be the most important and effective of the three when using archival footage and juxtaposition in a compilation film. Not only is the archival material in a new context temporally different from when it was recorded, it is now in a new physical context juxtaposed with images that change the way the audience interprets the archival material.

Russian filmmaker Esther (Esfir) Shub established the technique of compilation filmmaking (Petric 429; Ellis and McLane 35). One of her early films, The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty (1927), combines newsreels with home movie footage of Czar Nicholas II. These two sources, shot by two separate entities for separate purposes, are now cut together, creating a new context. The particular order of the footage and the inter-titles play to our emotions as we, the viewers, see Shub’s point of view of history. We are persuaded to believe that the revolution was a good thing. Jack Ellis and Betsy McLane write:

Even though she is clearly justifying the Revolution through showing the background out of which it came, *the humanity* of the people photographed *still comes through*, regardless of which side they were on politically. (My italics.) (37)

Esther Shub very effectively invokes emotion with the juxtapositions she so cleverly crafts. One famous example of this is the scene of wealthy men and women dancing aboard a cruise ship. At the end of the dance, the women are perspiring and fanning themselves. The next footage we see is of peasants digging a ditch. Both of these images retain their ‘truth claim,’ but their juxtaposition contributes to the modification of viewers’ ‘social reality.’ Esther Shub comments:

The intention was not so much to provide the facts, but to evaluate them from the vantage point of the revolutionary class. This is what made my films revolutionary and agitational - although they were composed of counterrevolutionary material. (Shub, 251)

The contradiction of wealth and leisure with poverty and physical labor establishes a great imbalance between the classes of people in Russia at that time. We feel sorry for the poor, and resent the wealthy, which sets the viewer’s frame of mind in a place more favorable to the point of view of Esther Shub and the revolutionaries of the time. As the film continues, the viewer is more likely to be persuaded by the arguments set forth because of the filmmaker’s effective use of the ‘emotional proof.’

Ken Burns is also a master of the emotional proof. The JAZZ series encompasses not only jazz music and jazz musicians, but a host of other issues confronting jazz musicians of the time. Burns refers to many of his viewers as “the rest of us.” (2) Many of ‘the rest of us’ feel guilt and sorrow that black Americans were treated so poorly in a time when they were supposed to be free. By appreciating jazz music, and the difficult times they went through, we as viewers can feel better about ourselves as Americans. When Burns elevates the status of Louis Armstrong to “the most important person in American music,” we want to believe him. He has proved, or apparently proved that

despite adversity and hardships we viewers cannot understand, this particular black jazz musician is a genius we must appreciate. And if we appreciate him, and all jazz music, our collective American sins of racism will be forgiven. In an interview about the JAZZ series on the PBS website, Burns says:

African-Americans in general, and black jazz musicians in particular, carry a complicated message to the rest of us, a genetic memory of our great promise and our great failing, and the music they created and then generously shared with the rest of the world negotiates and reconciles the contradictions many of us would rather ignore. Embedded in the music, in its riveting biographies and soaring artistic achievement, can be found our oft-neglected conscience, a message of hope and transcendence, of affirmation in the face of adversity, unequaled in the unfolding drama and parade we call American history. (Burns 2)

Artistic Proof #3: Demonstrative

A demonstrative proof uses “real or apparent reasoning or demonstration; proving, or giving the impression of proving, the case.” Lawyers use evidence in a court of law to argue their cases. However, as discussed above, the same evidence is often used in multiple ways to try and prove opposing arguments. The initial court case on the Rodney King beating proved, or apparently proved, that the contextualization of footage is what gives it meaning. This statement is especially true in compilation filmmaking.

Emile de Antonio uses compilation filmmaking to make political commentary. Like Shub, he designs his films to make audiences think; he feels it is an insult to the viewer’s intelligence to be told what to think of a sequence with voice-over narration. Although he had yet to become familiar with the works of Esther Shub at the time of the release of Point of Order, (1964) Stella Bruzzi writes, “De Antonio’s work offers the

most comprehensive articulation of the ideas first expressed by Shub about the polemical potential of archive film” (24)

In Point of Order, a compilation film using the television recordings of the McCarthy hearings in 1954, Emile de Antonio makes effective use of the third of Aristotle’s artistic proofs by proving, or giving the impression of proving, the case. Rather than mixing multiple sources of footage, de Antonio reduces 188 hours of previously televised material to 97 minutes (Ellis and McLane 230), choosing footage that reveals McCarthy as an opportunistic, power-hungry man who no longer had any credibility or support for his endeavors.

Unlike many compilation films that mix footage from a variety of sources, Point of Order uses only the television recordings of the hearings. De Antonio constructs new meaning by changing only the temporal context of the footage, rather than inter-cutting it with footage from outside the hearings. The film has no voice-over narration. As the viewer watches the images, based upon the decisions de Antonio made in the editing room, he leads the viewer to arrive at the same conclusion he has come to (Bruzzi 24). De Antonio termed this method ‘democratic didacticism.’³ Stella Bruzzi writes:

Imperative to de Antonio’s idea of ‘democratic didacticism’, though, is that the innate meaning of this original footage, however it is reconstituted, is never entirely obscured. One vivid, consistent facet of de Antonio’s work is that his collage method does not attack hate figures...but rather gives them enough rope by which to hang themselves – turning often favourable original footage in on itself. (24)

The images, as manipulated by de Antonio in Point of Order, seem to speak for themselves in this filmic environment. Unlike a court case, a documentary film retains its argument in this format. The form chosen by de Antonio invites the viewer to question

the rhetoric, and to think about the evidence presented. In this way, if the viewer comes to the conclusion that Senator McCarthy had gone too far with his witch-hunting – that the very establishment that gave him his power now no longer respected his position or actions - he has very effectively proven, or given the impression of proving, the case.

Bill Nichols writes:

The film's own consciousness (surrogate for ours) probes, remembers, substantiates, doubts. It questions and believes, including itself. It assumes the voice of personal consciousness at the same time as it examines the very category of the personal. Neither omniscient deity nor obedient mouthpiece, de Antonio's rhetorical voice seduces us by embodying those qualities of insight, skepticism, judgment, and independence we would like to appropriate for our own. (Rosenthal 58)

Point of Order exemplifies de Antonio's clever use of the demonstrative proof and its effectiveness. Aristotle's inartistic proofs provide guidelines for persuading viewers of a filmmaker's argument. Archival footage can play an important role in documentary rhetoric. The footage captures a moment in history, but does not explain that moment. From the instant the event becomes an image, it becomes infinitely open for reinterpretation until it physically disintegrates or is destroyed.

Archival footage maintains a truth claim, and is an inartistic proof on a very basic level (i.e., JFK was shot). The image itself is objective, but the filmmakers are not. There are too many decisions, both conscious and unconscious, that happen in the production of a film for it to be truly objective. The filmmaker makes decisions ranging from what to include or not include in shot to the tone and mood of the music used. Viewers then interpret the filmmaker's decisions in varying ways depending upon their prior knowledge and feelings on the subject. The basis of documentary film is in

historical reality, but we are all part of a 'social reality', including both filmmakers and viewers.

As Stella Bruzzi writes:

[D]ocumentaries are predicated upon a negotiation between the polarities of objectivity and subjectivity, offering a dialectical analysis of events and images that accepts that no non-fictional record can contain the whole truth whilst also accepting that to re-use or recontextualise such material is not to irrevocably suppress or distort the innate value and meaning it possesses. (39)

THE USE OF ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE IN
THE GREAT OCEAN OF TRUTH

My thesis film, The Great Ocean of Truth (2006), is a departure from my comfort zone of a structured, objective, scientific documentary. The film is about the life and work of Dr. Bruce Halstead, a marine bio-toxicologist and medical doctor. However, it does not conform to a traditional biographical structure (i.e., I do not follow a chronology of events beginning with birth, highlighting major accomplishments, and ending in death). Instead, the film presents the viewer with events that represent the issues Dr. Halstead fought for during his lifetime.

Stella Bruzzi defines compilation film as “a documentary constructed almost exclusively out of retrieved archive” (21). The Great Ocean of Truth is a compilation film, although not a *pure* compilation film. I shot a short re-enactment sequence for the beginning of the film. As discussed below, compilation filmmaking is very limited to available archive. I felt the re-enactment sequence was important enough to the story of Dr. Halstead, that it outweighed the desire to make a *pure* compilation piece. Dr. Halstead was a man with a lot to say, who was not afraid to say it. I approached the film in a way that would allow viewers to experience him as I had, through archival material. He died three years before the start of the film project. I never had the opportunity to interview him and ask for his comments on various events throughout his life, thus, we only have access to his public persona, and the image of himself he chose to project while the cameras and tape recorders were rolling.

Dr. Halstead was a complex man with a complex and expansive career in marine biology, toxicology, and medicine. His life's work and professional reputation were scarred in 1991 when he was convicted of cancer fraud. The intention of this film was to re-examine the circumstances surrounding his conviction and his underlying credentials and scientific career as they relate to the present.

I approached the film heuristically, researching his career and absorbing the archival materials found in his institute. It became apparent that his early research on ichthyology was well respected and unquestioned. It also became apparent that he was very outspoken about issues of pollution and alternative medicine, both in the U.S. and around the world. The individuals now associated with the World Life Research Institute do not discuss the court case or the cancer fraud conviction, yet the archival material and bound volumes of court documents indicated that it was a large part of Dr. Halstead's life and consumed more than six years of it. The initial intent of the film was to allow Dr. Halstead to tell his story using only archival footage and audio recordings (i.e., no voice-over narration). There was a lot of archival material available, but not enough audio to accurately represent a discussion of issues and events in his life. In order to introduce a viewer to this man, I felt voice-over narration was necessary, and that it was important to include archive representing his court case for it to accurately represent his life. I also wanted to argue the point that despite his criminal conviction for cancer fraud, his scientific career should not be dismissed as fraudulent. On the contrary, his scientific career is the reason we should listen to his arguments about his criminal conviction.

Archive material records events in the historical world, but documentary argument is about the relation of the past to the present. Alternative, preventative and traditional medicines are much more accepted and common today than in the 1980s. Although chemotherapy and radiation treatments for cancer work for some patients, we still have no cure or 100% effective treatment for cancer. Health care in this country is inconsistent and plagued with problems, and the FDA and pharmaceutical companies are constantly under fire for defective and overpriced medications. Retrospectively, Dr. Halstead had a very productive career, and his conviction for cancer fraud was a misguided attempt to silence an outspoken man who was not afraid to question the methods and approaches to medicine that are practiced and enforced in this country.

Aristotle's Proofs in The Great Ocean of Truth

Inartistic Proof.

The archival material for this compilation film was all found in the World Life Research Institute. There were four main sources of material for the film: 1) 16mm film prints; 2) still photos and slides; 3) audio tapes; and 4) VHS tapes. Most of this material was labeled with a location and year, but lacked audio (film and photo prints) or video (audio tapes) to provide additional context and meaning. Context provides meaning and interpretation. I had initially intended to use only the available recorded audio of Dr. Halstead and no additional voice over narration, but because of the limitations of working with archival material, there was not enough meaning for this material to stand alone and present an argument. Like the Zapruder or Holliday footage, these materials recorded

specific events in the historical world, but did not explain them. The inherent truth claim of the footage serves as factual evidence that Dr. Halstead participated in these historical events. But their meaning in this present-day argument was unclear, so I wrote and recorded voice over narration to explain the historical context of the images.

Artistic Proofs.

The first of the artistic proofs, the ethical proof, is extremely important in my film. Not only is it important that I, as the filmmaker, appear moral and credible, it is more important that my subject, Dr. Halstead, appears as a moral and credible character. This is essentially the argument of the film, that despite his criminal conviction in California in 1991, he was a qualified and credible scientist and physician. He had multiple degrees and accreditations, and was well published. If I do not apparently prove his credibility, the viewer will not be convinced that he was wrongly prosecuted.

I included a section from the television program Science in Action (1952) in order to establish that the California Academy of Sciences considered Dr. Halstead to be an expert in the field of marine bio-toxicology very early in his career. The host, Earl, informs the audience that Dr. Halstead has a medical degree from Loma Linda, and that he received “some of his early training” at the California Academy of Sciences. The California Academy of Sciences is still in operation today and is home of the Steinhart Aquarium, which is a well-respected and credible scientific institution. The fact that Dr. Halstead is associated with the Academy adds to his credibility. I also include narration and footage from early expeditions to establish that he has traveled to many areas of the world to conduct research, which resulted in major publications of his work. In the

scientific world, publications are a measure of credibility and accomplishment. At the end of the film, while the viewer hears Dr. Halstead talking about his court trial and his feeling about the medical establishment, I show photos from various expeditions throughout the world and include subtitles with additional information about his accomplishments and his status as an expert to reinforce his status as a credible scientist and physician right before I reveal that he was convicted of cancer fraud.

The emotional proof in this film is the most important of the three. Even if the viewers might not agree with Dr. Halstead's approach to medicine, they can identify emotionally with him and feel bad that he lost his court case, and that he was unfairly sentenced to 32 months in prison at the age of 77. He was not a dangerous criminal, and today it seems ridiculous to put a man in jail for providing herbal tea to patients. I first use the emotional proof in the section of the film dealing with global pollution. The mercury poisoning in Minamata Bay, Japan, invokes strong emotions of anger (at the company polluting the bay), sadness (for the victims of the pollution), and repulsion (at the deformities of the victims). Most reasonable viewers would agree that negligent pollution such as that in Minamata Bay causes health problems for local residents that greatly outweigh the economic gains of a company or individuals employed by that company. This section now places viewers in a state of mind where they are more likely to agree with Dr. Halstead on broader issues of pollution and health, because they agree that the pollution in Minamata Bay was a tragedy.

I also make use of the emotional proof by establishing the pioneering work of Dr. Halstead and his great dedication to science and health. His goal from early in his career

was to improve health, which reasonable individuals would agree is a noble cause. In the early 1980s, in his efforts to improve the health of terminal cancer patients, he provided herbal supplement teas to them intended to boost their immune systems while undergoing chemotherapy and radiation treatments. He states that he has seen many cancer patients, and he has had to watch them die. He is very convinced of his ideas, because he is tired of watching people die. Most viewers have either battled cancer themselves, or know someone who has battled with cancer and lost. For a terminal patient, anything is worth a try. Dr. Halstead was an expert on toxic substances and knew that this herbal tea was not dangerous to these patients and had seen good results from those who were already taking it. He provided this option to terminal patients and was made a criminal for his efforts. Emotionally, the injustice of his efforts as well as the injustice to the terminal patients makes the viewer feel sorry for Dr. Halstead, and angry that the medical establishment seems to lack compassion.

Finally, the truth claim of the footage, the ethical proof, and the emotional proof combine, forming the demonstrative proof. I hope to have demonstrated or proved that Dr. Halstead was a credible scientist with a great deal of experience and knowledge gained from traveling and working throughout the world, who was wrongfully criminalized and lost a six year fight for his own rights and those of others. Many of the issues he speaks of in the archival material are included in the film because they are still relevant issues today. He spoke out against pollution and warned politicians that continued pollution would result not only in poisoned fish, but poisoned people. He spoke out against the FDA because he felt health care in this country was more about

money than about well-being. My use of the demonstrative proof in my thesis film proves (or apparently proves) that Dr. Halstead was right about many issues, and tried to prevent these problems from happening twenty years ago.

CONCLUSION

Compilation films are a powerful way to present an argument and reinterpretation of historical events. This power comes from the new context of the footage selected for the compilation. Famous footage, such as the Zapruder or Holliday footage, over time came to represent much more than it revealed. Films like The Atomic Café and Point of Order reflect on politics of the past as they relate to the present. The inherent truth claim of the archival footage in these compilations acts as evidence of these past events. However, as Jane Loader says, it is extremely difficult to make a film without narration. Pure compilation films are limited to the *recorded* moments of historical events. A lack of context can make a new argument about the event difficult to convey. The more footage available to choose from, the easier it is to make a clear argument.

My thesis film is limited to the public persona of Dr. Halstead and those events he deemed important enough to record. With no budget to work with, my goal was to create a film only from the materials available within the World Life Research Institute. In order to construct an argument, I needed to provide context and decided that the film required voice over narration to provide historical context to the recorded events. Most of the examples of compilation films I discussed above utilize well-known footage as the material for their compilations. Not only is the footage in my thesis film relatively unfamiliar to most viewers, my subject is also relatively unknown to most viewers. Compilation can be a powerful approach to documentary filmmaking. In many cases, its power is most effective when both subject matter and archival footage are recognizable to the viewer from their initial use. In my case, however, I believe the power of the film

comes from the context of the socio-historical world, and the current relevance of its issues. The issues addressed and the arguments of the film *are* familiar to most viewers. By using material new to the viewer, my film helps reconstruct viewers' social imaginary on subjects like global pollution, global health, cancer fraud and quackery.

As documentary filmmakers, we have the power to educate our viewers. We have an opportunity to shape the future of our world. There is much to be learned from history; we are intrinsically linked with our historical reality. Thanks to Louis Lumière, history can be captured into a visible form that can be reviewed and reinterpreted. As documentary filmmakers, we not only interpret, but we recontextualize to provide meaning. Every new meaning we share with our viewers aspires to contribute to a better understanding of our world.

NOTE

¹ The selection of a topic one believes to be worthy of a film, and the decision of what to include and what to not to include within the frame of the shot are, at the very least, subconscious decisions that reveal a filmmaker's subjectivity toward his or her subject. The advent of small portable cameras with the ability to record synch sound fueled the debate on this topic. Was direct cinema able to be truly objective and observational? I believe it is not possible to be truly objective in filmmaking, even when approached in a manner that is as unobtrusive and observational as possible. Erik Barnouw writes, "Documentaries make endless choices: of topic, people, vistas, angles, lenses, juxtapositions, sounds, words. Each selection is an expression of a point of view, whether conscious or not, acknowledged or not." (344)

² Wees makes a distinction between "compilation," "collage," and "appropriation" as three methodologies for filmmaking. He considers "compilation" films to fall within the exemplary genre of "documentary film" with "reality" as the signification. (34)

³ De Antonio's democratic intention, not wanting to teach, but to reveal, is what he calls 'democratic didacticism,' a term from Waugh, T. "Beyond Verite: Emile de Antonio and the New Documentary of the Seventies" in Movies and Methods II. Ed. Bill Nichols. Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California Press, pp. 233-58.

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