TRICKS OF THE TRADE

An examination of the confluences between documentary and deception,
inspired by the symbiotic relationship between filmmaker and con artist
in *Forbidden Lie$*

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Abstract

This doctoral thesis combines Anna Broinowski's dramatised documentary feature, *Forbidden Lie$* (2007), with a scholarly exegesis examining the confluences between documentary filmmaking and deception. This critical writing has been inspired by the symbiotic relationship between "honest" filmmaker, and "dishonest" subject, in Broinowski's film.

The written component, *Tricks of the Trade,* presents a detailed examination of the ways in which the nonfiction "real" has been constructed and consumed over cinema's one hundred and twenty year history. In the process, parallels are revealed between the techniques used by documentary filmmakers, and the techniques used by magicians, forgers, propagandists, con artists and other professional dissemblers, to deceive, seduce, entertain, persuade, and "trick" their audiences, or "marks".

Tricks of the Trade advances two propositions: 1, that deception is as necessary to documentary is to fiction; and 2, despite this, documentary remains a valid and important art form. Documentary's ability to successfully engage audiences in the future, it is suggested, depends in part upon the acknowledgment (rather than concealment) of its deceptive techniques.

Statement of Candidate

I certify that the work in this thesis, *Tricks of the Trade,* has not previously been submitted for a degree, nor has it been submitted as part of the requirements for a degree to any other university or institution other than Macquarie University.

I also certify that this thesis is an original piece of research and that it has been written by me. Any help and assistance I received in my research work and in the preparation of this thesis has been appropriately acknowledged.

In addition, I certify that all the information sources and literature that have been used and referred to are indicated and acknowledged in this thesis.

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Acknowledgments

Cinema is the most beautiful fraud in the world

Jean-Luc Godard

INTRODUCTION

Who told the first lie? To the public? I did, didn't I?

Norma Khouri
Forbidden Lie$

When *Forbidden Lie$* (2007)*,* my feature documentary about fraudster-turned-hoax author Norma Khouri was in the cinemas, I used to sneak in to observe the audience. I was bored with the film, but watching the viewers was refreshing. People would heckle the screen, laugh and yell. Sometimes they would be so annoyed by Khouri's relentless fabrications they would leave; others would shout out encouragement or abuse. One love-struck man in Sydney called out, "Marry me, Norma!" A tetchy woman in San Francisco growled, to no one in particular, "Oh, this is too much."

The consistent impression (in my admittedly biased eyes) was that the film had so disrupted people's perceptions of reality, they needed to debrief before they could resume their normal interactions with the world. In question and answer sessions in the Middle East, Europe and America, people would interrogate me – confused, bemused, or furious – and cling to my answers like life-rafts. I had intended to make a film in which the audience was forced to question not only the veracity of its main character, but the veracity of the filmmaker, and indeed the nature of "truth" itself – at least in those public modalities which depend upon our acceptance that what is presented as "fact" is indeed true: current affairs and news programs, the print and digital media, literary non-fiction, and documentary.

In doing so, I hoped to reawaken peoples' independent critical faculties, and reflect the film's deceptions squarely back at them. If they walked out questioning not only the trust-worthiness of the media, but the credibility of non-fiction texts such as Khouri's hoax memoir *Forbidden Love,* and my hybrid-documentary *Forbidden Lie$,* then I had succeeded. When a woman in Washington asked, without irony, "Who was the actress you got to play Norma?" I realised I had exceeded my goal.

The fact is, the slug line on the film's poster, "con or artist? you decide," does not just refer to Norma. It refers to the filmmaker. Unlike Norma however, the filmmaker is only fleetingly judged in *Forbidden Lie$*. The written component of this thesis, *Tricks of the Trade*, seeks, in part, to address that imbalance. It is also, more broadly, a scholarly examination of the range of deceptive techniques used throughout the (predominantly western) history of documentary film: from its inception with the first nonfiction *"actualités"* of the Lumières in 1895; to 2015, when documentary's status as fiction's "superior" truth-telling other, remains tenuous at best (Roscoe & Hight 2001, Juhasz & Lerner 2006).

Inspired by the symbiotic relationship between "honest" filmmaker and "dishonest" subject in *Forbidden Lie$*, *Tricks of the Trade* uses German filmmaker Alexander Kluge's proposition that a documentary film is shot with "three cameras" – "1) the camera in the technical sense; 2) the filmmaker's mind; and 3) the generic patterns of the documentary film, which are founded on the expectations of the audience that patronizes it" (Kluge 1988: 4) – as a conceptual framework within which to examine three categories of documentary deception. Firstly, fictive deception: which employs the cinematographic, technical and narrative techniques of fiction film (from scripting, performance, dramatisation, computer simulation and editing, to music, art and sound design), to construct an authentic "real". Secondly, ethical deception: which involves the manipulation of information, both within the film (to the documentary's subjects and audience), and during its making (to the subjects, financiers and other participants), to construct a "real" that resembles the documentary "in the filmmaker's mind". The third category is public deception: in which the filmmaker (and/or exhibitor and distributor) makes false statements about the documentary's "truth claim", both during and following its release.

These three categories of deception provide an over-arching structure within which to analyse the shifting ways in which the documentary "real" has historically been depicted on screen. Examining the deceptive techniques operating in a range of documentaries, from films on the "factual" end of the fact/fiction "continuum" (Rosco & Hight 2001), to those operating in the generically murky fissures *within* it, *Tricks of the Trade* advances two propositions:

1. Deception is, and always has been, as necessary to documentary as
it is to fiction; and

2. Despite this, documentary remains both a valid, and an important,
art form.

Aligning the filmmaker with the con artist, magician, forger and propagandist as the technically (if not ethically) conjoined partners in the same manipulative dance, *Tricks of the Trade* shows how fakery, illusion, manipulation, persuasion, ellision and sleight-of-hand have been the indispensable (but largely unacknowledged) tools of nonfiction film practice, since cinema's inception.

Rather than using this exploration to mount a postmodern critique of documentary's already unstable "truth-teller" status, however, this thesis contributes to the arguments advanced by Grant & Sloniowski (2014), Gaines (1999), Williams (1995) and Renov (1986, 1993, 1999, 2004): that documentary deserves to be liberated from its cultural straightjacketing as a purely "factual" and "objective" discourse (in which artfulness is perceived as "deceitful"), and repositioned as an important art form it its own right. By illustrating how a key line of documentary filmmakers have successfully used art (and its shadow, deception), to engage audiences throughout the history of nonfiction film; and by demonstrating the ways in which modern incarnations of the documentary form continue to engage media-sophisticated consumers today, *Tricks of the Trade* upholds and celebrates the continuing power of documentary: to move, educate, entertain, inspire, and every once in a while – despite its inherent deceptions – speak the truth to power.

Part One, <u>Deception in Documentary from 1895-1988: a (secret) history</u>, traces the divergent ways in which the documentary "truth claim" has been produced, defined and received by filmmakers, scholars and viewers: from the fact/fiction blends of the first two decades of cinema, when "documentary" was not yet an officially acknowledged genre (Nichols 2014: xiv); through to the Direct Cinema and *Cinéma Vérité*-inspired texts of the second half of the twentieth century, when the discourses of "sobriety" (Nichols 1991: 113) and Bazin's markers of "documentary authenticity" (Bazin 1967: 162) dominated the way in which nonfiction narratives

were produced, exhibited and consumed. The particular focus of this "secret" history is the infrequent but influential line of documentaries which have continually operated within the murky borders of the fact/fiction divide.

Chapter 1, "Defining the Documentary 'Truth Claim'" provides an overview of how the documentary "truth claim", the deceptive techniques used by filmmakers to enact it, and the documentary genre's constantly shifting position on the fact/fiction continuum have each contributed to the constantly changing ways in which the word "documentary" has been historically defined by both filmmakers and scholars, from 1895 to the present day.

Chapter 2, "Early Cinema: Illusion and Spectacle", draws on Gunning's work on the early "Cinema of Attractions" (1995), During's work on Georges Méliès and the first "Ciné-magicians" (2002), and Lerner and Kiel's work on the fact/fiction hybrids of early cinema's travelling film exhibitions (2006), to illustrate the willingness of both audiences and filmmakers to embrace the use of deceptive techniques, in the nascent "nonfiction" texts of the period.

Chapter 3, "'Honest'" manipulaters: Flaherty to Vertov" refers to the work of Feldman (2014), Barnouw (1983), Aufderheide (2007), Gaines (1999), and other scholars to explore the continuing interplay between fact and fiction in the cinema documentaries of the artist-filmmakers of the 1920s and 1930s, focusing on the deceptive strategies and techniques employed in the romanticized ethnographies of Robert Flaherty, and in the visionary film experiments of Dziga Vertov.

Chapter 4, "Deceptive '"truth-tellers'": The Padillas to Riefenstahl", anaylses the increasingly divergent deceptive techniques which can be seen operating in documentary film from the 1930s to the Second World War: from the fact/fiction pastiches of Orson Welles and the Mexican Border Cinema pioneers the Padillas (Rocha 2006); to the surrealist ethnographical work of Buñuel (Russell 2006); to the propaganda documentaries of Grierson, Jennings, and Reifenstahl - which are examined against the

key Second World War propaganda techniques catalogued by Bartlett (1940).

Chapter 5, "Revealers and Concealers: Jean Rouch to Spinal Tap", illustrates how the new post-World War Two cultural and commercial imperative for nonfiction discourse to be "objective" and "believable" (Bazin 1967: 162), dominated the production and reception of documentary from the 1950s through to the late 1980s, generating two divergent strands of documentary practice: *Cinéma Vérité*, whose practitioners frequently acknowledged the use of fictive techniques in their texts (Renov 2004, Scheinman 2014); and Direct Cinema, whose practitioners actively sought to conceal them (Winston 1993, Nichols 1985, Lebow 2006).

Part Two, Documentary Deception from 1988 to 2015: an (honest) account, positions Erroll Morris' seminal fact/fiction hybrid, *The Thin Blue Line* (1988)*,* as the catalyst for a new era of reflexive, border-crossing, "postmodern documentaries" (Williams 2014, Arthur 1993), illustrating how the deceptive techniques used in these films have continued to flourish in documentary filmmaking to the present day. Focusing on filmmakers who freely move between factual and fictional discourses, not only playing with, but often actively interrogating, the validity of the documentary "truth claim" itself, this analysis brings the (secret) history of documentary deception full circle, back to the borderless realms of early cinema.

Chapter 6, "Persuasion and Fakery in the modern documentary" uses Roscoe & Hight's (2001) and Juhasz & Lerner's (2006) work on the fake and mock documentary genres, and on their proliferating subgenres, to analyse the deceptive techniques in play in a selection of contemporary nonfiction films, and the challenges which these techniques pose to the validity of the documentary "truth claim". This analysis focuses on the overlapping factual and fictional devices that operate in a select group of "progressive" documentaries, and in their progressive fictional counterparts (Trinh 1993).

Chapter 7, "The Déjà Vu Effect: Spectator, Subject, and the Filmmaker-deceiver", refers to Hansen (1995), Lerner (2006), Renov (2004), Aufderheide (2009) and other scholars to illustrate the parallels between a select group of highly influential political, commercial and independent contemporary documentaries, and the similarly influential historical documentaries analysed in Part One, focusing on three main areas of confluence – the mode of exhibition; the filmmaker-persona; and the five deceptive techniques that can be seen operating in both present-day and historical nonfiction texts.

Chapter 8, "Forbidden Lie$ and the post-9/11 truth claim", analyses how documentary's "truth-teller" status has changed in the post-9/11 era, when mass-communication platforms, the rise of the filmmaker-spectator, and the popularity of deceptive narratives (in factual and fictional discourse) have combined to create an audience more cynical about the documentary "real" than ever before (Renov 1993, Trinh 1993, Grant & Sloniowski 2014). It is within this increasingly unstable nonfiction landscape that the fictive, ethical and public deceits at play in Forbidden Lie$, and in Khouri's hoax "memoir", Forbidden Love (2003), are exmained with reference to Maurer's work on con artist techniques (1940), and to the deceptive techniques in the historical documentaries discussed in Part One.

The conclusion of *Tricks of the Trade* draws on Aufderheide, Jaszi and Chandra's work on ethical and unethical contemporary documentary film practices (2009), Maurer's work on con artist techniques (1940), and Malcolm's work on deceptive literary nonfiction (1990) to revisit the "secret" history presented in this thesis: the use of deception in documentary, since the inception of the form. Analysing the symbiotic relationship between filmmaker and con artist in *Forbidden Lie$* to test whether the director has performed the necessary documentary "juggling act" (between the need to protect the subject, entertain the viewer, and stay true to the film) in an ethical way, the conclusion reexamines the two propositions that have been tested throughout the thesis, with a caveat:

1. Deception is as necessary to documentary as it is to fiction; and

2. Documentary, *when its deceptions are delivered in an ethical way,* remains a valid and important art form.

The acceptance of these two propositions, by both filmmakers and the audiences they serve, it is suggested, represents a valid way forward for nonfiction film discourse at a time in which "the association between factual discourse and factual means of representation is increasingly tenuous" (Roscoe & Hight 2001: 4), and "classical forms of film consumption seem to be unravelling on a world-wide scale" (Hansen 1995: 137). By the end of this thesis, I hope to have shown that *Forbidden Lie$*, as a nonfiction text which operates within the fissures of fact and fake to interrogate what the documentary "real" actually means for its audiences, belongs to a long line of singularly reflexive fact/fiction hybrids that stretch back to the late-nineteenth century magical trick films of Georges Méliès.

These reflexive, hybrid films, I suggest, are not only an influential and commerically appealing nonfiction subgenre with deep historical roots, but represent a valid frame through which the glimmers of a different documentary mode in the 21st century may be glimpsed: one which both echoes the genre-free realms of early cinema, and points toward a new era – in which expanding digital exhibition platforms and accessible filmmaking technology are helping to create a sophisticated filmmaker-spectator, who is dissatisfied by conventional takes on the nonfiction "real", and hungry for something new.

PART ONE

Deception in Documentary from 1895 to 1988: a (secret) history

Truth isn't guaranteed by style or expression.
It isn't guaranteed by anything.

Errol Morris
1989

Chapter 1   Defining the Documentary "Truth Claim"

> *Almost any story is almost certainly some kind of lie. But not this time.*
> *This is a promise. For the next hour, everything you hear from us*
> *is really true and based on solid fact.*
>
> Orson Welles
> *F for Fake*

The documentary film and its continuing (but tenuous) claims to represent the "real" have been the subject of debate amongst filmmakers and scholars since the first recorded use of the term "documentary" in John Grierson's review of Robert Flaherty's *Moana* in 1926 (Rosen 1993: 66).[1] While the roots of nonfiction film can be traced back to Auguste and Louis Lumières' first "*Actualités"* in 1895, what Nichols defines as "the complex, fuzzy boundary to the enterprise of documentary filmmaking" is marked by its

> …striking absence from the first quarter century of cinema…of any single word for what we now call documentary. There is no clear frame of reference for its production or reception, and its existence in this period can be considered debatable. Even after the word "documentary" began to designate something that looked like a distinct filmmaking practice…it remains to this day, a practice without clear boundaries (Nichols 2014: xiv).

Documentary's "stubborn refusal to be properly disciplined"; and its "elusiveness" as a nonfiction category (Lebow 2006: 226), can be understood, in part, to derive from what Aufderheide identifies as the "two crucial elements" always in tension within the genre, "representation, and reality. Their makers manipulate and distort reality like all filmmakers, but they still make a claim for making a truthful representation of reality" (Aufderheide 2007: 9-10). In the 1920s and 1930s, three radically different, but profoundly influential pioneers of the documentary form – the

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[1] The 1989 *Oxford English Dictionary* added the term "Griersonianism" to mean "Factual, realistic, applied especially to a film or literary work, etc., based on real events or circumstances and intended primarily for instruction or record purposes", including Grierson's review of *Moana* (1926) as a sample usage of the word "documentary" in this context (Rosen, 1993: 66).

American Robert Flaherty, the Russian Dziga Vertov, and the Scotsman John Grierson (44) – positioned themselves as "artists", while simultaneously making "radical claims for the truth-value of their work" (40). Grierson labeled his educative films for Britain's Empire Marketing Board as the "creative treatment of actuality" (cited in Lebow 2006: 232), while Flaherty famously justified the blending of fact with fabrication in his 1920s romanticized ethnographies of exotic worlds on the grounds that "one often has to distort a thing to catch its true spirit" (cited in Barsam 1988: 116). Vertov, a passionate believer in the camera's superior ability to capture the real world, or "life caught unawares", beyond the inferior capacities of the human eye, developed his Kinopravda (Film Truth) movement to create "a true international pure language of cinema", while delivering technically dazzling, virtuosic manipulations of the documentary form (Barnouw 1983: 54-55; Feldman 2014: 27).

In the second half of the twentieth century, and through to the present day, filmmakers have continued to re-define what "documentary" is, variously acknowledging and disavowing their artistic manipulations of the genre in relation to its continuing, but increasingly tenuous, "truth claim". Identified by Renov as "the baseline of persuasion for all nonfiction film, from propaganda to rock documentary" (Renov 1993a: 30), the truth claim posits documentary in "a relationship to history which exceeds the analogical status of its fictional counterpart" (Renov 1986: 71), or "says, at the very least: 'believe me, I'm of the world'" (Renov 1993a: 30). Significantly, documentary's defining pledge to the viewer - "that what we will see and hear is about something real and true - and, frequently, important for us to understand" - necessitates the use of "a wide range of artifice in order to assert that claim" (Aufderheide 2007: 56). This fact has been embraced by a distinct line of contemporary filmmakers, whose cinematic antecedents are found in the works of Flaherty, Vertov and Buñuel, and more recently, in the *Cinéma Vérité* documentaries of Jean Rouch.

In the nonfiction texts of each of these filmmakers, a degree of artifice, construction and manipulation is openly acknowledged. Rouch's "ethnofictions" (Torchin 2014: 523) and Orson Welles' flamboyant deceptions in the 1950s through to the 1970s; Chris Marker's and Ross McElwee's narrative subversions in the 1980s; and the postmodern fact/fiction hybrids of Errol Morris, Kevin Macdonald and James Marsh in the 1990s and 2000s all present the viewer with texts in which the artistry of the

documentary form, and its ability to deliver powerful "treatments of actuality", are able to co-exist on screen. In the 1980s, a decade when many documentary filmmakers – and theatrical documentary makers in particular – remained influenced by the re-enactment-eschewing, "straight" observational style popularized by the 1960s American Direct Cinema movement, Morris galvanized a radical re-thinking of the (then) widely disparaged technique of documentary reenactment, with his seminal fact/fiction hybrid *The Thin Blue Line* (1988) (Anderson 2006: 79). Morris justified his use of *Rashōmon*-style, non-authoritative fictionalizations in his real-life crime investigation thus:

> There is no reason why documentaries can't be as personal as fiction filmmaking and bear the imprint of those who made them. Truth isn't guaranteed by style or expression. It isn't guaranteed by anything (Morris 1989: 17).

Two decades on, Kevin Macdonald, arguably the stylistic successor of both Welles and Morris, in that he both fictionalizes "true-story" narratives (*The Last King of Scotland* 2006) and dramatizes nonfiction texts (*Touching the Void* 2003), posited that the use of artifice, illusion, and other deceptive techniques normally associated with fiction posed no contradiction to the documentary truth claim:

> Every documentary involves sleight of hand, in that you have to create a story out of the chaos of the rushes. And there are all sorts of tricks and techniques from different genres that you can use (Macdonald 2013: 193).

These unapologetic advocates for a fictionalized approach to nonfiction are, however, a minority. Rouch's use of the camera as a "catalyst", and of his real world subjects as collaborative "performers" in the French *Cinéma Vérité* movement of the 1960s (Scheinman 2014: 184; Lerner 2006a: 29), coincided with the evolution of the Direct Cinema movement in America: an influential documentary methodology based on a strenuous disavowal − rather than acceptance of − the use of stylistic artifice of any kind in delivering the truth claim to the viewer (Winston 1993, Renov 2004).[2] D.A. Pennebaker, a leading Direct Cinema pioneer, countered what he saw as "the trouble" with documentary - that it "requires a lot of artfulness, and most

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[2] While "*Cinéma Vérité*" and "Direct Cinema" are occasionally used as interchangable terms by scholars and filmmakers (Hall 2014, Aufderheide 2007, Herzog 2008, Morris 1991, Franju 1971), this thesis adopts Barnouw's definition of the two modes as distinct categories: *Cinéma Vérité* as a mode that openly acknowledges its subjects' participation in its construction; Direct Cinema as a mode primarily characterized by its filmmakers' attempts to conceal it (Barnouw 1983: xxi).

people making documentaries…feel embarrassed about being artful" - with the defense that "if there's any artistry in what I do, it is deciding who to turn this fearsome machinery on" (Pennebaker 1971: 243). While Pennebaker conceded that editing was an artistic manipulation of sorts, he also asserted that his edits were made with "the absolute conviction that any attempt to distort events or remarks would somehow reveal itself and subject the whole to suspicion"; choosing instead to describe his documentaries as "only *a kind of record* of what happened" (Pennebaker 1970: 25).

The assertions made by Pennebaker and his Direct Cinema colleagues about the superiority of the mode's "truth claim" over that of any other documentary mode were characterised by "a certain aggression", as Winston notes: the "feeling that anything less than an automatic approach could not produce documentary film was expressed vigorously" (Winston 1993: 44-45). Direct Cinema's "automatic approach" involved the use of new light-weight cameras and portable sync-sound rigs to enforce a scientific-objectivist belief that technology alone could deliver an authentic "real". This belief was based on an "almost transcendent faith in equipment [that] defers intentionality, as it creates, in the minds of many filmmakers, a virtual metaphysics of presence" (Arthur 1993: 118). The faith that Direct Cinema practitioners placed in their technology was underwritten by a moral certainty "because they could now record actual events and sounds, they believed that anything else, including any sort of rehearsal or post-synchronization was immoral and unworthy" (Shivas 1963:13). Direct Cinema filmmaker Albert Maysles dismissed the use of music and narration in the Grierson-inspired documentaries of Canada's National Film Board as "propaganda", and "illustrated lectures" (Maysles 1964: 22, 23); while Richard Leacock declared that Rouch's use of expressive framing, stream-of-consciousness interviews and artful tracking shots in *Chronique d'un Été* (1960) "bothered me very much" (Leacock 1971: 216). Robert Drew pronounced that "documentary films in general, with very few exceptions, are fake": the exceptions being, of course, the films of Direct Cinema - in which "the filmmaker's personality is in no way directly involved in directing the action" (Drew 1961: 14).

While an extensive body of postmodernist scholarship has since been devoted to critiquing the "naivety" of Direct Cinema's "superior" truth claim from its "*ad hoc* polemics [and] idealist faith in neutral, non-interventionist recording and editorial reconstruction" (Arthur 1993: 118) to the deceptiveness of its "magic template of verisimilitude" (Nichols 1985: 261), which is "fashioned to disguise the work of standard continuities and rhetorical effects" (Arthur 1993: 118), the ethical, moral and ideological rejection of artifice (and its deceptive enabler, artistry) which underpins the films of Direct Cinema continues to influence documentary practitioners today. As Lebow notes, the tendency of Direct Cinema's modern-day adherents "to speak unselfconsciously about documentary's unique relation to reality and also (albeit without Lacanian intentions) to the real" (Lebow 2006: 234), is widespread amongst both financiers and practitioners of the form:

> HBO documentary impresario Sheila Nevins extols the virtues of the new compact digital cameras and their ability to deliver "purer" documentaries… [and] Barbara Koppel exuberantly celebrates the singular advantage of documentaries over fiction films by claiming that "nonfiction films *are real"* (Lebow 2006 citing *The Independent*, 2002: 51, 54-55).

Contemporary filmmakers who work exclusively in the observational documentary mode have shown a particular (and understandable) distaste for artistic manipulation, given that the truth-status of their films rests largely on the creation of a spontaneous, and apparently unmediated "real", which is achieved primarily by the use of a "fly-on-the-wall", hand-held shooting approach. Geoffrey Smith, director of the observational documentary *The English Surgeon* (2007), equates artistic (as opposed to observational) documentary techniques with dishonesty, observing that

> When you see something built on deceit or exploitation, [there's] a sort of…repugnance. There's a moral contract which documentary rests on. [You] are saying to the audience, "What's happening in front of you is, in essence, the emotional truth of the situation", but if the audience starts to feel they're being tricked, [that] there's some deceit or manipulation going on, [they] get very angry. No amount of gloss or spin or great shots or sexy music can disguise a lack of honesty or a dishonorable purpose on the part of the director (Smith 2013: 7).

Smith's "moral contract" between the documentary maker and viewer is shared by all nonfiction filmmakers, whether or not they use deceptive techniques in their

work. This contract is both crucial and largely self-regulated, as Aufderheide, Jaszi and Chandra's 2009 report, *Honest Truths: Documentary Filmmakers on Ethical Challenges in their Work* demonstrates. As Smith points out,

> The viewer's sense that they're not being conned or misled is so paramount but it's…an intangible thing. It can't be enshrined in rules or legislated for; it just has to be between people. And when it breaks down, it's a disaster (Smith 2013: 10).

British television documentary maker Paul Watson extends Smith's critique of "dishonorable" documentary practices to the use of documentary subjects in reenactment:

> Dishonest films are easy to spot – absolutely easy! The action seems fake. The characters look a bit dead behind the eyes, because they're just [repeating] actions according to the filmmaker's wish…faking a film is disrespectful to the people you're filming. Take away the reality of a situation, and you turn them into bad actors (Watson 2013: 26).

For Watson, the use of any technique other than unmediated observation renders a documentary both dishonest and confusing:

> The minute you tell one lie, you tell two…And you start to write an essay in lies, because each has to justify the other…You get into a humungous bugger's muddle. You can't do it. Mustn't! It only works if what we put on screen seems honest. *Is* honest (Watson 2013: 23, 25).

Watson and Smith's positions, which many contemporary filmmakers (particularly those making broadcast documentaries), share, can be understood as a modern-day evolution of Direct Cinema's original assault on the directorial manipulations of *Cinéma Vérité,* and its artistically intrusive predecessors, Grierson, Flaherty and Vertov. As filmmaker-artists who were motivated, respectively, by the desire to educate, transport and inspire, these seminal figures established "three disparate sets of expectations among both filmmakers and viewers for documentary: ennobling entertainment (Flaherty); socially useful storytelling (Grierson); and provocative experiment (Vertov)" (Aufderheide 2007: 44). While disparate in intent, however, the films produced by these distinct approaches are conjoined by the predominantly artistic (as opposed to scientific and objective) nature of their authorship. As such,

they share similarities with the "poetic line" of city-symphony films that evolved between the 1920s and the 1940s (among which Vertov's *Man with A Movie Camera* is often included). This expressive, and broadly encompassing, documentary subgenre was evocatively explored by filmmakers, photographers, composers, artists and poets working in collaboration: from the German Walter Ruttmann, the Brazilian Alberto Cavalcanti, the Dutchman Joris Ivens and the Americans Paul Strand and Charles Sheeler, to Harry Watt, Bazil Wright, composer Benjamin Britten and the poet W.H. Auden in Britain (Leach: 2014).

Representing the contemporary documentary makers who have evolved as the artistic heirs of this expressive, and avowedly *artistic* documentary tradition (in contrast with Direct Cinema's descendants, Geoffrey Smith and Paul Watson), is filmmaker James Marsh, the director of the Academy Award winning fact/fiction hybrid, *Man on Wire* (2008). While Marsh accepts that the construction of images in documentary is viewed as "somehow dishonest, and not appropriate to what the medium should be about", he also has

> …no suspicions of created imagery or image-based filmmaking. I have some sympathy with the point of view that somehow I'm being more manipulative this way, or I'm imposing an aesthetic…on my subject matter. But we're all doing that, really. The moment you make an edit, everything changes. I construct films around stories that are pre-existing, and it's…my duty to create compelling and appropriate imagery (Marsh 2013: 173).

Marsh's observation that a single edit "changes" everything goes to the heart of the ongoing debate amongst filmmakers and scholars about what "documentary" is, and what level of deception is acceptable in delivering its truth claim to viewers. The increasingly divergent strands of nonfiction subgenres that have opened up since *Cinéma Vérité* and Direct Cinema laid down two distinct paths for representing the "real" in the 1950s and 1960s leaves documentary makers, eighty-eight years after Grierson first used "documentary" to describe the nonfiction film, no closer to agreeing what that word actually means. At one end of the spectrum are filmmakers who believe that "as soon as one points a camera, objectivity is romantic hype. With any cut at all, objectivity fades away" (De Antonio 1988: 235): a stance with forty years' worth of postmodernist support, along the lines of theoretician Claire Johnston's assertion that "it is idealistic mystification to believe that the 'truth' can

be captured by the camera" (Johnston 1975: 28). At the other end of the spectrum are the faithful upholders of Direct Cinema's original mission: to capture "reality" in an as unmediated way as possible. Striving to deliver an immersive viewing experience, or "the feeling of being there" (Leacock 1961: 16), these filmmakers typically justify the edits and other (unavoidable) artistic intrusions they perform along the lines that "every cut is a lie but you're telling a lie to tell the truth" (Koenig cited in Aufderheide 2007: 53).

The semantic and ethical instability around "documentary" intensifies when the word becomes embroiled in questions over "the tangled relationships between fiction and documentary" (Nichols 1991), which have plagued portrayals of the "real" since the earliest days of cinema. Documentary's proliferating sub-genres (Fake Doc, Metadoc, Semi-Doc, Mock Doc, Hybrid Doc, Docudrama, Reality Doc, Anti-*Vérité* Doc, Pseudo Doc, Post Doc and Docufiction, to name a few [Juhasz & Lerner 2006]), and where they sit in the "two-way traffic" that continues to cross the "weak ontological frontier" between fact and fiction (Levi 1982: 248), remain open to interpretation. For French theoreticians Jacques Aumont, Alain Bergala, Michel Marie and Marc Venet, "documentary" as a genre is redundant: as "all (so-called) nonfictions must make use of imaginative forms and various manipilations, and thus resemble fictions" (Plantinga 2014: 353). For American scholar Alisa Lebow, the status of "mock" and "doc" are reversed: with documentary being the "failed project", and mockumentary

> …the truer documentary form. No amount of "faking" can undo the fact that documentary is itself already a fake of sorts, insofar as its claims to capturing reality have never yet proven fully authentic, definitive, or incontenstable (Lebow 2006: 235-6, 223).

German filmmaker Alexander Kluge concurs that "documentary is no more realistic than the feature film" (Kluge 1988: 4), while American scholar Alexandra Juhasz describes all documentaries as "fakes", in that "they are *not* the world they so faithfully record" (Juhasz 2006: 12). Film theoretician Leshu Torchin, writing of Sacha Baron Cohen's 2006 mockumentary *Borat* (a fact/fiction hybrid that in itself defies neat categorization) places "documentary" − a genre already historically "rife with fictions and hoaxes that produce dubious knowledge about the lived world" − within an equally uncertain present: in which "digital manipulations and suspect

documentary practices call the truth-status of the mode into doubt" (Torchin 2014: 539).

Despite these erosions of its "superior" truth-teller status, however, documentary "truth", or in the very least, its "partial and contingent truths", remain the genre's (receding) goal (Williams 2014: 239). While the blurring boundaries between fact and fiction do call into doubt documentary's validity as a genre, it still maintains "a sacred place within contemporary society" (Roscoe & Hight 2001: 182), a place that continues to depend upon the distinct relationships it enacts between filmmaker, text, and audience (Nichols 1991). Williams, who resists postmodernist attempts to assimilate documentary "entirely into the rules and norms of fiction" (Williams 2014: 392), argues for a more nuanced, and constructive definition:

> Instead of careening between idealistic faith in documentary tradition and cynical recourse to fiction, we do better to define the documentary not as an essence of truth but as a set of strategies designed to choose from among a horizon of relative and contingent truths. The advantages, and difficulty, of this definition is that it holds onto the concept of the real (392).

Contemporary documentary's defining, if diminishing, adherence to the "real" is intricately linked to the ambivalent relations between fact and fiction which have proliferated within the genre since Morris resurrected reenactment as a valid nonfiction device in *The Thin Blue Line* (1988). These relations have significant implications for how documentary might be made and received in the future. They also point us backwards: to the "generally undiscussed kinship between mainstream cinema and the original documentary tradition", suggesting an ever-evolving realm in which the two domains, rather than being distinct, "*inhabit* one another" (Rosen 1993: 72). If Rosen is correct, then Kiel's call for a reinvestigation of "the status of fact and fiction in cinema's early years" (Kiel 2006: 39) also presents a useful framework within which to understand how techniques of deception have contributed to the twenty-first century documentary's continuing mutations inside the fissures of the fact/fiction divide. Documentary markers of authenticity may have been "historically variable" (Renov 1993a: 23), but so are the expectations of its audiences. Retracing how the genre's truth claim has shifted in realtion to fiction, and also in realtion to how the "real" has been historically promoted to, and

consumed by, its viewers, will help to reveal documentary's "hidden, ugly secret" (Juhasz 2006: 12): the increasingly discussed, but freqeuently concealed, use of deception by documentary makers, over one hundred and twenty years of the form.

Documentary's "secret": its concomitant "uncertain links between objectivity, knowledge and power" (Juhasz 2006: 12), is underpinned by a myriad of deceptive techniques that have been used by nonfiction film pratitioners since the inception of cinema: from illusion, persuasion, mimesis and sleight-of-hand, to ommission, exaggeration and fakery. The following four chapters analize how a key line of filmmakers (from the Lumières and Méliès in the 1890s, to Vertov, Flaherty and Grierson in the 1920s and 1930s, to Rouch and Pennebaker in the 1960s, to Morris and Moore in the 1980s), have each used deceptive techniques to entertain, enlighten and convert their audiences. In the process, this analysis recasts the apparently oxymoronic (and ethically problematic) term "documentary fiction" into a useful conceptual catalyst, that both mirrors the multi-genred spectacle of early cinema, and reveals the genre's continuing evolution in the transgressive, contemporary fact/fiction hybrids discussed in Part Two: pointing us toward what "documentary", in the future, has the potential to become.

Chapter 2   Early Cinema: illusion and spectacle

I sing the forms which magic pow'rs impart
The thin creation of delusive art,
Expand the sportive scene, the lantern show…
The Scorceress thus exerts her mystic spell.

Walter Titley
1728-1731

Every image is an ephemeral vanishing act...its only magic is the magic of disappearance,
and the pleasures it gives are bloodless.

Jean Baudrillard
1990

The proposition that all film is inherently deceptive has a long history. Cinema, for Jean-Luc Godard, may have been a fraud, but it was still "the most beautiful fraud in the world" (Godard: 1963). Throughout the medium's one hundred and twenty year history, filmmakers, including those working in nonfiction, have used persuasion, performance, illusion, omission and trickery to elicit our attention and emotional engagement, and to convince us that what we are watching is somehow, "real." Art and her backstage handmaiden, Deception, have worked their magic on and behind the unspooling frames of the collective imagination for as long as cinema itself.

Since its inception, as Renov notes, "documentary has availed itself of nearly every constructive device known to fiction…and has employed virtually every register of cinematic syntax in the process (Renov 1993a: 6). Renov's five "fictive" elements are the construction of character; the use of poetic language, narration or music; the use of narrativity and dramatic arcs to create suspense and engagement; varied framing and shooting speeds; and editing (Renov 1993a: 3). They further problematise the conflict already at play within documentary: between the artistry (and artifice) of filmmaking, and an obligation to [re]present the "real". These fictive devices create "moments in which a presumably objective representation of the

world encounters the necessity of creative intervention"(Renov 1993a: 3), a fact that continues to pose an ethical and ideological conundrum for many documentary makers working today, especially those descendants of the Direct Cinema tradition. To Renov's list, twenty years on, must be added the fictive techniques of the dramatized documentaries, mockumentaries and pseudo-documentaries that have since multiplied across the big and small screen. These include dramatization, computer generated imagery (C.G.I.) and special effects, "faked" or doctored archive, false interviews and characters, and the presentation of fictional content or information under the guise of "truth".

The documentary hybrids mentioned above, along with documentary's commercial cousins (Reality TV, docusoaps, infotainment, YouTube Vlogs, advertorials, and documentary's "shameful idiot step-children", sensationalist tabloid-style "disseminations of untruths" [Lerner 2006a: 21]) all illustrate the range of deceptive strategies now flourishing in "the murky borderlands of documentary, ficiton and fake" (21). Yet despite the challenges posed by these mutations to the genre's status as the "bearer of knowledge and truth" (Roscoe & Hight 2001: 171-2), documentary makers remain yoked to the "ethical burden of single-minded truth telling" that has underpinned the history of documentary film practice (Renov 2004: 147). Obliged by the defining promise of the genre, that "what you see is true", contemporary nonfiction filmmakers are locked in a moral contract with the viewer. While it has become increasingly acceptable to use fictive (or "artistic") techniques in contemporary documentary production, and even to use production and promotion techniques that entail an element of public and ethical deception, the film delivered to the audience must still be perceived to be, on some level, "responsible" and "truthful."

But this was not always so. Cinema sprang, after all, from the magic theatres, exhibition halls and burlesque spectaculars of late-nineteenth century popular entertainment: a heterogeneous realm of "fairgrounds, circuses, variety shows, dime museums and other commercial entertainment venues" that was driven by a presentational (rather than representational) mode of display (Hansen 1995: 137). The films of early cinema unspooled within an aesthetics of showmanship, a dynamic entertainment mode defined by its goal of "assaulting viewers with

sensational, supernatural, scientific, sentimental, or otherwise stimulating sights, as opposed to enveloping them into the illusion of fictional narrative" (137). The first films projected often shared the stage with live acts (illusionists, vaudevillians, contortionists, mind-readers, stereopticon lecturers, levitators, comediennes), and adapted several of their tropes and stories to the screen: from boxing matches, magic tricks, pornographic peep-shows and travelogues, to tales from the wild west and highlights from popular plays and operas (137). The Lumières' *actualitiés* and the trick-laden confections of the first "*ciné*-magicians," David Devant and Georges Méliès, were the undisputed stars of this *ad hoc* blend of fact and fiction, performance and projection, and "found footage jumbles that recklessly defied categorization" (Lerner 2006a: 23).

Together, the films of early cinema, their mode of exhibition, and the multi-genred arena of late-nineteenth century popular entertainment make up what Gunning has called "the Cinema of Attractions" (Gunning 1995: 116). The first celluloid projections coincided with the climax in a period of "intense development in visual entertainments" (117), epitomised by highly sophisticated stage illusions, where realism was chiefly valued for its ability to deliver "uncanny effects", and confound the spectator's "expectations of logic and experience" (117). The undisputed commercial leader in this spectacle of the uncanny was the travelling magic show, which between 1860 and 1910 reached its artistic zenith (During 2002: 135). Elite theatrical magicians, conjurers and illusionists such as Bautier De Kolta, David Devant, J.N. Maskelyne, and his French protégé, Méliès, vigorously competed for financial backing and audiences by delivering spectacular feats of deception, using the latest technology (electric light, false bottomed apparatus, transformation panels and magic lantern projections) (During 2002: 185) to "produce apparent miracles" (Gunning 1995: 116).

It is significant that the main appeal of these illusions rested on the magician's ability to make the invisible visible; or, indeed, the visible invisible: as in the London Polytechnic's 'Pepper's Ghost' trick, where a man appeared to walk through walls before evaporating off the stage (an effect created by projecting magic lantern images of an *offstage* performer onto glass inserted between the stage and the audience) (During 2002: 150); or Thomas Tobin's 'The Sphinx', which featured an

apparently decapitated talking head sitting on a table (beneath which the performer's body was concealed with mirrors) (143). As the master manipulators in this intersection of deception and spectacle, it is inevtiable that magicians should have been among the first to embrace celluloid as "the most technologically advanced form of entertainment" (Gunning 1995: 120). Méliès (who set up his own cinema at the Robert Houdin Theatre), and sleight-of-hand artist Albert E. Smith (who co-founded the early exhibition company, Vitagraph), saw the cinema not as a distinct art form in itself, but simply as an advanced technological method of rendering the illusionary *real*. As such, film was "the magic theatre's crowning achievement" (116).

The *mis-en-scène*-style "trick" films that became Méliès' specialty were ingenious adaptions of the illusions he had produced in his theatre. He built elaborate props and sets, and invented celluloid equivalents for deceptive stage magic techniques (sleight of hand, optical dissolves and magic lantern projections), ranging from "stop-action substitutions" (jump cuts) and dissolves to superimpositions (During 2002: 169). Partly inspired by the London Polytechnic's popular "demystifying" magic shows, in which conjurers exposed the techniques used by spiritualists to promote their sprurious claims to "supernatural" power, Méliès created witty anti-spiritualist film parodies, all presented within traditonal theatre's proscenium arch frame. Among the well known illusions he adapted for the screen were the Davenport séance, the Maskelyne "Box Trick", and De Kolta's "Vanishing Canary" (featuring the apparent immolation of a young woman on stage), which Méliès re-rendered on celluloid in *Escamotage d'une Dame* (*The Vanishing Lady*) in 1896, using the film to advertise his stage magic show (141-142). Méliès' playful film recreations of the illusionist's art so captured the public imagination, that between 1900 and 1904 he was the world's most successful filmmaker, screened and imitated around the globe (169). The ingenuity with which he used film technology to create astonishing spectacles of the uncanny also makes him, Pringle suggests, "one of the great-grandfathers in spirit of the people who produce special effects for cinema today" (Pringle 2007: 56).

Stage magic's natural affinity with the presentational (rather than representational) viewing mode of early cinema is anchored within "a technology of a dynamic vision, designed to realize fictions of the real" (During 2002: 285). Ciné-magicians like

Méliès and Devant cannily exploited the deceptive powers of film to create in the spectator's mind a "pleasurable vacillation between belief and doubt" (Rosen 2014: 72); the same vacillation that had fuelled the popularity of live magic entertainment throughout the nineteenth century. Magic could be successfully translated to film, During suggests, because the two modes share a technological reliance on the "visual illusion of continuity" (During 2002: 285), where the sleight of hand of the fairground cup-and-ball routine, and cinema's projection of an apparent "real", are homologous. "Gaps or disappearances in the presented show are concealed: the opacity that separates one film cell from another is structurally equivalent to the invisibility of the conjurer's ball or hand as it performs its passes" (285). Extending Pringle's link between the celluloid deceptions of Méliès and twenty-first century computer generated imagery (C.G.I.), During draws a similar parallel between the machinery of late-nineteenth century phantasmagoria, and the special effects stages of big-budget film studios today (285).

In early cinema's borderless realm, however, the seamless integration of C.G.I. into the moving image was not yet a crucial component in maintaining the suspension-of-disbelief viewing mode that came to define classical western cinema. Before dramatic fictional narratives began evolving in earnest in 1905, the aesthetics of the "glance" still dominated over the illusionist absorbtion of the "gaze" (Hansen 1995: 137), and the scopic pleasures of Méliès' magical fictions were consumed in much the same way as those of a nascent *non*-fiction format (and documentary's earliest ancestor): the *actualités* of Auguste and Louis Lumière. These so-called actuality films were a leading commerical product up to 1908, promoted by cinema and fairground impresarios as miraculous simulations of the "real" (Rosen 2014: 72). The terrified reaction of the first spectators to one of the most famous *actualités*, the Lumières' *L'arrivée d'un Train en Gare* (*The arrival of a Train at the Station*) in 1895, has been widely documented: "spectators reared back in their seats, or screamed, or got up and ran from the auditorium (or all three in succession)" (Gunning 1995: 115). This reaction, Gunning argues, has been wrongly mythologised as proof of the inability of early film-goers, who were unfamiliar with the new verisimilitude of celluloid, to distinguish between the projected image and reality. While the *actualités* did exert an "uncanny and adgitating power" (116), the audiences who viewed them were not "gullible country bumpkins, but sophisticated

urban pleasure seekers, well aware that they were seeing the most modern techniques in stage craft" (117).

Gunning's notion of a cognizant spectator who observes (rather than gets lost in) the images on screen, directly interacting with them by vocalising and even physicalising his or her appreciation or shock, is consistent with early film's position as just one attraction amongst many, in the live/projected blend of late-nineteenth century entertainment. Pre-dating the emotionally transfixing narratives of classical cinema, The Cinema of Attractions was instead experienced as "a series of visual shocks" (116). The screaming spectators of *L'arrivée d'un Train en Gare* can be understood to have not been "submitting passively to an all-dominating apparatus, hypnotized and transfixed by its illusionist power" (115), but rather, responding to it in the same way they might respond to a powerful stage conjurer's trick, in which "the apparent realism of the image makes it a successful illusion, but one understood as an illusion nonetheless" (119).

This distinction is significant. It postions the Lumières' "nonfiction" *actualités*, and Méliès' magical "fictions" as identical dishes in The Cinema of Attraction's banquet of display. The ways in which both modes were promoted and consumed were identical: they were illusionary *amuse-bouches* or deceptive candies for the eye: in which the spectator/gourmand was not a dupe but the filmmaker/conjurer's willing accomplice, always aware of the "act of looking" and never lost inside a fictionalised world. In directly addressing the viewer (as Méliès did with his gestures to camera), or tantalising him/her with simulated assaults (as the Lumières, and, later, Albert E. Smith and J. Stuart Blackton did with their oncoming-locomotive films), these early fictions, nonfictions, and fact/fiction blends all emphasized an aesthetic of spectacle: fulfilling spectatorial curiosity with "brief doses of scopic pleasure" (121).

On a generic level, the films of early cinema also occupy a "halting middle ground, where fact and fiction, narrative and documentary, coexist – but in odd and often unexpected inter-relationships" (Kiel 2006: 47-48). Many early nonfiction films were first experienced by spectators as part of the "magic assemblage" (During 2002: 169), and as such, audiences appeared to place little importance on whether what they were seeing was in fact fiction or fact. Unlike modern news audiences (with the

exception, perhaps, of consumers of Fox News and its tabloid-documentary equivalents), early cinema viewers were accustomed to so-called "news footage" having "an uncertain and remote link to events...[and] reconstitutions and fakes had an impressive record of 'success'" (Barnouw 1983: 25). Thus, Méliès' recreation of the crowning of Edward VII in Westminster Abbey (1902), Albert E. Smith's *Battle of Santiago Bay* (1898), and a newsreel about the 1906 San Francisco earthquake all became smash hits, despite the fact they openly mixed genuine footage with fake. Smith shot cardboard battleships on his coffee table; while the earthquake film featured a shaking, but obviously miniature, model city. James Williamson's "factual" report, *Attack on a Chinese Mission Station* (1898), was shot on a golf course and in his backyard; while William Selig's "true-story" travelogue, *Hunting Big Game in Africa* (1907), featured a Roosevelt impersonator and African-American "natives," hunting a geriatric lion in a studio jungle (Ramsaye 1986: 520-521). Thomas Edison's studio produced "war footage from the Philippines in New Jersey, and the supposed record of the sinking of the Maine in the Havana harbor was actually filmed in a New York bathtub" (Aufderheide 2007: 22); and in a foreshadowing of the racial stereotyping of 1930s Nazi propaganda films, Francis Doublier created bogus news footage to falsely incriminate Captain Alfred Dreyfus, a French Jewish officer accused of treason, in a tricked-up newsreel in 1898 (Ramsaye 1986: 520-521).

Unswayed by this abundance of faked reality (or perhaps hoping to attract the audiences that flocked to it), the Lumières doggedly produced undoctored "panoramas of French life" on their cinematograph (Barnouw 1983: 8), beginning with a suite of ten short films projected in France's first public cinema screening at Paris's Grand Café in 1895: which included *La Sortie de l'Usine Lumière à Lyon* (*The Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory*); *Repas de Bébé* (*Baby's Breakfast*); and *Le Débarquement du Congrès de Photographie à Lyon* (*The disembarcation of the Congress of Photographers in Lyon*). But even the Lumières weren't immune from trickery: *L'Arroseur Arrosé* (*The Sprinkler Sprinkled,* 1896), for instance, in which a boy steps on a hose then releases his foot to drench a surprised gardener in the face, is often seen as the first fiction film, in that the audience is made to feel they are watching reality unfolding, whereas they are in fact watching a carefully rehearsed "gag" (Barnouw 1983: 8, Kiel 2014: 41). *L'Arroseur Arrosé* may also be seen as one

of the first documentary "deceptions" for the same reason: what appears to be a "spontaneously" captured fragment of reality is in fact a playful manipulation.

The montage-style exhibition mode of pre-narrative cinema extends this analysis of the early interplay between documentary and fictional practices. It was common, for example, for filmmakers or exhibitors to provide a concurrent, and often dramatically heightened, live commentary on the nonfiction films being projected (Musser 1984: 47-58); or a dramatic preamble to build audience suspense. In exhibition tours of Smith and Blackton's most popular item, *The Black Diamond Express* (which was shown in various forms between 1896 and 1903), the one-shot film of a locomotive rushing towards camera was prefaced by a carnival-barker style verbal "trailer" delivered by Blackton, whom Smith described as a "terrorist mood setter" (Gunning 1995: 120):

> In just a moment, a cataclysmic moment, my friends, a moment without equal in the history of our times, you will see this train take life in a marvelous and most astounding manner. It will rush towards you, belching smoke and fire from its monstrous iron throat (Gunning citing Smith & Khoury: 1952).

Blackton's preamble illustrates the emphasis placed by both filmmakers and spectators on early nonfiction texts as acts of display, as opposed to objective documentations of the "real." Kiel's detailed work on the blended fact/fiction hybrids produced between 1905 and 1906 further demonstrates how early exhibition practices, rather than separating fiction from actuality, actively facilitated an exhange between the two modes: adding to the already busy "two-way traffic" moving across the fact/fiction divide's "weak ontological frontier" (Levi 1982: 248). In 1905-06, exhibitor-curated film programs frequently inserted fictional material into "factual" travelogues; with the three dominant types of fact/fiction blends being "motion films which interpolated fictional material, travel films, and fiction films employing scenes of an actuality nature" (Kiel 2006: 42).

The fiction/non-fiction dichotomy may have been in its infancy when Méliès and the actuality filmmakers began screening in the late 1890s, but it has gone on to become one of the most rigorously upheld divisions in contemporary western cinema. Positioning documentary "in direct opposition to the imaginary world of fiction"

(Roscoe & Hight 2001: 7), this division, as has been noted in Chapter One, is based upon assumptions about cinematic "truth" that have consistently favoured documentary over drama as the more "trustworthy" genre (Renov 2004: 172). But what actually constitutes "truth" in documentary making remains as rubbery as it was when the Lumières' boy first stepped on the gardener's hose. While the fiction films that came to dominate classical cinema from 1905 onwards did indeed rely upon trickery, illusion and artifice in order to create the suspension-of-disbelief narrative that was critical to audience engagement, the parallel world of the nonfiction film has been equally trick-laden, fictional and constructed. The remarkable blending of fact and fiction which characterises cinema's prenarrative years generated a generic instability between the two modes that continued to echo throughout the first twenty years of cinema's existence (Kiel 2006: 40). As the documentary texts analysed throughout this thesis illustrate, this instability, in fact, never quite went away.

To test the assertion, it is important to start with Méliès' own strong aversion to the early developments in narrative film technique. As a self-described "*honest trickster*", who anchored his cinematic illusions squarely within the proscenium arch frame of pre-cinematic theatrical entertainment, Méliès can also be seen as an early documentarian: he "documented" his tricks from a locked-off camera, and utilised jump-cuts, props, superimpositions and dissolves to highlight his audience's enjoyment of the magical trickery which *at all times* it was aware it was experiencing. For this reason, Méliès was (somewhat ironically, for a magician), deeply opposed to the new fiction filmmaking style that began evolving from 1905 on because it was, in his opinion, deceitful. The "modern techniques" he so vehemently opposed, all of which have gone on to become an indispensable part of both the fiction and non-fiction filmmaker's technical arsenal, included "the shortening of the distance between performer and camera [and] shooting the action twice from different points of view in the interests of narrative development"; a rejection of the proscenium arch frame in favour of dramatically motivated close-ups and reverses; "smooth mimetic editing, based first on action matches but increasingly on shot-reverse-shots; by sequences (bracketed by dissolves and wipes) that broke down established shots into tighter frames dominated by one or two persons only; and by an increased fluency in inserting close-ups" (During 2002: 169-172).

Méliès believed these new cinematic tricks "broke with secular magic's core caveat: an implicit or explicit admission that any presented illusion or trick is indeed an illusion or trick", as During explains. "He was unwilling to...concede that the illusions of film (that flow of images masquerading as reflections of reality) should cease to be judged as deceit" (During 2002: 171). For Méliès, magician-turned-filmmaker, what would become the dominant narrative style of classical cinema was a blatant deceit, consisting of "magic tricks that did not declare themselves as such. Once its status as an illusion was not motivated within the plot, film became a deception" (172). Méliès' aversion sits at the heart of what makes all filmmakers deceivers on one level: in order to successfully render their stories believable for audiences, they must not reveal the deceptive devices they use to enact them - at least not until after they have been successfully performed. They must not, to borrow from the poker vernacular, "show their hand." Like a host of other professional dissemblers (magicians, forgers, con artists, hoax authors, spin-doctors, pyramid-traders, fraudsters, identity-thieves, email scammers, P.R. representatives, advertisers and actors), filmmakers are in the business of making illusions real. And like their drama director siblings, directors of documentary (as opposed to its "fake" equivalent, mockumentary), must conceal from their audiences the fact they are deceiving them, in order to successfully present the illusion of "truth."

The rare documentary makers who have acknowledged this over cinema's one hundred and twenty year existence are famous (and notorious) for having done so. In the 1920s, Flaherty, who re-enacted a "traditional" seal-hunt with spears in *Nanook of the North* (1922) and presented it as "authentic", despite the fact that his subject used guns, explained, simply, that "sometimes, you have to lie" (cited in Calder-Marshall 1963: 97). In the 1960s, Rouch, who specialised in radically dramatized documentations of the rituals of West African tribes, said that for him, "as an ethnographer and filmmaker, there is almost no boundary between documentary film and the films of fiction" (cited in Feld 2003: 185). In 1974, Welles made F For Fake, a fictionalised nonfiction about a trio of dissemblers: an art forger, a literary hoaxer, and a filmmaker (himself); and gleefully admitted, "I'm a charlatan" (Welles: 1974). In 1995, the Lord of the Rings director Peter Jackson made Forgotten Silver, a mock documentary about a (fake) New Zealand filmmaker that was so believable, the subsequent moral outcry prompted him to defend himself on the grounds that he

"was in the business of creating illusions" (cited in Roscoe & Hight 2006: 182). And in 2007, this writer made a documentary about a con artist and hoax author called Norma Khouri, in which she not only deceived her subject in the last act, but conned her audiences in the first, discovering that:

> The marriage between filmmaker and con artist is a match made in heaven. Both use a thousand tiny deceits to manipulate the way we think and feel. Both are engaged in the business of making illusions real (Broinowski 2011: 75).

These flagrant floutings of the documentary "truth claim" across the fact/fiction divide's porous frontier, all support what Kiel's work on early cinema suggests: that the Lumières' La Ciotat train, and Méliès' moon-bound rocket in *Le Voyage dans la Lune* (1902), may well have been "on a more similar trajectory than is usually acknowledged" (Lerner 2006: 23).

Chapter 3　　"Honest" manipulaters: Flaherty to Vertov

The cinema, the art of the double,
is already the transition from the real world to the imaginary world,
and ethnography…is acrobatic gymnastics,
where losing one's footing is the least of the risks.

Jean Rouch
1971

The generic instability of the fact/fiction dichotomy, and the deceptive techniques used by filmmakers to enact documentary's (correspondingly) ambivalent truth-teller status, continue to percolate in diverse ways from 1905 (when classical cinema took root as a distinct fictional genre) through to the 1930 and 1940s, when the ideologically opposed (but identically motivated) propaganda films of Grierson, Riefenstahl and Capra cemented documentary's position as a powerful agent of public persuasion. While the existence of documentary as a recogniseable genre in the first twenty five years of cinema is considered "debateable" (Nichols 2014: xiv), Rothman and others argue that a realist strand can in fact be glimpsed running through films from 1895 to 1926 and beyond, beginning with the *actualités* of the Lumières. As the first nonfiction texts to illustrate French theorist André Bazin's statement that cinema emerged from "the wish for the world to be created in its own image" (cited in Rothman, 2014: 21), the Lumières' work (and that of the early cinema filmmakers previously discussed), also illustrate cinema's ongoing "enmeshing" of factual and fictional elements: a practice which became an increasingly concealed component of the filmic "real" over the ensuing four decades. Summarising this apparent contradiction, Rothman observes:

> Reality plays an essential role in all films, but in no film does reality simply play the role of being documented. Reality is transformed… when the world reveals itself on film. Then, too, reality itself, in human experience, is already stamped by fantasy and myth (17).

Further complicating any attempt to position early documentary as a category unpolluted by fiction are the "troublesome hybrids" that "lurked around the edges of documentary film" (Lerner 2006a: 19), long before Grierson's review of *Moana* officially recognised the genre in 1926. The silent film era from 1895 to 1927 was

> …full of anarchic, seat-of-your-pants mixtures of actuality and acting…
> With the documentary not yet defined, and the demands of ethics less
> pressing than those of the market, early filmmakers found numerous
> ways to fake it, sometimes while using nonfiction footage (19).

The first decade of sound film, which began with the projection of the feature-length "talkie" *The Jazz Singer* in 1927, is similarly littered with fact/fiction blends, or what Lerner labels "semi-documentaries": low-budget films that "saved studios money by beefing up low-cost narratives shot on a studio sound stage (most typically *noirs* or tabloid crime dramas) with stock B-roll filmed on location and an authoritative, documentary-style voice-over" (19). Lerner's investigation into fictional approaches to nonfiction film continues through to the mainstream documentaries of the 1940s, which, as texts produced before the advent of portable sync-sound, typically controlled "the profilmic in order to approximate an observational narrative style" (19). Included in Lerner's list of realist films made without any intention of "faking it" are Flaherty's *Louisiana Story* (1948) and Meyer's *The Quiet One* (1948): both of which are an undisputed part of the documentary cannon, depsite there being "little of the profilmic that was not scripted and controlled" (19).

Supporting Lerner's position that documentary filmmaking not only predates Grierson's 1926 acknowledgement of the genre, but also represents a tradition whose ongoing manipulations of fiction and fact have placed it on "shaky epistemological ground" since the Lumières staged their first *actualities* and Flaherty cast Allakariallak as Nanook in *Nanook of the North* (1922), are Torchin (Torchin 2014: 523) and Rosen, who observes that from the point when Hollywood cinema became "the leading model of economic and mass cultural success, variants of the documentary film have…offered a battle standard for alternative constructions of the medium" (Rosen 1993: 77). Renov rounds off this genre-bending picture of documentary as a truth-telling mode paradoxically bound up with the deceptions of fiction by stating the two forms have always been "enmeshed" in one another: particularly in the realms of semiotics, performance, and narrativity. While

narrativity is sometimes assumed to be the sole province of fiction, he observes, it is, in fact,

> …an expository option for the documentary film that has been forcefully excercised: [in] the suspense-inducing structure of Flaherty's *Nanook of the North*; the day-in-the-life framework [of] *Man with a Movie Camera;* [and] the "crisis" structure of the Drew associates' films (Renov 1993: 2).

To analyse the manipulations of the "real" that continue to shape documentary's evolution, from *Nanook of the North* (1922) and *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929), through to Leni Riefenstahl 's *Triumph of the Will* (1935) and its western propaganda equivalents in the 1930s and 1940s, it is prudent to accept the dominant view outlined above: that textual glimmers of what we now call "documentary" can be traced back to the first frames of cinema; and, further, that the form has always shared with its fictional sibling a range of deceptive devices (both artistic and promotional) that have enabled it to deliver to audiences what is, essentially, the "more or less artful reshaping of the historical world" (Renov 1993: 11). In the twilight years of the silent-film era, Flaherty created a romanticized portrayal of the Inuit hunter, Allakariallak, in his seminal first feature, *Nanook of the North*: an evocative fact/fiction blend of *Vérité*-style observation and fictional reconstruction. From the film's (still captivating) establishing exteriors, displaying nature in all her grandeur (a visual trope that has been reproduced *ad infinitum* in the "wildlife-doc" subgenre), to the witty jump-cuts of Nanook's (apparently never-ending) family members climbing out of his canoe, it is clear that Flaherty is engaged in a deliberate mixing of modes. On one hand are the gliding and locked-off shots we now associate with the techniques of "straight" observational documentary; on the other, extreme directorial manipulations that pre-empt the *Cinéma Vérité* intrusions of Rouch and his descendants: both inside and outside the frame.

The filmic and editorial deceptions in *Nanook of the North* are well documented. Aufderheide (2007: 28-30), Gaines (1999: 6-8), and Tobing Rony (1995) each highlight how Flaherty enlisted Nanook to perform a traditional Inuit seal hunt with spears and presented the hunt as "authentic"; while knowing that Nanook had moved on to the superior kill-rate of the gun. Rothman (2014: 1-19) points out that far from living in "natural harmony" with his environment, Nanook's gun enabled him to meet the large pelt-quota set by Revillon Frères, the fur company on whom his

survival depended (as, indirectly, did Flaherty's, given Revillon Frères was also a sponsor of his film). In a scene where Nanook listens to a phonograph as if for the "first time", biting the record to "test" whether it is edible, Flaherty deceived both viewer and subject simultaneously: by faking the action (getting Nanook to bite the record), and ommitting the fact that Nanook was not only familiar with the phonograph, but with Flaherty's technology, having helped the director (along with several unacknowledged Innuit collaborators) to set up, carry and maintain his equipment throughout the shoot. Several interiors of Nanook's "home" were filmed inside a custom-designed roofless igloo which Nanook also helped Flaherty construct, in order to enhance camera mobility and access to natural light. In one of the film's most telling scenes, Nanook, devouring the raw flesh of a freshly caught seal, stops to glare at the camera, as if he is finally fed up with Flaherty's constant interference in his world. This gaze has been retrospectively interpreted as evidence that Flaherty, at his most ethically "progressive", was willing to acknowledge his subjects' humanity by showing "the revelations that emerge through their encounters with the camera" (Rothman 2014: 13).

For Tobing Rony, however, this evidence of Flaherty's humanity is a fleeting exception. Critiquing the director from an anti-colonialist stand point, Tobing Rony positions *Nanook of the North* not as an early example of anthropological nonfiction and the precursor of ethnographic documentary, but rather, as part of Flaherty's "cinema of romantic preservationism": an *oeuvre* dedicated to the capture and display of "primitive" indigenous peoples as nostalgic, fictionalized "trophies" (Tobing Rony 1996: 102). As a cinematic incarnation of Harraway's concept of "ethnographic taxidermy" (102), Flaherty's films may therefore be viewed as "spectacles of resemblance", or reality embalmed, which are, by definition, deceitful: they are illusionary texts which use "artifice to [create] an image more true than the posited original" (Gaines 1999: 6-8). Rothman takes similar issue with *Nanook's* claims to authenticity, citing a widely distributed video cassette of the film, which begins with a title card stating that *Nanook* "is generally regarded as the work from which all subsequent efforts to bring real life to the screen have stemmed". The implication, Rothman argues, is that fiction films are not

> …efforts to bring real life to the screen – they are efforts, perhaps, to
> bring to the screen the imaginary life of fantasy and myth…What is

fictional about a fiction film is that it is only a fiction. What is fictional
about *Nanook* [is] that it is not fiction at all (Rothman 2014: 4).

These criticisms of Flaherty's manipulations, and of his choice to present *Nanook* within a realist framework that creates "the illusion of seen and felt reality through editing, camera angle, and pacing − [giving] viewers a vivid impression of having virtually experienced something genuine" (Aufderheide 2007: 28), intensified after his death in 1951, when the anthropologist Jay Ruby persuasively argued that Flaherty was "a romantic fraud" (32). However, Ruby's and Tobing Rony's critiques, by judging Flaherty's deceptions from the superior ethical standard set by anthropological documentary practitioners today, largely overlook what I propose are two other critical components in any analysis of documentary film, alongside authorial intent: its mode of presentation, and the truth-assumptions held by its audiences. Influenced by Gaines', Hansen's and Gunning's work on the exhibition practices of early cinema, this proposal is a minor extension of Kluge's observation that "a documentary film is shot with three cameras: 1) the camera in the technical sense; 2) the filmmaker's mind; and 3) the generic patterns of the documentary film, which are founded on the expectations of the audience that patronizes it" (Kluge 1988: 4), with the "mode of presentation" incorporated as an influencing agent on audience expectations. Viewed in this context, Flaherty's ethical misdemeanors in *Nanook* may (understandably) land him in documentary-jail today, but at the time he made his film, far from wanting to trivialize Nanook as some kind of "pet-like innocent", he can also be understood, in part, to have been contributing to the idealization of (and fascination with) the "noble savage" popular in early 1920s cultural discourse: an idealization which dates back to the Western Enlightenment, and the Rousseau-ian belief in the inherent goodness of man (Aufderheide 2007: 30).

It is also within this context that *Nanook*'s huge popularity with its first audiences, and the success of Paramount's 1922 marketing campaign, can be reanalyzed. The novelty of the "noble" Eskimo, thrillingly "captured" in his "exotic" Arctic home, was, at the time of its premiere, *Nanook's* defining attraction. As Paramount's promotional materials make clear, ticket-paying punters rushed to see – and received – the film not as a sober ethnographic documentation of the Inuit, but as a transporting spectacle of the exotic: "See Nanook spear the seal, fight to get it and then eat the raw flesh", "You'll not even wink your eyes", "So much interest, so much heart-throb, so many pulse-quickening sensations, you'll sit as if you were

hypnotized!" (cited in Gunning 1986). These carnival barker-style exhortations to buy a seat in Flaherty's "Big Top" extended to the poster: "The Screen's Greatest Novelty! It's Newer than New! It's Greater than Great!" (cited in Gaines 1999: 9). As such, they bear a strong imprint of the earlier showmanship aesthetic of the Cinema of Attractions, which displayed nonfiction films as spectacles of actuality, or projected feats of mimesis and illusion that played on the "public fascination with likenesses…both to the hoax and *by* the very success of the hoax – by the ability of the filmmaker to produce the perfect illusionistic imitation" (Gaines 1999: 7,8).

While it is unlikely that Flaherty's romanticized depiction of Allakariallak in *Nanook* was understood as a "hoax" by its first audiences (at least not beyond their usual understanding that any film is automatically the projection of a technologically mediated "real"), the film's exhibition and promotion as "entertaining spectacle", and not as "illustrated lecture", is important. It contradicts the (still) prevalent contemporary emphasis on documentary "as hard, cold fact, as propaganda and social problem" (Gaines 1999: 9), and demonstrates instead the genre's ability to "elicit a particular kind of fascination…with the workings of mimetic technologies, only intensified by their spectacularly successful illusionism" (10). Enveloping viewers inside the fiction film's cocoon of pleasurable engagement, rather than inside Nichol's documentary lecture theatre of "sobering" discourse (Nichols 1991: 3), commercially successful documentaries such as *Nanook*, and to various degrees, every successful documentary that has followed it, display what Gaines describes as a "Ripley's Believe It or Not" quality, or a quality of "stranger than". This quality, which "invites investigation and knowledge, even a questioning about the real world/imagined world distinction" (Gaines 1999: 10), has long been exploited by documentary filmmakers and exhibitors to maximize audiences. However, it has gone largely unremarked by scholars, Gaines suggests, because:

> Similarity and resemblance as modes of understanding the world are associated with [the] knowledge of the masses – the ways in which ordinary people learn through yielding to their fascination, a fascination that leads them to…curiosities and technologies that play on similarity – from Civil War reenactments to flight simulators, from fossils to death masks. [Documentary] is particularly attracted to freaks of nature and technological wizardry: quintuplets and x-rays. In this category, moving pictures are resemblance-as-attraction *par excellence*… Documentary adds to the achievement of the camera and the projector the fascination

of congruence and coincidence: the camera was there, history was
there. Similarity is a technological wonder! (8)

Documentary's "believe-it-or-not-ness", its ability to fascinate, is further intensified
by the question Gaines proposes arises every time a documentary "ceases to be just
news and becomes entertainment" (10): namely, how much is "real", and how much
is "fiction"? While it is indisputable that this question has dogged a line of
commercially successful documentaries produced from the mid century on, from
Heyerdahl's *Kon Tiki* (1950) and Koppel's *Harlan County, USA* (1976) to the post-
1990s blockbusters of Moore and Morris, it is important to locate these films within
Bazin's "definite return to documentary authenticity" that underpinned the
production of nonfiction texts after World War Two, when "objective" reporting
took over from wartime propaganda, and audiences increasingly demanded that what
they saw should "be believable, a faith that can be tested by the other media of
information, namely, radio, books, and the daily press" (Bazin 1967: 162). Unlike
Flaherty and his successors in the 1930s and 1940s, post-World War Two
documentary makers produced and screened their work in an environment where its
"Believe It Or Not" aspect was assessed against its educative value and ethical
standards. And despite the fascination which commercially successful documentaries
continue to inspire in audiences in the present day, documentary financiers, critics,
scholars, and a significant number of filmmakers themselves, tend to adhere to a
lingering assumption that documentary, as fiction's "straight", or stylistically
"unadorned" cousin, must, as Nichols has suggested, be, somehow, "sober".

Flaherty was operating under no such constraints. Creating at a time when audiences
were still in the (gradually diminishing) thrall of cinema's mimetic ability to deliver
a believable "real", and when the sketchy barrier between fact and fiction had yet to
solidify, he and the filmmakers he inspired could manipulate with relative impunity.
The success of *Nanook* prompted Paramount to release two more "man-versus-
nature" silent films-of-the-exotic: *Grass* (1925), which followed the seasonal journey
of the nomadic Bakhtiari tribe in Persia; and *Chang* (1927), which directors Cooper
and Schoedsack promoted as a "melodrama with man, the jungle, and wild animals
as its cast". Set in the wilds of Northern Thailand, *Chang* featured staged scenes of
tigers and bears being slaughtered on camera, and climaxed with an obvious set-up
involving a stampeding elephant destroying "Kru" the protagonist's house. The

thematic interplay between "civilized" and "primitive" popularized by Flaherty also inspired a spate of (ethically more dubious) adventure-travelogues, such as Mr and Mrs Johnson's *Congorilla* (1929). Billed as "the first sound film from darkest Africa", *Congorilla* was accepted by audiences as a "real" portrait of "big apes and little people", despite the fact that the Johnsons constantly invaded the action with pre-staged pranks at their subjects' expense (rather like an unreconstructed pair of Bear Grylls's). In one scene, the Johnsons gave a Pygmy a cigar so viewers could watch him choke; in another, they cut down seven large trees so that two baby gorillas hiding in them could be caught on camera (Barnouw 1983: 50-51).

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, as Flaherty and his contemporaries exploited documentary's power of fascination with spectacular commercial results, a filmmaker on the other side of the Atlantic was harnessing that same power to inform and galvanize the masses. Méliès' ghost can be clearly glimpsed in the *oeuvre* of visionary Russian director Dziga Vertov, who shared the cine-magician's original distaste for the tawdry fakery of Hollywood fiction films. Describing them as "opium for the people…the living corpses of movie dramas garbled in splendid technological dressing" (54), Vertov exhorted Soviet filmmakers to instead make films that "reflected Soviet actuality": they were to "stop running from the prose of life [and become] craftsmen of seeing – organisers of visible life", armed with a "maturing eye" (55). In a radical foreshadowing of YouTube's powerful citizen-filmmaker network, which uploads one hundred hours of user-created content every minute (YouTube: 2014), Vertov recognised documentary's potential to become a mass-information delivery system, and called for Soviet films to be shot by "large numbers of ordinary citizens acting as film scouts, edited collectively and exchanged in a vast nationwide network" (Feldman 2014: 25). Vertov's first feature, *Kinoglaz*, or "Cinema Eye" (1924) illustrated this idea, following the "Pioneers" (a Soviet version of the Boy Scouts), as they guided the camera into "the nooks and crannies of daily life" (25). Vertov's invention is arguably the earliest precursor of the "video-diary" technique used in contemporary documentary, where footage that has been shot (and sometimes, edited) by its subjects is incorporated into the finished film.

Vertov's belief in the "transcendent power of documentary, not only to record society but to see and imagine it differently than deemed possible by mere human beings" (Aufderheide 2007: 42), was an underpinning philosophy of his *Kino Pravda*

movement, which he set up with his 'Council of Three' (himself, his editor/wife Yelizaveta Svilova and his cameraman/brother Mikhail Kaufman). Together, they produced newsreels and films governed by what came to be known as the "Leninist Film proportion": "a doctrine that every film program must have a balance between fiction and actuality material" (Barnouw 1983: 55). Far from being "objective" journalistic treatments of real issues, however, the films of *Kino Pravda* were laced with ingenious directorial illusions and tricks. Méliès' love of technological artistry was shared and considerably advanced by Vertov (whose Ukrainian *nom de plume*, appropriately, means "Spinning Top"). He may have rejected the content of Hollywood cinema as irrelevant to Soviet movie-goers, but he was an ardent embracer of its reality-enhancing photographic techniques. In one early experiment, he used high-speed film to capture the expressions playing across his face just before he jumped off a balcony (Feldman 2014: 25), presenting the footage as scientific proof of the camera's superior optic abilities. And in numerous films, he used superimpositions, dissolves, dramatic angles, frenetic cutting, suspense-building montages, artful dolly and crane shots, perspective-shifting lenses and emotionally manipulative scores to heighten audience engagement.

Although Vertov's shooting and editing techniques borrowed extensively from fiction, his approach to narrative echoed Méliès' own disavowal of the classical cinema's "deceptively" seamless story-telling approach. Vertov's audiences, like those of Méliès, were never in doubt that the films they were watching were elaborate constructions. Favoring the presentational mode of early cinema over the representational mode that was well established by the 1920s, Vertov removed the invisible "fourth wall" to directly acknowledge and interact with his viewers. In *Film Truth issue number 24* (1925), he inset footage of mourners filing past Lenin's coffin with a box in the corner of frame showing the "live" Lenin speaking to them; in a later issue of *Film Truth*, a sequence of a travelling film crew setting up an outdoor screening was superimposed with text advertising Kino Pravda's contact details to prospective hirers: just as Méliès, three decades earlier, had advertised his stage show to the audiences of *Escamotage d'une Dame* (1896). Vertov's cinematic trickery earned him similar criticisms to those levelled at Méliès in the declining years of his career: he was accused of empty showmanship, of using clever tricks "for their own sake" (Barnouw 1983: 59). The contemporaneous Soviet director

Sergei Eisenstein declared himself "increasingly exasperated" by Vertov's "unmotivated camera mischief", and Vertov, ever the nonfiction advocate, countered by saying that Eisenstein should embrace the superior powers of documentary, instead of "faking reality" (Aufderheide 2007: 42-3).

While it is the magician whose skill we admire in Méliès' magic-trick films, however, Vertov makes the magician his camera. In *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929), a film that "incessantly reminds us that it is a film, [where] the shadow of the camera is allowed to invade the shot" (Barnouw 1983: 63), Vertov delivered a dazzling exploration of the relationship between cinematic truth and fiction, marked by overt visual artificiality and aural manipulation, in-camera tricks and contrived staging. The film, which Aufderheide (2007) and Leach (2014) place in the "poetic line" of artist-made city-symphony films, is an unsubtle precursor of what Nichols has categorised as "reflexive" documentary (Nichols: 1991, 1993): driven as it is by "an avant-garde determination to suppress illusion in favour of heightened awareness" (Barnouw 1983: 65); or the consistent reminder that the movie we are watching *is* a movie.

Vertov bracketed *Man with a Movie Camera's* "day-in-the-life-format" with an audacious "theatrical conceit" (Aufderheide 2007: 42), framing his narrative inside scenes of an audience viewing the same film, in order to capture the world "*as the entire cinematic apparatus sees it*" (Feldman 2014: 25). From the opening shots of people taking their seats in a cinema, to the closing shots of their applause, Vertov's movie-about-a-movie makes its parts and their assembly continually visible. We see the camera's dilating lens, the cameraman's daring shot positions, the celluloid frames in the Steenbeck suite, the dangling spools in the processing lab, the projector and its screen. In one scene, Vertov shows a poster for a movie, "*A Woman Awakes*"; in the next, his camera cuts to the same woman, no longer a two dimensional image, *awakening* in the frame. In another scene, Svilova works at her edit bench, and pulls up a frame of a child's face; Vertov cuts to a moving image of the child on screen, and, later, to the same child, edited into "a (now subverted) illusion of reality – appropriately enough, the sequence of the magician's act" (22).

Vertov's use of the camera to document "life caught unawares" saw him increasingly marginalized after 1934, when the revelatory power of his approach began to

threaten the credibility of the "life-is-good" propaganda films made under Stalin. That Vertov should have ended his career in relative obscurity, editing state-authored newsreels, is perhaps an "inevitable vindication of his ideas", as Feldman observes:

> …"life caught unawares" worked all too well. People not deliberately posed for the camera looked as desperate and distraught as they were. Nor could a highly centralized, dictatorial state encourage spontaneous mass production in its "most important" art form (Feldman 2014: 33).

However, Vertov's multi-angled vision of a "pure" cinematic truth in *Man with A Movie Camera;* and its foreshadowing of what was to become one of the main ideological drivers of postmodernism, the abandonment a singular, "historical truth" in favour of a multiplicity of relative, subjective and often ambivalent truths (Williams: 2014), ensured Vertov's place as one of the most influential *auteurs* in cinema history. In the 1960s, *Cinéma Vérité* and Direct Cinema filmmakers, and their *Novelle Vague* fiction film contemporaries, embraced the possibilities Vertov's camera had opened up: exploiting the astonishing sense of reality that could be captured by filming ordinary people, or actors behaving like ordinary people, in un-staged, or unconventionally *staged* settings. And from the 1970s on, the reflexive audacity of Vertov's movie-within-a-movie continued to inspire filmmakers working across the fact/fiction spectrum, from experimental video artists and hybrid documentary makers to Martin Scorsese – who, after picking up *Man with a Movie Camera* "at random in a video store, professed himself thrilled by the possibilities it opened up" (Aufderheide 2007: 44).

Half a century after it was made, *Man with a Movie Camera* prompted Barnouw to ask a question that speaks directly to the use of deception in any documentary film, and reflects the "how much is fact/how much is fiction" dilemma Gaines has identified as surfacing every time a documentary succeeds as entertainment:

> Had [the director] demonstrated the importance of the reporter as documentarist? Or had his barrage of film tricks suggested – intentionally? Unintentionally? – that no documentary could be trusted? (Barnouw 1983: 65).

The answer, I suggest, is that *Man with a Movie Camera*, like *Forbidden Lie$* and certain reflexive texts discussed later in this thesis, did both. In inviting his audience to acknowledge it was watching a constructed actuality, Vertov, like his ciné-

magician predecessor Méliès, was openly playing with the confluences between filmmaking and deception. Vertov's and Méliès' ingenious experiments and "tricks", despite the opprobrium they earned, focused on creating a heightened filmic reality which (honestly) incorporated an awareness of its construction for its audiences. Vertov, like Méliès, was not saying "don't trust me," so much as "enjoy how this new technology manipulates you." Rather than using his tricks to earn praise or profit, however, Vertov, unlike Méliès, was primarily concerned with capturing a more accurate "truth" about the world. Operating at a time "before the distinction between documentary and fiction was set" (Rothman 1998: 24), Vertov, like his contemporary, Flaherty, was unshackled by Renov's "ethical burden of single-minded truth telling", and was free to approach the nonfiction "real" as an entity open to artistic interpretation. As Vertov explained in a 1925 *Kinoki* manifesto,

> My mission is the creation of a new perception of the world… But it is not enough to show bits of truth on screen, separate frames of truth. These frames must be thematically organized so that the whole is also a truth (cited in Barnouw 1983: 58).

Chapter 4   Deceptive "truth-tellers": The Padillas to Riefenstahl

*It may be good to have power based on arms, but it is better and more joyful
to win and to keep the hearts of the people.*

Joseph Goebbels
1935

The blunderbuss is to fascism as propaganda is to democracy.

Noam Chomsky
1999

Three new mutations of deceptive documentary techniques evolved in the 1930s and 40s, all of which have their roots in early cinema. The first is the repurposing, recycling, or fabrication of archival footage to represent an authentic "real": a technique that may be traced back to the tricked-up early cinema newsreels and "found footage jumbles" of Albert E. Smith and William Selig. The second technique, which involves the deliberate faking of action or information to heighten entertainment and engagement, was developed by Flaherty and his 1920s contemporaries, but exists in embryonic form in the first "proto-narrative" (Kiel 2006: 41), the Lumières' *L'Arroseur Arrosée* (1895). The third technique, which continues to evolve in increasingly sophisticated ways today, is propaganda.

Falling within Renov's second documentary mode, "to persuade or promote" (Renov 2004: 74-85), propaganda films made under John Grierson for the British Empire Marketing Board; by Franz Capra for the American Government; and by Leni Riefenstahl for the Nazi Ministry of Propaganda, all used deception, manipulation and emotional suasion to unite audiences behind their respective governments' wartime goals (Finch 2006). Propaganda's earliest cinematic antecedants are the 1900s pro-colonialist texts of Francis Doublier and James Williamson, which variously promoted and celebrated western military and economic supremacy over non-white nations. By World War One, western governments were actively

harnessing propaganda techniques to ignite nationalist sentiment through state-run studios, such as the *Universum Film Aktiengesellschaft* in Germany, the Committee of Public Information and War Office Cinematograph Committee in Britain, and the Department of Information in the U.S.A. (Finch 2006; Lasswell 1927). But it was only in the 1930s and 1940s that sophisticated new propaganda techniques, and the prevalence with which they were used, combined to elevate documentary from a second-tier art form (in relation to fiction), to a powerful mainstream position as a galvanizing agent of social change.

The first of the deceptive techniques outlined above, the recreation or repurposing of archive, has been used in diverse ways by nonfiction filmmakers, both before and after documentary's recognition as a genre in 1926; as Lerner and Juhasz's work on the "fake" documentary demonstrates (Juhasz & Lerner 2006). While this particular form of deception featured in many films of the 1930s and 1940s, one of the most audacious and historically unique examples of its use is found in the *oeuvre* of the Padillas: an itinerant family of projectionists and filmmakers active across the United States-Mexican border in the first part of the twentieth century. Like their late-twentieth century film-collagist equivalents (Jesse Lerner and Marlon Fuentes being two notable examples), the Padillas not only recycled found footage from different sources to create the "heady montages that became their own films," but shot "additional materials to be added to the mix" (Lerner 2006a: 23).

In 1936, the Padillas produced *La Venganza de Pancho Villa* (*The Vengeance of Pancho Villa*), which Rocha, after examining multiple glue splices in the print, and tracking down the sources from which it was cut, labels *"one of the oddest and most complex compilation experiments in the history of silent cinema"* (Rocha 2006: 57). The Padillas' fiction film sources included the no longer extant 1914 drama *The Life of Pancho Villa* (with Raoul Walsh as the eponymous hero), and the 1916 anti-Mexican melodrama *Liberty* (which featured a blonde Mary Walcamp being terrorised by Mexican bandits). By inserting scenes from these films into a pastiche of staged reconstructions (shot both with actors and real people), observational footage of Mexican villages, and historical newsreels of territorial skirmishes between American and Mexican forces over three decades (56), the Padillas transformed the pro-colonialist intent of the majority of their sources into a radical

new film, which celebrated Pancho Villa as a heroic resistor of American Imperialism.

La Venganza de Pancho Villa made $1,280 pesos between 1936 and 1937, attracting an estimated twelve thousand spectators (57). Its success suggests that 1930s audiences, like their early cinema predecesors, were capable of accepting the recycling and fabrication of factual material by filmmakers (including fact/fiction border-crossers like the Padillas), without treating these practices as a de-legitimisation of the truth claim of the films they produced. Read retrospectively, *La Venganza* is a "hoax" that works on multiple levels, as Rocha observes:

> …on the level of authorship, as the Padillas neither claimed nor denied their interventions, though they did misleadingly announce the film as having been "shot entirely on the outskirts of Torreon"; on the level of historicity, by recontextualizing facts and characters who were already fictionalized; and on the level of veracity, by deconstructing the meanings intended by other filmmakers (57).

However, despite these (now) obvious deceptions, it is clear that the pre-World War Two audiences of *La Venganza de Pancho Villa* (or at least, audiences sympathetic to the Mexican nationalism it espoused), unfettered by Bazin's expectation of "documentary authenticity", accepted the Padillas' film as a credible re-working of earlier American fictional and factual narratives, which they already held in doubt. Levi's "weak ontological frontier" between fact and fiction is dynamically in play in the approach of the Padillas, who Rocha postions as the first practitioners of "Border Cinema", both by virtue of their geographical location, and their deliberate attempts to "freely cross, back and forth, the dividing lines set between fact and fiction, Anglo and Mexican cosmogony, *gringo* and *greaser* stereotypes, and, most of all, original and transformed meanings" (57).

Two years after the Padillas premiered *La Venganza*, Orson Welles broadcast his own fact/fiction hoax, a 1938 newsreel-style adaptation of H.W. Wells's *The War of the Worlds* for CBS radio, proving that the fabrication of factual material was not only acceptable to a broad cross-section of the 1930s American public, but when exceptionally executed, was rarely questioned. The panic which Welles' deceptively "authentic" audio documentary caused, as listeners hoarded emergency supplies, and

hit the highways to flee the Alien invaders they believed had destroyed Chicago, made headlines across the country. Welles was forced to apologise in a national news conference for not anticipating that audiences, when presented with a story dressed up in the narrative wrappings of "fact" (statistics, commentary, citizen vox-pops and hyper-real sound effects), would be unable to distiguish it from fiction (Welles 1938). At the time he made his apology, Welles was concerned his hoax would destroy his career. Instead, its impact cemented his reputation as a master-manipulator and attractor of attention, earning him an appropriate new home in the drama studios of R.K.O. Pictures, for whom he created another fake newsreel, *News on the March,* in his seminal feature *Citizen Kane* (1941). While Welles, unlike the Padillas, fabricated nonfictional material primarily to entertain rather than to politicise, the credibility of his fake *War of the Worlds* and *News on the March* documentaries (inadvertently) demonstrated the power of documentary to persuade on a mass level: a power which Welles' propaganda-filmmaking contemporaries exploited to spectacular effect throughout the same decade.

Before examining the propaganda techniques these filmmakers used, it is useful to first analyse the second deceptive technique prevalent in non-propaganda documentaries of the 1930s: the faking of action or information to construct a nonfictional "real". While this technique does operate in an overt form in many contemporaneous propaganda texts, it also exists in its own right, as a subtle continuation of the constructions and concealments practiced by Flaherty in his romanticised treatments of exotic worlds. The use of the technique in this context is best illustrated by Luis Buñuel's own depiction of an exotic world, *Las Hurdes: Tierra Sin Pan* (*The Hurdanos: Land without Bread*), a 1933 pseudo-"travelogue" which caused as much ambivalence when it first screened as it continues to cause viewers and scholars today. Diversely interpreted as a "fake" and "antihumanist" documentary (Russell 2006: 111, 101), a "surrealist ethnography" and the first "mockumentary" (Ruoff 1998: 45-57), and a cinematic rendering of the Hegelian dialectic (Sobchak 2014: 53-4); the film Buñuel simply labelled "a study in human geography" deceived, bewildered and shocked its viewers: both through its extreme audiovisual contradictions, and its fabricated action. Composed of uncompromising portraits and sequences shot in the remote Spanish village of Extremadura, *Las Hurdes* juxtaposes the desperation and misery of its subjects with langorous,

romantic music (Brahms' fourth symphony), and a disconcertingly impassive commentary, which several critics have suggested borders on the immoral (Sobchak 2014, Russell 2006).

The commentary for *Las Hurdes* was written by the surrealist artist Pierre Unik, and delivered live by Buñuel in a screening in Madrid in 1933, where he read the text "in a tone which combined insolent indifference and apparent objectivity" (Aranda 1976: 93). Using "dry, pseudo-scientific conventions to incite bewilderment and outrage, both at the narrator and then at the horrific social conditions of the countryside" (Aufderheide 2007: 13), Buñuel's jarringly detached commentary did earn him harsh criticism, which largely overshadowed any outrage he had managed to generate on behalf of his blighted Hurdano subjects – beyond the widely held contemporary view that his treatment of them was unethical (Russell 2006). Scholars revisiting the film in the 1960s and 1970s variously critiqued Buñuel's commentary as too "matter of fact" in comparison to "the dreadful images of human degradation" it accompanied (Durgnat); "travelogue-ish…dry…at times contemptuous" (Lyon); unnecessary "reportage" in contrast to the superior, commentary-free Direct Cinema mode (Casaus); and inappropriately similar to the kind of narration "that might accompany a documentary on the cultivation of peas in the lower Pyrenees" (Kyrou; all cited in Sobchak 2014: 57).

Buñuel's choice to frame *Las Hurdes* within a narrative mode that audiences associated with conventional travelogues lulled them into believing they were watching a "pompous excursion into an impoverished corner of Spain" (Aufderheide 2007: 13); before rudely shocking them with the horror of its content. But it is not the only deceptive technique Buñuel used. He also faked information and action to shocking effect. In one scene, his camera presents a woman of about seventy, as the narrator announces, "this woman is thirty-two". This claim, which even the obvious malnourishment of the Hurdanos does nothing to support, immediately creates doubt in the contract between viewer and narrator, as Russell observes:

> Can we believe anything he says? Can we believe that he could be deceiving us? And if he is telling the truth, of what use is truth to the woman or to the viewer? (Russell 2006: 104).

In another scene, Buñuel fakes the action, presenting a long shot of goat on a ridge, with this comment: "One eats goat meat only when one of the animals is killed accidentally. This happens sometimes when the hills are steep and there are loose stones on the footpath." A puff of smoke suddenly erupts on the bottom right of frame, and the goat, which has clearly been shot, falls off the cliff. The moment compounds the doubt already in play in the film:

> We are confronted with a lie, with a manipulation of reality we can see is a manipulation *for the film*. We are led not only to mistrust the narrator and regard him as unreliable and unethical…but also to mistrust the reality and spontaneity of the images we see (Sobchak 2014: 55).

In cataloguing these deceptions, it is important to also acknowledge the cultural context in which *Las Hurdes* was created. Buñuel and his co-writer Pierre Unik, along with their influential European contemporary, Vertov, were the inheritors of the 1920s avant-garde, an artistic movement in which "artists and anthropologists alike experimented with cultural codes and ideologies and produced startling juxtapositions intended to challenge the legitimacy of categorization and the authority of meaning-making" (Torchin 2014: 526). *Las Hurdes,* a film which constantly exacerbates the dialectical tensions between surrealism and reportage; sound and image; and credibility and doubt; traps the viewer in an anarchic world of non-hierarchical meanings, where "everything is questioned and negated by its opposite" (Sobchak 2014: 61-2). Buñuel's camera documents poverty, illness and death, but his *film*, by making its deceptions both visible and audible, makes the viewer aware of "the *documenting* of the Hurdanos, the turning them into objects from which films are made" (54). Viewed in this context, Buñuel's decision to play the role of "unethical narrator", acting as an unreliable mediator between the viewer and the Hurdanos, far from being "inappropriate", "redundant" or "too matter of fact", is exactly what gives *Las Hurdes* its power. Forced to reject the narrator as a trustworthy guide, Buñuel's viewers must interpret what he is showing them for themselves. *Las Hurdes* is, on this level, neither a "horrific" travelogue, nor a "liberal" documentary *exposé*, but rather, a radically prescient glimpse of the postmodernist preoccupation with a multi-layered "real". Like Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera*, *Las Hurdes* is also a reflexive documentary: causing viewers to not only question what they are seeing, but to question the basis of perception itself.

In an acknowledgment of Kluge's "second camera" that operates in every film, namely, "the filmmaker's mind" (Kluge 1988: 4), it must also be noted that Buñuel himself, in a 1941 lecture on *Las Hurdes*, professed a deep admiration for the Hurdanos, stating he had intended to capture their strength of spirit, as well as their crippling poverty, within the harshness of the landscape they were forced to endure (Russell 2006: 101). The jarring cuts between his images, and his rejection of continuity editing, while intentionally subversive, was also due, he explained, to his limited budget, which had reduced the amount of stock available to shoot seamless transitions (111). Buñuel justified the controversial juxtaposition of narration and imagery in *Las Hurdes* on similar grounds to those used by Vertov, in his rejection of fiction film: he did not believe in

> …a cinema exclusively dedicated to the expression of the fantastic and mysterious…a cinema that flees from or despises daily reality and aspires only to plunge us into the inconscious world of dreams (cited in Kyrou 1963: 112).

In defence of the shock and discomfort that *Las Hurdes*, and the deceptive techniques he had used to make it, had caused his audiences, Buñuel cited Freidrich Engels' notion of the "honourable" novelist, who only acquits himself:

> …when, by means of an accurate portrayal of authentic social relations, he [has] destroyed the conventional view of the nature of those relations, shattered the optimism of the bourgeoise world, and forced the reader to question the permanency of the prevailing order…even if the author does not offer us any solutions, even if he does not clearly take sides (112).

It is clear from this statement that Buñuel the filmmaker was intent on making viewers question their comfortable assumptions about the existing social order, rather than the nature of perception itself; even though this latter aim, when viewed through a (retrospective) postmodernist filter, can be attributed to his text. It is also clear that Buñuel's mission was politically subversive. Unlike his contemporaries Grierson and Riefenstahl , who by 1933 (when *Las Hurdes* was made) were already producing propaganda documentaries to support their government's respective agendas, notably Grierson's pro-imperialist *Cargo from Jamaica* and Riefenstahl 's celebration of Nazi ideology, *Der Sieg des Glaubens* (*Victory of the Faith*), Buñuel's

ambition to "shatter" bourgeoise acceptance of the status-quo places him firmly outside what Althusser identified as the "Ideological State Apparatus" (ISA): the religious, educational, familal, political, cultural and communication institutions that control the machinations of power (Althusser 1984: 17). Throughout the 1930s, as the Axis powers and their Allied adversaries worked to prepare their citizenry for war, propaganda flourished as a mass educational tool: education having been installed in the "dominant position" (28), alongside the "Repressive State Apparatus" (the army, the police force, the prisons and the courts [19]), as the ISA's primary means of quashing "violent political and ideological class struggles" against the ruling elites (26). By 1936, propaganda was the dominant narrative genre in both fiction and documentary: and Buñuel, driven, like many of his peers, by the need to survive, shed his outsider-artist stance to take a propaganda job with Spain's Republican Popular Front government, for which he anonymously curated and assembled propaganda films throughout the Spanish Civil War until Franco's far right forces seized power in 1939 (Buñuel 2002: 94).

Propaganda techniques were intially developed in World War One across a range of forms, from newspapers, pamphlets and posters to newsreels, documentary and fiction film. But the dark craft which Lasswell has dubbed "the war of ideas on ideas" (Lasswell 1927) reached persuasive new heights in the cinemas of the 1930s and 40s, when the motion picture was recognized above all other mass communication devices as a preeminant mode of dissemination

> …unexcelled in its ability to play upon the emotions of the audience, to penetrate and influence their needs, frustrations, ambitions and desires. Its appeal is essentially emotional so that, the more…skillful its use of suggestion and subtle psychological conditioning, the more influential it is likely to be. (Qualter 1962: 94).

In the 1930s, propaganda filmmakers working on both sides of the growing conflict were quick to promote documentary's manipulative powers. Grierson, whose films for the British Empire Marketing Board were driven by the over-arching goal of winning public consent "for the existing order" (Aufderheide 2007: 33), extolled the documentary's superior ability to capture "life itself", in comparison to the "'shim-sham mechanics' and 'Woolworth intentions' of Hollywood-acted films" (35). The documentary, he stated, was:

> …capable of direct description, simple analysis and commanding conclusions, and may by its tempo'd and imagistic powers, be made easily persuasive. [No] force of description can add nobility to a simple observation so readily as a camera set low, or a sequence cut to a time-beat. But principally there is this thought that a single say-so can be repeated a thousand times a night to a million eyes, and over the years…to millions of eyes. That seven leagued fact… opens a new perspective to public persuasion (cited in Hardy 1946: 13).

Riefenstahl, whose techniques Grierson had no moral qualms about appropriating on the basis that "you can be 'totalitarian' for evil [or] 'totalitarian' for good"(cited in Aufderheide 2007: 35), agreed that documentary was powerful. But the discovery of its capacity to mobilize an entire nation belonged, she asserted, to the Nazis alone:

> One is familiar with documentaries. Governments…have used them for their ends. But the belief that a true and genuinely powerful national experience can be kindled through film, this belief originated in Germany. Where else in the world have the film's inherent potentialities to act as the chronicler [of] contemporary events been recognized in so far sighted a manner? (cited in Barnouw 1983: 103).

Despite their ideological differences, Grierson and Riefenstahl, along with the American director Frank Capra, went on to produce three of the most pivotal propaganda texts of 1935-1945: *Night Mail* (made by Wright and Watt in collaboration with Grierson in 1936); *Why We Fight* (Capra's series for the U.S. Department of Information); and the film that influenced them both, Riefenstahl's propaganda masterpiece, *The Triumph of the Will* (1935). While the stylistic and narrative approaches of these films are very different, the techniques underpinning them are the same. Their makers, as propagandists, are "international mountebanks", and their methods are a "sack full of tricks…designed, like those of mental conjurers, to delude the intelligence" (Bartlett 1940: 103). Even Grierson, who saw himself as an "educator" for democratic reform rather than a "conjurer", acknowledged that he manipulated information to render it simple for mass audiences. Documentary for Grierson was "a hammer, to be used in shaping the destiny of nations" (cited in Renov 2004: 74), and its makers "medicine men hired to mastermind. We are giving every individual a living conception of the community which he has the privilege to serve" (Aufderheide 2007: 74).

To analyze the deceptive techniques used by Grierson and his contemporaries, it is useful to begin with a definition of propaganda itself. Traceable back to 1622, when Pope Gregory the XV formed the *Sacra Congregatio De Propaganda Fide,* an educational body charged with "responsibility for carrying faith to the new world, and for strengthening and reviving the old" (Qualter 1962: 3), the word "propaganda" has been subsequently described as "the manipulation of the masses" (Goebbels cited in Bartlett 1940: 66); "the management of collective attitudes by the manipulation of significant symbols" (Lasswell); the "attempt to control attitudes…through the use of suggestion" (Doob); and "the dissemination of conclusions" through "promotion which is veiled…as to 1, its origins or sources; 2, the interests involved; 3, the methods employed; 4, the content spread; and 5, the results accruing to the victims" (Lumley) (all cited in Qualter 1962: 8, 14, 25).

While propaganda films and texts do use "suggestion", "manipulation" and "symbolism" to promote their messages, perhaps the most apposite definition of "propaganda", when examining its use in documentary, is Qualter's own:

> …the deliberate attempt by some individual or group to form, control, or alter the attitudes of other groups by the use of the instruments of communication, with the intention that in any given situation the reaction of those so influenced will be that desired by the propagandist. The propagandist is the individual or group who makes any such attempt (Qualter 1962: 27).

"The deliberate attempt", for Qualter, is the "one thing that marks propaganda from non-propaganda" (18).

F.C. Bartlett, the Cambridge psychology professor who catalogued the key techniques of propaganda in his 1940 treatise, *Political Propaganda*, was writing at the height of the information war between the Axis and Allied powers. He was well-versed in improvements that had been made to propaganda film since its rudimentary (and compared with Riefenstahl's extravaganzas, blatantly amateur) contributions to the "Big Lies" of World War One. Audiences of the 1930s and 1940s, while still credulous of well-executed "nonfictions" (as the reception of Welles' *War of the Worlds* attests), were more cognizant of the fact that film and photography could be technologically manipulated, than their World War One forebears (Finch 2006: 80).

The Allied propagandists who created "war news" between 1915 and 1918 mercilessly exploited the fact that the newly literate masses accepted newspapers and newsreels as the "truth" (5), and brazenly lied to them: talking up "encouraging victories" at the Somme and "the Hun's catastrophic losses", while concealing Allied casualties. When these fictitious media accounts were shattered by the stories of soldiers returning home from the war, the Allies' propaganda was seen as "an extraordinary act of betrayal" (80). For this reason, Allied propagandists in World War Two, unlike their Axis counterparts, adopted a more subtle and restrained approach: presenting information in "a rational way and avoiding lies and highly emotional appeals" in the belief that audiences would be more likely to accept a propaganda message "if they were unaware they [were] being propagandized" (Gorman 2003: 93).

Despite this marked difference in presentation, however, on an operational level, the techniques used by the Allied and Axis propagandists of World War Two were the same. Bartlett's treatise, which was written partly to enhance the Allies' chances of winning the battle for hearts and minds that had been a crucial tool of warfare since World War One, defines propaganda as "an organized and public form of the process which the psychologist calls 'suggestion" (Bartlett 1940: 51). Two distinct types of social relationship permeate Bartlett's analysis of the contrasting propaganda texts of the Allied and Axis powers. The most widely used form of suggestion "is based upon a relationship of superiors and inferiors; the second upon one of friendliness and comradeship" (51). The following summary of Bartlett's propaganda techniques illustrates the use of deception in World War Two propaganda documentaries, and presents a framework for understanding the far more sophisticated techniques of persuasion and manipulation employed by professional disseminators today: from mainstream journalists and government and corporate spokespeople, to advertisers and political documentary filmmakers.

1. Use Repetition. Bartlett takes issue with Hitler's belief that "effective propaganda must be confined to merely a few issues which can be easily assimilated. Since the masses are slow to comprehend, they must be told the same thing a thousand times" (cited in Bartlett 1940: 67). Instead, Bartlett encourages propagandists to use "repetition with well considered variations", on the grounds that "he who despises

and underrates human intelligence and emotions will be ineffective" (103). While Hitler's generalization rests "upon a very poor opinion of the intelligence of the masses" (70), effective propaganda, for Bartlett, treats its viewer with respect.

2. Make Statements, not Arguments. Goebbels' belief that "The masses think simply and primitively. They love to generalize complex situations and from their generalizations to draw clear and uncomplicated conclusions" (cited in Bartlett 1940: 73) echoes Grierson's own view, which was inspired by Walter Lippmann's proposition that an "increasingly complex society required professionals who could translate issues for the masses, who otherwise would become overwhelmed by the level of expertise needed to address any particular issue" (Aufderheide 2007: 33). But for Bartlett, the rule to use simple statements over arguments "is really a trick concealing a trick" (Bartlett 1940: 73):

> When the propagandist says "be simple" , he means, "be simple if you can also be emotional"…This leads at once to a whole bag of tricks used by propagandists in the name of simplicity of issues, but actually having to do with the strong arousal of popular emotions (73-74).

Bartlett stresses that empirically backed arguments and conclusions can work just as effectively as simple statements in propaganda: but that simplicity will be met with strong resistance, if it is not couched within a persuasive emotional context.

3. Use Exagerration and Stereotypes. "One of the key things film reinforces, to the point where people act them out, are stereotypes" (Qualter 1962: 94). This view is supported by Bartlett, who encourages an emphasis on stereotyping:

> …in print by the extensive use of special type-forms for headlines and paragraphing, in pictorial expression by a great amount of dramatization, and in words [by] the use of epithets which, within whatever culture is being aimed at, have already become highly coloured and stirring (Bartlett 1940: 71).

Exagerration, on the other hand, is a technique best concealed within an appeal to the viewer's emotions, namely,

> …pride and love in the alleged history and achievements of his own group, hate and rage for the alleged history and achievements of all or

most other groups, and fear or anxiety for an alleged indifference by the seond with the first (75).

4. Be Consistent. Bartlett stresses this technique should be used responsibly. The assumption by propagandists that they only need be consistent "within a single time and topic", and that if they "space out inconsistencies sufficiently…they will escape notice" (85), sets a dangerous precedent. If the propagandist consistently says the Nazis "suffered huge casualties", for example, while ommitting to mention incidents when his own side's casualties were greater, the enemy propagandist will use this inconsistency to counter-attack. The "noticeable break in the texture of the fictitious world" that results when audiences realise they've been misled (Lippman cited in Finch 2006: 5), not only damages the credibility of the propagandist, but causes "an enourmous problem…in the next major conflict, when the State again has a vested interest in winning the minds of the people (Finch 2006: 5).

5. Use Humour. "The perfectly amazing use" of "irony and sarcasm" in propaganda (Bartlett 1940: 87) is entwined with the sense of superiority over the enemy which these techniques instill in the audience. Bartlett identifies humour as the counter-propagandist's most dangerous weapon, citing a Nazi pamphlet that was circulated in English by Goebbels, which was so badly translated, its British targets laughed. In 1942, the British Ministry of Information used humour to spectacular effect in Charles A. Ridley's *Lambeth Walk – Nazi Style*, which manipulated Riefenstahl 's footage of Hitler and goose-stepping soldiers in *Triumph of the Will* to make it appear as if the Nazis were dancing to the popular song, *The Lambeth Walk*. Goebbels was reportedly so enraged by the film, he ran from the screening room screaming (www.Public Domain Review 2014). The film was widely circulated by the Allies, including America's Universal Newsreel Company: which successfully promoted it as "The cleverest anti-Nazi propaganda yet! You will howl with glee when you see…the 'Nasties' skip and sway in tune to *The Lambeth Walk*!" (www.Public Domain Review 2014).

6. Spread Rumours. Rumours, for Bartlett, are an unethical but necessary tool in propaganda. To be effective, they must be couched in emotion, and have "a certain trapping of detail to have apparent verisimilitude. The rumour is therefore started off with an accompaniment of the detail of the unverifiable kind" (Bartlett 1940: 92).

The ommission of evidence which is often employed in the "simple statement" technique is also present in the rumour's "whisper campaign":

> The propagandist pretends that he is working with picture, symbol and word alone. [But] to get the atmosphere in which his particular pictures, symbols and words work, [he] is forced [to use] weapons other than those proper to his supported trade (93).

7. Use Statistics. "A little learning is a dangerous thing", the eighteenth centrury poet Alexander Pope opined, and Bartlett concurs:

> When a statement is "quantified" it seems to carry…a superior certainty, and it passes without question. This may be due partly to inadequate training… and partly to the invasion of popular life by science, which likes to get everything into a mathematical or numerical form. [This] is another bit of evidence…that more education is required to destroy what a little education has helped to build (94, 95).

8. Don't Bore the Viewer! Boredom is the propagandist's "greatest bugbear….It may seem odd that appeals which make violent onslaughts upon human emotion should create a state of boredom; but this is neither impossible nor unusual" (26). Propaganda can bore audiences two ways: by challenging their intelligence until their attention disintegrates, or by not challenging it enough. Citing the Nazis' bullish saturation of the highly cultured Austrians with condescendingly simplistic pamphlets and newsreels, Bartlett positions the "state of boredom" that is induced by disrespecting audience's intelligence as

> …far and away the more dangerous. It produces…whole populations, stunned, inactive, who have lost their values and the reserves that can find new ones. For the propagandist to produce this state is an unpardonable sin (123).

To successfully engage the viewer, propaganda must deliver a bespoke message: one that uses the "idiom of the group to which it is directed - [in] picture; speech, spoken or written; bodily skills or whatnot. It is knowledge of the daily use of the language that is required, and of the many other shades of difference in practical culture that go with this daily use" (126). To Bartlett's "idiom", Qualter adds a second technique crucial to achieving the "full mental contact" necessary between propagandist and

audience: empathy. "The propagandist will not succeed unless he is speaking [their] language and displaying…sympathy with their attitudes" (Qualter 1962: 73).

9. Lie. Of all Bartlett's techniques, the lie is the propagandist's ultimate weapon. A "brilliant propagandist" may be one "who tells the truth, or that selection of the truth which is requisite for his purpose" (Crossman cited in Finch 2006: xv), but when the truth won't work, a lie certainly will. Bartlett's contemporary, the sociologist J.W. Albig, noted that "inevitably, the propagandist becomes a liar. He not only distorts, he also fabricates. He is usually driven by the logic of events to more and more extreme falsehoods" (cited in Bartlett 1940: 95). Not only is lying effective, but in times of crisis, it remains so even when audiences suspect its use:

> The greater the state of public tension, the greater appears to be the opportunity to profit from the undetected lie, or even, perhaps, to reap advantage from the story which large numbers of people suspect, though few know, to be untrue. (Bartlett 1940: 95).

The cliché that "Truth is the first casualty of War" is given empirical weight by the propagandist: who has always exploited anxiety and fear to disseminate falsehoods that are advantageous to his cause. In the 1930s, Hitler declared that "a lie repeated a thousand times becomes a truth" (67). In 2005, George W. Bush, explaining his three justifications for the Iraq War (Saddam's Weapons of Mass Destruction, which were never found; the "liberation" of Iraqi women, which never happened; and Iraq's involvement in the 9/11 terrorist attacks, which was false) said: "in my line of work, you got to keep repeating things over and over and over again for the truth to sink in, to kind of catapult the propaganda" (www.Prison Planet, 2005).

An analysis of two very different, but hugely influential propaganda documentaries, *Triumph of the Will* (1935) and *Listen to Britain* (1942), demonstrates how effectively Bartlett's techniques can be used to persuade the viewer, regardless of the ideology of the propagandist. Humphrey Jennings' *Listen to Britain*, a film as gently unobtrusive as Riefenstahl's is cinematically bombastic, uses propaganda techniques and a poetic style to "unsettle and enrich each other" (Leach 2014: 142), creating a moving evocation of the "evolving myth of the peoples' war" (156). Rejecting the "voice-of-God" narration technique Grierson developed in his films for the Empire Marketing Board, Jennings, a surrealist artist and Britain's "one undoubted *auteur*"

(Hillier 1972: 62), renders Bartlett's techniques almost invisible. In the process, he delivers one of the most persuasive propaganda texts of World War Two (Leach 2014: 149), precisely because its *intent* to persuade is not immediately apparent.

Repetition in *Listen to Britain* is both visual and aural: Britons of all classes and occupations gaze stoically at the sky, in which the *Luftwaffe* are never seen, but always implied. The same stalwart Britons listen to music (from high-brow classical to low-brow jazz), as they go about their work for the nation, resolute and unbowed. Consistency is at once a theme and a technique: the British people are consistently calm, industrious and positive, and the film consistently cuts between serene valleys, industrious factories and happy schoolyards to portray the nation the same way. Jennings avoids Bartlett's cardinal sin, condescension, by eschewing exposition (apart from a brief talking-head prologue), for music and gentle, observational humour: allowing his audience to interpret the film's meaning for themselves. Positive stereotyping is abundant: from the playful "cockney worker" in his cloth cap, to the responsible "middle-class girls" of the ambulance corps, to the bejeweled "titled ladies" sitting with the Queen Mother in a concert by (in a deft reversal of Nazi stereotyping), the brilliant Jewish pianist, Myra Hess. Statistics, rumour and argument are also largely absent: in their place, a simple but emotional statement, which subtly crescendos throughout the film, ending in an impactful climax in the last act, when a choir is heard (but not seen) singing *Rule Britannia*: "Britons never, never, never shall be slaves." If Jennings has lied*,* it is by omission: none of his subjects, not even the injured soldier, look anything other than dignified, determined, and devoted to Queen and Country. These modest patriots, Jennings' film makes clear, are thoroughly up to the task of beating the murderous Nazis.

Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* is an entirely different beast. Like Jennings and Grierson, Riefenstahl understood "the psychological impact of the darkened cinema contrasted with the dramatic action, distoritons…and other technical tricks of film production on the screen" (Qualter 1962: 94). However, as *Triumph of the Will* and Riefenstahl's subsequent propaganda masterpiece *Olympia* (1938), both illustrate, in terms of sheer technological prowess and innovation, she was the undisputed leader of the form. The ingenious angles and tracking shots Riefenstahl invented to cover the 1936 Berlin Olympic games in *Olympia* are still used in sportcasts today, while the cinematic power of *Triumph of the Will* not only converted many Germans to

Hitler's cause, but spawned a raft of enemy imitators, thereby delivering success to the Allies as well. Allied propagandists didn't just mimic Riefenstahl's techniques, they appropriated her footage on an unprecedented scale:

> …no film has been more widely used by opposition forces. Every nation ultimately arrayed against Hitler used huge segments of *Triumph of the Will* in its own propaganda films: nothing else depicted so vividly the demoniac nature of the Hitler leadership, and the scarcely human discipline supporting it. Riefenstahl …told a story that has never lost its power to chill the marrow (Barnouw 1983: 105).

Like Jennings, Riefenstahl eschews narration for music and diagetic sound, and makes "the Peoples' War" her simple, driving theme. However, unlike Jennings, Riefenstahl's fabrications are manifest, extending beyond the screen. In a 1967 interview about *Triumph of the Will*, she declared: "there is no tendentious commentary for the simple reason that there is no commentary at all. It is *history - pure history*" (Riefenstahl 1967: 460).

Triumph of the Will may "document" an historical event (the 38th National Socialist Party Congress in Nuremberg), but Riefenstahl's extensive use of Bartlett's techniques makes it anything but pure. Instead of a voice-over, Riefenstahl uses the camera to tell her lie of a revitalized Germany, unanimously united behind its Führer. The hundreds of thousands of people attending the congress are magnified further by the use of long lenses and compressed framing. Their salutes and cheers are captured on cranes and dollies by a crew of sixteen operators and 135 technicians, in a spectacularly stage-managed event which the Third Reich architect Albert Speer choreographed, in part, to accommodate Riefenstahl's shoot (Tomasulo 2014: 84-5). Riefenstahl's "Peoples' War", like that of Jennings, is comprised of the young and the old, soldiers and mothers, intellectuals and farmers: but rather than being individuals, these people form an anonymous – and homogenously Aryan – mass of devotion for one man: Hitler.

Riefenstahl repeatedly uses the same shot to portray the Führer as a consistent, solid leader in an otherwise "unfocused" Germany: he stands static in frame, arm raised in a *Sieg Heil*, while the crowd surrounding him form an amorphous blur. Hitler is "the unifying frame of reference for the audience and the nation" (87). Through him,

Riefenstahl persuades the viewer with "humour" (a blond toddler's cherubic Nazi salute after she hands the Führer flowers); rumour and exaggeration (Hitler's speeches to the rally, denouncing the forces inside and outside the party that threaten German solidarity); and a dramatic emotional arc. People gaze at the sky in rapture as the Führer's plane approaches; they laugh with joy when he holds their hands; they cheer when he calls on their courage; and they sing, not for Germany, but for him.

Riefenstahl's simple message – "Hitler is Germany and Germany is Hitler" – doesn't condescend to the point of inducing Bartlett's cardinal sin, "a state of boredom" in the viewer, for one reason: *Triumph of the Will* is a triumph of cinematic display. The viewer has no choice but to be dazzled, just like the early audiences of Méliès, by Riefenstahl's technological wizardry: her manipulation of the humble mechanics of film to conjure up a spectacle of unrivalled power.

Chapter 5   Revealers and Concealers: Jean Rouch to *Spinal Tap*

There isn't any Cinéma-Vérité. It's necessarily a lie,
from the moment the director intervenes – or it isn't cinema at all.

George Franju
1971

Direct Cinema opened a can of worms and then got eaten by them.

Noël Carroll
1983

The post-World War Two "return to documentary authenticity" identified by Bazin (1967: 162) dominated the production, presentation and reception of documentary from 1945 until the late 1980s: when Morris's *The Thin Blue Line* (1988) catalysed a radical rethinking of how the nonfiction "real" can be portrayed on screen (Anderson 2006: 79). This rethinking was characterised by the use of a subjective, non-authoritative stance, the rejection of "the boundary distinctions of prior filmic modes", and an "unprecedented degree of hybridization" (Arthur 1993: 127), all of which are evident in the 1990s and 2000s documentaries discussed in Part Two of this thesis. Until the commercial success of these "fashionable, mainstream, postmodern documentaries" (133) helped to revolutionize the way in which the documentary "real" is produced and consumed, however, nonfiction film in the second half of the twentieth century generally operated along two distinct paths. The ideological topography for these paths was originally mapped out in the 1960s, by the contrasting objectives and methodologies of the French *Cinéma Vérité* movement, and the Direct Cinema movement in America.

An analysis of the deceptive techniques used by key filmmakers working within, and subsequently influenced by, these two distinct modes reveals a second, less well-documented distinction: between *Cinéma Vérité*-inspired reflexive documentaries (which make the filmmaker's techniques known to the viewer); and Direct Cinema-

inspired documentaries (which render them invisible, to achieve the suspension-of-disbelief immersion of classical cinema). While the fact/fiction boundary was possibly at its most entrenched in the three decades following World War Two, the strategies these filmmakers employed to either challenge viewer assumptions about the superiority of the documentary truth claim, or to reinforce these assumptions to keep the genre's truth-teller status intact, supports Kiel's suggestion that the Lumières' train (normally associated with early documentary), and Méliès' rocket (normally associated with early fiction), were on less divergent trajectories than is usually assumed (Kiel 2006: 33). Direct Cinema practitioners such as Drew and Leacock promoted their approach as the more "honest", while seeking to conceal their artistry in the same way as directors working in fiction, while filmmakers inspired by *Cinema-Vérité* such as Marker and Welles, acknowledged their techniques on screen: echoing, in the process, the work of cinema's first "honest" fiction filmmaker, the magical-trickster, Méliès.

The fact that documentary film has been largely "motivated by the camera's powers of revelation, an impulse rarely coupled with an acknowledgment of the mediational processes through which the real is transformed" (Renov 2004: 75), makes the performative techniques used by Rouch in his "ethno fictions" and *Cinéma Vérité* films (and in the earlier reflexive texts of Vertov, by whom Rouch was partly inspired), both subversive and, paradoxically, honest. Rouch developed his intrusive documentary style (in which the director catalyses the action, rather than merely observing it) in direct opposition to the objectivity-driven Direct Cinema filmmakers: rejecting their pretence of authorial invisibility to openly acknowledge "the impact of the filmmaker's presence" on screen, choosing to "generate reality rather that allow it to unfold passively before him, [and pushing] participant observation to new levels of interactivity" (Renov 2004: xxi). Asked to define his approach, Rouch replied:

> It would be better to call it "*ciné*-sincerity"…that is, you ask the audience to have confidence in the evidence, to say to the audience, This is what I saw. I didn't fake it, this is what happened…I look at what happened with my subjective eye and this is what I believe took place…It's a question of honesty (cited in Levin 1971: 135).

In *Bataille sur le Grandfleuves* (*The Battle on the Great River*, 1951) Rouch adopted the hand-held shooting style that came to define the "fly-on-the-wall"

cinematography of both *Cinéma Vérité* and Direct Cinema: having discovered it "by accident" when he lost his tripod in Niger's rapids (Scheinman 2014: 182). He also extended the "participating camera" technique Flaherty developed in *Nanook of the North* (1922), by using technology to show his African hippopotamus-hunter subjects "their own images" as part of the film's narrative (Rouch 1989: 278). Rouch's involvement of his subjects in the filmmaking process, by "showing them their own images, attending to their reactions, and incorporating their commentary" (Scheinman 2014: 182), went on to become a hallmark of both his early ethnographic films and his later *Cinéma Vérité* works. In *Les Maîtres Fous* (*The Mad Masters*, 1955), a film that foreshadows contemporary ethnographic texts in its creation of a "more open" space for "cultural critique, [and] multi-vocal accounts of encounters between two cultures" (193), Rouch not only showed his West African Hakua Cult subjects footage of their ceremony (in which participants went into a trance to reenact the master/servant power-plays of British Colonial rule), but directly involved them in the film's construction. While assembling his footage in the edit, Rouch collaborated with one of his main subjects, the Hakua priest Moukayla, to interpret the trancers' use of *glossolalia*, and create his own narration (187).

From the late 1950s on, Rouch consistently employed "the cinematic apparatus as a kind of accelerator", and an "incitation for a very strange kind of confession" (Eaton cited in Renov 2004: 178). Extending Grierson's notion of documentary as a "hammer", to be used in the construction of persuasive messages, Rouch admitted his filmmaking tools made him not just a manipulator of audiences, but of his subjects too:

> Yes, the camera deforms, but from the moment that it becomes an accomplice. At that point it has the possibility of doing something I couldn't: it becomes a…psychoanalytic stimulant which lets people do things they wouldn't otherwise do (cited in Levin 1971: 137).

In *Moi, un Noir* (*I, a Negro*, 1958), Rouch intensified his experiments with "fiction, fantasy, and role-playing" (Aufderheide 2007: 112), to create a new kind of participant-driven subjectivity: in which he encouraged his Songhay subjects to assume "the roles of characters they created − out of the fabric of their own lives − in a collaboratively made film about a week in the life of a migrant worker" (112). The result was "a new form of spontaneous dramatic documentary", in which Rouch's

subjects "acted" their roles in a collaboratively shaped dramatic narrative that was "not simply a documentary, or fiction, or fake documentary, but rather used 'fiction', in Rouch's words, as 'the only way to penetrate reality'" (Lerner 2006a: 29; citing Rouch in Winston 1995: 182).

In *Chronique d'un été* (*Chronicle of a Summer*, 1961), which is widely recognized as the film which launched *Cinéma Vérité,* Rouch turned his collaborative performative approach upon his own "tribe", using new technology he had helped to develop (lightweight cameras and *Lavalière* microphones) to enable his Parisian subjects to wander the streets, "interviewing others or revealing their own inner thoughts" (Scheinman 2014: 184). Continuing his use of "ritual, dramatization, and stagecraft as tools for representing a documentary reality" (Lerner 2006a: 29), Rouch created a multicast, reflexive narrative, in which diverse subjects (an holocaust survivor, racism-battling African students, an Italian woman searching for happiness, and co-director Edgar Morin's politically radical friends), commented "on earlier parts of the film", and the filmmakers themselves debated the use of "different approaches". (Aufderheide 2007: 51). These techniques were adopted by Rouch's contemporaries to document the lives and views of communities not normally given a mainstream platform: Marker canvassed French citizens' views on democracy and other questions in *The Lovely May* (1963); Špáta documented the dreams and aspirations of Czechoslovakian youth in *Nejvetsi Prani* (*The Greatest Wish*, 1964); and Jabor captured the previously unheard opinions of Rio de Janeiro's lower-middle-classes in *Opinião Pública* (*Public Opinion*, 1967) (51).

In the year *Opinião Pública* was made, Rouch released his first dramatized feature documentary, *Jaguar* (1967), describing it as "pure fiction", and a "postcard in the service of the imaginary" (cited in Eaton 1979: 22). The film was a two-way collaboration between Rouch and his non-actor principals, the African travellers Damoure, Lam and Illo: who "worked out the action at the time of shooting, later improvising the commentary in the editing room while responding to their own images" (Scheinman 2014: 183). Despite Rouch's repeated transgressions across the mid-twentieth century's normally inviolable fact/fiction border, however, his films - and *Chronique d'un Été* in particular - have been positioned alongside those of Direct Cinema director Frederick Wiseman, within Nichols' interactive documentary

mode (Nichols 1991b; 1993), on the grounds that both filmmakers use "the direct address of expository filmmaking via the interview" (Bernstein 2014: 405-6).

But it may also be argued that Rouch's subjective challenge to Direct Cinema's objectively captured "real", and his acknowledgment of the camera not as a "neutral recorder" but "one that prompts constructions of 'reality'" by provoking "the behavior of those in front of the lens" (Scheinman 2014: 184), together with his driving philosophy that fiction is "the only way to penetrate reality" (cited in Winston 1995: 182), places *Chronique d'un Èté*, and Rouch's subsequent films, within Nichols' "reflexive" documentary mode (1991b), or what Renov identifies as its "third function": "to analyse or interrogate" (Renov 2004: 74-85). Unlike Renov's other three funtions, "to record, reveal or preserve" (as in Direct Cinema), "to persuade or promote" (as in propaganda documentary), and "to express" (as in the City Symphony films), the reflexive mode, significantly, has been

> …virtually ignored. The imperative towards analysis…offers an intensification of, and challenge to, the record/reveal/preserve modality insofar as it actively questions non-fictional discourse – its claims to truth, its status as second-order reality (83).

Joining Rouch to run the gauntlet between fact and fiction, and similarly standing out from their Direct Cinema peers for refusing to ignore documentary's "third function" in order to interrogate what nonfiction "truth" actually means, were Chris Marker and Orson Welles: whose films actively addressed such questions as

> On what basis does the spectator invest belief in the representation?... What material processes are involved in the production of this "spectacle of the real" and to what extent are these processes rendered visible or knowable to the spectator? (Renov 2004: 83).

In his personal essay, *Letter from Siberia* (1958), Marker counterpointed narration with unorthodox sound design and diverse narrative styles (travelogue, documentary, animation) to make audiences think about how the film was manipulating them, forcing "every viewer…to confront the malleability of meaning and the ideological impact of authorial or stylistic choices that typically go unnoticed" (84). In his later experimental essay, *Sans Soleil* (*Sunless,* 1983), Marker created a fictional interplay between an anonymous female narrator and a fictive cameraman, "Sandor Krasna," to construct a subjection exploration between "two extreme poles of survival"

(Rosenbaum 2007). *Sans Soleil's* pastiche of factual and fictional archival footage, silent 16mm film, observational scenes filmed in Japan, Guinea-Bissau, Iceland and San Francisco, and clips from Japanese cinema and television shows, presents an existentialist portrait of contemporary civilization which − through its reflexive references to Marker's *La Jetée* (1962), and its distinctive directorial style − never lets the viewer forget that the film, despite its anonymous narrator, is *Chris Marker's* portrait of civilization.

Marker and Rouch's acknowledgments of the reality-shaping properties of film techniques and technology *within* their texts, like Vertov's (overt) and Flaherty's (fleeting) acknowledgments before them, deliver a truth claim that is arguably more authentic (or in the very least, more "responsible") than that of Direct Cinema: precisely because an onscreen acknowledgment of the filmmaker's artistry subverts the myth of an "objectively" captured real. Welles, who similarly traversed the tenuous lines between fact and fiction throughout his *oeuvre,* from his hoax 1938 *War of the Worlds* broadcast, to the blended fact/fiction montages of *Citizen Kane* (1941)*, The Lady from Shanghai* (1947)*, Mr Arkadin* (1955), and *Chimes at Midnight* (1966) (Benamou 2006: 156), repeatedly incorporated into his narratives an acknowledgment of his role in their construction: not just from behind the lens (through reflexive and stylistic intrusions), but in front of it, as a performer. He often played dissemblers − Charles Foster Kane, Gregory Arkadin, Hank Quinlan in *Touch of Evil* (1958) − whose cunning ability to control the action mirrored Welles-the-filmmaker's own. In 1973, Welles applied his preoccupation with cinematic realism as "a modern form of magic" (150), and the deceptive techniques he had developed to create it, to nonfiction: celebrating the symbiotic relationship between film and fakery in *F for Fake*, a fact/fiction hybrid still marketed today as both "an inspired prank, and a searching examination of the essential duplicity of cinema" (*Criterion* 2012).

Including himself in the film's triumvirate of dissemblers (art-forger Elmyr de Hory and the hoax Howard Hughes biographer Clifford Irving), Welles constructs an eighty-nine minute confabulation of fact and fabrication, in which he presents himself alternately as a magician, a raconteur, an interrogator and a gourmand. When accused of being "up to your usual tricks," he cheerfully replies, "Why not? I'm a charlatan" (*F for Fake*). While *F for Fake* (1974) is an "essay film", structured

around a narration that teeters between exposition and mystification as Welles explores the hypocrisy and pettifoggery of the art world (and the similarly shifty world of literary and cinematic imposters), it is also a metacritical film: one that

> …investigates the possibilities of delivering truth in documentary (the mosaic and labyrinthine structure indicates that there is no simple formula here), while self-consciously raising the question of authorship and its…relationship to documentary representation (Benamou 2006: 147).

As such, *F for Fake* may be understood, like *Letter to Siberia* and Rouch's later films, to fall within Nichols' reflexive documentary mode and Renov's analytical third function. The film's opening promise, "for the next hour, everything you hear from us is really true and based on solid fact," is followed by sixty minutes of factual and fictional material between which no generic boundary is firmly established, segueing into a fictional coda which Welles concludes by stating: "for the last seventeen minutes, I've been lying my head off". Welles' initial promise, prefaced by the caveat that "almost any story is almost certainly some kind of lie", also functions as a *warning* to his audience, that

> …his representational strategies can move imperceptibly, as if by sleight of hand, between "documentary" and "fiction" and…that on the question of fakery, Welles is not about to let either the film, or himself as *one* of its makers, easily off the hook (146).

F for Fake is not only a deliberately unreliable documentary about fakers *by* a "faker"; it also casts the reliability of documentary itself into doubt. Welles's deceptive, sinuous text, riddled with ambiguity and magical conceits, is a constant reminder that the viewer should "remain on guard against any temptation toward gullibility (normally encouraged, it is implied, by documentary discourse)" (146).

The interrogative and analytical nonfiction mode (as represented by the hybrid fact/fiction documentaries of Welles, Marker and Rouch) was "virtually ignored" by documentary practitioners (Renov 2004: 86), particularly in the first three decades following World War Two: when Direct Cinema was the prevailing (albeit gradually receding) nonfiction film discourse (Benamou 2006: 147). Direct Cinema advocates

worked hard to reinforce the documentary genre's longer-standing historical alignment with the "objective" goals of the scientific project, which relies upon

> …the public understanding (and acceptance) of the camera as an accurate recorder of reality [which] was shaped by its association with other scientific apparatus such as the barometer and the thermometer (Roscoe & Hight 2001: 9).

The "objective real" of Direct Cinema positioned the light-weight camera as a new tool of scientific measurement, which could "give objective and truthful readings of the natural world" (9): offering up "its representations as factual evidence" (10). Direct Cinema was able to uphold its status as a superior representational form, because it persuaded audiences that its "objective, unmediated view of the world" − like that of Science − was "the most direct route" to truth (10). Falling within the ambit of the "Classic Objective Argument" (that is, expositional, observational, and interactive documentaries [Roscoe & Hight 2001]), as distinct from reflexive and dramatized texts such as those of Rouch, Marker and Welles (which can be broadly defined as "realist films in which dramatic reconstructions have been employed" [Kilbourn & Izad 1997: 86]), Direct Cinema depended upon the camera's ability to represent the world in real time; and on "the (apparent) incorruptibility of optics [to] guarantee absolute truth" (Richter 1986: 43). It also relied on the spectator's continuing belief in documentary's truth claim: the validity of which was supported by the fact that "few have ever trusted the cinema without reservation. If they ever did, it was the documentary that most inspired that trust" (Renov 2004: 172).

Throughout the 1960s, the "scientism" underpinning Direct Cinema triumphed. Its "experimental" method, and use of the camera as a "scientific instrument" enabled the Direct Cinema "filmmaker/observer" to emerge in full force - albeit "heavily disguised as a fly-on-the-wall" (Winston 1993: 43). The coinciding commercial and cultural entrenchment of the fact/fiction dichotomy − with documentary positioned on the "factual" side, and drama firmly on the other − gave added weight to Direct Cinema's disparagement of "the dramatic reenactment tradition of Flaherty and Grierson" (Renov 2004: xxi); and of the techniques used by its most prolific contemporaneous rival, Rouch. Direct Cinema filmmakers were "reporters with cameras rather than notebooks" (xxi); dogged upholders of nineteenth century standards of scientific "objectivity" (as in "factual, fair-minded [and] reliable"), as

opposed to the slippery "subjectivity" of twentieth century fiction films and non-Direct Cinema documentaries, which were seen as "based on impressions", and therefore, "unreliable" (Williams 1976: 308-312).

Believing that "the repression of subjectivity was…a cardinal virtue" (Renov 2004: xx), Direct Cinema's truth-seekers aspired to be anonymous "flies-on-the-wall"; while their showy *Cinéma Vérité* competitors were mere "[flies] in the soup…visible for all to notice" (Beitrose 1986: 47). For Direct Cinema pioneer Wiseman, "theatricality" was a liability: "the way I try to make a documentary is…there's no separation between the audience watching the film and the events in the film. It's [like] getting rid of the proscenium arch in the theatre" (cited in Atkins 1976: 44). Albert Maysles positioned himself and his brother as reality hunters: "Dave and I are trying to find out what's going on. We capture what takes place" (Malleff 1964: 23), while Pennebaker defined documentary, simply, as an act of perception: "It's possible to go to a situation and simply film what you see there, what goes on…[A film is] just a window someone peeps through" (cited in Levin 1971: 235, 254).

Drew, whose seminal Direct Cinema film *Primary* (1961) was rapturously received as "a sort of documentary second-coming" (Allen & Gornery 1985: 224), rejected the idea that documentary makers should have any control over the medium whatsoever: "we don't want to put this limit on actuality. What's happening, the action, has no limitations, neither does the significance of what's happening" (cited in Bachmann 1961: 16). At the height of its influence, Direct Cinema revolutionised documentary practice in much the same way that Lars Von Trier's *Dogme* movement challenged the practices of fiction filmmakers in the mid-1990s: with both movements advocating a removal of "artistry" to render a more believable "real". Just as the *Dogme* movement banned accepted cinematic "tricks" (props, sets, lighting, scripted dialogue, art and sound design) in favour of a spontaneously captured "real" in their "10 point Vow of Chastity" (*The Filmmakers' Vow* 2011); Direct Cinema practitioners were "gripped by an abiding faith in the spontaneous, [refusing] to re-create events or even control the behaviour of their subjects" (Renov 2004: xx), and shunning voice-over, interviews, non-diegetic sound, pre-planned coverage and even "direction".

The most succesful products of Direct Cinema remain undisputably powerful films today. The Maysles' *Salesman* (1969) is an extraordinary combination of character-driven entertainment and poignant observation – at once absorbing the viewer in the adventures of its suburban Bible-seller protagonists, and presenting a subtle metacritique of twentieth-century capitalism. Wiseman's *Titicut Follies* (1967), *Highschool* (1968), and *Hospital* (1970), each use evocative observational camerawork to create intimate portraits of the victims and perpetrators of institutionalised power; while Wadleigh's *Woodstock* (1970) and the Maysles' *Grey Gardens* (1975) present captivating, behind-the-scenes views of high-stakes dramas: the first, a public drama about a generation-defining musical event; the second, a private drama about two once influential women, sliding into domestic senility and decay.

The first audiences of these Direct Cinema masterpieces could be forgiven for believing that the "reality" they were experiencing was, as their practitioners attested, un-tampered with and therefore, not a "deception" at all. But it was: just an infinitely subtler one. The postmodernist critiques of Direct Cinema's claims to an "objective real" (as outlined in Chapter One), in tandem with the 1970s *Cahiers du Cinema*'s critique of Bazinian post-war realism "as something of a fraud because…realism didn't exactly reproduce the 'real' as it said it did" (Gaines 1999: 12), may both be used to de-legitimise what is arguably the most "objective" documentary ever made: Andy Warhol's eight-hour, locked-off shot of the Empire State Building, *Empire* (1964). Warhol's film, which eschews cutting and dialogue to give the appearance of a completely unmediated "real", cannot escape − like the documentaries of Direct Cinema − the fact that the director's choices only serve to highlight the film's subjectivity: both in terms of what Warhol chose not to do, and what he chose to do, *vis à vis* running time, camera angle, and the positioning of the building within the frame. Indeed, Warhol's decision to *not* vary his gaze, thereby throwing the monotony of the viewing experience squarely back on his audience, and forcing them to create their own meaning as the film transitions from day to night, is both a highly subjective and manipulative one. *Empire*'s presentation of an apparently unadulterated "real" may be classified as "deceptive", simply because – as many post-structuralist theorists have observed − the minute a director points the camera at

a subject, s/he presents reality one-step removed: it is reality *as the director wants us to see it* (Williams 1995: 1).

Even when the postmodernist and poststructuralist critiques of Direct Cinema's "objective" truth claim are set aside on semantic grounds, however, the deceptive techniques used by Direct Cinema practitioners to create the appearance of an unmediated "real" are undeniable. While Rouch and his successors "deceived" their audiences by colluding with their subjects to "perform" reality for the camera rather than allowing reality to "objectively" unfold before it, Direct Cinema filmmakers and their modern-day heirs can be understood to deceive their audiences in the same way as the directors of classical fiction: by keeping their techniques concealed. Despite Wiseman's assertion that observational documentary removes the "distancing" proscenium arch of the theatre, the "invisible fourth wall" of the conventional stage play - and of the suspension-of-disbelief narratives of classical cinema - is firmly intact in Direct Cinema. The mode presents real people (rather than actors), who interact in authentic (rather than scripted) situations, using a non-intrusive, hand-held, un-lit shooting style to successfully create Leacock's feeling of "being there": the sense of absolute immersion that comes from observing reality as it plays out, unadulterated, on screen. However, Direct Cinema's "fly on the wall" is a carefully constructed conceit. Its subjects are aware of the presence of the filmmakers at every moment; and the technology being used to create the illusion of reality is sitting just outside of frame. Or, indeed, *within* it as when a boom microphone "spontaneously" bobs down in the middle of a random action, or a subject forgets to ignore the camera and addresses the "invisible" director, crouching beside the lens. This frequently happens in the early reality-TV series, *An American Family* (1971), in which "there is no doubt the filmmaker is there, even though he is at pains to not acknowledge the fact." (Renov 2004: 175-6).

These accidental incursions on Direct Cinema's carefully constructed fourth wall may be understood to paradoxically represent the genre at its most authentic, largely because an acknowledgment of the filmmaker's involvement in the action on screen, and of the characters' relationship to the filmmaker in the capturing of this action, heightens the viewers' sense that the film *really is* happening as it appears to be, right in front of the camera. These rare moments of acknowledgment also heighten

the authenticity of the Direct Cinema film by certifying "more forcefully that other moments of pure observation capture the social presentation of self we too would have witnessed had we actually been there for ourselves" (Nichols 1985: 20). In the Maysles' *Grey Gardens* (1975), for example, one of the most "real" (and riveting) scenes is when David Maysles' directorial "invisibility" is shattered by Little Edie: who coquettishly solicits his opinion as she shows off a crazy outfit, her eyes flitting tellingly between Albert's camera, and him.

American Family (1971) is replete with similarly unintended (and at the time it was made, unconventional) moments of character/camera interaction, and reflexive acknowledgments of the filmmaking process. In one scene, Lance Loud delivers a frame-breaking soliloquy, in which he equates his family's real-life drama with that of the popular 70s soap-opera, *When the World Turns*:

> There are two things you can count on in life as the world turns. They are that at the end of summer, Lance always returns from an unsuccessful take off on life's big runway, limping home on a path of wired money. And Ma and Pa Loud plummet head-first from their Olympian heights of love and matrimony (cited in Ruoff 2014: 318).

In episode eight, Lance's father Bill comforts himself about the potential dangers of Lance's trip to Europe by telling his work colleagues, "they have the camera crew with them over there, following them around" (318).

The subject's acknowledgment of – and performance to – the camera is now an essential entertainment component of *American Family's* contemporary equivalents: character-driven ob-doc series such as *Sylvania Waters* (1992), and multi-cast reality TV shows such as *Big Brother* (1999–2015). However, at the time *American Family* was made, such incursions on Direct Cinema's narrative fourth wall were both unorthodox and shocking. For Ruoff, *American Family*'s "ubiquitous references to the filmmaking process" not only discredit the postmodernist critique of observational, Direct Cinema documentaries as "transparent forms that disguise the work of mediation" (Ruoff 2014: 318), but help to create a nonfiction program which, "to a greater extent than any other documentary…spills over into the experiential world of the viewer" and, like its soap-opera fictional equivalent, "may be read as fiction**".** In doing so, *American Family* **"**announces the breakdown of fixed distinctions between reality and spectacle, public and private, serial narrative and nonfiction, film and television" (308). While the docu-fictionalizations of Rouch

and his contemporaries indicate that in Europe, at least, the breakdown of "fixed distinctions" in documentary was already well underway by the debut of *American Family*, Ruoff's comparison of the program's narrative techniques with those of the television soap-opera points to a second, crucial deception which all Direct Cinema filmmakers engage in: the manipulation of raw footage into a dramatically compelling story arc.

Editing, that stealthy art of transforming hundreds of hours of randomly captured reality into a coherent dramatic story, is also performed by non-Direct Cinema filmmakers: but without the attendant claim that the end-product is an "unmediated" representation of the world. The fact that the edit suite is where the majority of documentaries are "written" (with the exception of highly constructed non-observational documentaries in which the structure and content is largely fixed before the shoot) returns us to Renov's "enmeshing" of fictional practices in the nonfiction form, in which "narrativity" and fictive devices have been "forcefully exercised" (Renov 1993: 2). The man-against-the-odds drama of *Nanook of the North*, the day-in-the-life arc of *Man with a Movie Camera*, the "mystical discovery" narratives of *Sans Soleil* and *F for Fake*, the "crisis" structure of *Primary,* and the genteel tragedy of *Grey Gardens* each rely, to varying degrees, on classical drama's three-act structure to create an engaging journey for the viewer.

Removed from the "genre" box and looked at, simply, as stories, these nonfiction texts pose a crucial question for Renov: "how do we begin to distinguish the documentary performance-for-the-camera of a musician, actor or politician (*Don't look back, Jane, Primary*) from that of a fictional counterpart (*The Doors, On Golden Pond, The Candidate)*?" (2). Albert Maysles, one of Direct Cinema's most masterful storytellers, acknowledged the importance of creative intervention in the edit, when he identified the "two kinds of truth" operating in documentary:

> …one is the raw material, which is the footage, the kind of material you get in literature in the diary form…no one has tampered with it. Then there's another kind of truth that comes in extracting and juxtaposing the raw material into a more meaningful and coherent story telling form (cited in Levin 1971: 277).

Maysles' "coherent" story is a goal shared by all filmmakers operating on either (or both) sides of the fact/fiction divide; with the exception perhaps, of provocative *auteurs* such as Welles, whose deliberately *in*-coherent narrative in *F for Fake* is a necessary part of his reflexive critique of the "reliability" of documentary truth. In classical fiction films, and in Direct Cinema films which either pre-date or reject the "authentic" character/camera interactions of *American Family*, the construction of a seamless narrative that conceals (rather than broadcasts) the filmmaker's presence is vital to securing the viewers' suspension of disbelief: that passive state of scopic immersion which enables them to "buy" the illusion of reality presented on screen. The emotional absorption achieved by a well-edited Direct Cinema documentary operates in much the same way as that of a classical drama in which, if the viewer is sufficiently persuaded to believe the story being told by the actors, s/he will suspend the awareness that it's "only a film", and experience a satisfying journey. The "reveal" of the director's artifice is delayed until the credit role when the list of actors, technicians, designers, set builders, writers and musicians demonstrate the extent to which the "reality" that has just been enjoyed has been constructed.

Unlike classical fiction films, however, which are cut to a script from a set of tightly controlled rushes, and unlike hybrid documentaries, which can combine observational footage with footage from a variety of other sources (including dramatizations, archive, interviews, computer simulations, home-movies and fictional and nonfictional texts), the Direct Cinema documentary is a predominantly observational form. As such, it involves one of the highest shooting ratios – and, by necessity, one of the most extensive editing processes − of all film genres. This is because "real life" is not, in itself, "dramatic":

> It needs to be structured and edited into film form; the lack of action in real life needs to be accelerated…Although picture logic allows us to see events as they really happen, this is not usually acceptable to audiences because reality is seen as slow…The nonfiction film is formed in the editing room to tell the story in a dramatic fashion from the mundane material shot (Block 2006: 192).

Wiseman, who filmed his observational exposés only for four to six weeks, but spent six months or more "in the editing room, shifting and giving shape to his footage" (Grant 2014: 255), saw his rushes as "really [having] no meaning except insofar as

you impose a form on them" (cited in Graham 1976: 35); and readily admitted to manipulating his footage in the edit, describing the resulting documentaries as "reality dreams" or "reality fictions" (cited in Rosenthal 1972: 72).

Australian filmmaker Bob Connolly, who uses Direct Cinema's light-weight equipment, skeletal crews and unintrusive shooting style to create intimate, nonfiction dramas that are astonishingly "real" for their audiences, adopts the same fiction-inspired terminology as Wiseman to describe the construction of his films: they are "written in the edit, like a Tolstoy novel" (Connolly 2001). *Rats in the Ranks* (1996), Connolly's satirical nonfiction drama about a suburban politican's bid for power against his machiavellian adversaries, was a box-office hit: proving, just as Direct Cinema had done, that documentary's "stranger than" quality, when expertly delivered, can produce entertainment that rivals fiction. As the novelist Helen Garner noted, "a writer would have given her right arm to have made it up, but it springs from a realm of reality which is beyond the power of ordinary invention" (Garner 1996). However, *Rats in the Ranks*, while springing from reality, was *not* reality. It was a cinematically constructed illusion: reality's mimetic twin.

The film, like its Direct Cinema antecedents, was artfully shaped in the edit. Connolly spent a year assembling his rushes into a dramatic three-act structure, eliminating swathes of footage which, while authentic, was not dramatically engaging. The post-production process involved intricate audio clean-ups and dialogue edits, all concealed by B-roll cut-aways to other characters, objects or exteriors, often shot at different times to the scenes into which they were inserted. The final film was woven together by a subtly integrated and emotionally manipulative classical score. Connolly's "invisibility" in *Rats in the Ranks,* like that of the Maysles in *Saleseman*, is crucial to the "fly-on-the-wall" immediacy it delivers its audiences. Connolly filmed his politician characters every week for twelve months, but more than ninety per cent of the final cut was comprised, unsurprisingly, from footage shot in the final month: as by then, Connolly's subjects "had forgotten [he] was there" (Connolly 2001). The result is a riveting ninety-three minutes in the cinema. Audiences bought the "illusion" of reality in *Rats in the Ranks* because Connolly, like his Direct Cinema predecessors, had skilfully used every post-production "trick" available to persuade them to do so.

While editing is no more "deceptive" than any of the other manipulative techniques filmmakers routinely use to craft their footage into a "coherent" whole, the refusal of many Direct Cinema practitioners to acknowledge that these techniques are as necessary to documentary as they are to fiction certainly is. Pennebaker, who referred to his music-documentaries *Don't Look Back* (1967)*, Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars* (1973) and *Monterey Pop* (1968) as mere "records of moments", "half soap operas", and "semimusical reality things" (cited in Alan & Gornery 1985: 234, 239-240), was at pains to distance himself from the creative manipulations of the edit, asserting that he did not distort events or remarks, and cut his material to produce "only a kind of record of what happened" (cited in Marcorelles 1970: 25). Pennebaker attributed the success of his Bob Dylan film, *Don't Look Back,* to Dylan's genius as a performer both on stage and in front of the camera, while deflecting attention from the film's sophisticated editing - which had successfully transformed what might have been a conventional life-on-the-road rockumentary into a "systematic critique of the dominant media informed by a liberal view of the role of the press in contemporary democracy" (Hall 2014: 252).

As a Direct Cinema advocate, Pennebaker was similarly "compelled to mask his artistry [and] to let his subject 'speak for himself'" (252); and also denied having any artistic agenda, other than an observational one. This is not suprising, given that

> …the advocacy of a specific program of change is not the [Direct Cinema] filmmaker's task; he or she merely reveals the 'truth' of a social situation to the viewer in as unbiased a way as possible….*Vérité* documentaries leave solutions to problems outside the film" (Allen & Gornery 1985: 237).

When viewed against the extensive behind-the-scenes manipulations that are involved in creating an engaging observational feature documentary however (as demonstrated by Connolly's work in *Rats in the Ranks*) the power and artistry of *Don't Look Back* makes Pennebaker's notion of an unmediated "truth" "as deceptively simple as Dylan's: 'If I just watch what is happening, it will happen right in front of me'" (Hall 2014: 252 citing Dylan in Gilliat: 1967).

It is understandable that Pennebaker and his Direct Cinema peers, preoccupied as they were with "observational methods and the protocols of reportage, [and] under

the influence of the natural sciences in their early pronouncements of…non-intervention [and] artistic selflessness" (Renov 2004: 174), should have emerged in full scale revolt against *Cinema Vérité's* heavy-handed intrusions into the objective ideal. But it is equally clear that despite Direct Cinema's claims to have discovered the ultimate nonfiction "real", what audiences will accept as "truth" in documentary, and the tricks filmmakers will perform to achieve it, is a perpetually shifting phenomenon. Thus, Direct Cinema's rejection of pre-*Vérité* films such as Grierson's expositional, voice-of-god documentaries of the 1930-40s as the work of "thousands of bunglers" who had reduced "documentary" to mean "a deadly, routine form of filmmaking…with a commentary imposed from the outside, in order to say nothing, and show nothing" (Marcorelles 1973: 37), was, itself, superceded.

By 1973, the American film student Mitchell Block was interrogating the ethical implications of Direct Cinema's truth claim in his fake documentary, *No Lies*: a scripted exchange between a "filmmaker" and a fictional "rape victim" which was ultimately

> …about the filmmaker manipulating the audience. *All* filmmakers, in both dramatic and nonfiction forms, do this. However, in the nonfiction form, the filmmaker has an assumed responsibility to the subject. By manipulating the film, the filmmaker is manipulating reality (Block 2006: 192).

And, from the late 1970s on, a new wave of documentarians began to disparage Direct Cinema in the same way in which it had attacked its predecessors: as "deadly" and "routine". The German director Werner Herzog told Pennebaker that *Vérité*-documentary was "the cinema of accountants"; while Erroll Morris scorned Direct Cinema's assumption that

> …somehow if you juggle a camera around in your hands, sneak around in the corners of rooms and hide behind pillars, the Cartesian riddle will be solved as a result. That somehow epistemology will no longer play a role in what you do. That this is truth cinema, truth incarnate as revealed by a camera! (cited in Aufderheide 2007: 52).

Meanwhile, Anglo-Indian filmmaker Lindsay Anderson declared that Direct Cinema was "just an excuse for not being creative and being pretentiously journalistic" (53)

and by 2008, Herzog was musing to Morris: "I think a part of the *Cinema Vérité*, we have discarded it…We have buried it for good, I hope" (Herzog 2008).

Herzog's hope that Direct Cinema is "buried" is perhaps wishful thinking, stemming as it does from the long-standing formalist rejection of documentary realism as a form of cinematic "illusion" which tricks "viewers into believing that they are watching something real", instead of allowing viewers to "notice and even celebrate the artist's role in creating the work" (Aufderheide 2007: 26). The fact is, Direct Cinema's defining techniques: observational camerawork, an un-intrusive directorial style, and a commentary-free narrative, have continued to endure: both in contemporary observational documentaries, and in a proliferating line of mock-documentaries traceable back to *Cannibal Holocaust* (1980) and *This is Spinal Tap* (1984), whose appropriation of these same techniques to respectively mimic and parody the documentary form are proof of the strength of Direct Cinema's legacy.

In 1984, cinema audiences laughed at *Spinal Tap's* earnest Direct Cinema director Marti de Bergi, whose hand-held camera "objectively" captured "the sights, the sounds, the *smells* of Spinal Tap" (from bass player David Small's cucumber-packed jock-strap to lead singer Nigel Tufnell's heart-felt homage to Bach, "Lick my Love Pump"). At the same time, documentary audiences where increasingly embracing the subjective, identity politics-style documentaries of filmmakers such as Ross McElwee and Mike Rubbo, who placed themselves as "inexpert" narrator/protagonists at the centre of the action (Nicks 2014: 325): producing a directorial voice that was "as likely to question what is shown as to interpret it authoritatively" (Renov 2004: xxi). In 1988, Direct Cinema's position as the prevailing nonfiction method was further weakened by the commercial and critical impact of Morris's real-life crime investigation, *The Thin Blue Line*. Resurrecting the widely disparaged technique of dramatized re-enactment in contradictory, character-driven "flashbacks" both to the police interrogation of protagonist Randall Adams, and to the scene of his alleged crime, Morris revealed (rather than concealed) the constructed nature of his onscreen "real" to highlight the unreliable nature of "evidence", encouraging his audience to "see the subjective dimension that permeates historical representation" (Nichols 1993: 180). By 1990, when the third

series of *An American Family* was made, Direct Cinema's observer-filmmaker was no longer "invisible," and

> …only remnants of the invisible fourth wall [remained]. Each of the Louds in turn speaks to the occasionally imaged filmmakers about the impact of the series on their lives as well as the effects of the presence of the camera on their behaviour (Renov 2004: 178).

American Family's various incarnations in 1971, 1983 and 1990, while providing "dramatic evidence" of the gradual shift away from Direct Cinema's "self-consciously observational approach to a more interactive, even reflexive, modality" (175-6) do not, at the same time, signify Direct Cinema's death knell, much as Herzog might have hoped for it. The movement's distinguishing techniques are still used by filmmakers today as valid representational strategies of the "real" albeit without the absolutism of their Direct Cinema advocates. As documentary maker Brian Hill observes,

> Too many people…think it's enough that you're just there…witnessing some event that's important. It doesn't matter that it looks like shit or you can hardly hear it, as long as you're bearing witness. I think that's a great disservice to documentary (Hill 2013: 120).

Filmmaker Louise Osmond, whose observational documentaries are heavily inspired by the Maysles' films, admits:

> I sniff a degree of bullshit when you go to festivals and people are talking about…"let it flow" [and] "I only go where the river will take me". And I think, "Really? Are you absolutely sure that's what you do? Or are you actually paddling intensely hard below the surface?" (Osmond 2013: 132).

And so, documentary "truth" (and its shadow, deception) continues to morph.

PART TWO

Documentary Deception from 1988 to 2015: an (honest) account

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                    THE ROMANIAN
          You're doing something pretty dangerous
          this time: mixing fact with fiction.


                    MARTINS
          Should I make it all fact?


                    THE ROMANIAN
          Why, no. I'd say stick to fiction.
          Straight fiction.


                   The Third Man
                      1949
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Chapter 6   Subversion, Persuasion and Fakery in the Modern Documentary

It is a trusim of postmodern culture
that the difference between truth and fiction is not what it used to be.

Steve Anderson
2006

The gradual de-legitimisation of Direct Cinema's truth claim in the last quarter of the twentieth century coincided with the evolution of a documentary filmmaking climate in which "the subjective/objective hierarchy (with the latter as the favoured term) [began] to be displaced, even reversed" (Renov 2004: 174); and "a field of uncertain but open-ended exploration…[set] aside rational proof in favour of receptivity" (147). In the 1980s, Trinh's *Surname Viet Given Name Nam* (1985), McElwee's *Sherman's March* (1986), Morris's *The Thin Blue Line* (1988) and Moore's *Roger & Me* (1989) each subverted Direct Cinema's "objective" ideal with radically subjective approaches to the nonfiction "real": using (respectively) non-actor performers; intimate commentary; dramatization; and political polemic to usher in a new era of documentaries, mockumentaries, and fact/fiction hybrids which set no limits on the "authorship of a plausible 'real'" (Renov 1999: 318).

While many 1990s observational documentary filmmakers continued to adhere to the Direct Cinema tradition, a significant number rejected it. They produced texts which variously "flouted 'negative mastery' as a form of validity" (Arthur 2014: 418), overturned the commitment to "record 'life as it is' in favour of a deeper investigation of how it became as it is" (Williams 2014: 393), or abandoned the goal of validity altogether, to pursue a "relative, hierarchized, and contingent truth" (390). By the end of the decade, the "presumed border between the real and the fabricated" was in a state of "serious disrepair", and "standards of reference [were] no longer in their place" (Renov 1999: 318). From the early 2000s to the present day, filmmakers have continued to subvert the documentary form: revealing previously unchartered landscapes of the "real," in which the reflexive and fictive techniques of Vertov,

Welles and Rouch carry new significance. As digital platforms of exhibition and consumption diversify and expand, accommodating a new generation of filmmaker-consumers who don't just watch nonfiction films but make their own, the historically vexed question of what constitutes documentary "truth" (which Welles's *F for Fake* was considered radical for even raising back in 1974), is once more – just as it was in the borderless days of Early Cinema – wide open to interpretation.

The generic diversity of nonfiction texts produced in the last three decades means that the positioning of "documentary" in an either/or binary − as fiction's polar "opposite" – is no longer adequate (Roscoe & Hight 2001). Rather, contemporary nonfiction films may be more accurately understood to operate, in tandem with fiction, "along a fact/fiction *continuum*: [with] each text constructing relationships with both factual and fictional discourses" (7). On one end of this continuum are "pure" observational documentaries (about human beings, places or nature) which, while they often use fictive techniques (the manipulation of footage into a coherent story, evocative shooting and B-roll inserts, and non-diegetic sound), are perhaps as close to the elusive ideal of an "unmediated" real as documentary makers (for the time being, at least) are likely to get. On the other end of the continuum are "pure" fiction films, made entirely without "factual" elements: that is, real-world locations or subjects, true-story-based narratives, text locating the film in real time and space, and diegetic sound. In between these two distinct poles is an expanding, and generically *in*-distinct mélange of blended "entertainments."

Moving from the factual to the fictional end of the spectrum, these entertainments can include current affairs programs and tabloid-style exposés (the ABC's *730 Report,* Fox TV's *Cops*), expositional and interactive documentaries (Attenborough's wildlife programs, Theroux's BBC Two specials), infotainment shows and video-advertorials (Channel 7's *Escape*, mini-docs promoting products on the web and TV), hoax or "prank" documentaries which deceive the subject but not the audience (*The Yes Men* [2003]*, Punk'd* [2003-2007]), heavily scripted reality "soap operas" and the food, dating and survival contests of Reality TV (*The Kardashians, Masterchef, The Bachelor, Survivor),* re-enactment-incorporating expositional documentaries (the BBC's *Extreme* Dinosaurs [2000]), dramatized feature documentaries (*Touching the Void* [2003]*, Man on Wire* [2008]), animated

documentaries (*Waltz with Bashir* [2008], *Creature Comforts* [2003-2007]), fake documentaries using fictional elements (*Forgotten Silver* [1995]*, Dark Side of the Moon* [2002]), fiction films using documentary elements (*Milk* [2008]*, Invictus* [2009]), and, finally, mockumentaries and documentary-style dramas (*The Office* [2001-13], *District 9* [2009]) which mimic documentary techniques to create (or parody) a nonfiction "real".

This increasingly overlapping interplay between fact and fake has produced some of the most critically (but not always commercially) successful "fiction" films of the 2000s, all of which use documentary techniques and elements to recreate real-world events. *United 93* (2006), a thriller about the high-jacked 9/11 flight that crashed in Pennsylvania, is shot like an observational documentary, scripted from real recordings of air-traffic control conversations and phone-messages left by passengers before the crash, and stars one of the flight controllers who tracked the plane's horrific progress on the day. *Good Night, and Good Luck* (2005) incorporates archival footage of the real Senator Joseph McCarthy into a fictionalised recreation of the public censorship battle McCarthy fought with journalist Edward R. Murrow, played by David Straithairn. *Milk* (2008), which was inspired by the 1984 documentary *The Life and Times of Harvey Milk,* green screens its actors into 1970s archive of San Francisco gay-rights demonstrations, using narration lifted from Milk's audio-diaries to book-end the narrative. *Snowtown* (2011) dramatises South Australia's "body-in-the-barrel" serial killings with a cast partly made up of non-actors from the country town where the murders happened: delivering a drama which audiences found horrifyingly "real". *Invictus* (2009) uses tracking animation software to insert actor Morgan Freeman's head onto Nelson Mandela's body in stock-footage montages of Mandela's public appearances. *Hail* (2011) uses a semi-autobigraphical story told by its real-world protagonist to create a surreal, fictionalised drama in which the protagonist then stars.

Each of these fiction films "constantly pay tribute to documentary techniques, [putting] the 'documentary effect' to advantage [by] playing on the viewer's expectation in order to 'concoct fables'" (Trinh 1993: 99). Documentaries which similarly disrupt the fact/fiction binary to incorporate fictional techniques, both playing with, and interrogating how the nonfiction "real" is constructed on screen,

can be understood to sit closer to Nichols' definition of documentary as "a fiction (un)like any other" (Nichols 1991: 113), than they do with the "discourses of sobriety" (science, economics, politics, foreign policy, education and welfare) (3) with which the genre has traditionally been aligned (Nichols 1991, Bazin 1967). Hybrids such as *The Five Obstructions* (2003), which intercuts *Vérité* scenes of Lars Von Trier and Jørgen Leth with Leth's fictional remakes of *The Perfect Human* (1967); *American Splendour* (2003), which recreates comic book writer Harvey Pekar's life by weaving documentary interviews into an actor-performed drama; *Exit through the Gift Shop* (2010), which places the British artist Banksy's cynical meditations on the Art World within the semi-fictional story of a French Graffiti-artist which Banksy helped to construct; *Rabbit à la Berlin* (2009), which uses fake archive shot from a rabbit's point of view to re-tell the history of the Berlin Wall; *Catfish* (2011), which employs the conventions of a mystery/thriller to uncover the identiy of a Facebook imposter; and *I'm Still Here* (2010), the candid (but fake) documentation of Joaquim Phoenix's descent from movie star to psychotic rapper, all boldly reinterpret the way in which the nonfiction "real" may presented on film.

The distinctive blending of artistry and factuality in these fact/fiction hybrids echoes the artist/filmmaker tradition of the experimental city symphony films of the 1920s avant-garde: illustrating the proposition that a "documentary aware of its own artifice is one that remains sensitive to the flow between fact and fiction. It does not work to conceal or exclude what is normalised as 'nonfactual'" (Trinh 1993: 99). However, unlike their 1920s counterparts, contemporary documentaries which incorporate an awareness of the "artifice" (and artistry) of filmmaking into their narratives remain, to some extent, fettered by the imprint of Grierson's expositional, "educative" documentary which, through the British Empire Marketing Board and the National Film Board of Canada, he elevated to a new mainstream position as a responsible agent of public education (Roscoe & Hight 2001: 183, Hardy 1966: 207). The longevity of the Griersonian imprint was demonstrated in 1988, 1989 and 1990, when the Academy of Motion Pictures, Arts and Sciences failed to nominate America's most popular (and generically subversive) documentaries for three years' running. Morris's highly stylised *The Thin Blue Line* (1988), Moore's unapologetically pollemical *Roger & Me* (1989) and Livingston's collaboratively performative *Paris is Burning* (1990) were each snubbed for the Best Documentary

category: an action which was attributed to an "economically rooted aversion to the documentary form", and a "double standard for documentary", in which "success by any measure, financial or aesthetic, goes unrewarded" (Epstein 1992: 9). In response, the films' distributor, Miramax, wrote an open letter to the Academy asking (unsuccessfully) for Best Documentary to be changed to "Best Nonfiction Film", so the "negative connotations of 'documentary' could be jettisoned" (Renov 1993a: 5).

Documentary's negative connotations, its "worthiness" and "sobriety",and its role as social "educator" and "promoter of causes" (Gaines 1999), continues to influence its reception today, with many viewers still watching documentaries "because they think they should do. Like eating broccoli" (Hill 2013: 120). These connotations, which "undervalue the significance of aesthetic pleasure and complexity that distinguish many documentaries" (Grant & Sloniowski 2014: xxiv), have contributed to a general belief, amongst both viewers and critics, that "pleasurable learning" (a concept originally pioneered by Bertolt Brecht in his agitation-propaganda theatre) is something of an oxymoron, when applied to documentary. The word's etymological root, *docere* ("to teach"), has prompted Renov to query whether the "cinematic pleasure" mobilised by the fiction film's "projection and identification with idealised others who inhabit the filmed world" can ever be replicated in "expository forms designed to foreground issues and to propose solutions (with varying degrees of self-consciousness)" (Renov 1993a: 5).

A significant number of theorists answer Renov's question in the negative: exhibiting a general reluctance to acknowledge documentary's ability to generate in its viewers the same forces of desire, empathy and pleasure as fiction film. This reluctance is characterized by the tendency for "documentaries…to be discussed as documentaries rather than closely read as rich works of cinema" (Grant & Sloniowski 2014: xxiv). In response, Renov (1986, 1993, 1999, 2004), Williams (1995), Gaines (1999) and Grant & Sloniowski (2014) have each mounted persuasive cases for a new reading of "documentary" as an entertaining and expressive art form in its own right. Rather than confining the genre's artistic qualities to the "artful documentary" subgenre, Renov argues, documentary's ability to evoke emotion and pleasure; generate "lyric power through…sound and image", and engage the "poetic qualities" of language

> …must not be seen as mere distractions from the main event. Documentary culture is clearly the worse for such aesthetic straightjacketing. Indeed, the communicative aim is frequently enhanced by attention to the expressive dimension; the artful film…can be said to [more effectively] convey ideas and feelings. In the end, the aesthetic function can never be wholly divorced from the didactic one insofar as the aim remains "pleasurable learning" (Renov 1993b: 35).

The cultural "straightjacketing" of documentary into the "worthy" box is a death-knell for box-office, as continuing attempts by filmmakers, distributors and exhibitors to find a more palatable label for "documentary" demonstrate. Pennebaker's and Wiseman's definitions of their Direct Cinema films as "semimusical reality things", "half soap-operas", "reality dreams", and "reality fictions" (Alan & Gornery 1985: 239-240; Rosenthal 1972: 72), have been replaced in the 2000s by marketing slug-lines that position the genre safely within the entertainment promise of fiction. The poster for *Touching the Void* (2003) bills it simply as a "true story", borrowing from fiction's against-all-odds-adventure genre to proclaim, "the closer you are to death the more you are alive". The poster for *Man on Wire* (2008) avoids labels altogether, quoting a one-word review from the New York Times: "exhilarating". The poster for *Supersize Me* (2004) announces it as "a film of epic proportions", while *The Act of Killing* (2012) is, simply, "a film".

Citizen Four (2014)*,* the Soderbergh-produced documentary on Edward Snowden, lets Snowden's image do the talking, underlining it with a barely decipherable block of credits, and the movie's release date. The poster for *The Imposter* (2012) is rendered in the moody tones of a *noir* thriller, announcing over a shadowy figure that "deception comes home", while *Searching for Sugarman* (2012) is billed (somewhat misleadingly, given its subject Rodriguez's popularity in South Africa and Australia), as "The Greatest 70s Rock Icon Who Never Was". The poster for *Forbidden Lie$* (2007), which was variously marketed as a "real-life thriller" and *"Catch Me if You Can* with chicks", echoes the *Capturing the Friedmans* (2003) tagline, "who do you believe?", by carrying a one line provocation under Khouri's *femme fatale* smile: "con or artist? you decide." Significantly, not one of the posters for these commercially successful nonfiction features makes a single reference to the word "documentary".

"Documentaphobia", the term coined to describe the commercial and artistic resistance to documentary's association with the worthy (and, from the viewer's perspective, frequently dull) "discourses of sobriety" (Bernstein 2014: 417), is perhaps more prevalent amongst ratings-focused filmmakers today than it was in 1989: when Moore released the (then) most commercially successful documentary of all time, *Roger & Me* (Grant & Sloniowski 2014: xxiii). In 2013, filmmaker Geoffrey Smith lamented that "tragically, the word 'documentary' carries with it a certain stigma for the general population: boring talking-heads, leftist, heavy, no fun, no production values" (Smith 2013: 20). In 1989, Moore, when challenged to explain the alleged factual misrepresentations in *Roger & Me*, argued that the film "was not a documentary but a movie, an entertainment whose deviations from strict sequencing were incidental to the theme" (Aufderheide 2007: 4). Moore's documentaphobia, which is evident in his repeated use of fictive devices such as the "quest" narrative, dramatic crosscutting, emotional musical underscoring, and apparently improvised (but scripted) narration, has been attributed to "his pathological fear of boring an audience with what he calls a 'three hour movie'" (Bernstein 2014: 417).

However, Moore's use of fictive techniques, along with his manipulation of factual information (both on and off the screen) in order to deliver a persuasive political message, arguably position him not just as an "entertainer", but as a propagandist. Extending the contemporary definition of propaganda films as those which are backed "by agents of the state—the social institution that sets and enforces the rules of society, ultimately through force" (Aufderheide 2007: 77), to also encompass Brande's 1840 definition of propaganda texts as those which "spread…opinions and principles which are viewed by most governments with horror and aversion" (cited in Qualter 1962: 4), enables *Roger & Me,* and Moore's subsequent left-agenda documentaries, to be read, on one level, as works of *reverse*-propaganda. They are texts which use the same persuasive techniques as conservative lobby groups, corporate PR firms, right-wing media outlets, and Pentagon-backed pro-US military fiction films and documentaries (Robb 2004), to subvert the political messages these mainstream entities disseminate. Through the use of propaganda techniques such as repetition, simple statement, humour, stereotyping, statistics, popular indiom and rumour, Moore produces anti-establishment entertainments that speak the truth to power.

A closer reading of *Roger & Me* makes this clear. Appropriately, the film has been positioned alongside Jennings' propaganda text *Listen to Britain* (1942), in Nichols' expositional mode: as a film in which "authority rests with the filmmaker and not the subject", and "the visuals are at the service of the commentary even if the latter is ironic" (Bernstein 2014: 405). *Roger & Me* may also be located, along with the state-backed 1930s and 1940s propaganda films of Grierson, Riefenstahl and Capra, in Renov's second documentary function: "to persuade or promote" (Renov 1993b: 29). The sense of "promotional urgency" which characterizes World War Two propaganda films is also a driving narrative force in *Roger & Me*. Moore begins in the interactive mode, setting up his mission to interview General Motors CEO Roger Smith in a prologue that emphasizes "the act of gathering information…the process of social and historical interpretation, and the effect of the encounter between people and filmmakers" (Nichols 1991: 49). But the film soon settles into its true function of expositional persuasion, doing so with "all the self-righteousness of a formulaic 1930s Warner Bros. social problem film, on one villain and his unwitting underlings" (Bernstein 2014: 417).

Moore (as any propagandist should), responded to journalist Harlan Jacobsen's charge that he had omitted relevant facts from his portrayal of the town of Flint's socio-economic decline under Smith's policies in *Roger & Me* with a deflection: "Why didn't I deal with all the other factors that aren't in the movie? Because it would involve abstract complexities that would not have entertained the audience" (cited in Jacobsen 1989: 22). Moore's emphasis on simplicity over "complexities" and his omission of information to strengthen the entertainment-value (and message) of his film, replicate two key propaganda techniques: the use of "simple statement" over nuanced argument, and "lying" by omission (Bartlett 1940: 73-74, 94). The fictive "quest" structure of *Roger & Me* is built around Moore's repeated, failed attempts to secure an interview with Smith: whose decision to close Flint's GM plant has devastated the town. However, as Melnyk and Caine's critique of Moore and his methods, *Manufacturing Dissent* (2007) subsequently revealed, Moore had in fact interviewed Smith twice, and omitted the footage from his cut.

"Anyone who says that is a fucking liar", Moore retorted when *Manufacturing Dissent* was released, explaining that while he had shot one "back-and-forth" with

Smith in 1987, he did so before starting work on *Roger & Me*, and the content was not relevant to his movie: "I'm so used to listening to the stuff people say about me, it just becomes entertainment….It's a fictional character that's been created with the name of Michael Moore" (cited in Flesher 2007). But as another Moore-critique, Hardy & Clarke's *Michael Moore is a Big Fat Stupid White Man* (2004) alleged, Moore's "Joe Sixpack" onscreen persona can itself be read as a "fictional" character, who harnesses the language and values of his target audience (the working class victims of capitalism and right-wing government) to enlist their support while enjoying the five star lifestyle of a "fabulously wealthy Manhattanite" (Clarke 2015). *Roger & Me* uses humour (Moore's shambolic attempts to get into Smith's office), repetition (statistics, articles, and montages reinforcing the damage Smith has done to Flint), emotion (heartfelt speeches by G.M.'s sacked employees), and stereotyping (the "honest", jeans-clad worker vs the "dishonest", limosine-driven Smith) to produce a documentary which Clarke postions (along with Moore's other films) in a new genre, the "crockumentary": a collage of "camera tricks, spliced speeches, and publicity plays…constructed by Moore to present his own truth" (Clarke 2015).

While the cheeky tone of *Michael Moore is a Stupid Fat White Man* made it a New York Times bestseller (Clarke 2015), the educational tone of *Manufacturing Dissent* made it a critical and commercial flop. Like their target Michael Moore, Melnyk and Caine became embroiled in ethical controversy. Filmmaker John Pilger alleged that *Manufacturing Dissent* was "a blunderbuss of assertions and hearsay", timed to discredit Moore during the release of *Sicko* (2007), his assault on the American medical system (Pilger 2007). Melnyk and Caine were invited to criticize Moore's credibility on Fox TV's *The Live Desk*, then abruptly shut down when they extended their criticism to the mainstream media and US President George Bush (CTV news 2007). *Roger & Me* and *Manufacturing Dissent* are both "political message" documentaries, with one crucial difference: Moore successfully conceals his deceptions within the cloak of fictive entertainment, using the propagandist's ends-justifies-the-means rationale to "adjust" information to convert his audiences. Melnyk and Caine remain stuck inside the Griersonian "worthy" box, rolling out their carefully corroborated research in an interactive narrative that, try as it might to *appear* entertaining, is really a traditional educative documentary.

Critical and commercial responses support this. *Manufacturing Dissent* received a critical score of 54% on the movie-ranking site Rotten Tomatoes, 39% audience likes, and a limited theatrical release. *Roger & Me* received 73% audience likes, 100% positive reviews (Rotten Tomatoes 2015a, 2015b), and grossed $7,706,368 million worldwide (Box Office Mojo 2015a). Moore went on to produce four more political blockbusters to eclipse *Roger & Me*: a testament to his ability, as a contemporary version of Grierson's propagandist "for the good" (or "evil", depending on one's politics), to deliver his audiences the Brechtian sense of "pleasurable learning", or what Nichols calls "epistophelia" - the "pleasure of knowing" (Nichols 1991: 178). *Bowling for Columbine* (2002), *Fahrenheit 9/11* (2004), *Sicko* (2007) and *Capitalism: a Love Story* (2009) each used Moore's rooting-for-the-little-guy persona to pillory the Ideological State Apparatuses of American power: the Law (America's liberal gun ownership laws), the Government (George W. Bush's dubious first-term election results and his invasion of Iraq), and Business (the profit-driven inequities of free-market capitalism). These four films reached tens of millions of people, becoming respectively the fifth, first, third and seventh highest grossing political documentaries of the last three decades, with a combined box-office total of $179,674,265 (Box Office Mojo 2015b).

In Moore's hands, an "entertaining documentary" is not an oxymoron, but proof that "truth" (as a money-maker, as an educator, as a political catalyst, as a *movie*) can be better than fiction. However, Moore is the exception. To reach large audiences and successfully convert them, political documentaries must make entertainment (rather than education) their primary narrative goal, and use a variety of fictive (and sometimes, ethical and public) deceits to achieve it. These techniques directly contradict the still influential "markers of authenticity" that locate documentary as a "reliable" factual discourse (Bazin 1967: 162). The majority of political filmmakers working today are either ethically opposed to, or artistically incapable of, using the deceptive techniques Moore enacts in his political entertainments of the "real". They remain locked inside documentary's moral contract with viewer: that "What I Show You is True", and its attendant juggling act between the need to honour the subject's trust, stay true to the vision of the film, and engage the audience.

Moore's supporter, Pilger, and his detractors, Melnyk and Caine, are also filmmakers with political messages to promote: but unlike Moore, they use a predominantly educative (rather than entertaining) approach. Pilger's documentaries, in particular, tend to "preach to the converted" rather than reaching broader audiences. The potential of the educative approach to overwhelm the viewer with information, inducing Bartlett's cardinal propaganda sin, "a state of boredom" (Bartlett 1940: 26), is an ongoing challenge to political filmmakers hoping to convert large audiences. However, it has proved an artistic godsend for another nonfiction genre that has flourished in the last three decades: the fake documentary. Unlike the "mock" documentaries *This Is Spinal Tap* (1984), *Bob Roberts* (1992), *Forgotten Silver* (1995), *Best in Show* (2000) and *The Office* (2001-13), which are "clearly demarcated as a fiction…yet utilize documentary techniques to (usually) comic and parodic effect" (Roscoe & Hight 2001), the fake documentary is more than just an imitation of its opposite. It employs "disingenuousness, humour, and other formal devices to create critical or comic distance between itself and documentary's sobriety", and at the same time, "creates relations amongst form, content…and the recorded" to achieve something extra: "a link to the real" (Juhasz 2006: 2).

Marked by its "kinship with the work of con artists, impersonators, forgers, and myriad other practitioners of deceit" (Lerner 2006: 29), the fake documentary uses fictional and factual discourses to "critique and alter each other's reception". In the process it reveals "the necessary but usually hidden fabrications" of "real" documentaries to produce "knowledge about the dishonesty of all documentaries, real and fake" (Juhasz 2006: 2). Like its mockumentary equivalent, fake documentary relies on recognizeable documentary conventions to enact its subversions of the "real", adopting "an (often latent) reflexive stance towards documentary - a 'mocking' of the genre's cultural status" (Roscoe & Hight 2001: 5). For this reflexive stance to work for audiences, the most recognisable of Nichols' modes, exposition and observation, are typically employed: with more sophisticated versions of the genre also using the interactive mode (49, 21). These modes combine to represent the "classic" documentary form, or "Classic Objective Argument" (21).

Mimicking "the code of realism" which has allowed documentary "to continue to position itself as a mere recorder of the real" (17), the fake documentary harnesses

the confessional powers of the camera identified by Rouch, and its ability to elicit extraordinary pronouncements from apparently "normal" people, to replicate the sense of believability that "real" documentary generates for its audiences. Appropriating "straight" documentary devices such as the talking-head interview, vox-pops, *vérité* camerawork, long takes, diagetic sound, natural lighting, expert commentary, *in-situ* overlay, archival footage, voice-of-god narration and the participant-filmmaker, fake documentaries often apply their "authenticity",conveying strategies to controversial political and social subjects. These films are classified by Roscoe & Hight (2006) as "fake", rather than "mock", because their mimicry of documentary representations of the "real" simultaneously destabilise the truth claim made by factual accounts (histories, news reports, documentaries) of the same subjects which are being mocked.

In Search of the Edge (1990), an ostensibly "straight" documentary that proves the earth is flat, is a fake documentary. It employs "a wide range of educational-documentary devices that people associate with 'regular documentary' − all with deliberate clumsiness − to demonstrate false logic in scientific arguments and manipulation in filmmaking" (Aufderheide 2007: 13-14). Featherstone's similarly transgressive *Babakiueria* (1988), which follows Aboriginal scientists as they investigate "a white Australian cultural ritual site", the Barbecue, "satirizes ethnographic film conventions, including the ascribing of mysterious or magical properties to exotic others" (13-14), to present a humorously veiled indictment of White Australia's racist historicization of its colonial past. Also using humour to challenge Australian "white-fella" history is Matthews' fake documentary, *Rosie's Secret* (1994), which uses scripted talking-head interviews (shot in authoritative, book-lined studies) to prove that on the day the Sydney Harbour Bridge was opened, the infiltrator Francis De Groot (who famously cut the commemorative ribbon before the NSW Governor could reach it), was in fact beaten to it by a scissor-wielding woman called "Rosie". She, as broadcaster Phillip Adams observes, "like so many other women…was airbrushed out of the history books" (*Rosie's Secret* 1994). Karel's *Dark Side of the Moon* (broadcast on April Fool's day 2002), similarly uses real-world "experts" (Nixon-era officials, Christiane Kubrick and an unusually credible Donald Rumsfeld), to demonstrate that the 1969 moon landing was fake, and that Buzz Aldrin took his famous first steps in a Hollywood studio, under

Stanley Kubrick's direction. Operating both as an entertaining satire and a meta-critique of government spin, Karel's documentary "evidence" includes wittily forensic zooms into classified stills of the studio, where Kubrick's passport photo is "discovered" on the pixelated ground.

Strengthening the fake documentary's multi-pronged assault on the stability of the nonfiction "real", are three fake documentary subgenres. The first consists of "films that perpetuate hoaxes" (Lerner 2006: 20), such as *The Couple in the Cage* (1997), *The Yes Men* (2003), and *Czech Dream* (2004). In these fake documentaries, the filmmaker-participants "perform alternative identitites" (undiscovered Amerindians, World Trade Organisation officials and Hypermarket Industrialists respectively), "to elicit truths about the institutions in which they appear", engaging in a form of "identity correction" that challenges "the perceived superiority of [their] subjects" (Torchin 2014: 532). The second subgenre involves films which "duplicate preexisting documentaries as latter-day postmodern twins" (Lerner 2006: 21), such as Godmilow's *What Farcoki Taught* (1998), a shot-by-shot replica of the German black & white film *Inextinguishable Fire* (1969), and Elizabeth Subrin's *Shulie#2* (1997), a scene-by-scene recreation of the 1968 student documentary *Shulie*, about art student and feminist, Shulasmith Firestone.

Using actors to "perform" its 1968 text, Subrin fills *Shulie#2* with 1990s technological and cultural markers, compelling viewers to scrutinize

> …what constitues the historical present versus the securely located *past*, and to do so across cultural, ecomnomic, racial, sexual, generational, and formal lines. *It looks like 1967, but is that a Starbucks?* (Subrin 2006: 60).

Shulie#2's continual moments of revelation, in which Subrin "pulls back the curtain" to reveal the deceptions at work in her fake reproduction, combine to build a new text in which "imitation and mimicry give way to something much more radical" (Lerner 2006: 24): that is, a subversive reworking of the original's exclusively male-gaze. The third subgenre of fake documentary moves further along the fact/fiction continuum, into a realm normally associated with the (fictional) mockumentary. Films which "deceive the audience with sensationalist pseudo-documentary tales of the uncanny" (21) such as *The Blair Witch Project* (1999) and *Cannibal Holocaust*

(1980) (26), may be read as "fake" rather than "mock" documentaries because they use deceptive techniques both *within* the film (to the viewer), and *beyond* it (to the media and viewers who are yet to buy a ticket).

Employing disguised fictional narratives to produce an authentic documentary "real", these texts dupe viewers with a hoax; encouraging an initial state of credulousness before revealing the genre's "definitive twist: when [the] viewer comes into a self-consciousness about the documentary, authority, realism, history…by recognising the act of fakery" (Juhasz 2006: 10). Deodato's fake documentary, *Cannibal Holocaust,* is arguably one of the most audacious cinematic deceptions of all time. Using an apparently "real" anthropologist, Harold Monroe, to investigate the disappearance of four documentary makers in the Amazonian jungle, the film pieces together the filmmakers' discarded footage to create increasingly horrific − but entirely convincing − "documentary" sequences revealing their grizzly murder by "cannibals." Deodato's deceit extended well beyond the frame, making *Cannibal Holocaust* − even more so than the films of Riefenstahl and Moore − the preeminent example of a text which employs not only fictive and ethical deceits, but public deception as well.

Deodato cast unknown actors in the filmmaker roles, making them sign contracts agreeing not to appear publicly for a year after the film's release, to cement the illusion that they had been killed (Deodato 2003). So well did he perpetuate his hoax that *Cannibal Holocaust* was banned in several countries as a snuff movie, and Deodato was accused of having murdered two people on camera. Arrested by Italian authorities, he was forced to beg his actors to break their contracts and be paraded, alive, on an Italian chat show. He also had to suffer the indignity which most professional dissemblers (filmmakers, magicians, propagandists and con artists) dread: he had to reveal his tricks. It was only when Deodato had demonstrated how he had constructed the film's most notorious murder, the impalement of a woman on a stake (an illusion created by placing her on a seat fixed to a pole, with an identically-sized pole balanced in her mouth), that authorities were persuaded to clear him of all charges (Deodato 2003). As Deodato cheerfully reflected two decades later, "it was a good gimmick because it helped make the film very successful, but also a bad thing as I was arrested!" (Deodato 2009).

The Blair Witch Project recycled *Cannibal Holocaust's* documentary cloaking device in 1999: presenting itself as a documentary constructed from footage shot by "real" film students, who had mysteriously vanished. Replicating the real-world "convincers" pioneered by Deodato (unknown actors, a *vérité* shooting style, and a viral marketing campaign that spruiked the project as a shocking "true-story"), filmmakers Myrick, Sánchez, Hale, Cowie and Monello pulled off their deception so successfully that despite their appearance in the credits, chat rooms still hosted pleas like that posted by "Lilyy☺" nine years later: "Is the Blair Witch project real or a hoax? Honestly? I've been getting different answers all day!" (Lilyy☺ 2008). *Forgotten Silver* (1995), Jackson's fake documentary about "forgotten" New Zealand filmmaker Colin McKenzie, is another deceptive text which many viewers recognised as "fake" only after its viewing (Juhasz 2006: 10). Incorporating interviews with real-world experts − archivist Jonathan Morris, filmmaker Costa Botes, Miramax distributor Harvey Weinstein, and historian Leonard Maltin (Roscoe & Hight 2006: 174) − and footage of Gallipoli and the Spanish Civil War, Jackson created the "lost" films of McKenzie, doctoring historical photos and faking newspaper articles to mount a convincing case for McKenzie's resurrection as a New Zealand "pioneer in the history of film" (172).

The moral outrage when *Forgotten Silver* was revealed to be fake was extreme, with one viewer announcing that "Jackson and his *Silver* screen conspirators should be shot" (Anderson 1995: 12). Just as Welles had done sixty years earlier with his *War of the Worlds* hoax, Jackson and his co-director, Costa Botes, professed surprise at their audience's inability to spot the parody:

> We never seriously thought that people would believe it because we kept putting [in] outrageous gags – custard pies in the Prime Minister's face, making film out of eggs...We wanted people to start out believing it and although by the time it was finished they no longer believed it, they would still have had a good time (Jackson 1996: 23)

Unlike Welles, however, Jackson and Botes were unapologetic about the betrayal that their patriotic (but fake) hagiography had caused. Botes wrote:

> If *Forgotten Silver* causes people never to take anything from the media at face value, so much the better. Our film was better researched and, on the whole, more "true" than most products of the "infotainment" industry (cited in Roscoe & Hight 2006: 176).

Forgotten Silver's hidden mission to encourage audiences "to recognize the constructed nature of representations yet still engage with them as artefacts of the social world" (184), makes the film both a reflexive provocation and a playful entertainment. Its subtextual taunting of the public's ongoing faith in "facts" reverberates back through the rare line of reflexive documentaries previously analysed, which not only acknowledge their artifice, but do so to question the validity of documentary itself. *F for Fake* ("almost every story is some kind of lie"), and *No Lies* ("a film about a filmmaker manipulating the audience"), like *Forgotten Silver,* problematise their truth claims *as* they present them. The success of Jackson's hoax, like that of Welles and Block, is due to the deceptive prowess of its creators. And for some audiences, at least, *Forgotten Silver* revealed the bigger lie. As one viewer wrote:

> The producers have done us all a service by showing how easy it is to hoodwink a viewing public that has been conditioned to believe that anything labeled a "documentary" is [the] truth. Viewers should…keep a pinch of salt handy when watching supposedly more serious documentaries [on] current issues, especially controversial ones (Durrant 1995: 12).

The deceptive techniques at play in fake documentary become more mischievous, and ethically problematic, when they deceive not just their audiences, but their real-world subjects. In *Borat* (2006), Sacha Baron Cohen tricked his audience into believing Kazakhstan was a godless backwater of inbreds, cretins and rapists, by simultaneously deceiving non-English-speaking Romany gypsies into standing beside him as he mocked their (fictitious) proclivity for incest and bestiality on camera. This earned him widespread condemnation along the lines of "Borat film 'tricked' poor village actors" (Daily Mail 2006), along with numerous lawsuits filed by his American subjects, whom he had also deceived into thinking Borat was a real person - with hilarious (for the audience, at least) results. The film generated $261,572,744 in box-office (Box Office Mojo 2015c), resulted in large pay-outs to Baron Cohen's humiliated American subjects, and drove Kazakhstan to fight back with a concertedly upbeat tourism campaign, promoting its modernity and innovation to the world (Fullerton 2008: 159-168).

Significantly, although *Borat* is a fake documentary with real victims, western audiences generally embraced it: freed, perhaps, from the need to pass judgment by

the fact that Baron Cohen's intentions were obviously comedic, and the Kazakhs were too geographically and culturally removed to require empathy. While most critics labelled the film a "mockumentary" (Torchin 2014: 522), *Borat's* blending of fictional and documentary techniques with fictional and documentary *footage* aligns it more closely with the fake documentary subgenre, "films that perpetuate hoaxes" (Lerner 2006: 20). Instead of operating smoothly in this mode, however, *Borat* complicates it further, by presenting "a fictional TV host [who] steps out of a mock travelogue on his fictional hometown and steps into a journey though real America" (Torchin 2014: 523). *Borat* differs from the hoax documentaries *The Yes Men*, *The Couple in the Cage* and *Czech Dream* in "its refusal to provide a clear backstage, where viewers can unproblematically assume complete knowledge of the identities and events" (535). Unlike the pranksters of the first two documentaries (who involve their audiences in the deception of their subjects), and unlike the pranksters of *Czech Dream* (who reveal their hoax to their subjects) (535), Baron Cohen never makes it entirely clear which of his actions are staged.

Instead, he stays in the character of Borat throughout the film (even in an apparently improvised nude wrestling scene), leading the viewer through "layer upon layer of reference" (523), in which the action switches between mockumentary, fiction, "straight" documentary, and − in the sequences where Baron Cohen attempts to kidnap Pamela Anderson, or addresses the camera in "documentary maker" mode − a documentary about a mockumentary about a documentary. *Borat* also exagerrates stereotypes, in order to challenge them. Baron Cohen's targets are not just the "mock" and "straight" documentary, but "Old Europe" (the Kuzcek villagers could be the comedic doubles of Buñuel's blighted Hurdanos); and "New America" (a land apparently populated by beer-swilling homophobes, etiquette-obssessed Southerners and Iraqi-murdering bigots). More extreme than its predecesor *The Couple in the Cage,* and frequently on par with the politically incorrect capers of *Congorilla's* pygmy-baiting Johnstons (1929), *Borat* enacts an aggressive kind of "ethnographic burlesque", immersing the viewer in a culturally, politically and generically unstable free-for-all which, like its documentary-maker protagonist, "refuses to tell the truth" (Torchin 2014: 535).

Borat's disruptions of fact and fiction, of primitive and civilized, of reference and performance, and its defiant lack of "a stable ground and clear referents" (539) leaves the documentary truth claim in shreds, somewhere between Kuscek and *Baywatch.* The film is a postmodern swan-song to the "documentary tradition": once championed by filmmakers and scholars as a concrete upholder of truth and reason, now plunged "into a permanent state of self-reflexive crisis of representation [where] what was once a 'mirror with a memory' can now only reflect another mirror" (Williams 2014: 386). The gradual "decay of ideological anchorage" (Renov 1999: 324) displayed in many of the fact/fiction hybrids, docufictions, mockumentaries and fake documentaries that have proliferated in the three decades since *Spinal Tap* first mocked the Direct Cinema rockumentary, represents, for some theorists, a grave crisis in meaning where scholars, lost in the "new depthlessness" of postmodernism (Jameson 1984: 58), tread a Mobius strip of a self-perpetuating "simulacra" that has little to do with the reality of documentary practice today.

Lebow's assertion that "*all* of the most exemplary early documentary films", including those of Flaherty, Grierson and Vertov, are "mockumentaries", and that mockumentary and documentary are "in their origins…one and the same" (Lebow 2006: 232) makes an important historical connection between documentary and deceit. But it is irrelevant to filmmakers who make their living in factual broadcasting: a sector whose cultural and commercial ethos is based on the idea that documentary (no matter what postmodernism says), is completely different to mockumentary. Roscoe & Hight, on the other hand, position the rise of the fake documentary and its subgenres as "both symptom and cause in the construction of an increasingly reflexive position, for the viewer, in relation to factual discourse" (Roscoe & Hight 2006: 171). This statement plucks "documentary" from the perpetual semiotic debate, and puts it back firmly where it belongs: in front of the viewer.

As the commerical success of *Borat*, *The Thin Blue Line*, *Exit through the Gift Shop* and *Roger & Me* demonstrate, contemporary documentary audiences will tolerate and even embrace a little deceit with their "pleasurable learning", as long as they are entertained. Fakery can be a powerful and honest strategy, when it is built upon "a willing and knowing dismantling" – both by the filmmaker and the viewer – "of

more traditional concepts of truth, identity, and history" (Juhasz 2006: 18). Far from abandoning the pursuit of truth, the modern documentary, in all its manifestations, can be understood to instead enage viewers with "a newer, more relevant, postmodern truth [which] still operates powerfully as the recording horizon of the documentary tradition" (Williams 2014: 388).

Documentary's continuing evolution in the new century: as catalyzer, revealer, political provocateur and artful entertainer, makes its future "a virtual *terra incognita*, studded with promise and peril….And the stakes have never been higher" (Renov 1999: 324). Renov made this prescient observation two years before the 9/11 terrorist attacks. In the post-9/11 media environment, the stakes for the documentary truth claim are, perhaps, even higher still.

Chapter 7   The Déjà Vu Effect: Spectator, Subject, and the Filmmaker-deceiver

Cinematic and television images are thought to bear witness to the world…
We have spontaneous confidence in their realism.
We are wrong.

Jean Baudrillard
1987

The changing relationships between filmmaker and viewer which divergent new documentary forms have created in the twenty-first century (Williams 2014) and the rapidly expanding digital platforms on which they may now be seen (Renov 1999) have led to "a déjà-vu effect" in nonfiction film consumption, in which

> …contemporary forms of media culture evoke the parallel of early cinema…the spatioperceptual configuration of television within the domestic environment has broken the spell of the classical diegesis; [and] an aesthetics of the glance is replacing the aesthetics of the gaze (Hansen 1995: 137).

To Hansen's "glance"-inducing television mode, two decades on, can be added the mass-communication factual platforms now multiplying across the internet: the 24-hour news cycle which has reduced the soundbute to a five second grab, the YouTube video meme which is circulated as a virtual antidote to political and social problems, the "micro-docs" of commercial web vlogs such as *Vice* and *Upworthy* which often attract larger audiences than their broadcast and cinema equivalents, and the amateur documentaries of DIY filmmaker-citizens (who, in a revolutionary manifestation of Vertov's 1920s citizen-film scouts, can now reach viewers in the hundreds of millions).

These truncated versions of the "traditional" documentary form strengthen Hansen's déjà-vu parallel between contemporary exhibition modes and those of early cinema, where nonfiction films were similarly experienced as "brief does of scopic pleasure" (Gunning 1995: 121). The nineteenth century *fin-de-siècle* exemplified "a

particularly modern form of aesthetics", in which a new, mass-produced "culture of distractions" (126) was challenging the popularity of older, more contemplative forms of mainstream entertainment (poetry, opera, classical music), just as the internet's proliferating nonfiction texts are challenging the appeal of traditional, long-form documentaries today. The observational documentary, which is technically the easiest to shoot and assemble, now sits squarely within the capability of the new millennial filmmaker-spectator. As the viral mini-docs *Charlie Bit My Finger* (170 million views [2007]), *David after Dentist* (127 million views [2009]), *Funniest Video In The World Ever* (25 million views [2013]), and *Don't Tase me, Bro* (7 million views [2007]) each illustrate, when factual content is engaging enough to entertain without embellishment, the fly-on-the-wall documentary (albeit in a radically truncated form) can reach audiences on a scale equalled only by documentary blockbusters such as *Fahrenheit 9/11* (2004)*, Justin Bieber: never say never* (2011) and *One Direction: this is us* (2013) (Box Office Mojo 2015d).

The "exponential explosion" in sites for documentary on the web has, as Renov notes, moved "the perceptual world towards oversaturation, [in which] critical responses must strain to equal the speed, density and contradictoriness of the media environment" (Renov 1999: 324). In this environment, documentary makers compete for "eyeballs" against the internet's scopic diversions, and the shortened attention spans of its users (Grant & Sloniowski 2014: xxiii). Beyond the film festival circuit, Direct Cinema-style documentaries, which require viewers to passively absorb apparently un-doctored slabs of reality, now struggle to reach the audiences they once did. There are exceptions: Bob Connolly's *Mrs. Carey's Concert* (2011), an observational feature about a music teacher's preparation for a concert at the Sydney Opera House, was rejected by distributors, who were not convinced the dour Mrs. Carey had mainstream appeal. But when Connolly invested $150,000 of his savings to "four wall" the film himself, *Mrs Carey* trounced most domestic fiction films screening at the time (Connolly 2001), earning $1,164,548 in box-office, and a place alongside *Bra Boys* (2007), *Storm Surfers* (2012) and *Cane Toads* (1988) as one of the ten highest grossing Australian documentaries of all time (Screen Australia 2015). This was no accident: Connolly, as has been noted, is a master of invisible construction. Like *Rats in the Ranks* (1996), *Mrs. Carey* was full of artfully concealed "tricks," which ensured that its audience's immersion would be total.

For contemporary documentary makers who don't possess Connolly's flair for transforming *vérité* footage into compelling drama (or his ability to finance year-long edits), a new challenge must be faced. The affordability of broadcast-quality cameras, and the coinciding YouTube-driven boom in amateur filmmaking, has created viewers so technically adept that they expect professional documentaries to be more technically and narratively sophisticated, and above all, more *entertaining*, than the films they produce themselves. Walter Benjamin's "literarization of the conditions of living" (Benjamin 1982), in which "new methods of representing the self in everyday life...wear away the distinction between home use and public display" (Renov 1999: 317), has contributed to the evolution of new nonfiction genres in the 2000s, which Nichols' first four modes (expository, observational, interactive, reflexive [1991: 32-75]) can no longer adequately encompass. In 1999, responding to "the exciting new work" of 1990s documentary filmmakers, Renov called for renewed attention on Nichols' fifth (and comparatively unacknowledged) mode, the "performative": arguing that documentaries in the future would be made in an "expanding site of reality-based representation still unimagined", in which the fact/fiction border would become "an ever more active site of contestation and play" (Renov 1999: 318).

The commercially successful documentaries produced in the sixteen years since Renov made this prediction would appear to prove him right. In 2014, surveying the nonfiction films now attracting audiences on the big and small screen, Williams observed two common characteristics:

> First, their unprecedented popularity among general audiences, who now line up for documentaries as eagerly as for fiction films; second, their willingness to tackle often grim, historically complex subjects (Williams 2014: 388).

Feeding "a new hunger for reality on the part of a public seemingly saturated with Hollywood fictions" (388), these documentaries exhibit an implicit (and sometimes, explicit) acknowledgment that today's filmmaker-consumer is fully cognizant that the documentary "real" is both a manipulated and constructed one. Far from destabilizing the credibility of the genre's truth-claim, however, contemporary documentaries are generally accepted as texts which reveal "the paradox of the intrusive manipulation of documentary truth, combined with a serious quest to reveal some ultimate truths" (388).

An examination of how contemporary documentary enacts this paradox, specifically focusing on the deceptive strategies involved in its construction, extends Hanson's déjà vu parallel (between modern and early cinema modes of consumption) from the spectator to the filmmaker. The confluences between the deceptive techniques used by the filmmakers discussed in Part One, and the techniques used by their new millennial equivalents, evoke a parallel with the magical trick films of Méliès, and with the fact/fiction blends of early cinema. These confluences spread further throughout the first sixty years of cinema. The use of illusion, fakery, manipulation, persuasion and fabrication in the "fashionable, mainstream, postmodern documentaries" of the 1990s (Arthur 1993: 133), and in the increasingly divergent texts of the 2000s, arguably resemble the pre-World War Two documentary tradition more closely than they do the conventions which drove the genre in the first three decades after the war, when a new emphasis on objectivity made the use of conspicuous artistry a comparativey rare, and frequently derided, phenomenon (Renov 1993: 45-6, Flinn 2014: 438). The following analysis of the similarities between contemporary and historical deceptive documentary techniques returns us to Kiel's original propostition: that "Méliès' rocket and the *Lumière* train were following more similar trajectories than is usually acknowledged" (Kiel 2006: 39).

Magic: that "trompe l'oeil play of give-and-take" (Gunning 1995: 117), which Méliès reproduced on film to create his witty illusions, making him "one of the great-grandfathers" of special effects technicians today (Pringle 2007: 56), has numerous counterparts in the fiction film world. The deconstructing landscapes of *Inception* (2010), the Hieronymous Bosch-like tryptichs of heaven and hell in *What Dreams May Come* (1998), the eerily beautiful spacescape of *Gravity* (2013), the slow motion bullets in *The Matrix* (1999), and the CGI. spectaculars *Transformers* (2007, 2014)*, X Men* (2000, 2014)*,* and *Iron Man 3* (2013) each, like the Magician's illusion, "test the limits of an intellectual disavowal – I know, but yet I see". They render visible that which is "impossible to believe" (Gunning 1995: 117). However, CGI and illusion also play an important role in contemporary documentary: from the computer-generated prehistoric worlds of *Earth: Making of a Planet* (2010) and *Extreme Dinosaurs* (2000), to the 3D modelling sequences of science and art documentaries, to the dramatic illusions of cinematic features. In 1995, the SBS documentary *Hell Bento!!* presented Japan's hidden subcultures (the *Yakuza*, AIDS

activists, drug dealers, *Otaku* techno-futurists) as pieces of bento-box *sushi,* spat up from the Hades-like depths of Japan's "*ungura-shakai*" (underground society). Using 3D animation, the documentary "morphed" its *sushi* pieces into various objects (syringes, flowers, steak), which acted as visual puns for the colloquialisms used by its Japanese subjects.

In 2008, James Marsh spent the entire special effects budget of *Man on Wire* on one crucial illusion: a five second shot that glided around the edge of the World Trade Centre towers, and angled down to the street, 110 floors below. Marsh had nothing but archival black-and-white stills to illustrate his climactic scene, Philippe Petit's death-defying tightrope walk between the towers. To heighten the drama of the sequence, Marsh used CGI to create the illusion that Petit's stunt had been filmed: "It [also] made everyone go, 'Oh fuck, that's really a long way down, and he's going to go and dance on that! That's terrifying!'" (Marsh 2013: 168). Just as nineteenth-century levitation tricks depended upon the magician's ability to manipulate benign entities (steps, surface and light) through projection and mirrors to alter the audience's spacial perception (Pringle 2007: 53-4), Marsh's manipulation of film time and space through the projection of an apparently real aerial POV shot persuaded audiences to perceive Petit's tightrope walk not for what it was (black-and-white photos cut to music), but for what Marsh *wanted* it to be: a strangely beautiful, moving image. As Marsh observed, "That one shot allowed the still sequence to work in really quite a different way" (Marsh 2013: 168).

A second deceptive technique prevalent in nonfiction films made between 1895 and the 1930s is the repurposing, recycling or fabrication of archival footage to create an authentic "real". This technique has been widely adopted by documentary makers over the past three decades. In *Man on Wire*, Marsh created fake archive of Petit preparing for his stunt, then integrated it into home-movies which Petit had shot decades before Marsh began making his film. In *Ruins* (1999), a documentary about the Mexican art forger Brigido Lara, Jesse Lerner "forged" archival footage of relevant historical events by replicating the techniques Lara and his forger colleagues used to create fake pre-Columbian artefacts: first sculpting the objects, then breaking and burying them, then digging them up, caked in dirt, to achieve lucrative sales with credulous collectors (Lerner 2006: 69). Lerner similarly imprinted his fake footage

with "the illusion of age", scratching the film and inserting splice flashes, and adding the clipped sound of the 1940s newsreel to reproduce the damaged look and feel of Lara's "one hundred per cent original finishes" (70). As Lerner explained,

> The filmmaker, who is not always to be trusted, can replicate the particular audio qualities of anything from the synchronously recorded magnetic track of super-8 film to WWII-era radio broadcast, all for the purposes of deception (70).

José Luis Guerín's *Tren de Sombras* ("Train of Shadows" [1997]), a dramatised documentary structured around the home-movies of the French aristocrat Gérard Fleury, incorporates historical reenactments shot with actors to create a cinematic mediation on memory, decay and loss. Inspired by Fleury's last, unrealized film on Lake Thuit (which Fleury planned to shoot on November 8, 1930, the day he mysteriously died), *Tren De Sombras* − like Subrin's *Shulie#2* and Lerner's *Ruins* − builds an acknowledgment of its artifice into the text. Guerín inserts numerous clues: footage of Fleury in the act of filming, and colour footage shot in the same locations as Fleury's black-and-white movies, to indicate that the archive in *Tren de Sombras* is not a reliable historical artefact, but rather, "a series of performances created specifically for Guerín's film" (Lerner 2006: 26). Archive is similarly repurposed in the fictional ethnography *Bontoc Eulogy* (1995) which uses 1900s newsreels to critique America's colonization of the Philippines, and to investigate the case of two Bontoc tribesmen who died while featuring as "living exhibits" at the 1904 St. Louis World Fair. Creating a fictional character to represent the Bontocs, filmmaker-narrator Marlon Fuentes oscillates between fictionality and authenticity, deliberately foregrounding his deceptions with references to early cinema (clumsy jump cuts, sleight-of-hand gags) in order to present himself as

> …a bungling Méliès incapable of tricking the audience. It was the incompetence that would lay bare the tricks of the trade, the pororsity and unreliability of the cinematic language being used. These devices…were all aspects I wanted the viewer to be aware of (Fuentes 2006: 117)

The Thin Blue Line (1988) similarly repackages archival footage to create a meaning different to that intended by the original. Morris counterpoints eye witness Emily Miller's declaration that she always wanted to be "a detective or the wife of a detective", and that "everywhere I go there's murders, even 'round my house", with

a scene from a *Boston Blackie* detective film, suggesting "the cliched, black-and-white nature of her view of the crime" (Renov 1993: 179). There is also an old-fashioned, "archival" quality to Morris' staged reenactments: dim lighting, exagerrated silhouettes, and dramatic cutting between theatrical wides and closeups of firing guns and flashing lights, all convey the sense of a deliberately fictionalised "real" which is subtly reminiscent of a *Noir* thriller. Subverting the conventional documentary's reliance on "authentic" markers of proof (the murder weapon, trial transcripts, and authoritative experts), Morris instead uses reenactment, contradictiory witnesses and sterotypical imagery to highlight the degree to which the viewer's perception of so-called "facts" is coloured by cultural conventions, and by the subjective nature of memory. In doing so, *The Thin Blue Line* implies that the cultural conventions of the documentary genre, and not its content, are what guarantee, in the viewer's mind, "the authenticity of that to which they refer" (179).

The third deceptive technique active in present-day documentary is an evolution of the photographic innovations pioneered by Vertov in the 1920s, in which camera lenses, framing, speeds and mounts were manipulated to deliver a superior, but authentic, "real." As a technological device, this technique can be seen as "deceptive" in that it persuades its viewers, through the verisimilitude of the imagery presented, that it is *their* eye, rather than that of the lens, which is perceiving the astonishing subversions of temporal, spatial and physical laws that are playing on the screen. Transforming documentary's conventionally "informative" discourse into an audio-visual spectacle of "stranger than", this technique is active in the time lapse, slow and fast motion shots and elaborate tracking moves of Reggio's *Koyaanisqatsi* (1982) and *Powaqqatsi* (1988), Fricke's Baraka (1992), and in the microscopic close-ups of insects in Nuridsany and Pérennou's *Microcosmos* (1996).

In nature documentaries in which animals are manipulated along with the camera to capture previously undocumented realities, photographic deception takes on an ethical dimension. The British series *Earth Flight* (2011-12) tracked migratory birds as they flew across the globe, showing the planet, and other birds, from the birds' point of view. To deliver this "natural history spectacle", executive producer Fred Kaufman's team "used every trick in the book", from drones, micro-gliders, and bird-mounted cameras to behavioural "imprinting", in which baby geese were trained

from birth to fly beside their imagined "mother", the cameraman Christian Moullec, as stunt performers across several major cities (Kaufman 2013).

The fourth deceptive technique employed by contemporary documentary-makers is both a fictive, and occasionally, an ethical one: the manipulation of subjects and content (through subject-led performance, re-enactment with actors, staged set-ups, or deceptive editing) to present an enhanced version of reality. While this technique also operates in some propaganda documentaries, the films discussed below do not use it specifically to "persuade or promote" (Renov 1993: 29) but rather, to "record, reveal or preserve" (25), and − in texts which make their audiences aware of the technique as it is being enacted − to "analyse or interrogate" the documentary truth claim itself (31). First evident in the participant-camera interactions of *Nanook of the North* (1922), and later developed by Rouch in his ethnographic and *Cinema Vérité* films, the use of documentary subjects as "performers" has become increasingly prevalent in the past three decades. The post-World War Two documentary conventions that "one should not stage or imitate reality", and that "conspicuous signs of manipulation", such as reenactment, contradict the "irrefutable 'reality' that…pre-exists beyond the text" (Flinn 2014: 438), have been replaced by a growing acceptance by filmmakers and viewers that documentaries which use performative techniques, perhaps even more so than other versions of the genre, help to "reveal the constructed − indeed, performative − nature of the world around us" (438).

The use of dramatization, in the right creative hands, renders the reenactment's historically "embarassing failures of authenticity" (Nichols 1993: 117), into something that is vividly "real" for audiences, and in many cases, a more "truthful" rendering of the subjects' worlds than traditional documentary devices (such as expositional voice-over, archive, past-tense interviews and real-world overlay) are able to accomplish. In *Touching the Void* (2003), Macdonald used actors to perform a suspensful recreation of mountain-climber Joe Simpson's near death experience in the Peruvian Andes in 1985. The authenticity of Macdonald's dramatization was enhanced by the fact that the actors playing Simpson and his fellow climbers were concealed by snow goggles and hats: preventing the usual perceptual disruption between the documentary character, and the actor who "represents", but obviously

isn't that character, from occurring. In *The Act of Killing* (2012)*,* Oppenheimer cast his subjects (former leaders of the 1960s Indonesian death-squads) as performers: recreating their murders in dramatized scenes shot in the styles of their favourite movie genres − the gangster movie, the western and the musical. Oppenheimer dubbed the result a "documentary of the imagination" (cited in Oursler 2013). In *The Story of the Weeping Camel* (2003), Faloni and the Mongolian director Byambasuren Davaa used non-actors to perform another imaginary story: that of a rejected camel calf saved by a traditional Mongolian ritual, which used music to entice the mother camel back to her baby. Intent on recapturing life in the Gobi desert as it "might have been generations ago"*,* Faloni named Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* as his inspiration. (Aufderheide 2007: 32).

The films above use fictive techniques to either visualise their subjects' inner worlds, create entirely new worlds, or – in the case of *The Act of Killing* – to do both at the same time. By *showing* the viewer what their subjects are feeling and experiencing, rather than simply *telling* the viewer the same information in the less dynamic context of a talking-head interview, these commerically successful documentaries, just as *Nanook of the North* did in the 1920s, fascinate the viewer with the believe-it-or-not, or "stanger than" quality of nonfiction: using "artifice to [create] an image more true than the posited original" (Gaines 1999: 6-8). When the subject and/or content is manipulated to construct a representation that is perceived to be, on some level, *less* true than the posited original, however, the ethical problems normally associated with the use of deceptive techniques in non-performative documentaries come into play. *The Secret Plot to Kill Hitler* (2004), a "virtual history" made for Discovery Channel was, like Jackson's *Forgotten Silver* (1995), a documentary in which the "fake [was] interwoven with the real without giving viewers the chance to distinguish" between the two (Aufderheide 2007: 23). Placing actors against well-known figures lifted from historical archive to reenact purported real-life events, the program, despite its makers' efforts to make their approach clear at the outset, was perceived as one that "crossed an ethical line" (23).

The ABC's *The Path to 9/11* (2006) similarly used actors to represent public figures – in this case, Clinton administration officials – in a "docudrama" which suggested the Clinton administration had neglected a terrorist threat (23). The widespread perception that these actors were saying and doing things which their real-word

counterparts "clearly had not" (23) forced the network to issue an (unsuccessful) disclaimer "that the film was only a docudrama" (23). The Australian documentary *Stolen* (2009) was arguably an even more ethically fraught falsification of real-world content. Instead of using re-enactment, directors Fallshaw and Ayala used deceptive and suggestive editing, manipulating their footage to mount a convincing case that slavery was being practiced in the Sahrawee Algerian refugee camps. This allegation was subsequently refuted, not just by the film's main subject, Fetim Sellami (who flew to the Sydney Film Festival to personally denounce the documentary [SMH 2012]), but by cameraman Carlos Gonzales, UN officials working in the camp, and independent translators, all of whom backed the ABC's claims that the filmmakers had fabricated their story to lure audiences their way (7:30 Report 2009). Ayala and Fallshaw countered by accusing the Polisario Front, who run the camps, of a cover-up, thus ensuring *Stolen* enjoyed a run far beyond its domestic broadcast date, including a well-received screening at the Toronto International Film Festival.

The fifth and final deceptive technique used in contemporary documentary filmmaking is Propaganda. The stealthy art of persuasion which has been transformed by Moore and others into a democratic catalyser for the "common good", has its roots in the state-sponsored propaganda films of Grierson and Riefenstahl in the 1930s, as has been noted. However, in the hands of Moore and his leftist filmmaking peers, and in the public pronouncements of their conservative adversaries (Fox News and the corporate media, right-wing lobby groups such as the Heritage Foundation, and military and foreign policy representatives of the US government [Finch 2006; Robb 2004]), the propagandist's craft has reached new levels of sophistication. The propaganda techniques originally catalogued by Bartlett in 1940 have been given a glossy digital reboot, and are producing results. *An Inconvenient Truth* (2006) uses high-tech statistical displays, empirical evidence and nuanced argument to convert climate change skeptics to its cause. *Enron: The Smartest Guys in the Room* (2005) uses incisive stereotyping, repetitive testimonials, and popular idiom and music to accentuate its depiction of Enron's disgraced powerbrokers as the "corporate criminals of the century." *The Corporation* (2003) uses dynamic pacing, funny archival montages, and empathetic footage of globalisation's human victims, to engage viewers with what might otherwise be a very dry topic. Spurlock's *Supersize Me* (2006) and *POM Wonderful presents: the*

Greatest Movie Ever Sold (2011) each present dazzling displays of comedy, facts and vernacular that are so adept at reversing the propaganda which they critique (Macdonalds commercials and Hollywood product placement respectively), that they are arguably *The Lambeth Walk'*s closest modern day twins.

Like Moore, Spurlock is a polemicist who sugar-coats his message with humour:

> We have a real mantra at our company which is: "If you can make someone laugh, you can make someone listen"…Through laughter, people don't realise they are taking the medicene (Spurlock 2013: 211).

Spurlock has also been criticised, like Moore, for treating serious issues as a joke. *No Lies* director Mitchell Block believes *Roger & Me's* use of fake characters (Moore's make-believe TV crew), and set-ups (Moore's attempts to gatecrash Smith's building even when he knows Smith is not there), make Moore

> …a documentary liar; his work holds up its subjects for ridicule and scorn. We laugh at these real people who, in some cases, are being presented in a false light…but the filmmaker tells us this is a documentary (Block 2006: 194-5).

Block's aversion to Moore's methods underpins the conundrum that deceptive propaganda techniques pose to the documentary truth claim, namely: "if documentary pledges to show viewers a good-faith representation of reality, can an honest filmmaker produce propaganda and really call it a documentary?" (Aufderheide 2007: 74). Filmmakers and scholars are divided about the answer. Marsh, whose use of dramatization and fake archive has also been criticized as deceptive, believes that "making a political argument" is "way more of a manipulation than what I do" (Marsh 2013: 173). Leach, on the other hand, positions the propaganda film as "more open and honest about its ideological workings than films that disclaim any social or political purpose", because it "normally makes its intentions apparent" (Leach 2014: 149).

Perhaps the answer as to whether or not an "honest" filmmaker can make propaganda and call it a "documentary" can be found not in an analysis of the filmmaker's intentions, or even in the kinds of deceptive techniques being used, but in the realm opened up by Kluge's third camera: that is, "the generic patterns of the documentary film, which are founded on the expectations of the audience that patronizes it" (Kluge 1988: 4). Contemporary nonfiction consumers (of

documentary, news programs, and social media) are aware that "truth", and its construction, takes many forms. The "relative, hierarchized, and contingent" truths now operating in post-1990 documentary texts (Williams 2014: 390) reflect the similarly relative "truths" of mainstream factual discourse, in which vested political and commercial interests frequently render statements that might once have been perceived as "incontrovertible," no longer quite what they seem. New millennial nonfiction audiences understand that the "Truth", as Trinh has observed, "is produced, induced and extended according to the regime in power" (cited in Renov 1993: 8). To illustrate this, one need only follow the money. Bruckheimer's pro-US military feature *Black Hawk Down* (2001), and his Iraq war documentary series *Profiles from the Front Line* (2003)*,* each had Pentagon support, including military hardware and greater access to US troops than embedded coalition journalists (Robb 2004), while Stone's pro-nuclear documentary *Pandora's Promise* (2013) was financed by several private investors linked to the pro-nuclear lobby (beyond nuclear 2013).

However, Bruckheimer and Stone's nonfiction texts, despite the vested interests behind them, and the extensive criticism these interests generated amongst consumers, are arguably as much "documentaries" as the similarly manipulative texts of Moore and Spurlock. The deceptive techniques they use to create a persuasive and "authentic" real, while they may be *propaganda* techniques that operate simultaneously in the fictive, ethical and public realms, are nonetheless used to produce films which fall squarely within Grierson's long established definition of documentary as "the creative treatment of actuality" (cited in Lebow 2006: 232). As to whether or not the makers of these texts may call themselves "honest", the defence used by another of documentary's founding fathers, Robert Flaherty, who was himself accused of "deceptive" filmmaking practices, is apposite: "Sometimes you have to lie. One often has to distort a thing to catch its true spirit" (cited in Barsam 1988: 116).

In the uncertain landscape created by Bruckheimer and Moore's conflicting truths, the battle for hearts and minds is being fought by filmmakers on all sides of the political divide. Moore, arguing that "all art, listen, every piece of journalism manipulates sequences and things" (Jacobsen 1989: 22-3) agreed to be interviewed

by Bill O'Reilly on Fox on July 28, 2004 – but only on the condition that Fox let Moore ask every second question in the interview, and did not edit his answers (Rhoads 2004: 6). In a detailed critique of Moore's propaganda techniques in *Fahrenheit 9/11* (2004)*,* Kelton Rhoads, a mentor for the CIA PSYOP (Psychological Operations) forces at the JFK Special Warfare Center in Fort Bragg, described Moore's demands to Fox as "tells":

> Moore knows the person asking the questions has much more control…that's why [he asks] lots of questions of his "marks" in his movies – it allows him to feed them lines or set them up with traps (Rhoads 2004: 6).

Moore's insistence that there be no editing, Rhoads argued, stemmed from the fact that

> …edits are one of Moore's primary weapons against his opponents. He's a master of cutting or splicing time so his interviewees look duplicitous or foolish. Aware as he was of his own techniques, it's likely he didn't want them used against himself (6).

In the same year Moore debated O'Reilly and Rhoads debunked *Fahrenheit 9/11* as "movie house agit-prop" (1) however, Greenwald released *Outfoxed: Rupert Murdoch's War on Journalism* (2004). Greenwald's documentary showed O'Reilly and his Fox News collaborators using every propaganda technique Rhoads had attributed to Moore: from suggestion (casting shifty-looking "experts" as left-wing panelists), to repetition (the nationally coordinated use of on-message phrases such as "Kerry's policy flip-flops"), to omission (O'Reilly blocking people making progressive arguments by telling them to "shut up").

To return to Aufderheide's conundrum, "can an honest filmmaker produce propaganda and really call it a documentary?" (2007: 74), perhaps it is not the word "documentary" that is at issue, but the word "honest". A filmmaker, whether or not she or he is "honest", may produce propaganda and call it a documentary, just as she or he may produce an apparently objective, non-manipulative, observational film and call it a documentary: deception in some form – whether it is ethical, fictive or public – is necessary to the successful realisation of both. What *is* important is the filmmaker's good-faith attempt to deliver what she or he believes is the "truth" about his or her subject to the audience – regardless of whether the techniques being used

to enact this truth are propaganda techniques, or one of the other deceptive techniques discussed in this thesis. In a nonfiction climate where the viewer has replaced the historical world as the primary referent (Roscoe & Hight 2006: 183), and the difference between fact and fiction, as the postmodern joke goes, "is not what it used to be" (Anderson 2006: 70), the beliefs of the audience are now a deciding factor in what is rejected as "overtly deceptive", and what is accepted as "true". Riefenstahl's depiction of Hitler in *Triumph of the Will* (1935) as Germany's saviour was *her* truth, just as Ridley's repurposing of Riefenstahl's footage in *The Lambeth Walk* (1942) to portray Hitler as a megalomaniacal clown was his. Both films, because of their creators' artistic skill, and the State-enforced ideology within which they were produced, were predominantly received as "true" by their target audiences, despite the fact that the techniques they used were deceptive.

In the contemporary documentary environment, however, a film which promotes a State-enforced ideological narrative − or indeed, the narrative of any other powerful group − can no longer rely upon the audience's automatic acceptance of its truth claim. To viewers who believe in nuclear power, *Pandora's Promise* (2013) is "important" and "radically sane" (Whitman 2013, Revkin 2013); while to viewers who oppose nuclear power, the documentary is "propaganda", an "elaborate hoax", and a "sick lie" (Friends of the Earth 2013, Robert F. Kennedy jnr. cited in Revkin 2013). In a media landscape where even the "truth" may be understood to be relative and contingent (Williams 2014: 390), the nonfiction "real" − just as it was during the first sixty years of cinema − is an entity open to intepretation. The final decision as to which documentary "truths" are credible, and which are "deceptive," no longer rests with the filmmaker, or even with the exhibitor: it rests with the consumer. For this reason, Winston (1995), Benamou (2006) and Roscoe & Hight (2006) each argue that "a grounding of documentary in *reception* rather than in its representaton is the only way to preserve its validity" (Roscoe & Hight 2006: 183).

The elevation of "reception" as a powerful new adjudicator in the ongoing battle for documentary "validity" adds a third layer to Hansen's déjà vu parallel with early cinema. Alongside the confluences already in play between contemporary and early cinema exhibition practices, and between pre-World War Two and contemporary deceptive documentary techniques, another connection exists: in the filmmaker

persona itself. While Direct Cinema gave audiences the "filmmaker/observer" (Renov 1993: 43), and McElwee, Rubbo and Broomfield's "inexpert", "displaced" and "bumbling" onscreen personas in the 1980s (Nicks 2014) delivered a subgenre of "filmmaker/participants…as likely to question what is shown as to interpret it authoritatively" (Renov 2004: xxi), new personas are now being performed by documentary makers, both on and off the screen. The fact that these personas have yet to be categorised with the same precision that Nichols (1991), Renov (1993), Bordwell & Thomson (1999) and Grindon (2007) have applied to documentary modes can be attributed, in part, to the still influential late-twentieth century rejection of "the auteur theory" as

> A romantic investment in the notion of individual creativity that ignores not only the industrial basis of the film as a medium but also the extent to which meanings generated by any work of art are produced by its cultural context (Leach 2014: 144).

In the post-1990s web of multivalent truths, however, Kluge's second camera, "the filmmaker's mind" (Kluge 1988: 4) – and how the auteur-filmmaker chooses to present the vision in his or her mind for the viewer – is once more a vital factor in how the documentary truth claim is judged. The content of a documentary frequently dictates not just its form, but the techniques used to create this form. With media-sophisticated viewers now more familiar with film techniques than at any other time in cinema history, filmmakers are producing texts that frequently bear the subtle (or overt) imprint, or "screen signature", of the filmmakers themselves. The more interesting of these films "undertake an interrogation not only of the strategies of authentication deployed by documentary filmmaking, but the material and epistemological premises of history itself" (Anderson 2006: 80). The new documentary personas presented below are a continuation of the historical personas identified by Barnouw (1983). But they are also a performative extension of Barnouw's personas, in that they are, often, "characters" which filmmakers perform: whose decisions and methods are frequently inspired by the subjects (and subject matter) being filmed. The contemporary documentary persona, particularly in reflexive texts which critique documentary conventions themselves, can be understood to be one which

…takes off from auterurist flights into how relfexivity and personality merge to alter preconceptions, conventions [and] ideological collisions between competing subjectivities, directorial manipulation, and the seeming validity of found events (Nicks 2014: 327).

From 1895 to the 1960s, as Barnouw observes, documentary evolved in the hands of the "filmmaker/prophet" (the Lumières), the "filmmaker/reporter" (Vertov), the "filmmaker/explorer" (Flaherty), the "filmmaker/painter" (Richter), the "filmmaker/advocate" (Grierson and Riefenstahl), the "filmmaker/bugler" (Jennings and Capra), the "filmmaker/poet" (Rosselini), the "filmmaker/promoter" (Murrow), and the "filmmaker/catalyst" (Rouch and Marker). (Barnouw 1983). Fifty years later, to the Maysles "filmmaker/observer", Morris's "filmmaker/interrogator", and Moore's defiantly blue-collar "filmmaker/avenger", can be added three more onscreen personas: the "filmmaker/showman" (Spurlock), the "filmmaker/gleaner" (Varda), and, as the front-men for the new millennium's "culture of distractions", the "filmmaker/prankster" (Bear Grylls, Baron Cohen and Banksy). Behind the screen, in the manipulative epicenter of every documentary, the edit suite, the personas being enacted are equally diverse, from Lerner's "filmmaker/forger", Macdonald's "filmmaker/detective" and Marsh's "filmmaker/archeologist", to Fuentes' "filmmaker/illusionist".

One of the most overtly theatrical personas operating on screen today is Morgan Spurlock, who describes his character in *POM Wonderful presents: the Greatest Movie Ever Sold* (2011) as "The Carnival Barker of documentaries. I'm the guy out front saying, 'Come on in! You're going to love it. It's the greatest thing ever!'…People will pay for anything" (Spurlock 2013: 219). In *POM Wonderful*, Spurlock's filmmaker/showman doesn't just drive the narrative, he *is* the narrative. The film tracks Spurlock's attempts to sell product placement slots to corporate brands: whose advertisments become part of the movie. As more brands come on board, Spurlock transforms into a walking billboard, repeatedly interrupting the film to spruik the products he has signed on to promote. Spurlock's "carnival barking" for *POM Wonderful* transferred product placement from the screen to the real world, when Spurlock paid a minor Pennsylvania Mayor $25,000 to rename his town "POM Wonderful presents: the Greatest Movie Ever Sold, Pennsylvania." Like Smith and Blackton spruiking fairground tickets to *The Black Diamond Express* (1896-1903) as

"a cataclysmic moment…without equal in the history of our times" (Gunning 1995: 120), Spurlock was selling a populist spectacle, not high-brow Art:

> It was a big kind of P.T Barnum-esque stunt, anything that gets everybody talking. And it was picked up around the world…the goal for me was to make a documentary blockbuster. So we coined this term of a "docbuster" – to make it seem bigger than a regular documentary (20).

At the opposite end of the promotional spectrum is Agnès Varda, who describes documentary "as a discipline that teaches modesty" (Varda 2000). Yet Varda also has a message to sell, and a persona with which to sell it. In *Les Glaneurs et la Glaneuse* (*The Gleaners and I*, 2000), Varda, as Lerner does with his forger characters in *Ruins*, takes her creative queues from her subjects. The "gleaners" of rural France eke out a frugal living by scouring fields and trash sites for unwanted food. Positioning documentary as another kind of "gleaning", Varda's onscreen "filmmaker/gleaner" finds trash "beautiful". She gathers footage and stories from those whom society has discarded, intercutting close-ups of her wrinkled hands with the gleaners' reclaimed trash, to "embody a kind of eco-feminist subversion of aesthetics, of what Western society considers beautiful and therefore valuable" (Bonner 2014: 497). Like Moore, Varda has a leftist agenda (capitalism is wasteful), and like Spurlock, she uses humour to express it: but Varda's humour is off beat and subtle. By humanizing the gleaners through gently funny interactions, she wins the viewer over to the film's broader political message. Varda's quirky filmmaker/gleaner and Spurlock's glitzy filmmaker/showman are both uniting threads in their respective narratives, between the content (gleaning and advertising), the subjects (collectors and profiteers), and the spectator − who is positioned as a cognizant ally. *La Glaneurs* and *POM Wonderful* both use humour, information and suggestion to encourage viewers to question two different aspects of the same capitalist myth: that we need more "stuff" to be happy.

Behind the screen, the contemporary filmmaker persona is also hard at work, using deceptive techniques, rather than onscreen performance, to construct subversive new interpretations of the documentary "real". Lerner (as filmmaker/forger) and Fuentes (as filmmaker/illusionist), each adopt the techniques of their deceptive subjects (forgers and biased historians respectively), to present a meta-critique of the documentary truth claim. Observing that "concern for authenticity links forger and

documentary filmmaker – both create an illusion of the real through an elaborate web of artifice" (*Ruins* 1999), Lerner employs forgery (as Varda employs gleaning) as a metaphor for documentary making, fabricating footage "to create a sustained assault on conventional tropes of documentary truth" (Lerner 2006: 25). Rather than provide conclusions, however, *Ruins* neither celebrates the forger "as a postmodern hero" nor damns him as "a villain" (72): instead, it throws the choice back on the viewer – foregrounding its deceptions to "encourage active participation on the part of the audience, who is compelled to view the film critically, and to skeptically consider the authenticity of [the] information being presented" (73). In *Bontoc Eulogy* (1995), Fuentes foregrounds his audiovisual deceptions to do the same thing: mixing a blatantly fictional story with apparently "credible" archive to construct a deliberately unverifiable narrative. Fuentes decribes this approach as akin to

> …viewing an "optical illusion", for example, the one with the profile of two human faces melding into contours of a vase...[or] an Indonesia puppet show…where one can watch on either side of the screen. Watching the puppeteer's side shows the movements of the craftsperson concurrent with the unfolding narrative (Fuentes 2006: 117, 118).

Like Varda, Lerner and Spurlock, Fuentes is speaking to an "active" spectator. one who acts on the information presented, as opposed to the "passive anaesthetised receptors" and "apathetic digesting organisms" of mainstream entertainment (123).

In non-reflexive contemporary documentaries, which use fictive techniques primarily to entertain, rather than to critique the documentary truth claim,

> …the techniques of dissimulation [are] at work, no less than in the seamless continuities of narrative fiction films. The wizard is working overtime behind the curtain…to make us believe in the illusion of the reality represented (Lebow 2006: 235).

Macdonald and Marsh, the "wizards" behind the successful cinema documentaries *One Day in September* (1999) and *Man on Wire* (2008), both adopt personas and techniques which are inspired by the tropes of fiction. Describing himself as "an archeologist", Marsh sees his documentaries as "buildings" concealed within the footage, which he must "excavate" to "expose what the building was, and…make it more complete. My reference points aren't other documentaries. I work [with] a lexicon of the whole of cinema" (Marsh 2013: 164-5). Marsh structured *Man on*

Wire like a Hollywood heist movie, because his subject Philippe Petit saw himself as a heister: "that's his character. He would watch TV shows and movies that were about robbing banks and stealing things" (172). Marsh's rejection of conventional documentary rules, which is evident in his use of fake footage, CGI illusion and the narrative tropes of fiction, makes him as much of an *artistic* heister as Petit is a *legal* one. Petit broke numerous laws to infiltrate the World Trade Centre towers and tightrope-walk across them. Marsh justifies Petit's deceptions (and by default, his own), on the grounds that the resulting narrative was both entertaining and harmless:

> The heist structure was there because that was what it was like as far as [Petit] was concerned. It did involve essentially a criminal conspiracy [to] do something that was illegal, and the brilliance of it is…no one is going to get hurt. Nothing is getting stolen. It's a gift. That's just a brilliant inversion of a heist movie (172).

Macdonald also relies heavily on fictional techniques: a reliance which Nichols notes is "increasingly prevalent" in documentaries which "attempt to give witness to personal, subjective experience rather than categorical knowledge" (Nichols 1993: 175). Positioning himself as a "detective", Macdonald aims to "make thrillers – to tell a really suspenseful story but using reality, like *In Cold Blood*" (Macdonald 2013: 187). To make *One Day in September* (1999), a feature documentary about Germany's botched attempt to rescue eleven kidnapped Israeli athletes during the 1972 Munich Olympic Games, Macdonald undertook a behind-the-scenes investigation as gripping as the one he put on screen:

> We put the viewer in the position of discovering everything along the way as [we] discovered it…We chose the thriller because that fitted the process we had gone through ourselves, with the German secret police interfering…to keep the truth from coming out" (193).

As a story-teller, Macdonald approaches real-world narratives as another kind of fiction. When editing *One Day in September*, he decided to

> …treat it like a fiction film, dribbling out the information as it occurred in real time…You have to take facts and somehow find…the fictional element that binds [them] together, because a bunch of random facts is meaningless, and what we do as documentarians [is] give meaning to the chaos around us (185).

It is in Macdonald's attempt to give "meaning to the chaos around us" that the déjà vu parallels analyzed above, between contemporary and historical documentary

exhibition modes, deceptive techniques, and filmmaker personas, also speak to the increasing commercialization of factual discourse in the new millennium. The contemporary documentary's continuing claim to "see" and "know", and the validity of its (historically variable) truth claim, are now firmly embedded in an awareness amongst filmmakers, subjects and spectators, "of the exploitation of 'the real' as currency in an all devouring image culture" (Renov 1993: 8).

Norma Khouri, the hoax author who drives the manipulative dance between fiction and fake in *Forbidden Lie$* (2007), is a professional dissembler who exploits the currency of the "real" for commerical and cultural gain. The contemporary documentary maker, it is suggested, can be understood to do the same thing. The final chapter of this thesis examines how.

Chapter 8   *Forbidden Lie$* and the post-9/11 Truth Claim

The battle for the mind of North America
will be fought in the video arena.
Television is reality and reality is – less than television.

Professor Brian O'Blivion
Videodrome

If Bush can spin W.M.Ds to invade Iraq,
why can't I spin Honour Crimes, to stop women being killed?

Norma Khouri
Forbidden Lie$

Norma Khouri is possibly one of the most unreliable subjects to be captured in a contemporary nonfiction film. Not only did she tour the world asserting that *Forbidden Love* (2003), her fake memoir about the honour killing of her best friend, "Dalia", was true, she continued to do so in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary in *Forbidden Lie$* (2007), a documentary made after her real identity as a con artist known to the Chicago police as "one of the best operating today" (Knox 2004a: 3), had already been exposed.

The slug line on the *Forbidden Lie$* poster: "con or artist? you decide" speaks in part to the uncertainties that continued to proliferate around the veracity of Norma's truth claims about her book, and the crimes she had allegedly committed, following the documentary's release. Like *Ruins* (1999), *Bontoc Eulogy* (1995), *The Thin Blue Line* (1988) and *F for Fake* (1974), which each document deceptive subjects (the art forger, the biased historian, the unreliable witness, the hoax author and the "charlatan" filmmaker respectively), *Forbidden Lie$* presents conflicting truth claims without providing a unifying conclusion for the viewer. Just as "none of the dramas emanating from [the] predicaments" presented in *F for Fake* "are ever 'resolved', nor are any of the protagonists' stories fully told" (Benamou 2006: 145),

Forbidden Lie$ makes the unresolvable, possible "truths" surrounding Norma its focus, rather than the truth (if such a thing is even possible) about Norma herself.

As the documentary progresses, questions multiply for the viewer. Is Norma a ruthless criminal who "decided to move into the book business", as the journalist who exposed her, Malcolm Knox, implies? (Knox 2006). Or is there a deeper pathology behind the web of lies within which she snared every reader, lover and journalist who crossed her path? Is it possible that Norma, who survived an impoverished (and possibly abusive) upbringing on Chicago's south side, falling pregnant to a man with alleged Mafia connections at nineteen, is simply a damaged confabulist who fell in with the "wrong crowd"? Or is she perhaps a product of the public confession culture of the *Jerry Springer Show* (1991-2012): a fame-seeking opportunist spawned by Gabler's "Epoch of Ego, in which the individual occupies centre stage, both for better or worse" (Renov 2004: xiii), and in which "public declarations of private selves have come to be the defining acts of contemporary life, often imbued with great urgency" (xvi-xvii)? Determined to succeed in the modern "world of images, [in which] we are not only what we do; we are also what we show ourselves to be" (xvii), is Norma a literary precursor of the imposters who are now active across social media: dissemblers who similarly exploit the "currency of the 'real'" (Renov 1993: 8) in the knowledge that public declarations of personal misery (no matter how false), provide an effective – and often lucrative – escape route from anonymity?

The criminal allegations made against Norma in *Forbidden Lie$* are also not entirely resolved. The extortions and frauds she is accused of by Knox, by Chicago lawyer Dawn Lakowski, by *The Chicago Tribune* journalist John Yates, and by former NYPD homicide detective Ed Torian, may conceivably be acts which Norma was forced to commit against her will, as she claims in the documentary: with her husband's gun pointed at her head. The doubt surrounding Norma's supposed guilt, and the sincerity of her motivations, is further complicated by Norma's assertion that while she was on the run from the FBI for an alleged one million dollars' worth of fraud, she "turned over a new leaf" in Athens: writing *Forbidden Love* in a good-faith attempt to stop honour crimes in Jordan, producing "the right book, the wrong way, for the right reasons" (Khouri 2006).

Is Norma a con artist? Or a (misunderstood) artist? This question, which drives the labyrinthine journey through fiction and "faction" in *Forbidden Lie$,* also challenges assumptions about subject and filmmaker in the documentary form. Khouri's main-subject status (as a reliable "witness"), and Broinowski's director status (as responsible "truth-teller") are gradually reversed, as Norma embarks on a brazenly false narrative, and Anna mirrors it with cinematic deceptions of her own. Norma's role as a "modern day Sheherazade, continually spinning stories to stave off her own execution" (Knox 2006), is counterpointed by the filmmaker's own use of multiplying and contradictory stories, and audiovisual tricks which alternately mislead and enlighten the viewer. During the documentary, subject and filmmaker become symbiotically locked inside what David Fincher describes as the "four dimensional chess" game of filmmaking, which

> …encompasses everything, from tricking people into investing in it, to putting on the show, to trying to distil down to moments in time, and ape reality but send this other message. It's four dimensional chess, it's strategy, and it's being painfully honest and unbelievably deceitful, and everything in between (Fincher 1999).

At the time of its release, *Forbidden Lie$'* use of deceptive techniques to mirror its Sheherazade-like subject's thousand and one mutating Arabian (and other) tales was generally perceived as a "unique" approach to the documentary form (Rotten Tomatoes 2007-2010). As one reviewer observed, the film's multi-layered, fictive approach to its subject matter

> …turns the film into a mess, a great, beautiful mess. It plays out more like a thriller than a documentary — part Errol Morris re-enactment, part personal story, part investigative journalism. It's hard to try and find the pigeonhole for this film, because it dabbles in so many different styles and is so far from the standard documentary it deserves a shelf of its own (Nelson, 2009).

However, as the documentaries discussed in the previous chapter illustrate, *Forbidden Lie$* does not sit "on a shelf of its own". As a dramatised documentary which uses fictive techniques to present the roles of con artist and filmmaker as symbiotic (and even interchangeable), interrogating its own truth claim in the process, *Forbidden Lie$* works openly within Nichols' reflexive mode (Nichols 1991b) and Renov's analytical third function (Renov 2004: 30), which encompasses

texts that acknowledge "that mediational structures are formative rather than mere embellishments" (31). This approach aligns *Forbidden Lie$* more closely with the similarly reflexive *F for Fake*, *Ruins*, *The Thin Blue Line* and *Forgotten Silver* than with most contemporary documentaries that were made during its release and exhibition between 2007 and 2009. Four more partially reflexive documentaries have since been produced, each exhibiting a similarly symbiotic relationship between deceptive subject and filmmaker. These are the factually ambiguous *Catfish* (2011) about a Facebook impersonator; Banksy's *Exit Through the Gift Shop* (2010) about a graffitti artist partly "invented" for the film; Affleck's portrait of Joaquim Phoenix, *I'm Still Here* (2010) which Phoenix only revealed was fake when promoting it on David Letterman (*Late Show* 2010); and Layton's *The Imposter* (2012) which used reenactment and heist genre conventions to deliver a film "as gripping as any white-knuckle thriller…[and] one of the year's best" (Bradshaw 2012).

Employing deceptive techniques ranging from CGI illusion and fake archive to performance and propaganda, *Forbidden Lie$* also belongs to the key line of post-1990 documentaries which exhibit "déjà vu" parallels with the narrative devices, exhibition modes and filmmaker-personas of nonfiction films made during the first sixty years of cinema. The documentary's strongest historical parallel can be found in its use of illusion. Analysed against the five "primary feats" of magic performed by the early cine-magician David Devant, and catalogued by historian Sam Sharpe (1932: 41-45), the magic-deceptions operating in *Forbidden Lie$* are as follows:

1. Production ("from not being to being"). In the film's opening sequence, Norma's voice is heard speaking to the viewer before she gradually "appears" inside a ballroom interview frame. This illusion is achieved through a fifty frame dissolve, centred on the cut, between a "clean" locked-off background plate that was shot before Norma entered it, and the subsequent sync section of her interview.

2. Disappearance ("from being to not being"). Sixteen minutes into the film, the re-enactment of Dalia's affair with her Christian lover, Michael, segues into a *Karaoke*-style music video, sung by a fan of *Forbidden Love*. At seventeen minutes and 17 seconds, the video cuts to a woman in a black

burqa, striding away from the camera through a golden desert. The music suddenly stops and the woman freezes and turns into a pillar of sand, which collapses and disappers across the desert floor. This illusion   was   achieved through a CGI "build", in which the woman's sillouhette was matted out and repainted with a sand texture, then deconstructed in a frame-by-frame animation, in which clumps of falling sand were digitally "painted" over the original plate.

3. <u>Transformation</u> ("from being in this way to being in that"). Numerous objects are transformed in the "73 Factual Errors" sequence, led by the Jordanian honour crimes activists Rana Husseini and Dr. Amal Sabbagh, who provide the voice-over for a visual montage of the falsehoods in *Forbidden Love*. The Gaulloises cigarettes Norma and Dalia smoke shoot backwards out of their mouths and "pop" off the bed; Amman's Hilton hotel deconstructs into the skeletal building site which existed when Norma first wrote her book; the money Michael pays Dalia for his haircut transforms into the currency that was actually used the year Dalia died; the ambulance which takes Dalia's body to hospital turns into a police van that ferries her father to jail; the Unisex hair salon Norma claims she and Dalia owned reconfigures itself into the kind of Amman barbershop that is typical in a country where unisex salons do not officially exist. All of these tricks were achieved using timelapse and a locked off camera, with two-frame blurs placed over each cut so that they could not be detected by the naked eye. The barbershop transformation involved filming two similarly proportioned sets from exactly the same angle: a real barbershop in Amman, and a fake ladies' salon in Adelaide, which had been dressed with the same number of objects. The Hilton hotel transformation required animators to first digitally "paint" and "light" the building at different stages of its construction, over a filmed backing plate of a real building site in Amman, then to morph the final construction stage into an identically angled and lit shot of the real Amman Hilton, and then, finally, to animate and reverse the entire sequence.

4. Transposition ("from being here to being there"). Viewers are familiar with the film convention of non-continuous editing, in which characters are transposed across time and space, between one cut and the next. However, *Forbidden Lie$* visualises this transposition, showing Norma "floating", as if on a magic carpet, through one continuous shot that takes her from the suburban alleys of Jordan to the skyscraper-filled boulevards of Chicago, to the waterfront avenues and beaches of Queensland. This effect was achieved by filming Norma against a greenscreen panel with fans blowing her hair to convey the sense of movement, and a flickering light focused on her skin to "match" the play of light and shadow between the buildings through which she "appears" to be floating. High speed backing plates, shot at an identical angle, were filmed from camera vans in Amman, Chicago and Queensland's Bribie Island, then composited over the greenscreen footage of Norma to complete the illusion.

5. Natural Science laws disobeyed ("antigravity, magical control, matter through matter, multi-position, restoration, invulnerability, and rapid germination"). In a reenactment of Dalia's murder twenty-seven minutes into the film, a rapid-cut montage of blurred faces and a flashing knife (shot from Dalia's point of view) is cut against a moodily lit wide shot of her being pinned to the bed by her brothers, as her father plunges a dagger into her chest. Suddenly a light flicks on, Dalia's father takes his hand off her mouth, and the actress playing Dalia, Linda Mutawi, sits up and laughs. The film then ramps into a fast-forward tracking shot of Mutawi and the other actors, covered in fake blood, strolling through the lights and cables of the film set. The "stabbing" was a simple film stunt using a retractable knife blade and blood capsules glued to a vest under Mutawi's nightgown. The light flicking on, and the actors' reactions to director Anna Broinowski calling "cut!" are real.

The fake death sequence in *Forbidden Lie$* is not only a cinematic metaphor for Dalia's "fictional death" in *Forbidden Love*: it is also a demystification of the film techniques which have been used to construct it. As such, it echoes the demystifying magic films of early cinema, as in Méliès' *L'Armoire Des Frères Davenport* (*The*

Cabinet Trick of the Davenport Brothers, 1903), which in turn echoed the late-nineteenth century demystifying magic shows of the London Polytechnic in which magicians performed popular spiritualist illusions, then deconstructed them to show audiences how they were done (During 2002: 149). The present-day popularity of magic demystification films is demonstrated by the two million-plus hits achieved by YouTube videos such as *Secret of magic trick of walking on water* (Secret 2012), and *Criss Angel − Cuts Woman in Half – Revealed* (Criss Angel 2010). Like the trick-revealing performances of the Polytechnic and its ciné-magician contemporaries, modern demystification films (and films with demystifying elements such as *Forbidden Lie$*) project illusions which exploit a triple "fascination with likenesses" in which audiences are not only "attracted both to the hoax and *by* the very success of the hoax − by the ability of the filmmaker to produce the perfect illusionistic imitation" (Gaines 1999: 7, 8), but also by the sense *epistophelia,* or "pleasure of knowing" (Nichols 1991: 178), which is experienced when the techniques used to create the hoax are revealed.

However, while both the fake death sequence in *Forbidden Lie$,* and the film's final "reveal" (in which technicians carry out Norma's ballroom interview backdrop to show her sitting in her kitchen), deliver the "definitive twist" of the fake documentary, in which the "viewer comes into a self-consciousness about the documentary…by recognising the act of fakery" (Juhasz 2006: 10), *Forbidden Lie$* remains a documentary *about* a hoax, as opposed to a fake documentary which chronicles a hoax. Unlike the fake documentaries *The Couple in the Cage* (1997) and *The Yes Men* (2003), which are structured around the filmmaker-participants' duping of their viewers and subjects (Torchin 2014: 532), *Forbidden Lie$* lets its subject's real-world deceptions − not the filmic deceptions of its director − take center stage.

The second deceptive technique used in *Forbidden Lie$,* the repurposing and faking of archival material, aligns it with Lerner's *Ruins* (1999) and Guerín's *Tren de Sombras* (1997) as a text which blends factual and fictional footage to construct a credible "real". This technique, as has been noted, began with the newsreels of early cinema, and evolved in various ways through to the 1930s, with the found-footage pastiches of the Padillas. *Forbidden Lie$* uses archival clips of Norma on American and Australian news programs and at the Byron Bay Writers' Festival to establish

her credibility as an author, and the "legitimacy" of *Forbidden Love.* Once Norma's truth-teller status has been debunked by Knox and others, the same archive is repurposed in an ironic montage, underscored by the lyrics of Sade's *She's Not There.* Archive is also "faked" in the documentary: its initial presentation of Norma as a credible author is supported by an apparently "retrospective" scene of Norma reading *Forbidden Love* to a spellbound bookstore audience, which was actually shot two years after Norma's hoax was exposed. Later, in a performative nod to Morris's *Boston Blackie* insert in *The Thin Blue Line*, Norma's Queensland neighbour, Rachel, performs in her own version of a 1940's *Noir* thriller, illustrating her claim that being involved with Norma and her "gangster" husband John was "like being in a Hollywood movie". To reinforce this comparison, real *Noir* footage is later repurposed in the film, when John discovers Norma has been lying to him. His sinister threat, "this is something between me and Norma that has to be discussed…a little bit more", is punch-cut to a black-and-white 1940s Hollywood clip of a gangster in concrete boots, plunging to a watery grave.

The third deceptive technique prominent in *Forbidden Lie$,* the manipulation of subjects in re-enactment and performance, has a long history in nonfiction film, as has been noted: from Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* (1922), to Rouch's 1960s *Cinema Vérité* films. While "strategies of recreation and simulation in historical documentaries" were widely rejected in the post-World War Two decades, *The Thin Blue Line* (1988) revived reenactment as a credible technique (Anderson 2006: 79). Nichols' observation that the attempt to "give witness to personal, subjective experience rather than categorical knowledge coincides with an increased reliance on the techniques of fiction in documentary" (Nichols 1993: 175), acquires an additional meaning when applied to films with deceptive subjects, such as *F for Fake, The Thin Blue Line, Bontoc Eulogy* and *Forbidden Lie$.* Using reenactment to capture the "personal" experiences of *unreliable* subjects (art forgers, unreliable witnesses, biased historians and con artists respectively), these documentaries employ fictive techniques not just to illustrate their subjects' experiences, but to keep the viewer aware of their subjects' untrustworthiness and, by extension, the untrustworthiness of the documentary makers themselves.

Just as *Bontoc Eulogy* presents historical reenactments which are deliberately flawed and "unreliable" (Fuentes 2006: 117), *Forbidden Lie$* uses kitsch sets and melodramatic acting to highlight the bogus nature of Norma's memoir, *Forbidden Love*. To compound the deception, Norma narrates the drama and plays "herself" in two scenes (running to Dalia's house; staring at Dalia's grave), while an actress styled as Norma plays the author in scenes where her face is not shown. Norma also "performs" in stylised bridging sequences: she smokes in a Chicago alleyway, she "travels" in greenscreen montages, and she poses in front of fraud victim Mary Baravikas' southside Chicago home. In several observational scenes, which might have played out as "straight" documentary in a more honest subject's hands, Norma continues to "perform". She dissembles in Torian's lie-detector test; she interacts with Majid whom she claims is her father, as if the incest allegations she has made against him never occurred; and she sheds a well-timed tear in front of a random house in Amman, to imply that it was the (fictional) Dalia's home.

The final deceptive, and historically prominent, technique operating in *Forbidden Lie$* is propaganda. The film positions Norma's fake memoir as itself a form of propaganda, in that it helped to fulfil the burgeoning demand for sensationalist exposés about "evil Arab men". In the lead up to the Iraq War eight similarly influential books about Islam's alleged oppression of women were in circulation (Caterson 2009: 8). Implying that the success of *Forbidden Love* (which was published in sixteen countries and earned an alleged one million dollar advance) was partly due to the support of government officials intent on winning "hearts and minds" over to the unpopular war, *Forbidden Lie$* spends twelve minutes *reversing* the anti-Arab propaganda which was disseminated by Norma and her mainstream allies. These allies included, in publishing Transworld and Random House, in the media CNN and News Corporation, and in government the U.S. State Department's Elizabeth Cheney, and the Australian Department of Immigration.

Presenting the Jordanian journalist Rana Husseini as a Michael Moore-style "avenger" for the maligned Arab people, the film employs humour, statistics, idiom and repetition in its "73 Factual Errors" sequence to debunk Norma's widely promoted claims. In doing so, it joins a list of other documentaries which have similarly presented "information for the purpose of creating an informed and

responsible citizenship" (Grant 2014: 265). They range from the expositional films of Grierson and Moore and the interactive films of Spurlock and Varda, to the observational films of Wiseman, for whom "one of the primary functions of documentary…is to provide public education and awareness" (265). As a reflexive text which reveals its deceptions to the viewer, *Forbidden Lie$* also uses deceptive techniques to obliquely critique its own truth claim. Like *Bontoc Eulogy,* it acknowledges that "cultural distortions are produced when certain groups have the power to define reality and construct serviceable others", making transparent the processes by which "the dynamics of social perception and…images of the other are created and perpetuated" (Fuentes 2006: 128).

Moving the analysis of the deceptive techniques used in *Forbidden Lie$* from Kluge's "first camera" (the film) to his second, "the filmmakers' mind" (Kluge 1988: 4), reveals a second parallel with contemporary dramatised documentaries. In the same way that Macdonald's "filmmaker/detective" drives the narrative of *One Day in September* (1999)*,* drawing on the tropes of the Hollywood thriller to fictionalise its real-world content (Macdonald 2013: 185), *Forbidden Lie$* treats, shoots and edits the story of its con artist subject "like a fiction film" (185), emulating the narrative conventions of the Hollywood heist movie. The filmmaker-persona operating behind the frame can be understood to be that of the "filmmaker/con-artist", insofar as it takes its creative queues, just as Lerner's "filmmaker/forger" does in *Ruins*, and Welles' "filmmaker/charlatan" does in *F for Fake,* from the deceptive techniques of its subject/s. While con artists featured widely in fiction films at the time *Forbidden Lie$* was made, however, their presence in nonfiction texts was comparatively rare. Marsh's "heist" documentary, *Man on Wire* (2008), and Layton's con-themed *The Imposter* (2012), had yet to be made.

*Forbidden Lie$'*s narrative and stylistic inspirations were therefore predominantly fictional ones. Like Mamet's shyster dramas *House of Games* (1987), *Wag the Dog* (1997) and *Heist* (2001), the documentary both exploits the con narrative for its entertainment value, and uses con artist techniques in its construction. Relying on the commercially proven audience fascination with cons, that "there's something fascinating about people not being who they are, and [using] our intelligence to...anticipate where they're going, and then failing and being tricked" (Mamet

1998), *Forbidden Lie$* tricks its viewers into believing they are watching a documentary about an honour-crimes activist for seventeen minutes, before revealing that Khouri (and the film) have been lying to them. The documentary then presents – and debunks – a succession of apparently "plausible" tales, mimicking Mamet's narrative approach to *The Spanish Prisoner* (1997), which he constructed

> …exactly the same [way] as if I were developing a con. The filmmaker has to get something from the audience – their belief, their credulity – which they wouldn't [give] if they were thinking about it. You don't do a magic trick by telling a person what you're going to do. You do a magic trick by letting the person anticipate where you're going, and while they're doing that, you pull your rabbit out (Mamet 1998).

The *onscreen* filmmaker-persona in *Forbidden Lie$,* on the other hand, is not that of the filmmaker/con-artist, but something closer to Australian director Mike Rubbo's "out-of-place…filmmaker acting and improvising his way through the shooting" (Nicks 2014: 325), a character who "obscures his knowledge and engages with others…like the classical dramatic fool" (327). "Anna" the filmmaker pursues "Norma" the con artist in a real-world simulation of the heist movie's cat-and-mouse-chase, the template for which exists in numerous Hollywood movie plots from 1940s *Noir*s, to *The Heist* (1971) and *The Sting* (1973), to *The Usual Suspects* (1995), *Catch Me if You Can* (2002) and the *Oceans Eleven* trilogy (2001, 2004, 2007). *Catch Me if You Can*, which is itself based on the true story of a con artist, most closely resembles the narrative structure of *Forbidden Lie$*. Anna attempts to unravel Norma's lies like a bumbling Tom Hanks, while Norma uses her improvisational genius to stay one step ahead, like Leonardo Di Caprio's mercurial Frank Abegnale Jr. By the third act, the roles of con artist and director have become symbiotically joined. In a studio in Chicago, Anna *cons* Norma into acknowledging she has lied on camera by first pretending not to know, then revealing she *does* know, that a crucial piece of Norma's evidence is false. Norma *directs* her own documentary in Jordan (which, like a modern version of Vertov's citizen-filmmaker, she shoots herself) to show how Anna, because of her "dishonesty", has been duped.

The use of con artist techniques in *Forbidden Lie$* by both subject and filmmaker is also pertinent to the "third camera" which operates in nonfiction film, namely "the generic patterns of the documentary…which are founded on the expectations of the

audience that patronizes it" (Kluge 1988: 4) and, by extension, on the way in which documentary is promoted and exhibited. As Juhasz (2006), Roscoe & Hight (2001) and Williams (1995, 2014) have each observed, documentary's "truth-teller" status has become increasingly tenuous over the last three decades. While it is true that in regard to "the moving image - used for purposes of entertainment, evidence, or sales – indexicality and commodification remain historically linked" (Renov 1993: 8), it is also clear that this link has been strengthened by the "all devouring image culture" (8) which has evolved since the 1990s, in which

> …the value of the image depends upon its ability to inspire belief in its "real" provenance...Stylistic elements drawn from the documentary past – the grittier and grainier the better – are now routinely added to television commercials selling shoes, motorcycles, or telephone services as an antidote to their implicit fraudulence. [Documentary's] low-tech look…has been massively appropriated by Madison Avenue – another super-added, special ingredient for a saturated market-place (8).

The sophistication of the filmmaker-spectator has developed in tandem with the commericial exploitation of the currency of "the real", as Grant & Sloniowski note. By 2013, Reality TV was the most popular staple of prime time, over 700,000 amateur filmmakers were exhibiting on YouTube, and

> …interest in 'reality genres' [was] greater than ever with the advent of inexpensive filmmaking equipment…and freely accessible online exhibition sites (xxiii). There is now an intense desire to record, examine, and exhibit "the real", from the massacre in Tiannamen Square to…the massive *Tsunami* that struck Japan in 2011 (Grant & Sloniowski 2014: xxiv).

Coincident with the filmmaker-spectator's desire to record and exhibit "the real" is a broad (and broadly articulated) public distrust of the way in which reality continues to be commodified by professionals working across a range of nonfiction disciplines: from journalism, documentary and literary nonfiction, to political pundits, corporate lobbyists, and Renov's Madison Avenue advertisers. As has been noted, the development and advancement of twentieth century propaganda techniques by filmmakers such as Moore and Bruckheimer has helped to create an exhibition environment in which audience cynicism toward − or acceptance of − public truth claims is now a matter of individual choice, based partly on the consumer's awareness of the extent to which film techniques can manipulate belief, partly on the

entertainment value of the truth claim being delivered, and partly on the consumer's own belief about whatever product or message is being promoted. However, propaganda (and its commercial cousin, advertising), are not the only communication modes to have reached new levels of persuasion in the past three decades. Also prevalent in contemporary public discourse is another set of deceptive techniques, which were catalogued by linguistics professor David W. Maurer in 1940, and have since been developed on all levels of the factual spectrum from the "impersonators, forgers and…other practitioners of deceit" working in fake documentary (Lerner 2006: 29) to entrepreneurs, celebrities and politicians working at the highest levels of commerce, entertainment and government. These techniques belong to the con artist.

According to Maurer, the techniques of "the Big Con" evolved from the "Small Cons" of late-nineteenth century fairgrounds, such as the Cup and Ball routine, rigged card games, and pick pocket scams. "Closely knit with the invention [of] the *Big Store*, a fake gambling club or broker's office, in which the victim is swindled", the Big Con reached a "high state of perfection" in the first third of the twentieth century, hitting its zenith as a serious money-earner by the late 1930s (4). Executed by a central team of the "Roper" (who snared the "Mark" or victim) and the "Insideman" (who completed his "fleecing"), the Big Con used secondary collaborators to play brokers, bankers and betting gentlemen, who "snowed" the Mark with realistic dialogue, sets and props to trigger the "larceny" in his veins, and persuade him to part with his money, or "cush". While the principles governing Big and Small Cons progress through the same "fundamental stages to an inevitable conclusion" (10), the Big Con is the most refined version of the con artist's craft, and requires great skill to execute. Its elaborate scripts are constructed with the care and precision of a "novel", while Small Cons are merely "anecdotes" (Luc Santé in Maurer 1940: x). In the late 1930s, the three dominant Big Cons were "The Rag" (using a fake stockbroker's office), "The Wire" (using a fake betting saloon), and "The Pay-off" (using a fake betting saloon and a bank [31-103]). The ten fundamental steps of all Big Cons proceed as follows:

1. "Putting the Mark up": the Roper locates a well-to-do victim.

2. "Playing the Con for him": the Roper befriends the Mark and gains his confidence.

3. "Roping the Mark": the Roper introduces the Mark to the charismatic Insideman, usually playing a stockbroker with "insider" knowledge, or a gambler with a "secret" formula for winning races.

4. "Telling him the Tale": using fake newspaper articles and other "proof" of his success, the Insideman shows the Mark how he can make money, betting on horses or stocks.

5. "Giving him the Convincer": the conmen take the Mark to the Big Store (the bank, betting saloon or stockbroker's office) and allow him to make a substantial profit.

6. "Giving him the Breakdown": with the Mark hungry to make more money, the conmen convince him to invest his savings in their "fail-safe" scam.

7. "Putting him on the Send": the conmen send the Mark home to get his money, often hiring armed collaborators to trail him, in order to protect it.

8. "Taking off the Touch": the conmen and their collaborators play the Mark against the Big Store, and take all his money.

9. "Blowing him off": the Roper gets the Mark out of the way as quietly as possible, telling him the Police are onto the Insideman's scam.

10. "Putting in the Fix": if the Mark threatens to go to the Police himself, the conmen stage a fake arrest, fake fight, or fake murder, to frighten him off.

These techniques, when viewed retrospectively, appear to be as archaic and unsophisticated as the propaganda techniques articulated by Bartlett (1940). However, in the post-9/11 media arena, they can, in fact, be understood to have evolved into highly persuasive, and often highly lucrative, "convincers." Since 2001,

modern variations of Maurer's Big Con strategies have been successfully used in commerce (by billionaire Ponzi scheme traders such as Bernie Madoff), in entertainment (by bestselling hoax authors such as Norma Khouri and James Frey), and in sport (by drug-cheating athletes such as Lance Armstrong). In the political arena, the techniques of the Big Con (in combination with the propaganda techniques previously analysed), were elevated to an unprecedented public scale in 2003 when former U.S. President George W. Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney constructed the Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) deception (or "con"), to justify the Coalition of the Willing's illegal invasion of Iraq. With the help of charismatic "Insidemen" such as British Prime Minister Tony Blair, US Secretary of State Colin Powell, and U.S. Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, the WMD con was enthusiastically disseminated by "Ropers" in the mainstream western media (including embedded coalition war reporters and Fox News); and remains, to this day, one of the grandest public swindles of all time.

Facilitated by "pokes" such as the vial of Anthrax Powell used to illustrate Saddam Hussein's "chemical stockpile" in the United Nations Security Council, and the forged trade documents distributed by the CIA as "convincers" that Iraq had imported uranium from Niger (Kristof 2003), the WMD con continued to be perpetrated after the invasion through the "Big Store" of the Central Command Centre in Doha. From the Centre's *Dr Strangelove*-style sets, which had been telegenically designed by Bruckheimer and a Hollywood art director (Hammond 2003: 23-36), hard-hatted reporters relayed stories of heroic marines, and their search for Saddam's "hidden" WMD: which they had purportedly invaded the country to find. Between 2001 and 2003, the Bush administration made 935 deceptive statements to galvanize support for the Iraq invasion, including false assertions about Saddam's links to Al Quaeda, and his (non existent) WMD (Center for Public Integrity 2008, CBC News 2008). In 2003, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz explained that WMD had been chosen as a justification for the war "for bureaucratic reasons…because it was the one reason everyone could agree on" (Shovelan 2003). Later, Donald Rumsfeld admitted, "OK, we were lying, but…with a good intention. We manipulated you, but this was part of a larger strategy" (Žižek cited in Brevini 2013: 265).

In the build up to the invasion, and for the first years of the war, the Coalition's propaganda campaign was largely successful: with most western journalists surrendering their "independence and scepticism" (Moyers 2007) to carry out the wartime media's expected role of "winning the minds of civilians", a crucial tool of modern warfare since World War One (Finch 2006: 81). Falling in line with the Coalition's need for "a compliant press, to pass on their propaganda as news and cheer them on" (Moyers 2007), reporters added rousing stories to the Bruckheimer-produced "Operation Desert Storm" TV spectacle, which was a nightly ratings bonanza after its explosive "Shock 'n Awe" season premiere. Only a few media dissenters, such as British PR agent Mark Borkowski and American journalist Michael Wolff, refused to participate in these "persuasion exercises" (Finch 2006: 36), responding, instead, with cynicism:

> Borkowski asked "Is it all a photo-op?", comparing the propaganda campaign to a "corporate-style PR and marketing strategy." [Wolff] described the surreal atmosphere at the million-dollar Cent-Com compound in Doha…ridiculing the pretence that reporters were being given the "big picture": "Eventually you realize you know significantly less than when you arrived, and that you are losing more sense of the larger picture by the hour. At some point you will know nothing." He described the briefings as a "theatre of the absurd" in which journalists interviewed other journalists, and watched television news reports to find out what was going on (Hammond 2003: 23-36).

The deceptions used by the Coalition to justify the Iraq war, and their subsequent exposure by the same journalists (or Marks) who had "bought" them in the first place, had a significant impact on documentary filmmaking. In keeping with Renov's proposition that "documentary flourishes in times of crisis" (Renov 1993: 109), the 9/11 terrorist attacks heralded in a rare period of prominence for political nonfiction film. Just as "debate over the moral probity of dominant film [and media] practices" was ignited by the hardships of the post-1929 Depression era, and by Regan's 1980s economic reforms (109), the post-9/11 era's controversial wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the lies which were used to promote them, focused "normally myopic media attention to independent nonfiction's promise of greater verisimilitude" (109). In a stark illustration of the notion that "truth is produced, induced and extended according to the regime in power" (Trinh cited in Renov 1993: 8), the 9/11 decade, like the World War decades before it, was a time in which "truth" (as an immutable

entity which politicians, journalists and other shapers of public discourse were ethically bound to uphold) was cynically re-configured into a commodity to be moulded and sold to ideologically susceptible consumers. In this environment, the popularity of political documentaries surged: as viewers, betrayed by "credible" news sources, and increasingly cynical about anything sold as "fact," turned to the cinema as an alternative source of information. *Control Room* (2004)*, Outfoxed* (2004)*, Fahrenheit 9/11* (2004) and *Taxi to the Dark Side* (2007) functioned as documentary "antidotes" to the "faction virus" that flourished in the moral vacuum left behind by the WMD con, and its attendant deceptions.

The exposure of the Coalition's propaganda also had an impact on popular entertainment both in the broadcast and theatrical spheres, and online. Viewer cynicism about the truth of information presented in public discourse as "true" helped to make deceptive narratives (whether political, commercial or fictional) a dominant filter through which public communications could now be dissected: from the doctored press releases of politicians, to the exaggerated statements of celebrities and corporations, to the truth claims of entertainment itself. The mass critique of popular culture by the spectator-consumer (a comparatively marginal endeavour when Barthes first documented it in *Mythologies* in 1957) had, by 2012, become a mainstream pursuit:

> Instead of just passively absorbing a series of broadcasts from Planet Media, consumers today participate directly in the creation of culture. The thing that's exploding into relevance in our era is not mass culture but the critique of mass culture...This happens everywhere now, often in real time. And this critical analysis is often as vital and interesting and consumable as the culture it discusses... (S. Anderson 2012).

The rise of the deceptive factual narrative as an entertainment in its own right (as evidenced by the social-media frenzy which ignites the blogosphere every time a public lie goes "viral"), has helped to elevate hoax authors, corrupt CEOs, cheating athletes, fraudulent politicians, and sensationalist YouTube claimants to a bold new status as the antiheros of the post-9/11 age. The carnivalesque line-up of fakers and freaks recently trending on the web, from the *Woman-who-looks-like-Barbie* (2012) and *Pregnant Man* (2012) to *Balloon Boy* (2009) (whose family faked his disappearance in a weather balloon to secure a Reality TV contract), points to the

same conclusion drawn by Santé in the 1999 edition of *The Big Con*: that the con artist has "emerged from the underworld and entered the mainstream, where he may be far less colourful and imaginative, but no less on the grift" (Santé in Maurer 1999: xv). In the business world, perhaps no-one better illustrates the con artist's elevation as a celebrity antihero than Big Store grifter Bernie Madoff, whose Ropers and Insidemen raked in billions in his fake New York stock broking offices, before he confessed (in the kind of glamorous photo spread *Vanity Fair* normally reserves for Hollywood A-listers) that it was all "one big lie" (Madoff 2009).

Reality Television has not been immune from viewer cynicism about the "facts" now sold on screen. Audiences know that the "unvarnished truths" presented *Big Brother* are extensively edited before going to air, and that *Big Brother's* "un-cut" late-night broadcasts are no less corrupted by the fact that the participants are aware of (and constantly perform to) the cameras concealed in their rooms. On the internet, YouTube's amateur videos, which attracted attention for their refreshing authenticity when they first appeared in 2005 (*20 Oldest Videos* 2005), have since been infiltrated by commercial, political and religious promotions masquerading as home-movies. Diet Coke, iphone and Volkswagen have each used apparently "amateur" postings to promote their products (*Diet Coke* 2006; *iphone* 2007; *VW* 2009); while political and religious campaigners have appropriated the "grass roots" and "home-made" documentary aesthetic to bend public opinion their way (*KONY* 2012; *Scientologyandbeinghot* 2008; *illusion* 2006).

In the personal sphere, a panoply of celebrity-seekers continue to fabricate stories (with *Lonely Girl* 2006 being an early incarnation of the genre), while in the cinema, dramatic naturalism (still the preferred narrative mode of star-driven Hollywood films), is another "con" which no longer quite works. Audiences, bombarded by newsfeeds showing Hollywood stars in their tracksuit pants, may appreciate Angelina Jolie's acting ability in *A Mighty Heart* (2007), and George Clooney's Hawaiian mensch in *The Descendants* (2011), but they can no longer easily suspend their disbelief when Jolie's and Clooney's extreme visibility prevents them from convincingly embodying the "ordinary" people they portray. In television drama, the post-9/11 viewer fascination with deceptive narratives has been lucratively exploited. In 2009, Fox produced *Lie to Me* (based on psychologist Paul Ekman's research on

the facial muscles used when lying), CTV released *The Listener* (about a paramedic who can detect lies), and CBS created the *The Mentalist* (about an psychic detective who can read peoples' secrets). Television's litmus test of thematic popularity, the soap opera, has also capitalised on audience fascination with deceit, with *Days of Our Lives* and *The Bold and the Beautiful* each running plot lines resurrecting the lie detector machine as the *prop-de-jour*. At the highbrow end of the market, where well-made series by Hollywood directors are luring cinema audiences to the small screen, liars also take centre stage. *Mad Men* revolves around the duplicitous life of ad-man Don Draper, who lies about his ongoing sexual affairs and past in Vietnam; the eponymous hero of *Dexter* is a serial killer who hides behind a "family man" identity; *Breaking Bad*'s high-school teacher, Walter White, moonlights as a crystal-meth dealer; and *House of Cards* tracks the Machiavellian progress of Congressman Frank Underwood, as he lies his way into the Whitehouse's top job.

Post-9/11 Reality Television shows have also pumped up the deception stakes. *Survivor* (CBS) uses inter-contestant treachery and "Moles" to spin a web of deceit around its paranoid contestants; *Australia's Got Talent* (Channel 7) routinely leaks bogus stories about contestants "going off the rails" to attract viewers; and *X-Factor* (Channel 7) casts underdogs with unexpectedly beautiful voices to cash in on the Susan Boyle phenomenon. The British quiz show, *Poker Face* (2006-2007)*, which made its contestants' ability to deceive each other the determining factor of who would win, was successfully reformatted in thirteen countries including India, China and Australia, where it was broadcast as *The Con Test*. In mainstream cinema, dissemblers enjoy a new prominence, no longer as antagonists, but as leads. Studio Canal presented Gary Oldman as a duplicitous anti-hero in the espionage thriller *Tinker, Tailor, Solider, Spy* (2011), while Hollywood has produced numerous star-as-liar vehicles ranging from *Catch Me if You Can* (2002) and the 2008 heist flick *Deception* (with Hugh Jackman playing a predatory extortionist) to the 2009 thriller *Duplicity* (featuring Julia Roberts as a corporate spy).

The "literary con artist", the hoax author, has also featured prominently in fiction film such as *The Night Listener* (2006) about fake memoirist Anthony Godby Johnson, *The Hoax* (2006) about Clifford Irving's fake biography of Howard Hughes, and *Shattered Glass* (2003) about the deceptive *New Republic* journalist Stephen

Glass. Corporate con artists have been put in the spotlight by *Michael Clayton* (2007) and *Thank you for Smoking* (2005), while political con artists such as former U.S. Presidents Nixon and George Bush and Texas congressman Charlie Wilson have been respectively lampooned in *Frost/Nixon* (2008), *W.* (2008) and *Charlie Wilson's War* (2008). The Iraq war, and the lies used to promote it, have also not escaped scrutiny, as *Body of Lies* (2008) and the US/UK co-production about the "sexing up" of the Coalition's WMD lie, *In the Loop* (2009), both demonstrate. By the end of the 9/11 decade, in fact, the deceptive narrative had arguably become so deeply embedded in popular culture, British comedian Ricky Gervais was able to finance a big-budget fantasy, *The Invention of Lying* (2009) about a bizarre parallel universe, where no-one lied at all.

While it must be acknowledged that deception has always played a role in popular entertainment, the diversity and prevalence of deception-themed fiction films, game shows, television series and internet videos made between 2001 and 2014 suggests that deception reached an unprecedented level of popularity in the post-9/11 era. In this environment, *Forbidden Lie$*, a film about a con artist (Kluge's first camera), made by a "deceptive" filmmaker (Kluge's second camera), and promoted to an audience well-versed in deceptive techniques (Kluge's third camera), can be understood to be a documentary which, far from sitting on "a shelf of its own" (Nelson 2008), spoke to the post-9/11 *Zeitgeist*. Functioning as a nonfiction "antidote" to the resurrection of the public lie as a persuasive tool by the U.S. and its allies, *Forbidden Lie$* uses the provocation, "con or artist? you decide," to encourage viewers to form their own judgment about Norma's truth claims, and those of her powerful government and corporate supporters. Like *Les Glaneurs et la Glaneuse* (2000) and *POM Wonderful presents: the Greatest Movie Ever Sold* (2011), the documentary makes the spectator an "active" rather than "passive" participant, operating within what Truffaut, writing of Hitchcock, dubbed "the area of the spectacle" in which "filmmaking is not the dual interplay between the director and his picture, but a three way game in which the audience, too, is required to play" (Truffaut 1968: 16).

As a film which disabuses the viewer of Norma's propagandistic depiction of "evil" Arab men and "oppressed" Arab women by showing the "real Jordan" (a reverse-

propaganda goal), and one which uses sleight-of-hand, fake archive and re-enactment to do so (deceptive techniques), *Forbidden Lie$* activates what Hansen, writing of Kluge's "analytical fictions", describes as

> A textual climbing wall designed to encourage viewers to draw their own connections across generic divisions of fiction and documentary (Hansen 1995: 144).

Mirroring the deceptive techniques of its con artist subject, *Forbidden Lie$* reveals (rather than conceals) its manipulations to its audience, thus extending the narrative focus from the expected question (is Norma lying or isn't she?), to a broader question about the nature of "truth" itself, in the post-9/11 era, and the extent to which government, the media and the documentary filmmaker are each complicit in its construction. In doing so, *Forbidden Lie$* joins the post-1988 documentaries analysed in the previous two chapters, which similarly invite "radical doubt, ambivalence, and the embrace of contingency rather than certain knowledge" (Renov 2004: 147). Its value as a reflexive text is perhaps most closely aligned with that of *The Thin Blue Line*, which also "exists both as challenge and affirmation: provocative in its refusal of individualist truth, profoundly moral in its call for, and reliance on, individual moral responsibility" (147).

Finally, as a cultural and commercial product of the post-9/11 era, when the deceptive public narrative reached an unprecedented level of validity and power, *Forbidden Lie$* leaves the spectator

> …not with a desire to know what Khouri lied about — whether her husband was a mobster or her father abused her — we just end up wanting to delve deeper into the instruments of the lie, the psychology of the lie. Journalism, filmmaking, novels — they are all different forms of lying, but all in an effort to inch closer to the truth (Nelson 2008).

CONCLUSION

Reality is more fabulous, more maddening,
more strangely manipulative than fiction.

Trinh Minh-ha
1993

For the last hour, I've been lying my head off.

Orson Welles
F for Fake

When *Forbidden Lie$* played at the Al Jazeera Documentary Film Festival in Doha, the organizers decorated the foyer with banners displaying a still from the film. The still featured "Dalia" in a flowing black *burqa,* striding across the dunes of a golden desert. Beneath the banners, Qattari women drifted past in black *abaya*, and men in white *dishdash* sipped mint tea. I told the festival's director, Abbas Arnaout (himself a filmmaker) that the actress in the image was Anglo-Australian, the *"burqa"* was polyester made in Taiwan, and the sand dunes were in Stockton, north of Newcastle. Abbas smiled at the irony: "Film makes its own realities, doesn't it."

Forbidden Lie$, a film which explodes the fact/fiction binary to openly play with what "truth" in documentary means, encouraging the viewer to participate in the game by revealing its deceptive techniques, joins the singular line of reflexive documentaries discussed in this thesis. They range from the post-9/11 era films *Exit through the Gift Shop* (2010) and *I'm Still Here* (2010), to the late twentieth century hybrids *Ruins* (1997) and *The Thin Blue Line* (1988), and back through the "docu-fictions" of Rouch, Marker, Welles, Buñuel, Vertov and Flaherty to the original cinematic trickster himself, Georges Méliès. By activating the "textual climbing wall" between fiction and documentary (Hansen 1995: 144), and by inviting audiences to draw their own conclusions about the truth claim being presented, these border-crossing documentaries deliver a "a fiction (un)like any other" (Nichols 1991: 113), influencing filmmakers and audiences long after they have been made. They are films in which, as Renov observes of Marker's *Letters to Siberia* (1957),

> …the collective coherence of the filmic elements remains to be constructed by a thinking audience. The analytical impulse is not so much enacted by the filmmakers as encouraged in the viewer (Renov 2004: 85).

While the reflexive documentary is a comparatively rare phenomenon in cinema's one hundred and twenty year history, documentary's "secret", the use of deception across all five of its modes (expositional, interactive, observational, reflexive and performative [Nichols 1991]), has been both prevalent, and largely concealed. The genre's defining pledge to the viewer, "that what we will see and hear is real and true" (Aufderheide 2007: 56) and its attendant "truth claim" (Renov 1993a: 30), have resulted in the use of "a wide range of artifice in order to assert that claim" (Aufderheide 2007: 56). This is a fact which has been both embraced and denied by filmmakers throughout the evolution of the form. Five over-arching deceptive techniques can be found operating in documentary since its recognition as a genre in 1926 (Rosen 1993: 66) and indeed, *before* its recognition in the genre-free landscape of early cinema (Gunning 1995, Kiel 2006). They are:

1. The repurposing, recycling and faking of archive: as seen in blended fact/fiction newsreels and travelogues made between 1895 and the 1920s; the fact/fiction pastiches of the Mexican "border crossers", the Padillas; World War Two propaganda films such as *The Lambeth Walk* (1942); and a number of post--Direct Cinema hybrids, from the experimental *Ruins* (1999)*, Tren des Sombras* (1997) and *Bontoc Eulogy* (1995); to the dramatised features *The Thin Blue Line* (1988), *Man on Wire* (2008) and *Forbidden Lie$* (2007).

2. The use of illusion and sleight-of-hand: as seen in Méliès' cinematic "documentations" of popular late-nineteenth century stage-magic tricks; Welles' in-camera illusions for *F for Fake* (1974); and post-9/11 feature documentaries and television programs such as *Man on Wire* (2008) and *Earth: Making of a Planet* (2010) in which CGI technology delivers the same "wonder" as traditional stage magic, rendering visible that which is "impossible to believe" (Gunning 1995: 117).

3. The use of photographic technology to "trick" the eye: as seen in Vertov's and Riefenstahl's manipulations of camera lenses, framing, speeds and

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mounts in *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) and *Triumph of the Will* (1935); the timelapse, macro and microscopic photography of *Baraka* (1992) and *Microcosmos* (1996); and the flight-simulating cameras of *Earth Flight* (2011-12).

4. <u>The manipulation of subjects and content in re-enactment and performance</u>: as seen in the deceptively edited "real" of *Nanook of the North* (1922); the apparently spontaneous (but staged) scenes of *Congorilla* (1929)*, Chang* (1927), *Las Hurdes* (1933) and *Chronique d'un Èté* (1960); the "docufictions" *Jaguar* (1967)*, Bontoc Eulogy* (1995) and *Hail* (2011); deceptive "docudramas" like *The Path to 9/11* (2006); and the fake documentaries *Borat* (2006), and *Forgotten Silver* (1995).

5. <u>Propaganda</u>: as seen in the pro-colonialist early cinema newsreels of Doublier and Williamson, the deceptive propaganda newsreels of World War One, 1930s and 1940s propaganda features such as *Triumph of the Will* (1935) and *Listen to Britain* (1942), Grierson's "educative" social issue films for the British Empire Marketing Board and National Film Board of Canada, and the contemporary political "entertainments" of Moore and Bruckheimer.

In the public realm, deception has also been widely used to promote the documentary truth claim. In the early "Cinema of Attractions", films which mixed the factual and the fake were exhibited as spectacles of the "real" (Gunning 1995, During 2002), with scant regard for the ethical implications of marketing the fabricated as "true" (Lerner 2006a: 19). In the 1920s, documentary's entertaining powers of "mimesis" dominated its promotion, with Flaherty's romanticised ethnographies, and the Johnstons' constructed "travelogues", both sold, and received, as uncanny "displays" of the "real" (Gaines 1999). In the post-World War Two decades, when Direct Cinema's "objectivity" was the dominant (but gradually receding) ideal, filmmakers deceived both viewers and arguably, themselves with a science-based faith in the ability of new camera technology to capture reality in an "unmediated" way (Arthur 1993, Winston 1995). The proliferation of fake documentaries and their various subgenres from the late 1980s to the 2000s gave the documentary truth claim a new deceptive "twist" (Juhasz 2006) as real-world content was manipulated in semi-

fictional documentaries masquerading as "fact", such as *Borat* (2006) and *The Dark Side of the Moon* (2002). In the political arena, *Roger & Me* (1989), *Pandora's Promise* (2013), and the Pentagon-backed series *Profiles from the Front Line* (2003) each issued absolutist public claims about their "veracity", despite having been made with extensive (and artfully concealed) propaganda techniques (Bernstein 2014, Robb 2004, Rhoads 2004).

The ethical implications of these deceptions, both on the documentary subject and the spectator, became a more serious concern for filmmakers after World War Two, as as been shown: when markers of "documentary authenticity" (Bazin 1967: 162); and a new imperative for documentary, alongside other "discourses of sobriety", to be "believable" (Nichols 1991) influenced the way in which documentaries were made, promoted and consumed. While the rise of the filmmaker-spectator, and the proliferation of deceptive narratives (in both factual and fictional discourses) in the 1990s and 2000s coincided with a resurgence in the use of deceptive techniques in documentary, particularly in dramatized features (Nichols 1993), contemporary documentary makers − more so than their historical counterparts – have nonetheless largely adhered to three ethical principles: "Do no harm"; "Protect the vulnerable"; and "Honor the viewer's trust" (Aufderheide, Jaszi & Chandra 2009: 1).

The confluences between the fictive, ethical and public deceptions operating in contemporary and historical documentaries have been examined throughout this thesis. However, to test its initial proposition that documentary, *despite* its deceptions, "remains a valid and important art form," the ethical impact of deception itself on the contemporary documentary maker's subjects, audience, and off-screen collaborators, must be acknowledged. The prevalence of deceptive narratives in the post-9/11 era, and the mass-appropriation of documentary devices by fiction filmmakers, advertisers, and the filmmaker-consumer, have led to an environment in which documentary must find new ways of presenting the "real" to sophisticated (and sceptical) audiences, if it is to retain its credibility and appeal. But rather than generating a spike in the production of reflexive documentaries (which capitalise on viewer fascination with, and knowledge of, deceptive techniques) the dominant response of documentary filmmakers has been to conceal – rather than reveal − the deceptive techniques they continue to use.

This is comprehensively demonstrated by Aufderheide, Jaszi and Chandra's work on contemporary documentary practices, *Honest Truths: Documentary Filmmakers on Ethical Challenges in their Work* (2009). Justifying "the manipulation of individual facts, sequences and meanings of images if it meant telling a story more effectively and helped viewers to grasp the…overall truthful, themes of a story" (1), the forty-five filmmakers interviewed for *Honest Truths* positioned themselves, in relation to deception, in much the same way as Grierson, Vertov and Flaherty: as "executors of a 'higher truth'" (19). Perhaps unsurprisingly, the majority chose to remain anonymous. As the authors note:

> The ethical conflicts put in motion by these features of a filmmaker's embattled-truth-teller identity are, ironically for a truth-telling community, unable to be widely shared or even publicly discussed...Constrained by the fear that openly discussing ethical issues will expose them to risk of censure (23), [anonymity enabled filmmakers to] speak freely about situations that may have put them or their companies under uncomfortable scrutiny (5-6).

The deceptive practices covered in *Honest Truths* range from the commonly accepted (removing dialogue to alter meaning, concealing jump-cuts with shots filmed at other times, manipulating soundtracks); to the moderately problematic: one filmmaker, unable to find archive of his subject's 1950s childhood, used footage of an unrelated family, another forced his subject to repeat a story about being abused in prison until he cried on camera (3-20). The more extreme deceptions include films where financial constraints demanded expedient solutions: one wildlife filmmaker broke a rabbit's legs to ensure it could be killed by predators on camera (3), another used stock footage of an animal from another country, when he could not capture it *in situ* (5). Filmmakers working with human subjects, on the other hand, felt a stonger moral obligation to protect them – variously admitting to hiding a celebrity subject's addiction (17); hiding a company's employment of illegal immigrants (11); and breaking the documentary rule never to pay the subject, by offering "honorariums" and a split of profits (12-14). Filmmakers who disliked their subjects, or risked their film being damaged by their subjects' behaviour, confessed to using "bad faith and outright deception" to obtain their footage, regarding their actions as "entirely ethical because of an ends-justifies-the-means argument" (14).

These deceptions, as "the necessary tools of documentary, [which] fall under Picasso's idea of art as the lie that makes us realise the truth" (17), join the range of deceptive techniques operating in the ethical, fictive and public realms of documentary production, consumption and exhibition discussed in this thesis. They are part of the contradictory juggling act which all documentary makers, bound by an "ethical obligation [to] deliver honestly told stories" (15), must perform: between the need to entertain the audience, stay true to the film's vision, and honour the trust of the subject and viewer. Despite its truth claim, documentary "is never innocent" (Rothman 2014: 13): it has always employed deception to present higher, more profitable, or more persuasive "truths" on screen. Unlike the fiction filmmaker, documentary makers are, on one level, "reality hunters": the camera is their weapon, and the subject their prey. Nanook was vulnerable to Flaherty because "the filmmaker, no less than his 'primitive' subjects, belongs to a natural order whose only rule is to 'eat or be eaten'" (Rothman 2014: 13). Present-day documentary subjects are no less vulnerable: Baron Cohen deceives the participants of *Borat* to secure massive box-office; Moore uses the propagandist's ends-justifies-the-means rationale to excise Smith from *Roger & Me*; and tabloid-style series, "those wayward, twenty-first century heirs of Direct Cinema", give "the socially disenfranchised a 'face'", but fail "to empower them beyond the limits of the screen", yielding "little in the way [of] 'truth'" (Benamou 2006: 165-166).

Ultimately, what *Honest Truths* confirms is that documentary makers, despite documentary's continuing status as fiction's superior "truth-telling" other, are a paradoxically untrustworthy group, whether they care to admit it or not. Largely unfettered by institutionalised ethical protocols (Aufderheide *et al* 2007: 3) and operating outside the professional code that governs journalists worldwide (*Society of Professional Journalists* 2012), documentary makers choose which ethical, fictive and public deceits to use, on a case-by-case basis. Those who entertain audiences at the expense of their subjects sometimes justify their approach as "authentic," or "brave," or most ironically, "truthful." While the techniques used do not often veer into the problematic territory raised by *Honest Truths*, and are usually employed in a good-faith attempt to put a "higher truth" on screen, documentary makers know that what they do is inherently, "deceptive". As filmmaker Joe Berlinger admits,

I usually enter people's lives at a time of crisis. If the tables were turned, God forbid! I'd never let them make a film about my tragedy. I am keenly aware of the hypocrisy of asking someone for access that I myself would probably not grant (Aufderheide *et al* 2007: 7).

The use of manipulation, ellision, illusion and fakery in documentary, and the "how much is 'real'" question which arises every time a documentary "ceases to be just news and becomes entertainment" (Gaines 1999: 10), has cast a long shadow, from *Nanook of the North* and *Las Hurdes* to the controversial "docbusters" of Moore, Morris and Spurlock. Reflexive documentaries such as *Forbidden Lie$* and *F for Fake*, in which the "filmmaker-persona" mirrors the deceptive techniques of its subject/s, further problematize the documentary truth claim by bringing it into conflict with Kluge's "third camera", the audience – who accept that:

The truthfulness, accuracy, and trustworthiness of documentaries are important…because we value them precisely and uniquely for these qualities. When documentarians deceive us, they are not just deceiving viewers but members of the public who might act upon knowledge gleaned from the film (Aufderheide 2007: 4-5).

To the onscreen deceptions performed by the "filmmaker/con artist" in *Forbidden Lie$*, must be added the *off screen* deceptions which I, as a real person (and not a "character in a movie") performed on Norma. As the documentary equivalent of the "journalist/confidence man" who preys "on people's vanity, ignorance, or loneliness, gaining their trust and betraying them without remorse" (Malcolm 1990), I "conned" Norma as comprehensively as she "betrayed" me. Believing Norma would prove Dalia's story was true in Jordan, I "roped" her with a promise of my own: that *Forbidden Lie$* would support her campaign against honour crimes. I introduced her to my "Insideman" Dr. Helen Caldicott, and used our documentary, *Helen's War* (2004) as a "convincer", showing Norma how the film gave Helen's anti-nuclear campaign the same attention and credibility she craved. I put Norma "on the send" to locate witnesses in Jordan, and when she failed to deliver this proof, I "took off the touch", turning my film into the portrait of a con artist. When I finally showed *Forbidden Lie$* to Norma, I had already "put in the fix": Norma had signed a release form agreeing not to injunct the film, no matter how defamatory she found it.

The symbiotic relationship between filmmaker and con artist in *Forbidden Lie$* exists inside the moral vacuum opened up by the post-9/11 ideological and

commercial exploitation of the "currency of the real" as it has been examined in this thesis. Norma justified her deceptions in *Forbidden Love* on the grounds that "if Bush can spin WMDs to invade Iraq" she could "spin Honour Crimes to stop women being killed" (Khouri 2006). I justified my deceptions in *Forbidden Lie$* on the grounds that they would reverse Norma's anti-Arab propaganda, and present a "higher truth". Unlike the "de-hoaxing" of the murderer Jeffrey MacDonald, who was shocked to discover that his "friend", author Joe McGinniss, had portrayed him "as a psychopathic killer" (Malcolm 1990: 31), Norma responded to my betrayal with relative equanimity. Knowing that *Forbidden Lie$* would not be the honour crimes documentary we had set out to make (because she, unlike the credulous MacDonald, had betrayed me too), Norma watched it without anger. MacDonald sued McGinniss for libel (Malcom 1990); Norma cheerfully recorded a new raft of implausible "tales" for the DVD commentary, adding another layer to her perpetually spinning web of deceit.

If the contemporary documentary landscape is defined by the multivalent, "relative and contingent" truths driving factual discourse in the post-9/11 age (Williams 2014), then Norma Khouri is its human face. She exists inside a moral vacuum of her own making: approaching life as an elaborate game, and improvising on queue. It was not narcissism, nor the desire to salvage her reputation, that kept Norma participating in the "four dimensional chess game" of *Forbidden Lie$* long after she had conned me: it was the adrenalin rush of knowing that she might be caught. Unlike hoax author Clifford Irving, who confessed, "I was on the train of lies. I couldn't jump off" (*Liar, Liar* 2000), Norma showed no remorse. Like the fabled "trickster", who "possesses no values, moral or social…yet through his actions, all values come into being" (Hyde, 1998: 10), Norma countered accusations of deceit with new lies. Whoever the "real Norma" is, she is not cold-blooded schemer the media portrayed. She is more trickster than devil. And there is a difference:

> The Devil is an agent of evil, but the Trickster is *a*moral, not *im*moral. [He] is at one and the same time creator and destroyer, giver and negator, he who dupes others and is always duped himself…He knows neither good not evil, yet he is responsible for both (Hyde 1998: 10).

On balance, the onscreen deceptions I used in *Forbidden Lie$*, and the offscreen deceptions I used on Norma, while extreme, do not ultimately overstep an ethical

line. I did not shoot footage which made Norma appear less negative then omit it, as Moore did with Roger Smith. I did not "make up" stories about Norma, as Irving did with Howard Hughes. And I did not tell Norma that I thought she was innocent, as McGinniss did with MacDonald. While *Forbidden Lie$* makes extensive use of the deceptive techniques discussed in this thesis, and while my manipulation of Norma did stray into morally problematic territory, I met the documentary maker's three obligations, "Do no harm", "Protect the vulnerable," and "Honor the viewer's trust" (Aufderheide *et al* 2009: 1), in the most ethical way I could. The use of deception in documentary has never sat comfortably with its "truth-teller" status. But perhaps it is time to reclaim deception as an "honest" strategy, particularly in those films which collude with the viewer to dismantle "traditional concepts of truth, identity, and history" (Juhasz 2006: 18) in order to present a more relevant and collaborative "real". *Forbidden Lie$,* and the reflexive films whose lineage it shares, by raising questions but providing no answers, moves documentary a step closer to addressing the challenge facing all filmmakers today, when

> Film-going is no more a passive experience than filmmaking is, and cinema is where creation and consumption unite. If we embrace the active spirit of film-going, [and] the quiet dialogue running in the heads of all audiences, we [will] find some answers on how [to] survive this vast paradigm shift our culture is now engaged in (Hope 2009).

Rather than viewing documentary's eroding "truth-teller" status as a negative phenomenon, however, or suggesting that documentary is "redundant" (Lebow 2006), this thesis has sought to position documentary's embattled truth claim positively: supporting the view that films which invite "radical doubt…rather than certain knowledge" (Renov 2004: 147), engage viewers with "a newer, more relevant, postmodern truth [which] still operates powerfully as the recording horizon of the documentary tradition" (Williams 2014: 388). By illustrating and examining how documentary filmmakers have successfully used art (and her shadow, deception), to entertain audiences throughout the history of cinema, *Tricks of the Trade* upholds documentary's continuing power to move, inspire and enlighten its audiences, and once in a while (despite its deceptions), to speak the truth to power. In this light, the two propositions intially advanced can be supported, but with a caveat:

1. Deception is as necessary to documentary as it is to fiction; and

2. Documentary, *when its deceptions are delivered in an ethical way,* remains a valid and important art form.

If cinema is "a dialogue between the audience and the screen" (Hope 2009), then what directors who reveal the use of artifice and deception *within* their documentaries have always gambled on is that audiences will embrace it as long as they are entertained. *Forbidden Lie$* ignited viewers' imaginations by showing them how deception works, then allowing them to judge it. It is just one film in a distinct line of reflexive documentaries which continue, in increasing numbers, to be made. These films, it is suggested, point to a new story-telling mode in the 21st century: one that both reaches back before the passive absorption of classical cinema to the showmanship aesthetic of the "Cinema of Attractions" and forward, beyond the "glance" inducing diversions of digital culture (Gunning 1995, Hansen 1995), to speak to an audience dissatisfied by formulaic approaches to the documentary "real" and hungry for something new.

In the years since *Forbidden Lie$* was released, the "truth" has continued to be a commodity sold for profit and clicks, and the fact/fiction boundary appears to have warped into a soft-focus blur. YouTube's homely mini-docs are just as likely to be viral ads; Facebook has been invaded by companies masquerading as "friends"; literary hoaxers continue to flourish; and more documentary makers are playing with the expanding fissures between fact and fiction than ever before. Encouraging audiences to enjoy the experience of watching doctored (rather than pure) takes on reality, and provoking them to question (rather than accept) the constructed nature of the nonfiction "real", these filmmakers hint at what documentary is set to become.

In the future "world of images" (Renov 2004: xvii), as the fact/fiction border becomes an increasingly "active site of contestation and play" (Renov 1999: 318), documentary makers may need to be both artists and showmen, to lure viewers their way. Documentaries, when ethically made, will continue to "help us understand not only our world but our role in it" (Aufderheide 2007: 4-5); but as new technologies, exhibition platforms and stylistic approaches evolve, they will also take us full circle, back to early cinema's magic-halls: where audiences expected not to be dazzled with "truth", but with its spectacle. The documentary "real" will keep evolving, as the marriage between art and deception continues to bloom.

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