

Abstract

Scholarly discourse surrounding the moving image suggests the actuality of clearly defined filmic modes. Regarding the filmic mode of documentary; scholars focus on the debate between documentary's associations with 'actuality' and 'objectivity' versus the subjective nature of film as an artistic construction. According to Bill Nichols (2001: 38) documentary, unlike fiction, has the potential to influence due to our assumption that documentary images and sounds are an authentic representation of the world. Conversely, we assume fiction is a "fabrication" (Renov 1993: 7) that aims to project an illusion of the world. In the 21st century, we are witnessing the emergence of filmmakers who are vocally challenging the established characteristics that embody the documentary and fiction modes. In documentary, filmmakers are exploring the boundaries of categorisation by openly embracing subjective intentions and processes commonly associated with fiction. Fiction filmmakers have attempted to harness the 'truthfulness' of documentary; the byproduct of which being the manifestation of the docudrama sub-genre in popular culture. These new developments call for an investigation that leads to a better understanding of the fundamental reasons behind them. Drawing from a theoretical framework and the film component as a case study, this report investigates the characteristics that define these filmic modes and examines how these characteristics relate to objectivity, subjectivity and actuality. This paper interrogates the perceived differences in their defining characteristics, and explores the strong indications that documentary and fiction films are products of a similar intention and process.