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A comparative analysis of the contemporary documentary films Ryan and Waltz with Bashir as animated representations of autobiographical reality

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Abstract

This research paper aims to explore the nature and implications of two animated films where graphic depiction is used to document the complexities of an individual's account of non-fictional events and situations. Within this position of animation and actuality, a "reality"[1] is represented[2] by the unreal[3] in the form of created (not captured) moving picture images, and therefore the elements found in the live action dominated documentary genre are significantly affected. Animation has become a more acceptable form of documentary filmmaking in the context of postmodernist scepticism about the traditional claims of representation. However, its uniqueness in this situation has led to further developments in the dominant mode of discourse creation within this genre. These developments will be explored in relation to contemporary scholarship in the field of animation. Certain theoretical postulates will then be invoked to set up a comparison between the two films chosen for case study, seen as examples of the subjective[4] in animated representations of individuals' realities, so as to identify and describe their contribution to the contemporary documentary genre. The essential research question may thus be posed as follows: how do these two animated films contribute towards the present notion of actuality representation, through a postmodern autobiographical style, within the developing contemporary documentary genre?

[1] What we know, understand and share with each other about the external world.
[2] A creation that is a visual or tangible rendering of someone or something.
[3] Man-made and invented, not merely captured from reality on a medium like film.
[4] Indicating a dependence on personal taste or view.

More specifically, the use made of verbal audio interviews within the animation processes in the case studies will be compared in order to address this question, because it is the particular use of interviews (and through them, the contributions to collective memory made by the interviewees) that really sets these two films apart from other autobiographical accounts within animation.