

Documentary film production under neo-liberal circumstances – a genre in change

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With my paper I will give a short definition and the tradition of documentary filmmaking and a short description of what changed last decades especially in production conditions, thus influencing style and approach of filmmaking. With the example of few selected awarded documentaries it will be discussed how neo-liberal politics is influencing via production conditions as well as changing minds style and approach of films, and how filmmaker try to face the scars of neo-liberal politics and what does this mean for filmmaker and protagonists.

Keywords: documentary; the free individual; charisma; journey of the hero; dramaturgy; aesthetics; authenticity; representation; AMY; CITIZENFOUR; MAN ON WIRE; BELTRACCI – THE ART OF FORGERY

For a long period Documentary filmmakers were seen as the ‘good people’, encompassing the vital role of both reporter and poet in one. They (we) are acting as artistic advocates who want to give people a voice that otherwise wouldn’t be heard: to open up the mind for political, cultural, social events and developments. We want to attract the audience to parts of the world they perhaps without us, the documentary filmmakers, would never have heard of or known about. Filmmakers are telling stories about real people and their fate, about the condition of societies and/or of the world—but they are no journalists. Documentaries are a specific form of audio-visual art, not only mirroring a situation or an event, not only giving facts and information. A documentary is a poetic condensation of reality. This is based on crafts and art, in research and reflection, well-composed cinematography, sound design and high quality editing. “Documentary often took the form of the visual essay, with or occasionally without a verbal commentary.” (Chanan 2007, v) Or, how Bill Nichols summarized it: a documentary is showing, telling and poetics (Nichols 2010), thus representing reality.

“The definition of ‘documentary’ is always relational or comparative. (...) But documentary is not a reproduction of reality, it is a *representation* of the world we already occupy. It stands for a particular view of the world, one we may never have encountered before even if the aspects of the world, one we may never have encountered before even if the aspects of the world that is represented are familiar to us. We judge a reproduction by its fidelity to the original—its capacity to look like, act like, and serve the same purposes as the original. We judge a representation more by the nature of the

pleasure it offers, the value of the insight or knowledge it provides, and the quality of the orientation or disposition, tone or perspective it instills. We ask more of a representation than we do of a reproduction.” (cf. Nichols 2010, 20/1)

Filmmakers like Dziga Vertov (1896-1954), Esfir Shub (1894-1959), John Grierson (1881-1972), Humphrey Jennings (1907-1950), Joris Ivens (1898-1989), Chris Marker (1921-2012), Barbara Kopple (1946-), or Patricia Guzman (1941-)—to name just a few—gave a huge impact to the tradition of documentary, left their indelible marks.

A distinction between documentaries and fiction movies is not only obvious by the specifics of the production process, but also given within the addressing of the audience.

“One of the crucial differences is that fiction addresses the viewer primarily as private individual, it speaks to the interior life of feelings, sentiments, and secret desires; whereas documentary addresses the viewer primarily as citizen, member of civil society, putative participant in the public sphere. But in that case, it is always strongly influenced, in certain ways structured in advance, by the conditions which govern the public sphere in each country.” (Chanan 2007, vi)

That does not mean fiction movies as such are to be seen as pure entertainment, but the dramaturgical approach of how to tell a story about conditions of society, the world we are living in, is different. A fiction movie is telling stories of singular fate, bigger than reality, experienced by a specific character or some times by a group, an ensemble. “Cinema is about people you either wish you were like or are glad you are not.” (Cottrell Boyce 2003, 108) In general fiction movies are made to attract our sympathy. To sympathize with a character or a situation means identification. Imagination can let us see the other—the character—like us, “it can make a magic leap from difference to likeness so that strange or foreign experience seems our own. Then we can identify with them”. (Sennett 2012, 20) That is the approach given with a ‘closed dramatic form’, how this would be defined in dramaturgy, aesthetic or semiotics. (cf. Stutterheim 2015; Eco 1990 (1977); Klotz 1980) But Documentaries in general are made in an observational mode like *Direct Cinema*, in an participatory mode like *Cinema Verité* or more associative like essay films, always as poetic as possible (cf. Chanan 2007, 100; Nichols 2010). They are narrated as ‘open dramatic forms’, asking for empathy, not sympathy leading into identification in the above meaning. “Curiosity figures more strongly in empathy than in sympathy. (...) empathy attends to another person on his or her own terms. (...) the listener has to get outside him- or herself.” (Sennett 2012, 21)

Thus, the documentary is addressing the audience as citizen, as a thinking human being, able to relate and to attend to a character or situation distinct from our own experience.

For some years Neoliberalism has been setting up new production and distribution conditions. This is not only changing production abilities but also changing subjects, topics, style, and the approaches of contemporary documentary productions. As a result of neo-liberal politics, some documentaries are no longer addressing the audience as citizen, an active member of civil society, but asking for sympathy and identification. Many commission editors, who have become since the 1990s godlike in deciding about documentary productions, want to see documentaries touching the audience, are seeking for stories with stronger sentiment than just empathy, leading into identification. Success must be guaranteed by handing in a treatment. And many commissioning editors do believe that the audience would like to suffer and cry while watching a documentary, and would be less interested in being encouraged to think about a situation, to compare oneself with the person acting in the film. Thus, broadcasters are first of all asking for documentaries either focussing on terrible living conditions, threats against children, women, or animals somewhere else in the world; or tell about a hero. That hero can be successful or fail. The hero's life must be extraordinary—like the life of “THE MAN ON WIRE”, or “AMY”. Such a documentary can be structured following the scheme of ‘The Journey of the Hero’. This scheme is since some years to be seen as the most promising way of narrating a film, to get an high quote by touching the audience, achieving sympathy. The ‘journey-of-the-hero’ is the only one model used for film productions for structuring a narration not based in the dramatic tradition, but the one fitting best to neo-liberal thinking (cf. Campbell and Cousineau 1999; Campbell 1949).

The scheme based on the 1949 published book “*The Hero with a Thousand Faces*” by Joseph Campbell. In his work Campbell is combining psychology and comparative mythology from the perspective of a conservative Christian, disappointed about the situation of the modern, secular world after WWII. His attempt was it to reinvent the more religious understanding of a hero:

„It is not society that is to guide and save the creative hero, but precisely the reverse.
And so every one of us shares the supreme ordeal —carries the cross of the redeemer—

not in the bright moments of his tribe's great victories, but in the silences of his personal despair.“ (Campbell 2004, 362)

His book was used by Christoph Vogler to write a short summarizing compendium for writers of screenplays, *“The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure For Writers“*. Distilled the structure goes like this: The hero is introduced as a human being like every one, who lives in a normal world, in good conditions. Something happens and the hero get's a ‘call of adventure’, because only he is able to solve the problem. It can be a threat against him or his family, but this often is implicit a metaphor for a bigger problem. He can either have fears or reservation to follow the call or he can agree in the moment. Next he will meet ‘the mentor’. That's the person explaining the problem, the quest more in detail, and supporting the hero to start the adventure, to find his way into the ‘special world’, to equip him with knowledge and weapons to enable him to survive. The hero has to cross the threshold towards the ‘special world’/‘the belly of the whale’, which is saved with guards. Crossing the threshold is the first challenge to prove his will and ability to solve the quest. Arrived in the other, the special world he has to learn new rules, to find a helper, and perhaps to meet a goddess who will support him too or try to confuse him. He will meet allies and enemies, has to solve/survive some tests, to be able to find and approach the inmost cave and to meet his ‘father’ or a ‘Supreme Ordeal’ to get the ‘elixier’/‘the holy grail’ as reward. When he survives this extreme challenge the hero will be awarded and transformed. Now he has to find his way towards the threshold back into the ordinary world he came from. Again obstacles are to defeated. He has to leave his allies behind, sometime this means to sacrifice them. This can make the hero hesitating to do so and thus he needs an urgent sign or important reason to go back, to save the world. After crossing the threshold back he will have fulfilled the quest, and he has faced death. As result he changed, has experienced a transformation and will start a new, a better life. In an exemplary way this scheme is used in *“ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK”* (Carpenter, USA 1981) or as a postmodern version in *“DAY AFTER TOMORROW”* (Emmerich, USA 2004).

This scheme nowadays is seen in many commissioning/editorial departments as THE blueprint for a documentary guaranteeing a high quote. By comparing that model and documentaries made this way to some aspects of neo-liberalism one can see the

attractiveness of the model to design a story according to the given political circumstances.

Neoliberalism is grounded in the 'free, possessive individual', in privatization—returning public and state services to private capital, redrawing the social architecture of welfare states. (Hall 2011) Along this society is losing the sense for a balance between privacy and public.

“The reigning aspiration today is to develop personality through experiences of closeness and warmth with others. The reigning myth today is that the evils of society can all be understood as evils of impersonality, alienation, and coldness. The sum of these three is an ideology of intimacy: social relationships of all kinds are real, believable, and authentic the closer they approach the inner psychological concerns of each person. This ideology transmutes political categories into psychological categories. This ideology of intimacy defines the humanitarian spirit of a society without gods: warmth is our god.”
(Sennett 1974, 20)

This ideology is influencing the expectations of commissioning editors, producers, founders and sponsors, and thus the aesthetics and subsequent views/knowledge of the world represented in documentaries towards a representation of warmth. And warmth is to be understood in close connection to sympathy, feeling with or like the other.

In this respect, a topic or focus of a documentary could be an affective sympathy or feeling of caring, of pity, or the portrayal of someone different, god-like, or psychologically particular—or all of this together. Working within this situation, documentaries more and more frequently address the private individual, depicting 'free, possessive individuals' far more than in earlier decades. This approach goes along the tendency to change the form of narration and to try to adapt 'the journey of the hero' for this genre. The point of view of the filmmaker narrows and documentary goes private, focussing on the individual and his private wants.

One of the first documentaries signalling and representing this change in a successful way was “MAN ON WIRE” (UK 2008), directed by James Marsh. The film was internationally cheered and won the most attractive awards—from BAFTA to the Academy Award (Oscar) for Best Documentary Feature in 2009. The story told in this production chronicles the way of Philippe Petit to his extraordinary walk from one twin tower to the other, structured chronologically as a journey of the hero. This decision becomes not only, but especially, apparent by announcing his story like a fairy tale (Marsh UK 2008, 5:45)

The film is focussing on the private desire and the charisma of a person, a 'free, possessive individual', seeing himself as outside of or different than the society he lives in. Philippe, the protagonist, when explaining his motivation, says: "Life should be lived on the edge, see it as a true challenge, and then you leave your life on a tie trope?" (magnolia-pictures 2008) The trailer further promotes this notion, announcing: "It was a crime—Incredibly risky—Highly illegal—Definitely crazy!" (magnolia-pictures 2008) And this was a crime, prepared in secret and set up over night. The film was re-enacting the preparation to add suspense towards the expectation of the event. Marsh, the director, is completely loaded for his male hero, who is living for his desire and extraordinary talent as tied-rope-dancer—supported by friends and a loving woman. The hero Philippe Petite needs people supporting him to achieve his goal, like in the *journey-of-a-hero-scheme*: the mentor(s), the goodness, meeting an agent of the power and surviving the adventure of the 'other world', a last obstacle before coming back in the real life, and by crossing the last threshold he will change. Hence his girlfriend, Annie, can be seen as the goddess in the scheme, the true helper of the hero; his agent is arranged like the mentor, and his friends as the companions the hero needs to be able to survive in the inner world before he can cross the threshold back into civilization/our world.

Philippe met his Annie, when he was about to start to work as a robe artist. She remembers herself as an extremely shy 20-year-old woman, who was impressed by his personality, his charisma—to have been overwhelmed by his appearance. They became inseparable and she devoted her life completely to his, part of his. (Marsh UK 2008, 9 min) Everyone else in this film, dedicated to him or not, is describing the protagonist as an extremely focussed, entirely self-centred man. A man who likes to provoke; this is part of his character. Either one agrees and follows him best you can, or you are out of his sphere or team. (Marsh UK 2008, 76 min) His walk between the Twin Towers was not only attracting audience but as well the police. He was forced to come back to the roof—after 45 minutes of walking back and forth—and was for a very short time arrested.

That situation again was within the narration of the film set along the scheme of 'the journey of a hero'. The arrest represents the last threshold before the hero has to cross to come back to the sphere he came from, having changed completely. Annie, when

describing this phenomenon, states that she could see his desire to feel prominent and accepted, to be gazed at adoringly by the audience. She is convinced that at this moment something in his mind changed (Marsh UK 2008, 81 min). Philippe himself describes how prominent he felt in New York then, after the event. (Marsh UK 2008, 82 min) Thus, the friendship broke between Philippe and all members of his team, same the love story between Anne, his love, and him. This is as well one aspect of crossing the threshold back: the hero has to leave his companions and the goddess behind to become the new, developed character. To arrange a film on the scheme given by Campbell was first of all possible with a story like this. Having a person who urgently wants to be a hero, someone able to do something extraordinary, different than ordinary people, a charismatic outsider. One who wants to leave the sphere of the civilized world with rules and laws, which makes a society, to achieve his individual success. Charisma can be understood as a secular version of the aura of a priest (Sennett 1974, 269). Having this in mind one can understand the emotional power of the last act of this film. Then everyone is overwhelmed by his extraordinary performance and self-confidence in an extreme, once-in-a-lifetime situation. Within this situation/sequence, as result of the filmic narration, the sympathy of the audience is all his. The hero then has achieved a higher level of personality, thus, leaving behind the mentor(s), helpers, and the female company/familiar spirit. The aim of this scheme is to remember and to recreate the divine signature and to overcome the secular and democratic society, the modern understanding of equality of men and women. (Chanan 2007, vi) To portray a protagonist, who acts illegal, at his own risk, meets as well the theory of Chicago School defining the criminal as an economic-rational individual. In reference to Foucault's Lecture on Bio-Politics a criminal, however pathological he or she may be, "in the eyes of neo-liberals is always to a certain degree also a rational being, in other words sensitive to changes in the balance of profit and loss. (...) The neo-liberal program seeks to create neither a disciplining nor a normalizing society, but instead a society characterized by the fact that it cultivates and optimizes differences." (Foucault 2008 (2004)) Foucault also emphasised that the system is not only quite happy with a certain degree of criminality but also in this approach, it is counting crime as one market among others. (cf.Sennett 1974, 259) In this regard, the documentary follows the neo-liberal understanding that differences

should be cultivated and optimized, and “can live quite happily with a certain degree of criminality, which is thus not a sign of social dysfunction, but rather that society functions optimally, regulating even the distribution of criminality.” (Campbell 1949)

The next example was awarded as ‘Best Documentary’ by German Film Academy in 2014: “BELTRACCI – THE ART OF FORGERY” by Arne Birkenstock. Here again the protagonist is an extraordinary self-confident and charismatic male hero. He became extremely successful in faking paintings of highly ranked artists and selling them, cheating buyers and curators, art historians, everyone in the field. The film is introducing the forger as a passionate artist who obviously enjoys the situation, regardless of being accused and facing prison. Beltracci began as a young artist with not much luck. When he started his ‘career’ as a forger he was crossing the threshold into the ‘other’/the art world, he was living a life different than all those ordinary people, but hiding his real profession even before his children. Interestingly, if this is allowed to be mentioned here, it was a female curator who became suspicious and requested a chemical test, not only trusting her own eyes or beliefs, like other specialists before her. Thus became the starting point of an avalanche, a long investigation, ending in a prison sentence for Beltracci. Within the investigation the forger got time to prepare himself to face the investigation, to prepare himself to get public, to cross the threshold back into the society and present himself not only as the artist he wants to be seen, but also as an expert, someone with access to hidden knowledge.

Thus it is obvious that the scheme of the ‘journey of the hero’ is the fundamental structure of this documentary as well. Given the chosen form and narration the focus is consequently directed on Beltracci, his biography, charisma, and criminal energy, and subsequently explores the effect to society, cultural history, and cultural identity. Art historian Henry Kaezor is asking precisely this question about the importance of his excessive and successful falsifying of cultural history towards cultural memory and identity of a society, and Beltracci’s answer is laughing. And it immediately goes back to private when Beltracci is suggesting the art historian should come and ask him before publishing an essay; this question is sized back to a man-to-man solution and has no longer anything to do with society or culture anymore. In respect to terms of the neo-liberal construct of rationality how the Chicago School is defining it, Beltracci

is to be understood as “a rational-economic individual who invests, expects a certain profit and risks making a loss. From the angle of homo oeconomicus there is no fundamental difference between murder and a parking offense.” (n.n. n.d., 9) Hence, Beltracci took a risk and is now aware of the consequences he as an economic-rational individual takes for a chance at a change, as only changed circumstances have the capacity to deal with the market.

Next two examples are addressing the audience as citizen—in the tradition of being an advocate, to give a person a voice, who otherwise perhaps would not have been heard or not with same substantial effect. “MASTER OF THE UNIVERSE” (D 2013) by Marc Bauder, awarded with the European Academy Award 2014, is a film not only about the liberalization of the German banking system but also the principles of investment banking and trading. It is focussing the inner aspect or the reason for the structural crisis of the neoliberal form of capitalism, also called the ‘free market’. Neoliberal capitalism market relations and market forces do play a predominant role in an economy. (Kotz 2015) From the angle of neo-liberals, “it is more the case of the state being controlled by the market than of the market being supervised by the state. Neoliberalism removes the limiting, external principle and puts a regulatory and inner principle in his place: It is the market from which serves as the organizational principle for the state and society.” (Foucault Lec. 31.1.1979; 7.2.1979 quoted after n.n. n.d., 10) Bauder wants to know how this system works and how it is influencing our life and future. Thus, he is about to discover one of the two points classic liberalism and neoliberalism differ in defining the relation between state and economy. The intention of the filmmaker was to get to know how this system works. Bauder says he as a filmmaker and all of us a citizens should be allowed to ask questions and to get to know how the ‘free finance system’ is organized or acting. (DOK-Spotters 2013) It became difficult for him to find people out of this world to agree to be interviewed—they would get into trouble when they would do so. Consequently, Marc Bauder decided to work with this one ex-banker who as competent and open stands for a principle, not the fate of an individual private person or his biography. (DOK-Spotters 2013) The protagonist is describing the way investment banking operates, how people there are working, thinking, living, who all together play the predominant role, influencing the life of all of us. To think this concerning the above-discussed journey of

the hero, he is that hero, who crossed the threshold back in the civilization, achieved a knowing personality and is sharing his specialized knowledge. He describes challenges and obstacles, the attraction of power and money, of being part of a tight-knit community. But he also describes the wounds struck through neo-liberal politics by allowing banks and especially investment banking to work against the interest of societies. This protagonist is competent but self-critical, unpretentious. He sees himself as a citizen, thus addressing the filmmaker and audience as citizens.

The protagonist of the next example understands himself as well as a citizen, addressing the people, believing citizens should know about things going on in politics and the state as political institution. The topic as well as the motive of the protagonist deals with the concept of government in the area of neo-liberalism (cf. Capetillo Ponce and Binkley 2016; Foulcaut 2008 (2004)) The conflict here is given the situation that the “state in the neo-liberal model not only retains its traditional functions but also takes on new tasks and functions. The neo-liberal forms of government feature not only direct intervention through empowered and specialized state apparatus, but also characteristically develop indirect techniques for leading and controlling individuals without at the same time being responsible for them.” (n.n. n.d., 12)

In *CITIZENFOUR* (D/USA 2014), awarded Best Documentary by German and American Film Academy in 2015, the free individual is reporting about techniques of controlling and domination developed and used by the state. This is against the law. To use again the analogy of the ‘journey of the hero’, the protagonist arrives out of the ‘other world’, and was crossing the last threshold back into our world, the world of society and everyday life and hopes. He understands what happens and as an eyewitness, he can report the occurrences. As the director Laura Poitras emphasized after the world premiere in New York, her protagonist put his life at risk by revealing his information without remaining anonymous. (FilmSocietyLincolnCenter 2014) Thus, she decided to follow events like they happened—in the style of *Cinema Verité*, from the first contact to his asylum in Russia.

Snowden is not accepting or following the irrational rationality of a neo-liberal capitalist society, he is no player in a specific market. And he is not charismatic, nor made to appear as a charismatic hero in the above-designed way. Hence, he is

disrupting the balance of cost-benefit-calculation and thus a threat. Due to his action je is aware of the reaction of the state and its institutions, expecting punishment.

With her open and observatory way of telling the story, she is following a dialog and a development based in circumstances and events. This is a work of cooperation and exchange, curiosity and openness.

The filmmaker herself as well, at a lower level, was threatened by the state and it's institutions. She was aware of the risks she took, and knew that she was "going to be - reporting on things the U.S. government was going to be angry about", and what they can do to journalists and others in similar situations. (CBCNews 2015) For a long period of working on her film she preferred to live and work in Berlin, due to her earlier film being interrogated and threatened every time she arrived at an airport in the U.S. (DemocracyNow! 2012)and having been watched by the NSA (CBCNews 2015).

Last example to be discussed here tells the story of a female protagonist. What happens when the private becomes more important than public appearance of a person of public interest? Do have filmmaker/producer as well as award giving groups or institutions lost ethical distinction between public and private? Sennett wrote, that "There is a rough parallel between the crisis of Roman society after the death of Augustus and present-day life; it concerns the balance between public and private life." (Sennett 2002, 1) In contemporary life the relations between impersonal and intimate experience are no longer clear distinguished. "The obsession with persons at the expense of more impersonal social relations is like a filter which discolors our rational understanding of society; it obscures the continuing importance of class in advanced industrial societies" (Sennett 2002, 4). And "Amy" is reflecting this obsession and loss of respect for the privacy of others, not only of strangers, but also of a person different than the common people. On first glance this film can be seen as a biopic, a journey of a hero, based in archive material – out of private and public sources.

Universal Music initiated this documentary by contacting the producer of "SENNA" (Kapadia, UK 2010), who engaged Kapadia as director. "AMY" by Asif Kapadia (UK 2015) was awarded with many and most precious awards, e.g. the European Academy Award for Best Documentary, these days the film is nominated for the US Academy Awards (Oscar) for Best Documentary. It is made as a compilation of selfies, short clips of any kind, clips out of TV interviews and show recordings, some new material – like interviews with former husband and last boyfriend. It shows the carrier of Amy Winehouse as devastating development, the story told in a way that the audience will be convinced she was destroying herself: A young woman unable to keep a grip on her life and her carrier, a victim, fulfilling the myth, the old story (of successful female jazz singers).

After the premiere at Cannes Film Festival 2015 confronted with critic from family and friends of Amy Winehouse, the makers of the film said in a statement:

“When we were approached to make the film, we came on board with the full backing of the Winehouse family and we approached the project with total objectivity, as with Senna. During the production process, we conducted in the region of 100 interviews with people that knew Amy Winehouse; friends, family, former-partners and members of the music industry that worked with her. The story that the film tells is a reflection of our findings from these interviews.” (Press-Association 2015)

Not only by being a documentary filmmaker myself and thus within every project facing questions of objectivity, ethic behaviour, fairness and the interest of making a film people are interested in, my question here is, how a filmmaker can claim “total objectivity”? Documentaries are no compilation of facts; they are always a “*representation*” of reality (Nichols 2010, 20). From an academic point of view there is no “total objectivity” in a documentary, it is always a work, and decisions are made, “‘people’ are treated as social actors” (Nichols 2010, 5). A director is interested to give a sense of authenticity, but there is also always the implication given with “the ways in which the fact of filmmaking alters the reality it sets out to represent.” There are many examples of documentaries seen or announced as ‘objective’ or ‘authentic’ observations. Films don’t make themselves out of material given with a real event. Always decisions are made by people, from which angle in which position someone will be filmed, which clip or which part of an interview will be chosen, which order makes sense in the editing and gives an by the author intended impression. To compile a documentary out of about 100 interviews and archive material of any kind requires decisions. And people, filmmakers as well, are primed, when they do make decisions. Not only by Universal, the initiator of “AMY”. All people are primed by social experiences, traditions and conventions, surroundings etc. (Kahneman 2012, pp 55) Familiarity of pictures, clips and statements make people believe predictable illusions of reality as truth or authentic. (cf. Kahneman 2012, 61/2; pp 209)

Due to the real biography behind, the dramatic structure of AMY is different to the examples discussed before. For a long time following the scheme of the journey-of-the-Hero, the end of this documentary is designed like a myth based tragedy (Aristoteles and Schmitt 2008), than as a transformed hero coming back to the public world. Here the hero don’t makes it over the last threshold, her mentor (her first and later agents) and companions (father, husband, boyfriend) are not able to help her through the

special world, to understand the danger, the rules and the way to keep healthy after finding the elixir—her international success. And the story told make it looks like they tried to help, not that they increased pressure on her.

What becomes obvious with the film and the material used is that a person of public interest no longer has a control of to whom one speaks at home or in an environment “as akin to the company of the family” (Sennett 2002, 92), when there are so many clips are filmed on parties, in private situations, during long car journeys or private holidays and so on. In addition there is the extreme interest of the media for the private life of a beautiful looking and successful young woman. And there is as well the old story to take words of an artist, young or not, about the implications of her work as pure facts. When she says her songs are about herself and her experiences one believes that all of her songs must be about her private life. With this message the artist is following the expectation of the audience to make private public, to let them participate at her private life. That’s the approach of the filmmaker too. Hence he is telling a story where is no distinction between her art, her public being and her private life. The director is using her songs as kind of private diary, as a device or door opener to show as much as possible of her private life in the style of a tragedy, to show her as a disastrous and self-destroying woman. As a young Jewish girl having a problem with her body, referring to an old Anti-Semitic stereotype, showing extensive her suffering with bulimia; and having a problem with relationships. Seeing her seeking for love is catching our sympathy, for her and as well for her husband—whose role in her addiction to drugs becomes not clear in this narration; and for her last boyfriend who was calling for help when she died. (But why her husband was arrested and not she? Why the boyfriend was not stopping drinking and consuming drugs together?) The narration is organised in a way that the male characters were either influenced by her or nor strong enough to keep her safe. Thus, she is represented as this “free, possessive individual”, ignoring laws, traditions and rules of social behaviour, the ‘criminal’ in the definition of social dysfunction. She is proud, and she lives for today—these are no qualities of a hero, quite the contrary. (cf. Campbell and Cousineau 1999, 27; 322) Representing Amy Winehouse the way this documentary did, she is portrayed as different than common people—from childhood on, as the other, as someone we never want to be. Implicit the

documentary is telling that art, music business and success in that business is not good for women.

Due to the real biography behind for a long time the structure of the narration is following the scheme of the-journey-of-the-hero, the end is more equal to a myth based tragedy (Aristoteles and Schmitt 2008) than a transformed hero coming back to the public world. Here the hero was unable to make it back over the last threshold, her mentor (her first and later agents) and companions (father, husband, boyfriend) are not able to help her through the special world, to understand the danger, the rules and the way to keep healthy after finding the elixier—her international success. Hence the top star market and the big money should be preserved for men, the hero's able to survive in the 'special world', to use one last time the analogy to the-journey-of-the-hero-scheme.

With these different examples one can get a first idea of the contemporary tendencies in documentary filmmaking, resulting out of neo-liberal politics. One is influenced or representing changes, based in neo-liberal politics and their influence onto society and social behaviour, the privatization of action and interaction, stressing individuality, individual responsibility, solitariness of people and phenomena. Within the other tendency, one can see documentary filmmakers still acting as advocates. They still are giving people a voice, but many of the independent filmmaker become more and more under political and financial pressures, which are hidden in institutionalized rules and new laws dedicated to film financing—as well in democratic countries. This development more and more makes the independent filmmaker precarious working/living artists, like recently published studies tell us. (Schneider 2016; Hanfeld 2012) And as well the opportunity to watch independent films and to support people acting as artistic advocates for those whom never would be heard or seen is melting like the interest of some intellectuals, academics, politicians to watch documentaries or cooperate with filmmakers.

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