KADIR HAS UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES

LAYERS OF REALITY: REPRESENTATION IN

ANIMATED DOCUMENTARIES

GÜLÇİN ÇAKTUĞ KURT

ADVISOR: ASSOC. PROF. DR. MELİS BEHLİL

MASTER'S DEGREE THESIS

LAYERS OF REALITY: REPRESENTATION IN ANIMATED DOCUMENTARIES

GÜLÇİN ÇAKTUĞ KURT

ADVISOR: ASSOC. PROF. DR. MELİS BEHLİL

MASTER'S DEGREE THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES WITH THE AIM TO MEET THE PARTIAL REQUIREMENTS REQUIRED TO RECEIVE A MASTER'S DEGREE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CINEMA AND TELEVISION

ISTANBUL, FEBRUARY, 2021

NOTICE ON RESEARCH ETHICS AND

PUBLISHING METHODS

I, GÜLÇİN ÇAKTUĞ KURT;

- hereby acknowledge, agree and undertake that this Master's Degree Thesis that I have prepared is entirely my own work and I have declared the citations from other studies in the bibliography in accordance with the rules;
- that this Master's Degree Thesis does not contain any material from any research submitted or accepted to obtain a degree or diploma at another educational institution;
- and that I commit and undertake to follow the "Kadir Has University Academic Codes of Conduct" prepared in accordance with the "Higher Education Council Codes of Conduct".

In addition, I acknowledge that any claim of irregularity that may arise in relation to this work will result in a disciplinary action in accordance with the university legislation.

GÜLÇİN ÇAKTUĞ KURT

_____

05.02.2021

ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL

This work entitled **LAYERS OF REALITY: REPRESENTATION IN ANIMATED DOCUMENTARIES** prepared by **GÜLÇİN ÇAKTUĞ KURT** was deemed successful with the **UNANIMOUS VOTING** as a result of the thesis defense examination held on the **05.02.2021** and approved as a **MASTER'S DEGREE THESIS** by our jury.

APPROVED BY: SIGNATURE

(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Melis Behlil) (Advisor)   (Kadir Has University) _____

(Asst. Prof. Dr. Elif Akçalı)   (Kadir Has University) _____

(Prof. Dr. Nazlı Eda Noyan)   (Bahcesehir University) _____

I certify that the above signatures belong to the faculty members named above.

_____

Prof. Dr. Emine Füsun ALİOĞLU

Director of the School of Graduate Studies

APPROVAL DATE: …/…/…

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LAYERS OF REALITY: REPRESENTATION IN
ANIMATED DOCUMENTARIES

ABSTRACT

In this thesis, I examine how reality is represented through animation in animated documentaries. Representing reality is the main subject of discussions related to documentary cinema. During the postmodern era, the relationship between representation and reality has been interrogated by different approaches. A common approach claims it is impossible to access reality through representations since all representations are mediated. These discussions are described as the postmodern crisis of representation. The encounter of animation with documentary further complicates the discussions related to representing reality. I argue that, by using the medium of animation, animated documentaries could reveal the multiple layers of reality; therefore, they could be a response to the postmodern crisis of representation. I adapted the phrase 'layers of reality' from Linda Williams's examination of new documentaries. She argues that new documentary forms are employing narrational strategies to reveal different aspects of reality. Thus, they could respond to the crisis of representation. The term 'layer' is preferred because it also refers to digital montage and compositing techniques used in animation production. To support my argument, I will examine three animated documentaries in terms of how they use animation as a narrational tool and representational strategy: *Another Day of Life (2018), The Wanted 18 (2014),* and *Is the Man Who Is Tall Happy? An Animated Conversation with Noam Chomsky (2013)*. In my examination, I use Annabelle Honess Roe's methodology, which focuses on the functions of animation in animated documentaries.

Keywords: animation, documentary, representing reality, postmodernism, digital cinema.

GERÇEKLİK KATMANLARI:

ANİMASYON BELGESELLERDE TEMSİL

ÖZET

Bu tezde; animasyon belgesellerin, animasyon dilinin imkanlarından yararlanarak gerçekliği nasıl temsil ettiklerini inceleyeceğim. Gerçeklik temsili meselesi, belgesel sinemada en çok tartışılan konulardan biridir. Postmodern dönemde gerçeklik ve temsil arasındaki ilişkiye dair farklı yaklaşımlar ortaya çıkmıştır. Yaygın bir yaklaşıma göre gerçekliği doğrudan temsil etmek mümkün değildir, çünkü temsil etme eyleminin kendisi bu süreci dolaylı hale getirir. Bazı düşünürler ise böyle bir yaklaşımın, tüm imge ve temsilleri bir anlamsızlık çıkmazına sürüklediğini öne sürmüşlerdir. Bu dönemdeki tartışmalar postmodern temsil krizi olarak nitelendirilmiştir. Animasyonun belgesel ile bir araya gelmesi gerçeklik temsili tartışmalarına yeni bir boyut eklemiştir. Bu tezde, animasyon belgesellerin, gerçekliğin farklı katmanlarını açığa çıkaran anlatılar kurarak, postmodern temsil krizine bir yanıt olabileceklerini öne sürüyorum. "Gerçeklik katmanları" ifadesini, Linda Williams'ın, belgesel sinemada kullanılan yeni anlatı yöntemleri üzerine yaptığı çalışmadan uyarladım. Williams'a göre yeni belgesel formları, gerçekliğin farklı yüzlerini temsil eden anlatım stratejileri uygulamaktadırlar ve bu yöntemle postmodern temsil krizine bir çözüm olabilirler. "Katman" ifadesinin tercih edilmesinin sebebi, bu terimin animasyon üretiminde kullanılan dijital kurgu ve kompozisyon tekniklerine referans vermesidir. İddiamı desteklemek için *Another Day of Life (2018), The Wanted 18 (2014),* and *Is the Man Who Is Tall Happy? An Animated Conversation with Noam Chomsky (2013)* isimli animasyon belgeselleri, animasyonu bir anlatım aracı ve temsil stratejisi olarak kullanmaları bağlamında inceleyeceğim. Bu filmleri incelerken, Annabelle Honess Roe'nun, animasyon belgesellerde animasyonun farklı işlevlerine odaklanan çalışma yönteminden faydalanacağım.

Anahtar sözcükler: animasyon, belgesel, gerçeklik temsili, postmodernizm, dijital sinema.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

In 2008, when *Waltz with Bashir* was released, its director Ari Folman was giving numerous interviews. His work was one of the first feature-length animated documentaries that reached many audiences around the world. During the interviews, the most asked question to him was: "Is it a documentary?" Finally, when he was tired of this question, he said: "You know what? It's whatever you want it to be" (Kriger 2012). Although the animated documentary is a practice with deep roots in cinema's history, the merging of animation and documentary has been seen as a marriage of the opposites. (Honess Roe 2013) While the documentary is considered in relation to reality, truth, and evidence, animation is mostly perceived as belonging to the realm of fantasy and imagination. However, my research will demonstrate that these two representational systems have a more complex and multilayered relationship with reality. In this thesis, I examine how reality is represented through the medium of animation in animated documentaries. My research aims to discover the areas where the lines are blurred and the intersections create meaning. This discovery requires an examination of the language of animation and documentary in detail.

The issue of representing reality is the focal point of documentary cinema and documentary studies, and historically it is approached from different perspectives. Postmodern approaches in documentary cinema problematize the medium itself and its ways of representing reality. Postmodern theories underline that all representations are mediated, and it is not possible to get access to reality other than via representations. This perspective leads to another issue, which is called the postmodern crisis of representation. For some scholars like Bill Nichols, claiming the impossibility to represent reality causes a depthlesness that makes all meaning collapse into the endless surface of simulations. (Nichols 1991) It is commonly argued that total distrust of representations prevents us from making any meaningful expression through images.

On the other hand, after the film industry's transformation from analog to digital, the concept of reality was rediscussed in film studies. Digital image technologies changed the cinema's

status as a photography-based medium; the indexical link between the world and its representation is no longer a fundament of film production. With the digital transformation, animation becomes pervasive in contemporary image culture (Buchan 2013), and it is even argued that animation becomes an inclusive term that defines all forms of moving image. (Manovich 1999) The merging of documentary and animation further complicates the discussions related to the medium and realism. For this thesis, my main argument is that, by using the medium of animation, animated documentaries could reveal the multiple layers of reality; therefore, they could be an answer to the postmodern crisis of representation.

Since I will use it as the central concept in my examination of animated documentaries, I would like to explain what I refer to by the phrase "layers of reality" in detail. In "Mirrors without Memories: Truth, History, and the New Documentary" (1993), Linda Williams argues that if representations no longer refer to anything but themselves, we seem to be trapped in a state of self-reflexive crisis of representation. The photographic image, which has been seen as a mirror with memory ones, can only reflect another mirror now. She suggests that new documentary filmmakers employ different narrational strategies to underline reality's relative and constructed nature. She considers their method as "deploying many facets of the mirrors" (Williams 1993), which could be the best response to the crisis of representation. I adapt her perspective as "layers of reality." The reality does not consist of only one layer, which is visible to every eye as the same; it has multiple layers. Spence and Navarro argue that "actuality is infinite and can never be wholly represented." (Spence and Navarro 2010) The documentary filmmaker creates a representation of actuality that she/he selected out of the infinite number of layers. I will use the phrase "layers of reality" as a metaphor to indicate the different facets of reality represented through an animated documentary.

I describe different aspects of reality as 'layers' because it is a term related to the digital moving image production process. Lev Manovich describes a digital image as a modular structure "that consists of a number of layers whose contents often correspond to meaningful parts of the image." (Manovich 1999) What are these layers? As I mentioned above, digital technologies transformed the film production process. 'Digital' does not just describe the

recording material but also describes the entire process from shooting to post-production. Post-production is mainly the process of editing, or montage, which is the key component of cinematic language. The continuity editing creates the illusion of a coherent and continuous space and time from separate fragments of footages. Manovich distinguishes between two types of montage, the first one is the temporal montage, and the second one is the montage within a shot. Temporal montage is the common way of editing before digital. In a temporal montage, "separate realities form consecutive moments in time." (Ibid., 140) It means that different shots are edited sequentially. Montage within a shot is the opposite: "separate realities form contingent parts of a single image." (Ibid., 140) It refers to the process of compositing, which combines multiple moving image sequences into a single sequence with the help of a compositing software. Compositing becomes the common method of post-production in the digital era. The majority of films are being produced through the composition of different types of moving images like live-action footage, 2D and 3D animation, visual effects, etc. These multiple moving image sequences are the "layers" in the compositing software. Commonly, these layers are blended so that the audience does not realize them as different media or parts of different realities. This method serves to the illusion of continuous space and time; similar with continuity editing, which makes cutting invisible. On the other hand, a filmmaker could make these layers visible to the audience's eyes as a narrational strategy. Films with hybrid-media techniques such as *The Wanted 18* (2014) could be examples of this kind of usage.[1] To sum up, in this thesis, while "layers of reality" is metaphorically referring to different aspects of reality, it is also a reference to various types of moving image layers that constitute a digital film.

During the research process, I watched, categorized, and examined numerous animated documentaries. First of all, I prepared a list of films classified as animated documentaries by various sources. The first list consists of feature, medium, and short-length films with different production methods such as rotoscope animation, stop motion, cel animation, 2D or 3D computer animation, cut-out animation, or hybridization of animation and live-action

---

[1] *The Wanted 18* (2014) uses different types of moving images such as stop motion animation, illustration or live-action footages to underline the constructed nature of reality. It will be explained in detail in chapter three.

material. I did not distinguish the films by looking at their production method, but I select them based on their length. The number of short-length films is significantly high when compared to others. The reason for it would be that the short film form is more applicable technically and budget-wise. Although there are plenty of short films that would be good examples for this research, it is a necessity in a master's thesis to narrow down the focus. Therefore, I eliminated the medium and short-length films from the list and limited my research to the feature lengths.

Feature-length animated documentaries became widespread during the late 90s and the 2000s. Some of the important reasons are improvements in digital film production methods and the growing number of qualified animation artists and filmmakers. I also argue that filmmakers discovered animation's creative potential to express ideas, emotions, and experiences. This approach is also what I search for in an animated documentary to demonstrate my argument. In this respect, I will examine these three films: *Another Day of Life (2018), The Wanted 18 (2014),* and *Is the Man Who Is Tall Happy? An Animated Conversation with Noam Chomsky (2013).*

I chose three of them among the other feature-length animated documentaries because I observe that all three use animation as a narrational tool to represent multiple layers of reality. My analysis will focus on how animation constructs realities, experiences, and ideas. I will examine how animation functions in the film, what kind of production methods are used, and how editing works in the films by giving examples from specific scenes. In order to narrow down the focus of this research, I excluded sound as a subject. But it should be noted that sound is a key component of animation production as a narrational device, and it definitely should be included for further research.

In order to determine the functions of animation in the documentaries I selected, I will use Annabelle Honess Roe's method. She offers a methodology to study animated documentaries that describes animation's functions in a documentary by asking these questions: "How and why is animation being used instead of the conventional alternative (live-action)? What and how is the animation representing?" (Honess Roe 2013) I will adapt these questions as a starting point to examine the usage of animation in the films.

Another film has a similar approach that I decide not to include in my analysis: *Waltz with Bashir (2008)* directed by Ari Folman. As mentioned in the beginning, it is one of the most influential animated documentaries in history. Folman was a soldier in the 1982 Lebanon War, but after 20 years, he could not recollect any of his memories of the war and Sabra and Shatila Massacre. *Waltz with Bashir* is his attempt to find a way to fill his memory gaps and his process of remembering a traumatic past. Folman uses animation to represent the unrepresentable, underline the complexity of memory, and challenge the implications of photographic realism. *Waltz with Bashir* has been studied and became the subject of numerous substantial research (Stewart 2010) (Landesman and Bendor 2011) (Peaslee 2011) (Honess Roe 2013) (Kraemer 2015). Instead of focusing on a subject studied from various perspectives, I prefer to converge on different subjects, which is why I do not include *Waltz with Bashir* in my analysis. However, it should be pointed out that both the film itself and the studies related to it are substantial for my interest in this area, and they broaden my perspective to a great extent.

This thesis contains three main chapters. In the first chapter, the subject will be the studies related to representing reality. The focal point is how postmodern theory shapes and transforms the understanding of indexicality, objectivity, and documentaries' truth claims. It will start with a broader perspective of realism in film studies. In this thesis's scope, how the concept of realism is discussed after digital cinema is essential. The chapter will continue with definitions of documentary and how conventional methods are settled. The rise of different approaches will be explained historically, such as Direct Cinema and Cinema Verité. Postmodern theories will be included, particularly the simulation theory of Jean Baudrillard, which significantly impacts the perception of reality and representation. How documentary cinema is affected by the postmodern shift will be discussed through the light of significant documentary scholars such as Bill Nichols, Michael Renov, Trinh T. Minh-ha, and Linda Williams.

The subjects of the second chapter are the medium of animation and animated documentary studies. Definitions and different approaches to animation will be included. Paul Well's study on animation's narrational devices will be explained to comprehend the animated medium's

inherent characteristics. The second part of the chapter will focus on the history of animated documentaries, definitions, and studies. According to Honess Roe, the definition of the animated documentary contains three important points. First, it should be created frame by frame; second, it should be about the world, rather than an imagined world; and third, it should be presented as an animated documentary by its producers and received as such by its audiences. (Honess Roe 2013) Earlier studies approach animated documentaries with the methods of preceding documentary scholars. Scholars like Honess Roe and Wells look from different perspectives and offer unique methods on the subject, which I considerably benefit from in my analysis of animated documentaries.

The third chapter contains the examination of three selected animated documentaries with the methods that I explained in detail above. The first film is *Another Day of Life (2018),* directed by Raúl de la Fuente and Damian Nenow. It is an adaptation of Polish journalist Richard Kapuscinski's memoir based on his experience of the Angolan War of Independence. The second one is *The Wanted 18 (2014),* directed by Amer Shomali and Paul Cowan. It is the story of non-violent resistance of the Palestinian community that attempts to start their dairy production under Israeli Army occupation. The last one, *Is the Man Who Is Tall Happy? An Animated Conversation with Noam Chomsky (2013)* is directed by Michel Gondry. It is a documentary formed by the conversations between Gondry and Chomsky. I will explain their content in detail and examine their use of animation as a narrational and representational strategy. The answers will cast light on how multiple layers of reality are represented in animated documentaries.

1. BLURRED LINES: DISCUSSIONS ON REPRESENTING REALITY

1.1. REALISM AND DIGITAL CINEMA

A pattern can be seen in some animated documentaries: problematizing or thinking on photographic realism. A quote from *Waltz with Bashir* would be a perfect example of this. In the film, Ari Folman interviews his friends from the army about their memories of war. During one of these conversations, Folman asks his friend's permission to draw him. The interviewee's answer is: *"It's fine as long as you draw, but don't film."* He does not mind being illustrated by Folman, but he does not want to be recorded by a camera. This quote can be seen as a statement about the film. *Waltz with Bashir* is an act of remembrance of the war trauma, and it problematizes the camera's relationship to the constitution of history. (Peaslee 2011) There is an attempt to challenge photographic realism by using animation to deconstruct the bonds between photography and historical reality. So, the question here is, how is this bond constructed?

Photography's indexical relation to the world makes it associated with memory, history, and evidence more strongly than any image created in visual arts history. The photographic image has the capacity to construct the past; "to create, interfere with, and trouble the memories we hold as individuals and as a nation." (Sturken 1997) It is a device of remembering that fills the memory gaps. But it also obliterates them; it could create false memories and amnesia. The photographic image provides temporal and spatial evidence, but also it could be manipulated and detached from the context. Sturken argues that: "One looks through the image to the 'reality' it represents, forgetting, in essence, the camera's mediating presence." (Sturken 1997)

The realism based on the photographic image was the central point for the foundational theories of film. There is an entire corpus on the subject, and approaches change with social, cultural, and technological developments. This research will not cover the entire corpus, but

it is crucial to comprehend film realism's foundations. Also, as the main subject is animated documentaries mostly produced digitally, it is essential to see how the discussion related to film realism is transformed with digital production technologies.

The invention of photography as a turning point in the history of visual arts satisfied "our obsession with realism" (Bazin 2005). In *The Ontology of The Photographic Image (first published in 1967)*, Bazin argues that an image of the world is produced without a person's creative intervention for the first time in history. The photographic image has the power to transfer the reality from the object to its representation. He argues that the photographer's only creative intervention is selecting an object, and the final result can not be as subjective as a painting. Photography is an objective medium, and it implies certain credibility, which is absent from painting or other types of picture-making. (Ibid., 13) Cinema, on the other hand, is not just animated photography but a language. According to Bazin, what makes cinema a language is the montage. But he claims that invisible editing fails to reveal the full potential of montage. Instead of it, Bazin favors long shots and in-depth shots and lays stress on composition and mise-en-scene to create a realist style in filmmaking. It can be said that Bazin's cinematic realism depends more on the construction of time and space in motion than on the material resemblance. On the other hand, Siegfried Kracauer, one of the foundational theorists of realist film theory, remarks on the film's material aesthetics. The film's potential for representing reality comes from the materiality of photographic technology. Film's indexical bond with the world it represents is the key to capture reality. (Kracauer 1997)

The indexicality that defines cinematic realism needed a reconsideration after digital image-making technologies. Lev Manovich made a very detailed examination of the new media technologies, including digital cinema, in his book "The Language of New Media (1999)". Digital cinema does not just refer to the recording material becoming digitalized, but it refers to the image-making process in computing environments. He approaches digital cinema underlining its ability to combine live-action material with painting, illustration, 2D, and 3D computer animation. Therefore, Manovich argues that cinema overthrows its long-term dependence on physical reality. He points out that the indexical relationship between reality and representation is no longer cinema's defining characteristic. Due to digital production

technologies, photorealistic scenes can be generated by 3D computer animation programs. They could perfectly mimic the physical reality without any indexical link.

Since cinema is not just a recording of the physical world but a medium that can create an impression of reality, Francesco Casetti argues the opposite about Manovich's argument on digital cinema being a sub-genre of animation. According to him, "… an impression of reality is generated in film through the establishment of a link that simultaneously provides an imaginary discursive coherence and an apparent reestablishment of reality." (Casetti 2011) He suggests the establishment of reality in the film depends on four different levels: (1) the filmic signifier, which is the material component of a depiction. The sign has direct contact with reality, and it is ontologically linked to its referent. (2) the filmic representation, which is the content of the narrative. It is the way of creating a world of verisimilitude. (3) the filmic enunciation, which is the very act of depicting something. It refers to the filmmaker's way of creating her/his discourse by using the cinematic language. (4) the community of filmgoers, the spectators' confidence of the reality generated by the film they see. It does not just refer to the act of watching but also refers to the sphere that is created around a film, such as film reviews, discussions, etc. (Casetti 2011)

As Casetti argues, what constructs the realism in cinema is the film's ability to interweave or balance these different levels. He describes this ability as the act of "suture." Whether the film is produced with the digital or analog format, the negotiation between these suturing elements produces realism. As digital production technologies provide endless possibilities for filmmakers, a film could serve the realistic approach, although maybe not a single frame has an indexical link with reality. In the following part, I will investigate reality have been discussed in the context of documentary cinema.

1.2. DOCUMENTARY

1.2.1. Documentary Realism from Grierson to Direct Cinema

Although etymologically 'document' has meanings of evidence and recording, documentary cinema is not (and never was) just a raw recording of actuality. But the central tension of discussions about documentary cinema has always been the relationship between reality and representation. Various definitions are suggested from time to time to describe what documentary film is. The most referred definition belongs to John Grierson: the documentary is "the creative interpretation of actuality." Spence & Navarro argue that actuality is the basis that distinguishes documentary from fiction, but it is crucial to determine what constitutes the actuality. Since "actuality is infinite and can never be wholly represented," any documentary representation is "a selective view of the world" (Spence and Navarro 2011). On the other hand, Bill Nichols relates documentaries with other non-fictional systems (such as science, economics, etc.), and he argues that they altogether create a "discourse of sobriety" (Nichols 1991). According to Paul Ward, there is a dilemma for capturing the meaning of documentary: "How to deal with something that quite clearly is attempting to represent *reality* (or some part of reality), but as it does so, uses specific *aesthetic* devices" (Ward, 2005).

If we go back to Grierson, who is considered the father of British and Canadian documentary tradition, this dilemma could be argued as the inherent characteristic of documentary film. In his essay first published in 1926, "First Principles of Documentary," he differentiates documentary from other non-fiction types with natural materials such as travelogues, educational films, and newsreels, and argues that "documentary can hope to achieve the ordinary virtues of an art. Here we pass from the plain (or fancy) descriptions of natural material to arrangements, rearrangements, and creative shapings of it." (Grierson 2011) According to him, the documentary does not just describe the reality of life but attempts to reveal what is under its surface. When Hollywood Studios gained dominance over the film industry, the mainstream tendency was classical narratives and fiction films. Grierson argues that "the studio films largely ignore the possibility of opening up the screen on the real world." (Grierson 2011) He supported experimental filmmakers and animation directors like

Norman McLaren and Len Lye. When we consider his writings and his position in the industry, it can be said that he sees documentary as an alternative way of expression, and he underlines its capacity to penetrate the surface of the visible reality.

Apart from Griersonian notions, documentary cinema was perceived as "an objective and unmediated representation of reality" during the 20s and 30s. (Corrigan, White, and Mazaj 2011) From the 1920s to the 1960s, until the rise of Direct Cinema, documentary films have a serious tone (closer to the definition of 'discourses of sobriety') with objectivity claims and political-social missions. The documentary filmmaker was an interventionist to the events they portray. Although documentaries do not have actors/actresses, repeat action was widely used to have continuity editing. It can be said that the documentary filmmaker has considerable control over their subjects. Besides the location shootings, they built duplicated studio sets. Studio lighting was also used in interior shootings. Thereby, "the mainstream's conventions, adopted by the fictional cinema for representing time and space (aka 'Hollywood Grammar'), were easily applied to documentary film." (Winston 2013)

During the 60s, Direct Cinema and Cinema Verité were influential movements over documentary filmmaking. Direct Cinema originated in the USA, and the most famous film associated with the movement was *Primary* (1960) by Robert Drew, which follows John F. Kennedy during the presidential primary in 1960. Direct cinema rejects the interventionist approach of classic documentary cinema. Instead of controlling the narrative, direct cinema filmmakers chose to be observers, "to show rather than to preach." (Vogels 2010) With a fly-on-the-wall approach, the filmmaker remains absent to convey the sense of unmediated and unfettered access to reality. (Nichols 1991) Cinema Verité directors such as Jean Rouch and Chris Marker, on the other hand, have more self-reflexive approaches. They aim to problematize the representation of reality, not to represent reality in an unmediated way. Nichols describes Direct Cinema as the observational mode and Cinema Verité as the interactive mode. In interactive mode, the illusory absence is shorn away, and the filmmaker intervenes to and interacts with their subject. (Nichols 1991)

Direct Cinema could be considered as an important paradigm shift on the documentary's relationship with reality. The authoritative voice of the director is now questioned and

problematized. On the other hand, according to Winston, Direct Cinema positioned photography as scientific evidence of reality. The photographic image was perceived as an objective representation, and the filmmaker's subjectivity is ignored. The claim of capturing the unmediated truth through a camera could be problematic since the camera itself is a mediator. "Viewers, of course, were naive to think that a photograph could not 'lie'; it could, and did, from the very beginning." (Winston 2013)

1.2.2. Documentary in The Postmodern Period

During the 70s, photography's objectivity claim came into question with the rise of post-structuralism, post-modernism, and Deconstruction theories. Deconstruction, which is a word associated with the works of Jacques Derrida, can be described very briefly as "a questioning stance taken towards the most basic aspects of the production of knowledge." (Brunette 2000) Deconstruction questions the binary oppositions, which are the concepts that Modernism and Western thought have relied upon. And the first binary opposition that is called into question by deconstruction is the distinction between signifier and signified. According to Derridean thought, the meaning is constituted by the 'free play' between signifier and signified, and "the marks of the material signifier never really disappear in the face of the signified." (Brunette 2000) The film is a visual reproduction evaluated by its similarity to reality. From a Derridean perspective, reality and its filmic representation are always different from each other. Their difference is the essential part of their relationship.

The postmodern period witnesses all kinds of questionings like Deconstruction. It is an era of suspicion towards the systems of thought, institutional knowledge, and Modernist thinking's foundational logic. Postmodernist approaches reject the unquestionability of grand narratives of history and science. The basic concern of Postmodern is to point out that entities (like capitalism, patriarchy, or liberal humanism) that we unthinkingly experience as 'natural' are in fact 'cultural' (Hutcheon 1989). As a result, it tends to look at things as constructions. It accepts "the impossibility of gaining access to reality other than via discourses through which 'realities' are constructed." (Hill 2000)

One of the most influential works related to skepticism through 'reality' is Jean Baudrillard's simulation theory. Baudrillard is a French sociologist who writes on consumerism, economics, media, and popular culture. In his work, *The Mirror of Production (1975)*, he argues that the industrial society based upon the production of goods has been transformed into a society based upon the production of *signs*. In his book *Simulacra and Simulation (first published in 1981),* he claims that contemporary society lives in a world of simulations that replaced our understanding of reality. It is the state of hyperreal, where the signs and representations are so dominant that they cannot be perceived as representations anymore. Baudrillard distinguishes the representation from the simulation:

> Representation stems from the principle of the equivalence of the sign and of the real, […] Simulation, on the contrary, stems from the utopia of the principle of equivalence. Whereas representation attempts to absorb simulation by interpreting it as a false representation, simulation envelops the whole edifice of representation itself as a simulacrum. (Baudrillard 1994)

According to Baudrillard, there are four phrases of the image. In the first phase, the image is the reflection of a profound reality. He refers to it as a good appearance, a sacramental representation. In the second phase, the image masks and denatures the profound reality; he describes this state as an evil appearance. In the third, the image masks the absence of reality manifests itself as reality. It is the state of sorcery, an illusion. In the fourth phase, the image does not relate to reality at all, "it is its own pure simulacrum." (Ibid., 6.) He gives the example of Disneyland for the orders of simulacra. The experience created by this famous theme park can be considered as a "social microcosm, the miniaturized pleasure of real America." (Ibid., 12.) But it functions as a third order of simulation; it exists to hide that there is no reality outside of it. While the 'real' America becomes a Disneyland, "Disneyland is presented as imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real." (Ibid., 12.)

An American Family (1971) is a television documentary broadcasted in the USA and considered the first reality TV series of American television. Baudrillard takes this famous family, The Lauds, as an example of hyperreality. This *TV Verite* experiment claims to get included into the family's daily life as if the production were not there. During two months and 12 hour-long episodes, American audiences watched The Lauds' life and even their separation as a family. Baudrillard asks, "…was TV itself responsible? What would have

happened if the TV hadn't been there?" (Ibid., 28.) He claims that it is not the truth of The Laud Family but the truth of TV; the medium itself subjected them. According to him, this subjection is associated with the end of the panoptic system. The hierarchical order between the observer and the subject is no longer exist. The medium has power over both the subject and the observer. We no longer watch TV, but "TV is watching us, TV alienates us, TV manipulates us, TV informs us." (Ibid., 30.)

This quotation summarizes postmodern anxiety, believing that our perception of reality is twisted and manipulated by the media. *The Truman Show* (1998)*,* for example, is based upon this anxiety, which the protagonist doesn't aware that his whole life is under surveillance and a product of a reality tv show. What is more important here is the shift that Baudrillard underlines. In contemporary culture, the medium itself has power and domination over reality. By now, two significant paradigms in documentary cinema are mentioned here: the interventionist approach and Direct Cinema's non-interventionist, fly-on-the-wall tendency. Direct Cinema filmmakers claimed that they break the hierarchy between the gaze and the subject to create unmediated access to reality. With the paradigm shift that can be named postmodernism, this hierarchy does not exist anymore, and there is no such thing as 'unmediated access to reality.'

The documentary is a subject in film studies that face "questions of trust" at most (Eitzen 1995). During the 90s, postmodern skepticism through the documentary's truth claims is discussed from different perspectives. Documentary studies concentrate on representational strategies, performance, and fictional elements in documentaries during this period.

Bill Nichols is one of the well-known documentary theorists. In his work, *Representing Reality* (1991), he examines the domain and the meaning of documentary concerning the concept of representing reality. As mentioned before, Nichols argues that documentary cinema has a kinship with discourses of sobriety like politics, education, religion, etc. But despite its kinship, the documentary is not accepted as equal to those systems of non-fiction. Documentary attends to reflect the historical reality, but at the same time, by its nature, cinema is an image-based and illusionistic medium. So inherently, "documentary's alliance with the discourses of sobriety falls under attack due to the imagistic company it keeps."

(Nichols 1991) What Nichols means by that, in my opinion, is something close to Grierson's distinction between documentary and other non-fiction types such as travelogues, newsreels, etc. Creativity and interpretation are distinct elements that documentary cinema has, compared with the other non-fictional types. Nichols also made a distinction between fiction films and documentaries. While fiction addresses unconscious desires, documentary attends to social issues of which we are consciously aware. According to him, the imaginary realm of fiction has a metaphoric relation to historical reality. It depends on resemblance to life. In the documentary case, the images retain a special bond to the world we all share. With keeping this bond, documentary cinema portrays the historical reality and makes an argument about it. As documentary audiences, "We prepare ourselves not to comprehend a story but to grasp an argument." (Ibid., 5.)

Nichols suggests a typology in *Representing Reality (1991)* to examine different representational strategies that documentary films employed. He refers to them as *modes* of representation, which means "the basic ways of organizing texts in relation to certain recurrent features or conventions." (Ibid., 32.) They are expository, observational, interactive, and reflexive.[2] The expository documentary is the one mentioned before as Griersonian practice, which comes from the dissatisfaction of entertaining qualities of fiction film, has a Voice-of-God commentary perspective and didactic tone, and aims to reveal truths about the historical world itself. Observational mode, which corresponds to Direct Cinema practices, rises from the dissatisfaction with the authoritative and moralizing voice of expository documentary, requires a conscious distance between the filmmaker and the events. Interactive Documentary arose as a reaction to the distant observational documentary attitude and aimed to make the filmmaker's perspective more evident and more participatory with the events and social actors. The reflexive mode is born from a desire to challenge the conventions of representation and the impression of reality. It calls the viewer's attention to its construction as a moving picture.

---

[2] Nichols made two additions to this typology in Introduction to Documentary (2001): the poetic mode which is 1920's abstracted approach, and the performative mode which is 1980's approach that emphasizes the subjective aspects of documentary filmmaking.

Eitzen points out the similarities between Grierson's and Nichols's definitions of the documentary. "For 'the creative treatment of,' Nichols substitutes 'an argument about'; for 'actuality,' he substitutes 'historical reality.'" (Eitzen 1995) According to Nichols, "historical reality" is the perceivable world that exists around us and exists outside of representations. That can be seen as opposite to Baudrillard's arguments on reality. He disagrees with Baudrillard's theory that there is no longer a perceivable reality outside but only simulations. This point of view makes all metaphors, meanings, and reality collapse into simulations' endless surfaces for Nichols. On the contrary with Baudrillard, Nichols argues that "the separation between an image and what it refers to continues to be a difference that makes a difference." (Nichols, 1991, p.7) We cannot deny history's persistence as reality, although our only access to it is only by means of representations. Nichols's position is that he thinks of documentaries as argumentative and socially responsible discourses that can create change and difference in society. But he also claims that objectivity in a scientific sense cannot be achieved by documentaries, even when it is an observational one. Because "any given standard for objectivity will have embedded political assumptions." (Ibid., 195) Let's say that the documentary filmmaker adopts an observational, fly-on-the-wall approach. Even in this case, there are still moral positions, subjective strategies, rhetorical devices, and a personal style or voice that belongs to the filmmaker. First of all, the observational style itself has political implications. That is why Nichols claims that objectivity cannot be persuaded in documentaries.

Michael Renov, in the introduction of *Theorizing Documentary* (1993), describes the documentary form as "the more or less artful reshaping of the historical world." Like Nichols, he is also skeptical about the documentary's objectivity and truth claims, but he disagrees with Nichols's characterization of the documentary as a discourse of sobriety. He argues that this characterization neglects the 'fictive' nature of documentary cinema. "…all discursive forms – documentary included – are, if not fictional, at least *fictive*, this by virtue of their tropic character (their recourse to tropes or rhetorical figures)." (Renov 1993) No discourse is independent of the language forms; thus, documentary structures and styles are as "tropic and figurative in their character" as the fictional narratives. Renov's approach to

documentary cinema is to consider the in-between areas of truth and beauty, science and art, fiction, and non-fiction. He sides with deconstructing the dichotomies and hierarchies between supposedly opposed concepts.

This point is where the postmodern crisis intensifies around the understanding of what documentary is. Taking a step further on Renov's approach, Trinh T. Minh-ha claims that there is no such thing as documentary. She is a filmmaker and scholar who focuses on post-colonialism, politics of culture and gender, feminist theory, and third cinema. Minh-ha argues that "truth is produced, induced, and extended according to the regime in power." (Minh-Ha 1990) Using some aspects of cinematic technology, documentary cinema established a tradition that was perceived as an ultimate way to represent the truth objectively. So the truth that documentary claims to represent is more manipulative than fiction. That is why Minh-ha is skeptical toward the word itself. "it's illusory to take the real and reality for granted and to think that a neutral language exists, […] To use an image is to enter fiction." (Balsom 2018)

Questionings about the reliability of documentary truth give way to experimentations on representational strategies in non-fictional content. During the period described as postmodern, where the line between fact and fiction is fading away, fictional elements are commonly and self-reflectively used in documentaries. In her article "Mirrors without Memories: Truth, History, and the New Documentary (1993), Linda Williams examines the representational strategies of these new, postmodern documentaries. The phrase in the title originally belongs to a Harvard poet and medical professor, Oliver Wendell Holmes. In 1829, he described photography as a 'mirror with a memory' underlined the link between photography and the act of remembrance. (Shevchenko 2015) Williams argues that, with the postmodern breakdown between the image and reality, photography (and moving image) is no longer perceived as a 'mirror with a memory' that reflects the visual truth of events but a "manipulated construction" (Williams 1993). For Marxist theorist Frederic Jameson, this loss of the referent causes a new depthlessness and makes it impossible to represent "real" issues related to politics, economics, or sociological matters. Jameson argues that "Now reference and reality disappear altogether, and even meaning –the signified- is problematized."

Williams points out that many theorists share this perspective, and if representations are no longer refer to anything but themselves, then "we seem to be plunged into a permanent state of the self-reflexive crisis of representation. What was once a 'mirror with a memory' can now only reflect another mirror." (Williams 1993)

Some contradictions arise from this crisis of representation. On the one hand, there is the distrust of images; on the other hand, there are cases like George Holliday's tape of the Rodney King beaten by L.A. police, which uncovers the truth about this traumatic event. According to Williams, Rodney King's case demonstrates that "moving image still has the power to move audiences to a new appreciation of previously unknown truth." (Ibid) [3]

According to Williams, new docu-authors like Errol Morris, director of *The Thin Blue Line* (1987), find their ways to come out of the crisis of representation by drawing attention to the multiple, contingent, and constructed nature of truth and history. *The Thin Blue Line* is about the murder of a Dallas police officer and Randall Adams's imprisonment in the account of this crime, which turns out at the end that David Harris commits it. The documentary consists of interviews and enactments shaping and constantly changing according to the memories of different subjects. Morris employs different narrational strategies such as using fictional elements and stylistic enactments in a self-reflexive way, deploying temporal manipulations, using a distinct personal style, etc. He refuses to fix any final truth. Instead, he is interested in "reverberations and repetitions" (Williams 1993) to emphasize historical reality's relative and constructed nature. By examining these narrational strategies, Williams concludes that not all postmodern representations have to be defeated by simulacrum's depthlessness. She argues that:

> […] there can be historical depth to the notion of truth-not the depth of unearthing a coherent and unitary past, but the depth of the past's reverberation with the present. If the authoritative means to the truth of the past does not exist, if photographs and moving images are not mirrors with memories, if they are more, as Baudrillard has suggested, like a hall of mirrors, then our best response to this crisis of representation might be to do what Lanzmann and Morris do: to deploy the many facets of these mirrors to reveal the seduction of lies. (Williams 1993)

---

[3] Although the distrust of the images increased today, they still have the same power. On 25th May 2020, George Floyd, a 46-year-old black man is brutally murdered by four police officers in Minneapolis, Minnesota. After video footage made by a witness is shared on social media, the officers were dismissed, and numerous protests have erupted.

As I explained in the introduction part, I will utilize William's perspective to approach animated documentaries. I think of animated documentaries as a powerful medium of expression to blur the lines between fact and fiction and between animation and live-action. They have the potential to reveal the multiple layers of reality. By the phrase "layers of reality," I refer to a concept that is similar to Williams' "many facets of mirrors." I argue that animated documentaries respond to the crisis of representation with their potential to question the relative and constructed nature of reality, history, and truth. In the following chapter, I will focus on the medium of animation and how it functions in animated documentaries.

2. ANIMATED DOCUMENTARY

2.1 THE LANGUAGE OF ANIMATION

Animation, which precedes the invention of photography, is the logic and essence of motion pictures. It is also an umbrella term that refers to many different techniques and production methods, from cell animation to stop motion and visual effects. Thereby, many different definitions and approaches have been suggested from time to time. Paul Wells defines animation as: "To animate, and the related words, *animation*, *animated,* and *animator* all derive from the Latin verb, *animare*, which means 'to give life to,' and within the context of the animated film, this largely means the artificial creation of the illusion of movement in inanimate lines and forms." (Wells 1998) While Wells's definition focuses on the etymological roots, Charles Solomon made another definition commonly referred to in animation studies. According to Solomon, the animation is "(1) the imagery is recorded frame-by-frame and (2) the illusion of motion is created, rather than recorded." (quoted in Furniss, 1998).

Animation has remained peripheral in film studies and mostly approached in comparison with or in relation to the photographic image from different perspectives. As explained in Chapter 1, Lev Manovich aims to reverse the hierarchy between animation and live-action cinema. He claims that "born from animation, cinema pushed animation to its boundary," and it is now "a particular case of animation that uses live-action footage as one of its many elements." (Manovich 1999)

Maureen Furniss offers a different perspective to think about the relationship between animation and live-action. According to Furniss, these two tendencies are overlapped, and they should not be approached as two separate concepts. Rather, she suggests "a continuum representing all possible image types under the broad category of motion picture production." (Furniss 2017) She puts the terms of 'mimesis' and 'abstraction' to constitute the ends of the spectrum. "The term 'mimesis' represents the desire to reproduce natural reality (more like

live-action work) while the term 'abstraction' describes the use of pure form – a suggestion of a concept rather than an attempt to explicate it in real life terms (more like animation)." (Furniss 2017) It is a convenient approach to think about the grey areas between dichotomies. Rather than focusing on the material-based differences or hierarchies between photographic image and animation, it allows us to focus on how animation is used in specific cases to construct alternative special and temporal experiences. The crucial point for this thesis is how a filmmaker uses animation as a narrational and representational strategy, what difference is made by the medium of animation itself, and how meaning is created by using it.

In order to understand animation's language, it will be useful to explore the specific narrational devices of it. Paul Wells offers a 'vocabulary' specific to animation and examines its methods in detailed work. In *Understanding Animation*, he describes these narrational devices such as metamorphosis, symbolism and metaphor, penetration, or fabrication. He also examines other devices like sound or performance in detail. Still, I focus on metamorphosis and penetration, which, in my opinion, are very specific to the animated medium and useful for the examination of animated documentaries.

Speaking of metamorphosis, Wells argues that "it is the constituent core of animation itself." (Wells 1998) Metamorphosis is the visual transformation of an image into another different one through the evaluation of lines, drawings, clays, or manipulating objects and spaces. By way of metamorphosis, it is possible to create fluid linkages and relations between separate images and sequences "through the process of animation itself rather than through editing." (Ibid., 69) It can be considered as an editing method that is specific to animation. Metamorphosis could be a transformation of a specific character in the scene, or it could be the transformation of an entire scene into another. The common cartoon aesthetics, like stretched arms and legs, squished objects, twisted bodies, etc., can also be considered metamorphosis applications. In a sense, it is the suspension of physical laws. By employing metamorphosis, animators could create distinctive spatial and temporal experiences for the audience.

Secondly, penetration means the ability of animation to evoke the internal space and represent the invisible. (Ibid., 122) As the source of the term, Wells mentions John Halas and

Joy Batchelor's writings, the founders of a British animation company Halas and Batchelor. They appreciate the penetration as an outstanding advantage of the animated film, which allows picturing "the depths of a man's soul." (Ibid., 122) Abstract concepts, states of mind, or emotions can be visualized by animation in ways that could be difficult to achieve in a live-action context. Animated documentaries often apply this characteristic of animation when representing a subject's inner world or their desires, fears, dreams, and childhood memories. By nature, these concepts (memories or dreams) are very complex to visualize, and they cannot easily fit in the ordinary space and time constructions. Animation gives the possibility to create near-by experiences of dreams, memories, or emotions.

In her article about animation's world-making capacities, Karen Redrobe argues that: "Animators can suck viewers into alternative realities that often foreground, then mess with, perceived boundaries between form and formlessness, life and death, human and non-human, possible and impossible, the world(s) we know and the ones we don't." (Redrobe 2017) By using animation characteristics, animated documentaries can re-define and transform the documentary form's relationship with reality.

2.2. DEFINITION AND BRIEF HISTORY OF ANIMATED DOCUMENTARY

Defining animated documentary is no less complicated than defining the two forms that constitute it. As covered in the previous chapter, the meaning of documentary has been expanded; representation of truth and reality is no longer dependent on indexicality and photographic realism. Postmodern approaches in the documentary focus on the relative and multilayered nature of reality rather than an objective representation of the world around us. During the 2000s, as animation technologies become more affordable and accessible, using animation and motion graphics became a common creative treatment to non-fictional content. (Honess Roe 2017) For example, there is an animated sequence in Michael Moore's live-action documentary *Bowling for Columbine* (2002). It is a narrative of the history of violence in the USA and aesthetically very different from the rest of the film. Drawings and animations are very "cartoonish" and look joyful, while the voiceover narration talks about disturbing

and violent events with a tone of dark humor. In the film, this part functions as a satirical critique of the USA's problematic relationship with guns. We can give countless examples of the usage of animation in non-fiction content. But when we speak of an animated documentary, it is more than a few animated sequences or some motion graphics applications. So, how can we describe it?

Annabelle Honess Roe suggests that an audiovisual work can be considered as an animated documentary under these conditions: (i) being recorded or created frame by frame; (ii) being about the world rather than a world wholly imagined by its creator; (iii) being presented as a documentary by its producers and/or received as a documentary by audiences, festivals, or critics" (Honess Roe 2013). The first part of her definition refers to Charles Solomon's definition of animation as "the imagery is recorded frame-by-frame." The second part refers to Bill Nichols's famous statement, "a documentary offered access to the world, instead of a world" (Nichols 1991) that draws attention to the link between the content and the historical world. The last part is a crucial point to differentiate similar films that are motivated differently by the producers. It also helps to separate other non-fiction animations such as educational or public service films from animated documentaries. Honess Roe also underlines that there is no criterion to classify a film as an animated documentary by looking at the amount of animation that the film contains. In many cases, the animation is used alongside photographic material. She suggests that, for a film to be considered an animated documentary, the medium of animation should be integrated with the meaning that, when the animation is removed, the meaning would be incoherent. (Honess Roe 2013)

That kind of integration of the form and meaning would be found in *The Sinking of the Lusitania* (1918), directed by an American pioneer animator Winsor McCay and considered the first animated documentary. (Wells, 1997: Honess Roe, 2013). It is about a very traumatic event, the sinking of a British passenger liner by a German submarine in 1915, which caused the death of many civilians. There was no footage or record of the event. Therefore, McCay decided to illustrate what happened in the form of animation. It starts with the live-action footage of Winsor McCay and the other animators working on the subject. Before it switches to the event's animated illustration, an intertitle tells the audience that "you are looking at the

first record of the Sinking of the Lusitania." The composition of animated frames positions the audience as a distant eyewitness. (Figure 2.1) Here, the absence of the archival footage became documentary's subject, and animation functions as a creative solution to represent the unrepresentable.
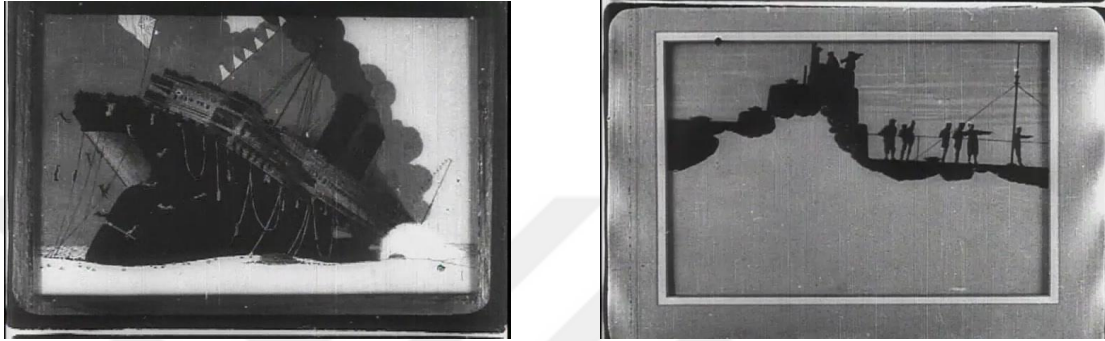

Figure 2.1. Still Frames From *The Sinking of Lusitiana* (1918)

In the early examples, the animation is most often used for illustration or clarification in non-fiction content. For instance, *The Einstein Theory of Relativity* (1923) and *Evolution* (1925) are two films made by American animators Max and Dave Fleischer that use animation to visualize and explain scientific theories. During the 1940s, The Walt Disney Studios made several educational and industrial films and provided animated sections for Frank Capra's propaganda series *Why We Fight* (1942-1945). Walt Disney's animated educational or commercial films were mostly hyper-realistic and concerned with re-creating the events that seek a visual resemblance. They use the multiplane camera to create a sense of three-dimensional space and rotoscoping to capture a realistic feeling for the movements. On the other hand, directors like John and Faith Hubley were less concerned with the realistic representation, and they employ a more stylistic approach to their animations. *Of Stars and Men* (1962) is a 53-minute animated documentary directed by John Hubley which illustrates the scientific theories of Harlow Shapley. Sybil DelGaudio argues that *Of Stars and Men* can be considered a response to Disney's realistic approach. Because it questions the issues like cinematic representation, indexicality, and "the ability of animation to represent reality." (DelGaudio 1997) There are other examples like Norman McLaren's *Neighbors* (1953) that use animation more creatively. It is an anti-war film that presents two men as neighbors

fighting over a flower on the line between them. McLaren mixes stop motion animation with live-action performances of the actors. Although the film has a very symbolic narration and could be controversial to categorized as a documentary, it was nominated for the Best Documentary (Short Subject) at 25th Academy Awards and won it.

Although these examples are significant, animated documentaries become visible and recognizable worldwide during the 90s and the 2000s. *Drawn from Memory* (1995) and *Still Life With Animated Dogs* (2001) are two animated documentaries directed by Paul Fierlinger, and they were made for TV. *Walking with Dinosaurs* (2000) is another animated documentary TV series directed by Tim Haines and produced by BBC. On the other hand, feature-length animated documentaries with theatrical releases get the worldwide audience's attention. *Chicago 10* (2007) by Brett Morgen, *Waltz with Bashir* (2008) by Ari Folman, and *The Green Wave* (2010) *by* Ali Samadi Ahadi are the most significant examples from that period. During the 2010s, animated documentaries became a recognizable part of the film festivals. Even specific festivals for animated documentaries were created, such as The American Documentary and Animation Film Festival (AmDocs) established in 2011 or The Factual Animation Film Festival established in 2013.

2.3. ANIMATED DOCUMENTARY STUDIES

During the 90s, animated documentaries got film scholars' attention, and significant academic works were published. In 1997, two articles were released; Sybil DelGaudio's "If truth be told, can 'toons tell It? documentary and animation" and Paul Wells's "The beautiful village and the true village: a consideration of animation and the documentary aesthetic." Later in 2005, Paul Ward published a book, "Documentary: margins of reality," which includes a chapter on the animated documentary. Both DelGaudio and Ward's works take their roots from documentary studies and tend to fit animated documentary into one of Bill Nichols's typologies.

DelGaudio classifies animated documentary within the reflexive mode of Nichols's typology because "animation itself acts as a form of metacommentary" (DelGaudio 1997). According

to her, by using the medium of animation, animated documentary reflexively comments on live action's ability to represent reality. She argues that animated documentaries attempt to "document the undocumentable." They could be undocumentable due to the absence of a recording device or simply because the event occurred in a period before the invention of photography. This point of view covers just a limited number of animated documentary types, such as *The Sinking of The Lusitania (1918).* It is important to note that in many contemporary animated documentaries, the medium of animation is preferred despite the existence of archival footage and live-action material.

On the other hand, Ward argues that many animated documentaries can be considered 'interactive,' especially those with voiceovers and interviews. Ward gives *A is for Autism (1992)* by Tim Webb as an example*,* which includes drawings of the participants in the animation. He argues that the subjects of animated documentaries often interact with the animators by becoming involved in the production process. In other cases, like when participants don't draw anything, it is still their thoughts and inner worlds that shape the animation, which becomes "an interactive and penetrative representing of a worldview." (Ward 2005)

According to Paul Wells, animation in a documentary does not just functions to construct reality but also performs as an interrogation of how 'the real' is constructed. (Wells 1997) Therefore he offers an original typology for animated documentaries. His method of classification mostly depends on the level of 'realism' employed by the animations. According to Honess Roe, Wells's modes "are entrenched in a now rejected postmodernist doubt regarding the viability of the documentary project and the very possibility of representing reality." (Honess Roe 2011)

His four modes are the imitative mode, the subjective mode, the fantastic mode, and the post-modern mode. The Imitative mode "directly echoes the dominant generic conventions of the live-action documentary" (Ibid., 41). These kinds of animated documentaries mostly have a narrative that aims to be informational & educational. Similar to the example of *The Sinking of The Lusitania,* they have historical content that needs to be visualized. The animation style of this kind is the most realistic one. The subjective mode "collapses the viewers'

assumptions of 'the real world' and uses the cartoon to refute the possibility of objectivity." (Ibid., 42) This mode reflects the animator's style and interpretation and allows them to express more subjective issues like dreams or individual perspectives. (Ibid., 43) The fantastic mode asserts that objective reality is an illusory concept and challenges it through a non-realist style of representations. This mode can be seen as an extension of subjective mode, but the difference is that the fantastic mode has a surrealist approach rather than a subjective interpretation. The post-modern mode further questions the documentary's ability to represent any truth or reality. Wells associates this mode to the performative documentary from Nichols typology and suggests that this kind of animated documentaries "render the documentary image as merely 'an image' not an authentic representation." (Wells 1997)

Annabelle Honess Roe argues that trying to fit animated documentaries into existing modes or typologies limits our understanding of the form. Instead, she suggests considering how animation functions in the documentary. She offers to ask these questions to understand the function of animation: "How and why animation is being used instead of the conventional alternative (live-action)? What and how is the animation representing?" (Honess Roe 2013) Her method is examining the use of animation as a representational strategy in the documentary. These questions address the ontological differences between animation and live-action in terms of their relationship with reality. There is a dialectic between the absence of the photographic material and the presence of the medium of animation, and this dialectical relationship constitutes the main core of animated documentaries.

> On the one hand, filmed footage, and its attendant presumed direct relationship with reality is missing. While, on the other hand, animation, through its potential multiplicity of styles, techniques, and means of production, becomes a visual excess that we need to factor in when interpreting the nature, and meaning, of animated documentaries. (Honess Roe 2013)

The absence of photographic material also tells us something about the reality that belongs to the subject or the event. For example, *Not For Money Not For Love Not For Nothing* (2020) is a documentary about four sex workers in Newport, United Kingdom. The Director of the film, John Robert Lee, uses animation and dubbing for the interviews to protect the subjects' anonymity. It is the reality of these women that they cannot reveal their identity. In documentary cinema, some techniques are used to protect subjects' identity, such as shooting

the interviewee in a dark frame by hiding their faces or using face masks, etc. But by using animation instead of these methods, *Not For Money Not For Love Not For Nothing* both protects the women's identity and creatively visualize their stories.

Honess Roe suggests that animation functions in three ways in documentaries: mimetic substitution, non-mimetic substitution, and evocation. This approach considers how animated documentary's epistemological status differs from the live-action documentary and what is implied by this difference. (Honess Roe 2011) Mimetic substitution means that animation in the documentary illustrates something very difficult or impossible to represent with live-action, like in the case of *The Sinking of The Lusitania.* Mimetic substitution could function as a realist reconstruction of events. On the other hand, some animated documentaries use non-mimetic substitution. In this case, animation does not imitate live-action conventions; it illustrates the events through interpretation. There is not an attempt to create a visual link between reality and representation. Honess Roe argues that this kind of utilization acknowledges the medium of animation in its own right. (Honess Roe 2011)

Both mimetic and non-mimetic substitution can overcome the limitations of live-action or be a creative solution to the absence of photographic material. The third function of animation in documentaries is evocation, and it responds to a different representational limitation. The evocative function can represent the abstract concepts, emotions, or states of mind that are difficult to represent through live-action imagery. Evocation makes use of the "penetrative" nature of animation. This function is mostly used to evoke the reality experienced by the film's subjects.

Honess Roe's book, *Animated Documentary* (2013), is one of the most comprehensive works on the subject. Besides the methodology she offers, she examines different aspects of animated documentaries, such as their production methods and representational strategies or their relationship with memory, history, subjective experiences, etc. She argues that the merging of documentary and animation led us to transcend "the binary understandings of what and how documentary and animation can show us." (Honess Roe 2013) She associates the explosion of animated documentary production after the 90s with the growing anxiety of the 90s towards the reliability of photographic representation. Because "the animated

documentary takes the viewer beyond the point of distrusting the origin of the image or the pro-filmic by embracing its quality as a constructed form." (Ibid., 171) I argue that they go further and provide a new way of expression for filmmakers to articulate the complex nature of reality. In the following chapter, I will examine this rich tool's distinctive ways to represent multiple layers of reality by giving examples from the films selected.

3. LAYERS OF REALITY

This chapter will examine three animated documentaries: *Another Day of Life* (2018), *The Wanted 18* (2014), and *Is the Man Who Is Tall Happy? An Animated Conversation with Noam Chomsky* (2013). To describe a film as an animated documentary, the medium of animation should be integrated with the meaning that, when the animation is removed, the film's meaning would be incoherent. (Honess Roe 2013). For the animated documentaries that I selected, the meaning is created by the medium of animation in unique ways. Therefore, my examination focuses on how animation functions as a representational strategy and how meaning is created by it.

The title of the first part, "Substitution and Evocation: *Another Day of Life* (2018)," refers to animation's functions of substitution and evocation. In the film, the animation reconstructs the past by using substitution and also represents the main character's inner world by using evocation. By employing these strategies, the film reveals two different layers of historical reality: the narrative of the events and the witness's subjective experience.

The second part's title, "The Fantastic Side of the Reality: *The Wanted 18* (2014)", points out the fantastic story of the cows, which is represented as stop motion animation. By embedding the cows' point of view as a humorous, fantastic layer of reality, *The Wanted 18* offers an insider look at the Palestinians' non-violent resistance and political struggle under Israeli occupation.

The third part's title, "The Filmmaker, The Subject and The Medium: *Is the Man Who Is Tall Happy? An Animated Conversation with Noam Chomsky* (2013)", is about the film's usage of animation as a tool to interrogate the three layers of a documentary film: filmmaker, subject, and medium. A documentary film renders actuality through these three layers. By using animation, Michel Gondry interrogates cinematic devices that construct a documentary film's reality. I will give detailed information about these films' contents and narrative structures in the following parts. Then I will examine their narrational and representational strategies.

3.1. SUBSTITUTION AND EVOCATION: *ANOTHER DAY OF LIFE* (2018)

Another Day of Life is an animated documentary that attracted the attention of festival circles and international audiences. Firstly, I would like to cover the thematic and formal aspects of the film. It is based on Polish journalist Ryszard Kapuscinski's memoir about his experience during the Angolan War of Independence. Kapuscinski (1932-2007) spent nearly 40 years of his professional life, writing about the conflicts throughout the developing world. As a journalist and memoir writer, he has a controversial personal style. He blurred the line between fact and fiction, mixed the journalism conventions with magical realism, metaphor, and allegory. (Kaufman 2007) His book, *Another Day of Life: Angola 1975,* is a brief history of the Angolan Civil War, but it is mainly the story of Kapuscinski himself as a reporter who witnessed the conflicts and war. The very first sentence of the book articulates that it is not going to be a narrative of actual events but a narrative of subjective experience: "This is a very personal book, about being alone and lost." (Kapuscinski 2001)

The book's adaptation is directed by Spanish documentary filmmaker Raúl de la Fuente and Polish animator Damian Nenow. They mixed animated memories of Kapuscinski with present-day live-action interviews of surviving participants. The story begins with the voiceover narration of Kapuscinski that speaks of the situation at that time. In 1975, While the cold war between the USA and USSR has been going on, The Portuguese Colonial empire collapsed, and Portugal started leaving the African Colonies. Angola was the last one, and the people of Angola were waiting for the upcoming Independence Day. In the meantime, a civil war erupted between two Angolan groups: the communist People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and the anti-communist National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). When the USA and the USSR forces took their sides, the conflict over Angola's lands became an international crisis. While people were trying to escape, the Polish Press Agency's reporter Kapuscinski arrived at Luanda's city. In Luanda, the situation is described by locals as "confusão" by Kapuscinski's words, "a state of absolute disorientation."

From Luanda to the southern front, Kapuscinski's story is a reporter's story as a participant of a historical event. Driven by curiosity and hunger for experience, he keeps pushing the

limits to go a step further, and his actions affect the flow of events. As soon as he arrives in Luanda, Kapuscinski tries to get permission to go to the southern front, the most dangerous war zone where Commander Farrusco has been defending for a long time. He convinces one of the commanders of MPLA, called "Daddy," to help him go to the south. In exchange, Kapuscinski promises to tell the story of Daddy to the world as a war hero. Like Daddy, most people he crosses the paths throughout his journey have the desire to be told and remembered. Daddy tasks one of his best soldiers, Charlotta, to this mission, and it causes Charlotta's death. Her death is a crucial point in Kapuscinski's journey because he understands that his action causes pain and affects the course of events. He falls into the ethical dilemma of a reporter. His mission is to receive information and transmit it objectively. Still, is it possible to remain objective and neutral while you are in there as a part of the historical event? This dilemma led him to make a critical decision at the climax of the film. He has to decide between transmitting the information he has and keeping it on behalf of the one side. Kapuscinski and his colleague Ricardo were the only journalists in the world with that information. Kapuscinski knows that if the information goes public, it will change the course of events. It will cause more pain and loss of lives in Angola. He decides to keep that information.

The animation style is an outcome of 3D computer graphics combined with 2D cel animation's visual aesthetics. During the production process of animation, the staged performance of the actors is recorded by a camera. These performances are transmitted to 3D digital models via a technique called Motion Capture (Mo-Cap). After the animators created the 3D animated scenes, they applied the colors and lights via a toon shader. Toon shader (or cel-shading) is a technique to apply a two-dimensional visual style into 3D models and graphics. As a result of this process, while motions look more realistic and detailed, the film visually looks more cartoonish and flatter. (Figure 3.1) This aesthetic choice draws the film away from photographic realism and creates a unique visual world.

Figure 3.1. The visual world of *Another Day of Life*

Another Day of Life is about representing history and memory, perceptions of objectivity, and subjective experience. So, how does the medium of animation function to tell this story? Let me repeat the questions of Honess Roe: "How and why is animation being used instead of the conventional alternative (live-action)? What and how is the animation representing?" In order to adapt these questions to *Another Day of Life*, the first thing to ask is, why are the events reconstructed with animation instead of using existing archival footage, photographic material, or live-action enactments? As the film is an adaptation of Kapuscinski's memories and personal writings, it should represent his personal experience. Therefore, filmmakers prefer animation as a representational strategy to create a reflection of Kapuscinsky's experience. It also became a representation of Kapuscinski's style of reporting and writing on historical conflicts, which blurs the line between fact and fiction. The animation functions to represent two different layers of Kapuscinski's reality: first, it reconstructs the historical events around him, and second, it represents his subjective experience. In order to perform these two different layers, animation functions in both substitutive and evocative ways.

For the first layer, the film reconstructs the historical events, places, and people with mimetic substitution. Honess-Roe points out that substitutive animation aims a close resemblance to reality and aims to achieve a high level of verisimilitude. (Honess Roe 2013) In *Another Day of Life*, the visual resemblance is intended while designing places and characters (Figure 3.2). Although the graphic language they chose is less detailed than a realistic 3D animation, the resemblances are still very obvious. In cuts between animation and live-action interview scenes, they underline the visual resemblance. This editing technique becomes repetitive in

the film and functions as a bridge between the past and the present. The virtual camera mimics conventional camera movements and framings. For example, they use the bird-eye point of view and panning shots for the road scenes.

Another specific example is the scene when Kapuscinski and Arthur take the road to go to the south. They get attacked by a group of soldiers. The gunfight scene is constructed as if there is a third person with a camera beside them. The shaky hand-held camera is conventionally used in documentaries, and it creates a sense of eyewitness in audiences. The animation's virtual camera functions here as the same; it follows Kapuscinski and Arthur and reflects their fear and shock.

Figure 3.2. Visual resemblances between animation and photographic material

As the second layer of reality, the animation represents the subjective experience of Kapuscinski by evocation. When Kapuscinski finds out Charlotta is dead, he suddenly decides to go to the southern front to reach Commander Farusco. He sits at the front seat with a tired-looking soldier as the driver; he is full of sadness, despair, and guilt. As a reflection of his intense emotions, the deserted road turns into a blue void where bodies lifelessly sink; destroyed buildings, planes, guns, and bullets float in the air. Into this blue void, the body of

Charlotta dissolves in the air and goes to pieces. (Figure 3.3) According to Honess Roe, animations that visualize the invisible aspects of life often use an abstract or symbolic style and function in an evocative way that allows the audience to imagine the world from someone else's perspective. (Honess Roe 2013) That blue void where everything is sinking and dissolving, including Charlotta's body, symbolizes Kapuscinski's grief and despair. Emotionally he experiences a transformation of the physical world around him into a sorrowful void. It should also be noted here that the animated documentary's evocative function uses penetration as a narrational tool.
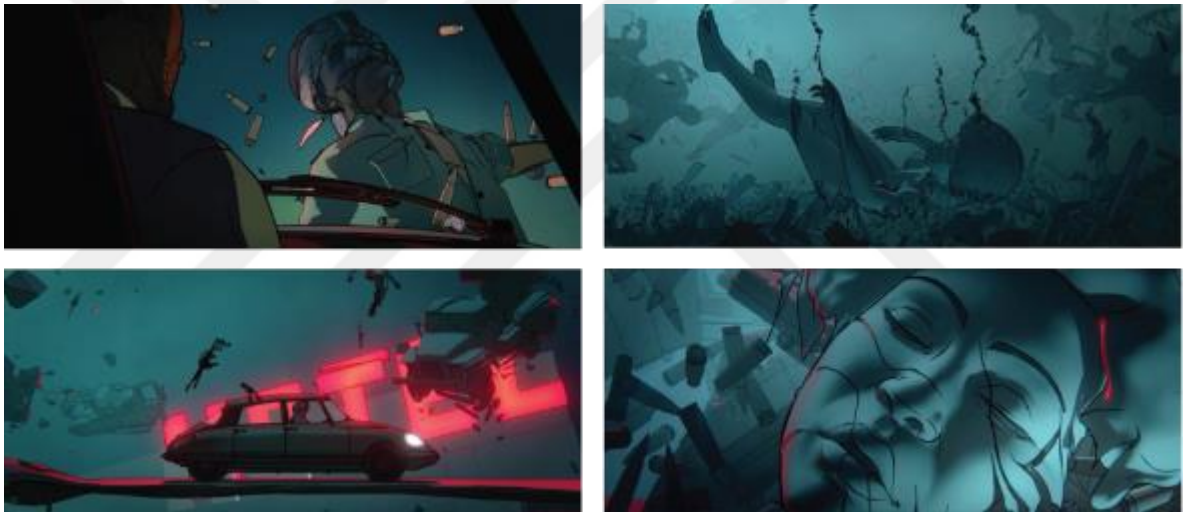

Figure 3.3. Kapuscinski's subjective experience

As it is mentioned above, Wells offers four modes for the animated documentary. Modes and typologies are useful to understand the form and content better. They are practical to make comparisons between different narratives and styles. In *Another Day of Life,* we can find the imitative mode's characteristics and the subjective mode together. Wells explains the modes with the level of realism they employed. As I demonstrated, Another Day of Life is interested in representing the multiple layers of the reality of the Angolan War and Kapuscinski's experiences. Firstly, it imitates reality by using the conventions of the live-action documentary (such as the hand-held camera technique) and using a photorealistic

representation of subjects and events. These aspects make the film closer to the imitative mode. Secondly, by penetrating Kapuscinski's subjective experience, the film uses the characteristics of the subjective mode, which challenges the assumptions of objective representation and expresses the subjectivity with creative interpretation.

3.2. THE FANTASTIC SIDE OF REALITY: *THE WANTED 18* (2014)

The Wanted 18 is an animated documentary about the non-violent resistance of Palestinian people during the First Intifada. It is directed by Palestinian interdisciplinary artist Amer Shomali and Canadian documentary filmmaker Paul Cowan. In 1987, a group of Palestinians in Beit Sahour purchased 18 cows to start a local dairy production, but their attempt to produce their milk was seen as a security threat by the Israeli forces. The Israeli Army declares the 18 cows as a thread and issues a search warrant for them. This true story is a tragicomic example of Palestinian dispossession and political struggle under the occupation of Israel. The Wanted 18 has a mixed media technique, including stop-motion animation, comic book style of visualization, live-action interviews, and reenactments. The director Amer Shomali himself is the narrator of the story, but there are different points of view in the film. The most significant one that I want to focus on is the cows' point of view, which is visualized through stop-motion animation. It is a different layer of reality represented by the medium of animation. Adding the cows' point of view as a fantastic dimension, as another layer of reality, *The Wanted 18* creates a perspective that reveals the unrepresented aspects of the Palestinians' experience. It also adds a humorous level to the narrative that makes their non-violent resistance visible. Firstly, I would like to give details of the story and the form of *The Wanted 18.* Afterward, I will examine the animation's function that adds a different layer to the reality represented in the film.

The film begins with a drawing of the Jerusalem Desert, which turns into live-action footage. Amer Shomali, the director, wanders around the desert, and when his live-action image turns into a comic-book frame, he begins to tell the story. In 1988, he was a Palestinian child living with his family in a Syrian refugee camp. He only knows about Palestine from TV and the

stories told to him by his parents. He says that his parents always talk about Palestine in the form of fairytales and Palestinians as superheroes. Shomali couldn't imagine Palestine as a real place when he was a child. At that time, the children couldn't go outside too much, so they spent their time inside reading comic-books. Shomali read the story of his hometown, Beit Sahour, and the 18 cows in a comic-book. While sitting at the mountainside in the Jerusalem Desert, Shomali begins to draw the cows, which he remembers the four of them very well. A stop motion animation sequence comes after the opening title. Shomali introduces us to the four Israeli cows: Rivka, a crazy peacenik; Ruth, the oldest and the leader; Lola, a sexy cow and a Madonna fan; and Goldie, the youngest and troublemaker. The Cows have typical characteristics like a super-hero squad that would be seen in an adventure comic-book. The directors created the cows' story as if they are the Palestinian superheroes in Shomali's childhood memories. Shomali begins to tell the cows' road journey from an Israeli town to Beit-Sahour. Palestinians were very excited about the cows' arrival, but the cows were very pissed-off. At first, their encounter was troubling because Palestinians know nothing about cow breeding, and the cows were uncomfortable about their new living conditions. As time goes by, the two groups get used to each other. The cows become a part of the Palestinian community and get an active role in their resistance.

As the cows' journey goes by in the form of stop motion animation, there are interviews with the people who tell their own experience with the cows at that time. Beit Sahour was a bit different demographically. Most of the population was Christian, and they have a higher socio-economic and educational level. The town was one of the centers of non-violent uprising. They started gatherings in neighborhoods, organized committees, and protested together. Starting their local dairy production was a need and a way of resisting and stating to the Israeli authorities that they are a self-contained community that deserves their freedom. The barn of cows also becomes a hiding place for a runaway Palestinian, Anton Shomali. He is a significant figure of the uprising and the cousin of Amer Shomali. Not surprisingly, their local milk production and barn get the attention of Israeli authorities. Army forces make a raid on the cows' barn and order Palestinians to eliminate the cows claiming that they create

a security threat for the Israeli government. But Palestinians do not obey the orders, and after this point, the cows' journey becomes an escape story.

Locals do everything they can to hide the cows. They also pursue their milk production in secret. Besides that, Palestinians start a tax strike and refuse to pay their taxes to the Israeli Government. Israeli Military Forces arrest and torture civilians, taking their belongings and households in exchange for unpaid taxes. In the interview, Shaltiel Lavie, then military governor of Israel, says that Palestinians were exhausted, and The Intifada was going down. After this interview scene, we see that one of the cows, Goldie, is giving birth. She dies after her baby is born. When the other cows realize that Goldie is not alive anymore, we see a radio behind Goldie that broadcasts The Oslo Accords (1993) has been signed by Yasser Arafat. This announcement means that The Intifada is over, just as Palestinians' hope to go back to their homes. Anton, one of the significant figures of the uprising, is killed. Amer Shomali says that his memorial was so crowded, people were mourning not just for Anton but also for The Intifada. In the end, since there is no need for the cows anymore, Beit Sahour people sell them to a butcher shop. While the cows are on the truck to the way of their death, they help the newborn baby to run away, and she succeeds. As a voiceover, Shomali says today there is a rumor that the cow is still living on the Jerusalem Desert. The film ends where it begins, in the desert with Amer Shomali wandering around looking for a mysterious cow. He says that he wants to believe the cow is still alive. While Goldie's death symbolizes The Intifada's end, her baby's liberation becomes a symbol of hope for the young generation.

I will elaborate my examination by asking Honess Roe's questions about how animation functions and what it represents in the film. The animation in *The Wanted 18* represents a fantastic story, and it is substituting for something unreachable for human perception: the cows' experience. Substitution is used here in a non-mimetic way. Honess Roe describes non-mimetic substitution as follows: Animation is substituting for something challenging to represent through live-action; however, it does not seek the visual resemblance. The directors created a fantastic story with a dramatic structure and characterization to represent the cows' experience, which would be difficult to represent through live-action. The characters and environment's design reflects a comic-book or cartoon type of visual style rather than a

realistic approach. (Figure 3.4) In the stop motion sequences, the point of view shifts to the four cows' world and represents what they experience, feel, and think. For instance, when the P.O.V shifts to their world, the cows speak English, but humans are just murmuring. This is a common approach in cartoons with animal protagonists, the audiences are usually in the point of view of the animal character, so human language becomes incomprehensible.

Figure 3.4. The visual world of the cows.

The experience of the cows becomes another layer of reality, the fantastic side of it. In other words, the stop-motion world of the cows embeds a fantastic context into documentary content. Paul Wells classifies this kind of approach as the fantastic mode of animated documentaries, and he argues that fantastic approaches to representing reality would be a way "to invalidate common assumptions and beliefs which has been historically/politically constructed." (Wells 1997) The cow's point of view represented by animation provides an insider perspective for audiences to see and engage with the unrepresented aspects of Palestinians' political struggle and resistance. The cows are originally from an Israeli town,

so at first, they have prejudices about Palestinians. One of them, Ruth, says that all Palestinians want to riot but not to work. It is the common perception about Palestinians created by media representation that they are "rock-throwing protesters." But as the cows become witness to the struggles of Palestinians, they grow empathy. And finally, when the cows become criminals in Israeli authorities' eyes for basically no reason, they put themselves in Palestinian's shoes and become a supporter of their rights.

The Wanted 18 uses a hybrid representational system that mixes comic-book frames, stop motion animation, interview sequences, and live-action re-enactments. (Figure 3.5) The directors use these different media in an intertwined way. For example, in the cow's arrival scenes, the events are represented with stop motion animation and live-action reenactments. The scene switches between the real cows and the stop motion cows. The directors edit them together and link them with sound-bridges. Another example is the scene where Israeli soldiers are come to control the cows' barn. In live-action enactment, a soldier takes a photo; then we see the photo as it is taken in the stop motion world. Through this cut, it switches from live-action to stop motion. This approach underlines the P.O.V shift between our reality and the cows' perspective. Some scenes are designed as comic book pages, and the virtual camera tracks between divided comic-book frames. In these scenes, we see that some of the frames are live-action footage. These frames become like a split-screen with both photographic image and illustration. And lastly, the directors compose some of the live-action interview scenes with animated material. For example, while the interviewee talks about the cow's truck, an animated truck passes behind the interviewee.

The mixed-media approach creates a representational system that consists of different layers of reality. In the Introduction chapter, I mentioned the montage within a shot and the digital compositing process. A digitally composed image consists of different types of moving image layers. Usually, these layers are blended in such a way that they become invisible. Spectators cannot distinguish them as different types of images that belong to different realities. In the case of *The Wanted 18,* these layers are visible and distinguishable. For animated documentaries with this kind of approach, Stefanie Van de Peer argues that:

> The hybridity of the form creates confusion and insecurity about the power of simulacrum: the seduction is incomplete. This then leads to a new awareness of the constructedness of reality, which encourages more complex expectations of the viewers and trust that they will engage more critically with the film, and therefore with the reality behind the film. (Van de Peer 2013)

It can be argued that the hybridity used in *The Wanted 18* underlines the multilayered and constructed nature of reality, and this approach creates a more robust engagement with the political text behind the story. In his examination of Palestinian animation cinema, Colleen Jankovic underlines that while representing Palestinians' struggle with a cinema verite approach is a common tendency among the Western artists, "It is rare in Palestinian cinema, which is marked by a more irreverent approach to conventions of documentation and narrative." (Jankovic 2017) He suggests that animated, hybrid, and experimental modes provide the world with a new way to engage with Palestinians' ongoing struggle. I think *The Wanted 18* is a rich example in this respect.

Figure 3.5. The hybridity of media in *The Wanted 18*

3.3. THE FILMMAKER, THE SUBJECT, AND THE MEDIUM: *IS THE MAN WHO IS TALL HAPPY? AN ANIMATED CONVERSATION WITH NOAM CHOMSKY* (2013)

Is the Man Who is Tall Happy?: An Animated Conversation with Noam Chomsky (2013), an animated documentary by French director Michel Gondry. Gondry interviews with Noam Chomsky and the conversations between the two men shape the narrative. Although Gondry recorded the conversations with a camera, he did not base his documentary on the talking-head kind of recorded footage; instead, he illustrated most of the conversations with a unique animation style. Gondry uses animation as a tool to create self-reflexivity and to question the relationship between the three layers that constitutes a documentary film: the filmmaker, the subject, and the medium. Firstly, I would like to give details about the content and the form of the film. Then I will focus on animation's function in the film that questions the nature of moving image and documentary cinema.

Noam Chomsky is an American linguist and philosopher, and he is considered one of the most influential thinkers of our time. In the beginning, Gondry asks personal questions to him, such as the very first memory that Chomsky could recall. So, Chomsky starts by telling the story of his childhood, family, and education. But the narrative does not have a dramatic structure; there is no story with a setup, confrontation, and resolution. In this respect, it is different from the previous films that I examine because both provide a story with a dramatic structure. Therefore it is relatively difficult to describe the narrative of *Is the Man Who is Tall Happy?*. Throughout the film, Gondry asks different questions about linguistics, philosophy, science, or evolution theory. As we can understand from his questions, Gondry is not interested in creating Noam Chomsky's portrayal, but Chomsky's ideas on specific topics and concepts. The nature of their conversation is fluid, like a stream of thoughts, memories, and emotions. Therefore, the visual style and editing reflect this fluidity.

For instance, in many scenes, Gondry uses metamorphosis as a tool for editing. Instead of cutting the scenes conventionally, he makes morphing animations in accordance with the flow of the conversation. He also has some hybrid scenes that combine old photographs and videos with illustrations. Photographic material is mostly used as a background layer, and it is combined with the line drawing animations at the foreground layer. The live-action

interviews of Noam Chomsky are also used in combination with animations. Throughout the film, a photographic material never appears alone and never covers the whole screen by itself. The animation's visual style is also far from being photo-realistic and does not depend on physical resemblance. Animations mostly consist of simple line drawings without specific details; abstraction is frequently used throughout the film. Also, there is no three-dimensional space construction and perspective; scenes are two-dimensional and flat. These aesthetic and narrational choices are serving to create a documentary that questions the layers of its construction.

Gondry explains why he chose to make this film in the form of animation in the opening scene. This scene is very significant in terms of the relationship between the animation and the representation of reality. The film begins with live-action footage of a pencil. A hand comes into the frame and takes the pencil. It begins to draw a hand, a pencil, a table, and a blank paper. The illustrated hand comes alive, takes the illustrated pencil, and draws an animator's light table from the side angle. Then it draws Michel Gondry and attaches itself to Gondry's left arm. Gondry begins to draw animated frames on his light table. (Figure 3.6) A real hand that draws its representation is a symbolic way of saying that a moving image is constructed by the filmmaker's hands. As a voiceover at the scene, Gondry explains why he choose to make this film as an animation:

> Film and video are both, by their nature, manipulative. The editor or director proposes an assembly of carefully selected segments that he/she has in mind. In other words, the context becomes more important than the content. And as a result, the voice that appears to come from the subject is actually coming from the filmmaker. That is why I find the process manipulative. […] On the other hand, animation that I decided to use for this film is clearly the interpretation of its author. If messages or even propaganda can be delivered, the audience is constantly reminded that they are not watching reality, so it is up to them to decide if they are convinced or not.

Here, I will repeat the questions of Honess Roe: "How and why is animation being used instead of the conventional alternative (live-action)? What and how is the animation representing?" In this case, Gondry has already answered the questions by stating his intentions at the beginning. He uses animation because he wants to underline that this film is not an objective portrayal of Noam Chomsky but an interpretation of Michel Gondry
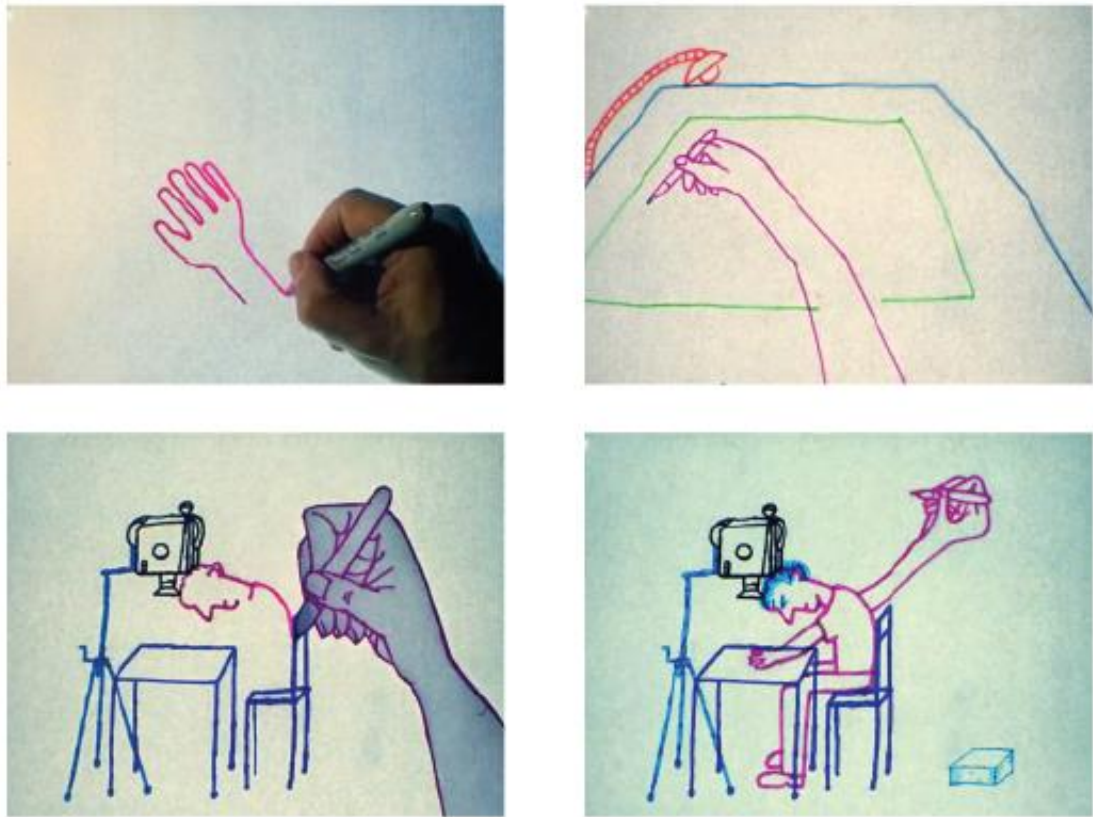
Figure 3.6. The opening sequence of *Is The Man Who is Tall Happy?*

about his subject. So, the critical point is how he uses the medium of animation as a visual tool for interpretation?

When we think about the functions of animation in the documentary suggested by Honess Roe, it can be said that *Is the Man Who is Tall Happy?* uses animation as both non-mimetic substitution and evocation. Michel Gondry illustrates Chomsky's thoughts and memories through highly personal interpretation, and Honess Roe describes this kind of implementation as a non-mimetic substitution. This kind of example does not seek visual resemblance; instead, they convert the reality and rephrase it. For instance, in one scene, Chomsky talks about his thesis advisor, a very famous and significant faculty member in his study field. This professor suggested to Chomsky to make a structural analysis of Modern Hebrew. Based on this information, Gondry illustrates the professor as a machine or a mechanical device in a very abstract way. (Figure 3.7) This figure is not the representation of Chomsky's advisor,

but Gondry's interpretation and imagination about how a structuralist professor would look. The majority of the film is about highly abstract concepts and theories related to linguistic, evolution, etc. The medium of animation can illustrate these kinds of abstract issues in a very creative way.

Honess Roe describes this function of animation as evocation, allowing one to penetrate to somebody's subjective experience or represent an abstract concept. We can pick any scene from the film as an example of evocation. Like in the scene where Chomsky talks about language acquisition and communication, Gondry illustrates these concepts with reversed human figures connected through lines and shapes. (Figure 3.8) Another example could be the scene where they talk about psychological continuity, which is our ability to connect different concepts, people, objects, etc. Gondry visualizes this concept with a wheel that resembles a phenakistoscope. (Figure 3.9) The Phenakistoscope is a device designed in the 19th century that creates the illusion of motion, and it is considered the earliest form of animation. (Figure 3.10) Obviously, the concept of psychological continuity evokes The Phenakistoscope in Gondry's mind, and he visualizes the abstract notion with this evocation.

Figure 3.7. Noam Chomsky's professor

Figure 3.8 Language acquisition

Figure 3.9. Psychological continuity

Figure 3.10. The Phenakistoscope

Gondry uses animations as a form of personal expression because, as he manifests in the beginning, he has an approach against the illusion of objectivity created by the cinematic tools. On the one hand, through experimental animation and editing, he challenges the illusion of reality. On the other hand, he questions the documentary filmmaker's position as an objective observer by including himself in the narrative. He includes his interaction and relationship with Chomsky and also includes his process of production into the film. His approach comments on the relationship between filmmaker, subject, and medium that has been problematized in documentary studies frequently. As I examine in Chapter 1, significant shifts in documentary filmmaking occur from this problematization. While Direct Cinema filmmakers claim that they can represent an unmediated reality through a non-interventionist, fly-on-the-wall approach, Cinema Verité directors argue that there is no such thing as unmediated representation because the cinematic tools are the mediator. Gondry has the same perspective, and he underlines that he cannot create an objective portrait of Chomsky. There is a couple of narrational strategies that Gondry employs to reflect his position. In some scenes, he interrupts the narrative and inserts his comments or describes what he feels during the interview sessions.

As a filmmaker, Gondry has always been playful, creative, and interested in a childish approach to craftsmanship. His approach to his subject as a documentary filmmaker reflects the same creativity and childish curiosity. He curiously asks questions to Chomsky about his field of study. Then he mentions his process of sense-making in Chomsky's serious talks. In a way, he deconstructs the hierarchy between the subject and the filmmaker and led Chomsky to direct the conversation. Meanwhile, he wanders around the concepts, tries to discover, and understand them. In a scene, Gondry's question is misunderstood by Chomsky because of the language barrier and Gondry's heavy French accent. After this moment, Gondry addresses the audience as a voiceover and says that he felt stupid because he could not express himself to Chomsky. As a solution, he animated what he means by that question and showed the animations to Chomsky during their next meeting. The result was satisfactory. After seeing the animated scenes, Chomsky was more receptive to Gondry's questions and ideas. This scene is significant in two ways. First, it reveals Gondry's position as the filmmaker that

affects the flow of the narrative. Second, it underlines the animation's potential as a visual language that can interpret and represent abstract ideas.

Gondry also mentions the technical difficulties that he faces while turning abstract conversations into animation. It is a way to draw attention to the medium he chose as a tool of representation. Sometimes we see the animations while they are being drawn or erased.

Figure 3.11. The use of live-action footages

In some scenes, Gondry uses an animation which he already used in previous scenes, and he explains why he is using the same animated sequence again. Whenever he uses live-action footage of Chomsky or himself, he combines the footage with drawings, and he makes it look like it is projected through a lens. (Figure 3.11) Also, when live-action footage comes to the scene, we can hear the camera rolling. The existence of a recording device is emphasized visually and audibly. The working mechanism of the medium and process of filmmaking is a visible part of the film.

Overall, the examination of these three unique examples indicated the possibilities of animated representation. In the examination of three films, I demonstrated that animation could go beyond the representational limitations. The medium of animation can reconstruct the past without claiming objectivity; it can penetrate subjective experiences; it can reveal

the unrepresentable aspects of reality, or even reach beyond the real and represent it from the perspective of fantastic; finally, it can be a tool to interrogate the cinematic language. These and many other representational strategies demonstrate that animated documentary form could be a powerful way of expression.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I claimed that animated documentaries could represent multiple layers of reality by using the language of animation as a representational strategy. As a result, the merging of animation and documentary could respond to the representation crisis in documentary cinema. In the first chapter, I investigated the meaning of representing reality for film studies and documentary studies. The indexical bond between reality and cinematic representation has been essential for realist theories. However, the digital transformation in cinema overthrows the material-based approaches. A digital film could create a hyper-realistic world without any indexical link with physical reality, and it means that the lines between real and unreal are not as sharp as before. Representing reality has always been the primary concern of documentary cinema, but its connotations have changed historically. During the postmodern period, there are different approaches to representing reality in documentary cinema. Many scholars claim that we cannot access reality through any representation since all images and signs are mediated. Some of them accept the mediated nature of representations. Still, they claim that we need a way to express reality through representations since images and signs have the power to create change in society. The tension between different approaches is described as the postmodern crisis of representation. Linda Williams argues that new documentary filmmakers employ representational strategies to reveal the contingent and constructed nature of reality. To reveal many aspects of reality could be a solution for the postmodern crisis of representation. I adopted her perspective as "layers of reality" to examine the representational strategies of animated documentaries.

In the second chapter, I investigated the medium of animation and how it functions in animated documentaries. The inherent characteristics of animation make it a suitable tool to express subjective experiences and to extend the limitations of physical reality. Animated documentaries benefit from the possibilities of animation to represent the unrepresentable aspects of reality. "Being unrepresentable" refers to different limitations. It could be an absence of live-action or archival footage. It could refer to abstract concepts such as memories, dreams, or any other subjective experience that would be difficult to represent via live-action. Honess Roe suggests that animation functions as substitution, non-mimetic

substitution, or evocation to overthrow its conventional alternative's representational limitations. Paul Wells argues that animation in a documentary does not just function to construct reality but also functions as questioning how 'the real' is constructed. These aspects indicate the possibilities of the animated documentary form. The form's brief history demonstrates that the number of animated documentaries increased during the 90s and 2000s. There are two crucial reasons for this boost. The first one is the expansion of the accessibility to animation production technologies and education. The second one is the growing need to discover a new way to represent reality. The second chapter concludes that animated documentary form responds to this kind of need and provides a rich tool for filmmakers to interrogate and represent multiple layers of reality.

In the third chapter, I examined three animated documentaries according to their use of animation to represent reality. I intended to demonstrate different techniques and representational strategies with the films that I selected. They have different narrative structures; while the first one is the most conventional in terms of dramatic structure, the last one is the most experimental. But the common aspect is all three of them deal with multiple layers of reality through animation.

The examination of *Another Day of Life (2018)* revealed how animation could be used for substitution and evocation. In the film, the animation reconstructs the past by using substitution, and the reconstructed representation resembles the actual events and people. The animation also represents the main character's inner world, his fears, and dreams by using evocation. Employing these strategies, *Another Day of Life* blurs the line between fact and fiction, between objective historical narrative and subjective experience. Therefore, the film underlines that historical reality has multiple layers and all these layers affect the course of events.

The examination of *The Wanted 18* revealed how animation and mixed-media techniques could provide a tool to represent the unrepresentable aspects of reality. In the film, stop-motion animation substitutes the experience of non-human characters, the 18 cows, who have a significant role in the real event. By embedding the cows' point of view as a humorous, fantastic story, *The Wanted 18* offers an insider look at the Palestinians' non-violent

resistance and political struggle under Israeli occupation. Besides the stop motion animation, the hybrid media approach provides a more decisive engagement with the events by revealing the constructed nature of reality. Consequently, the film demonstrates that animation, fantasy, and humor could be powerful narrational tools to reveal unrepresented layers of reality.

The examination of *Is The Man Who is Tall Happy?* revealed how animation could be a tool to interrogate the three layers of a documentary film: filmmaker, subject, and medium. Instead of the reality of an actual event or subject, Michel Gondry questions the reality of cinematic devices. Cinema renders actuality through its tools and the directors' perspective, so a documentary film's reality can not be considered separately from the filmmaker and the medium. He uses animation in a very stylistic way to challenge the notions of objectivity in documentary cinema. Animation represents the conversations between two-man by using non-mimetic substitution and evocation; it becomes a visual interpretation. It is constantly reminded of the audience that this interpretation is Gondry's subjective interpretation. To sum up, the film reveals the layers of its medium by using animation and underlines its creator's position and creation process as a documentary.

In conclusion, this research attempted to investigate the possibilities of animation and documentary's merging. My main argument in this thesis was that animated documentaries could respond to the postmodern crisis of representation. As a result of my examination, I demonstrated that animated documentaries provide a rich tool for filmmakers to articulate the complex and multilayered nature of reality. Contrary to the claim that documentary cinema is over or it is not possible to represent reality, innovative forms like animated documentaries prove that there is always a way for it. Documentary cinema's liberation from the burden of objectivity claims enabled unique possibilities to treat actuality, and animated documentary form is just one of these possibilities. The further step would be to investigate how reality can be represented through interactive narratives or Virtual Reality (VR) technologies. Since from the beginning, cinema is a language that transforms itself with technological developments; thus, new technologies always have the potential to discover unusual yet powerful forms of expression.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Balsom, Erika. 2018. "'There Is No Such Thing as Documentary': An Interview with Trinh T. Minh-Ha." *Frieze*, 2018. https://frieze.com/article/there-no-such-thing-documentary-interview-trinh-t-minh-ha.

Baudrillard, Jean. 1994. *Simulacra and Simulation*. The University of Michigan Press.

Bazin, André. 2005. *What Is Cinema? Vol. 1*. University of California Press.

Brunette, Peter. 2000. "Post-Structuralism and Deconstruction." In *Film Studies: Critical Approaches*, edited by John Hill and Pamela Church Gibson. Oxford University Press, U.S.A.

Buchan, Suzanne. 2013. *Pervasive Animation*. Routledge.

Casetti, Francesco. 2011. "Sutured Reality: Film, from Photographic to Digital." *October Magazin* 138: 95–106.

Corrigan, Timothy, Patricia White, and Meta Mazaj. 2011. "Alternative Modes: Experimental and Documentary Film." In *Critical Visions in Film Theory: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, edited by Timothy Corrigan, Patricia White, and Meta Mazaj. Boston, New York: Bedford / St. Martin's.

DelGaudio, Sybil. 1997. "If Truth Be Told, Can 'Toons Tell It? Documentary and Animation." *Film History, Indiana University Press* Vol. 9 (No. 2): 189–99.

Eitzen, Dirk. 1995. "When Is a Documentary?: Documentary as a Mode of Reception." *Cinema Journal, University of Texas Press* Vol. 35 (No. 1): 81–102.

Furniss, Maureen. 2017. *Art in Motion, Revised Edition: Animation Aesthetics*. John Libbey Publishing.

Grierson, John. 2011. "First Principles of Documentary." In *Critical Visions in Film Theory*, edited by Timothy Corrigan, Patricia White, and Meta Mazaj. Boston, New York: Bedford / St. Martin's.

Hill, John. 2000. "Film and Postmodernism." In *Film Studies: Critical Approaches*, edited by John Hill and Pamela Church Gibson. Oxford University Press, U.S.A.

Honess Roe, Annabelle. 2011. "Absence, Excess and Epistemological Expansion: Towards a Framework for the Study of Animated Documentary." *Animation: An Interdisciplinary Journal* Vol. 6(3): 215– 230.

———. 2013. *Animated Documentary*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

———. 2017. "Interjections and Connections: The Critical Potential of Animated Segments in Live-Action Documentary." *Animation: An Interdisciplinary Journal* Vol. 12(3): 272– 286.

Hutcheon, Linda. 1989. *The Politics of Postmodernism*. Routledge.

Jankovic, Colleen. 2017. "Pixelated Intifada: Animating Palestine Under Digital Occupation." In *Animation in the Middle East: Practise and Aesthetics from Baghdad to Casablanca*. I. B. Tauris.

Kapuscinski, Ryszard. 2001. *Another Day of Life*. Penguin Books.

Kaufman, Michael T. 2007. "Ryszard Kapuscinski, Polish Writer of Shimmering Allegories and News, Dies at 74." *The New York Times*, 2007. https://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/24/world/europe/24kapuscinski.html.

Kracauer, Siegfried. 1997. *Theory of Film The Redemption of Physical Reality*. Princeton University Press.

Kraemer, Joseph A. 2015. "Waltz with Bashir (2008): Trauma and Representation in the Animated Documentary." *Journal of Film and Video by The Board of Trustees of The University of Illinois* 67 (3–4).

Kriger, Judith. 2012. *Animated Realism. Animated Realism*. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780240814407.

Landesman, Ohad, and Roy Bendor. 2011. "Animated Recollection and Spectatorial Experience in Waltz with Bashir." *Animation: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 6 (3): 353–70.

Manovich, Lev. 1999. *The Language of New Media*. MIT Press.

Minh-Ha, Trinh T. 1990. "Documentary Is/Not a Name." *October, The MIT Press* Vol. 52.

Nichols, Bill. 1991. *Representing Reality*. Indiana University Press.

Peaslee, Robert Moses. 2011. "'It's Fine as Long as You Draw, But Don't Film': Waltz with Bashir and the Postmodern Function of Animated Documentary." *Visual Communication Quarterly* 18 (Issue 4).

Peer, Stefanie Van de. 2013. "Fragments of War and Animation: Dahna Abourahme's Kingdom of Women and Soudade Kaadan's Damascus Roofs: Tales of Paradise." *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication* 6: 151–77.

Redrobe, Karen. 2017. "The Worries of the World(s). Cartoons and Cinema." In *World Building.Transmedia, Fans, Industries*, edited by Marta Boni. Amsterdam University Press.

Renov, Michael. 1993. "Introduction: The Truth About Non-Fiction." In *Theorizing Documentary*, edited by Michael Renov. Routledge.

Shevchenko, Olga. 2015. "'The Mirror with a Memory': Placing Photography in Memory Studies." In *Routledge International Handbook of Memory Studies*, edited by Anna Lisa Tota and Trever Hagen, 1st Editio. Routledge.

Spence, Louise, and Vinicius Navarro. 2010. *Crafting Truth: Documentary Form and Meaning*. Rutgers University Press.

———. 2011. *Crafting Truth*. Rutgers University Press.

Stewart, Garrett. 2010. "Screen Memory in Waltz with Bashir." *Film Quarterly, University of California Press* 63 (3): 58–62.

Sturken, Marita. 1997. *Tangled Memories : The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering*. Berkeley: California University Press.

Vogels, Jonathan B. 2010. *The Direct Cinema of David and Albert Maysles*. Southern Illinois University Press.

Ward, Paul. 2005. *Documentary The Margins of Reality*. Wallflower Press.

Wells, Paul. 1997. "The Beautiful Village and the True Village: A Consideration of Animation and the Documentary Aesthetic." *Art & Design Magazine*, no. Profile no.53.

———. 1998. *Understanding Animation*. Routledge.

Williams, Linda. 1993. "Mirrors without Memories: Truth, History, and the New Documentary." *Film Quarterly* 46 (3): 9–21. https://doi.org/10.2307/1212899.

Winston, Brian. 2013. "Introduction: The Filmed Documentary." In *The Documentary Film Book*, edited by Brian Winston. British Film Institute.

FILMOGRAPHY

1) *The Sinking of The Lusitania* (1918) directed by Winsor McCay
2) *The Einstein Theory of Relativity* (1923) directed by Max and Dave Fleischer
3) *Evolution* (1925) directed by Max and Dave Fleischer
4) *Why We Fight* (1942-1945) directed by Frank Capra
5) *Neighbors* (1953) directed by Norman McLaren
6) *Primary* (1960) directed by Robert Drew
7) *Stars and Men* (1962) directed by John Hubley
8) *An American Family* (1971) produced by Craig Gilbert
9) *The Thin Blue Line* (1987) directed by Errol Morris
10) *A is for Autism* (1992) directed by Tim Webb
11) *Drawn from Memory* (1995) directed by Paul Fierlinger
12) *The Truman Show* (1998) directed by Peter Weir
13) *Walking with Dinosaurs* (2000) directed by Tim Haines Jasper James
14) *Still Life With Animated Dogs* (2001) directed by Sandra Fierlinger, Paul Fierlinger
15) *Bowling for Columbine* (2002) directed by Michael Moore
16) *Chicago 10* (2007) directed by Brett Morgen
17) *Waltz with Bashir* (2008) directed by Ari Folman
18) *The Green Wave* (2010) directed by Ali Samadi Ahadi
19) *Is the Man Who Is Tall Happy? An Animated Conversation with Noam Chomsky* (2013) directed by Michel Gondry
20) *The Wanted 18* (2014) directed by Amer Shomali, Paul Cowan
21) *Another Day of Life* (2018) directed by Damian Nenow, Raúl de la Fuente
22) *Not For Money Not For Love Not For Nothing* (2020) directed by John Robert Lee

CURRICULUM VITAE

Personal Information
Name Surname   : Gülçin Çaktuğ Kurt

Academic Background
Undergraduate Education   : Bahcesehir University, Film and TV (2010-2016)
                                          : Bahcesehir University, Communication Design (2012-2016)

Graduate Education   : Kadir Has University, School of Graduate Studies
                                           Department of Cinema and Television (2018-2021)
Foreign Language Skills   : English

Work Experience
2019 –   : Ozyegin University / Research Assistant
                                                        (Dep. Of Communication Design)
2016 – 2018   : UV Creative / Motion Graphics Designer