

JOHN DEWEY AND DOCCUMENTARY NARRATIVE

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation is the first submission to take full advantage of the use of video clips as part of the presentation. My work is a combination of traditional scholarship and a visual account concerning the construction of the different narratives in my films. It also contains interviews with other filmmakers about narrative construction in their films. My aim is to show how a new mode of representation in the documentary film, with ties to the theories of John Dewey and his view of art in experience, has developed throughout the past several years and that, in this mode, the filmmaker becomes an observational/participant in the making of the film. This process is tied to John Dewey's idea of the concerned citizen in a democracy and his belief in the idea of art based in the concept of experience.

The examination of my films will use video illustrations, which will allow the dissertation to provide a visual commentary on the thought process of a filmmaker. This will give the dissertation a self-reflexive quality that is part of a long tradition of scholarship by documentary filmmakers. I include, as part of the dissertation, a newly edited version of an updated film and a sample from a new film that I have begun.

The interview sections with other filmmakers provide us with a glimpse into their thought process as they discuss narrative construction in their documentary films. This section will establish the links between John Dewey's thoughts on the process of inquiry and the development of a documentary film. I also will reveal how Dewey's view of art

provides filmmakers, scholars, and students with a fresh look into the construction of the documentary film and the idea of art in experience.

This dissertation is dedicated to all the soldiers who have died in war due to the tyranny
of elites.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Don Callen who has guided me throughout this dissertation. I'd like to, at this time, acknowledge the work and thoughts of my long-time colleague and co-filmmaker Deb Ellis. Her honesty and critical awareness is an important part of any success I may have achieved. She has always stood behind me even when I may not have deserved such loyalty. I would also like to thank her son Kiah who has been a very bright spot in my life.

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INTRODUCTION

This study argues that the process of constructing narratives in certain types of documentary films is tied to the idea of inquiry and discovery by the filmmaker. This idea has its roots in the work of John Dewey as well as in the ideas of participatory democracy and an art based in experience. My study did not start out to be an investigation between the relationships of Dewey's thoughts and documentary film. It started as an examination into the idea of narrative construction but, using a model of inquiry based on Dewey usage of the terms, it ended up examining the idea of narratives based on Dewey's thoughts on art in experience and the role of community in this process. In this Dewey based view of documentary films, the filmmakers position themselves as observational participants, thereby giving voice to those who are often left out of the public discussion by the mainstream media. This impulse by the filmmakers represents a democratic expression to tell the stories of ordinary people and their participation in the events that surround them. These people, who become the subjects of this mode of representation, are often left off the nightly newscasts or have their viewpoints explained by the various experts. They seldom become the focal point of the story.

A filmmaker's gathering of evidence is often viewed as a tool for constructing narratives. However, I will show that the process of inquiry by the filmmaker is more than just a tool to facilitate narrative construction; it is an organic process that is fluid, with no fixed conclusions. The process is tied to a belief in the possibilities of human activity into an experience, which the filmmaker witnesses through their explorations and relationships with their subjects.

These types of relationships come from an art that is community based. It is an art that emerges from the experiences of everyday life and the fluidity of the historical world. John Dewey's model of art in experience becomes a guide for the exploration of what filmmakers have referred to as an "organic process." One of my aims in this study is to demystify this organic process and break it into an understandable mode of inquiry by the filmmaker for the reader.

I discovered that John Dewey's thoughts on art and his philosophy of the importance of experience is a virtual blueprint for understanding the documentary process. Dewey sees the artist as being a very important part of society and argues that much of the significance of the artist stems from the tradition of art being used as a criticism of life. As Dewey writes, the role of the artist is significant. He explains the artist's significance "not directly but by disclosure, through imaginative vision addressed to imaginative experience (not set judgment) of possibilities that contrast with actual conditions. A sense of possibilities that are unrealized and that might be realized when they are put in contrast with actual conditions, the most penetrating 'criticism' of the latter that can be made."¹

In addressing the documentary process, the artist is an important part of a democracy and artist's function as moral critics. In the documentary seen through the concept of art in experience the artist becomes part of a larger process of social struggle and the documentary film is a means of expression for the struggle. The film is a political act, based on a community's collective knowledge, which is tied to the concept of participatory democracy and art in experience.

In writing about the idea of the filmmaker as activist, I position myself within a long, and quite distinguished, history of documentary filmmakers who have worked to explain the possibilities of political activism within the documentary film. The list includes Latin American filmmakers, such as Eduardo Maldonado and Victor Casaús, who used film as a weapon against the shackles of neo-colonialism. In addition, Russian filmmakers, such as Sergio Eisenstein and Dziga Vertov, saw film as a way to create a new world. My study, which includes my own films, is from an American perspective. As a result, it was necessary to look at a philosophy that embraces the concepts of American radicalism. Here is where the work of Dewey is very important in the formulation of a radical voice that is prevalent in the cultural milieu of American thought. Dewey and his theories about social inquiry are crucial to this study of narratives in the documentary film for many reasons that will be addressed throughout this study.

I have chosen to study my own work for this inquiry along with the work of several other filmmakers. I have made over twenty documentaries and have enjoyed a great deal of success with my latest film, *Howard Zinn: You Can't be Neutral on a Moving Train*. It was in the process of making this film that I began to seriously ask theoretical questions of myself about how narratives are developed in the documentary film. The questions that arose about the process of documentary filmmaking, along with the idea that neutrality is a mirage, has led to this study.

I also tried to build upon the scholarship of Bill Nichols, whose work in the categorization of the various modes of representation in the documentary film, has opened up methods for other scholars who seek to understand this unique art form. These modes of representation, established by Nichols, provide a starting point for the

examination of the different modes of representation in the documentary film and as a chronology of the historical development of the documentary film. I enhance this by suggesting that a new mode of representation has arisen in the years since Nichols' scholarship. The new narrative mode is connected to the idea of art in experience and can be categorized by the tools of inquiry suggested by John Dewey. This study is broken down into three sections:

Chapter One

Here, I observe and reflect upon the development of the narratives in my own films leading up to and including the film, *Howard Zinn: You Can't be Neutral on a Moving Train*. I also pay special attention to my previous film with co-producer Deb Ellis, *The FBI's War on Black America*, and reflect on the process of discovery that we used for that particular film. Although, at first, we began to examine questions regarding the rise of the black power movement, through the process of discovery, the film shifted to an examination of the FBI's infamous Cointelpro program. I will use clips from my films throughout this chapter to illustrate my points. In addition, I also explain how the films of Emile de Antonio influenced my development as a filmmaker and made me aware of how juxtapositions of images and sound can provide the filmmaker with an alternative to direct commentary by a narrator.

Self-reflexivity on my own process of development is extensively used throughout this section. My aim is to take the reader through the development of my thought process and use segments from my films to illustrate some of the points I am trying to illustrate. Finally, this section will also introduce the thoughts of John Dewey,

as well as his theories concerning art in experience and participatory democracy, which are the centerpiece for the rest of the dissertation.

Chapter Two

In this section, I will engage with Dewey's theories in order to explore the results of my examination regarding the concepts of documentary theory. This is achieved by examining the works of other filmmakers and the links between Dewey's theories and the filmmaking process. I establish this by connecting the interviews with the filmmakers' development of their narratives to the ideas of John Dewey and how that process can be applied to John Dewey's concepts of participatory democracy and art in experience. Some of the interviews were conducted by me and others have been taken from other texts.

I begin with an introduction to the different modes of representation, as established by Bill Nichols, to provide the reader with an explanation of what Nichols means by modes of representation. This also serves to give the reader a brief history of documentary practice and will be the starting point for this section, which directly leads to my thoughts on a new mode that I describe as the experience or Deweyan mode of representation. This mode is tied to Dewey's thoughts on social inquiry, democracy and art in experience.

I will use clips from these films throughout this section as examples of their work. These clips are shown at the beginning of each interview. I use these clips in both an illustrative and a theoretical sense, by tying the interviews to different aspects of John Dewey's modes of inquiry. It is in this section that we establish both the theoretical and

practical applications of the ideas of Dewey and how these ideas relate to the documentary films.

Chapter Three

John Dewey believed that theory should be applied to practice, so in this section, I will use my own work as examples to demonstrate art based in experience. In the first section of this chapter, I will give the reasons for my decision to edit one of my previous films, add scenes, and shoot additional material for the new version based on my new ideas of narrative. I intend to take the reader through the various stages of narrative development, the reasons why I made these decisions and finally, my own critique of the film, which results in a decision to film another encounter. The film, *Soldier of Peace*, is a 68-minute documentary that attempts to use the ideas put forth in Chapter Two about Dewey's belief about art in experience and the filmmaker's ties to participatory democracy.

The rest of this section will focus on the development of my new film with Deb Ellis, illustrating how the theories of John Dewey have impacted my views surrounding narrative development. *Peace Has No Borders* follows some of the motivations, by veterans and their families, regarding their resistance to the current war in Iraq. This section of my dissertation will examine my motivations for making this film and the various stages involved, including our proposal for the documentary, which will give the reader an idea of where our point of inquiry begins. The story itself will change, but this proposal gives us a written record and a concrete point of reference. In this section, the reader will see how the ideas of inquiry established by John Dewey can be used as part of an intellectual process that has its roots in the idea of the engaged citizen in a democracy.

This self-examination of the process is meant to be a guide and a research model into the development of these questions, which have been continuously raised throughout this dissertation.

I'd like, at this time, to acknowledge the work and thoughts of my long-time colleague and co-filmmaker Deb Ellis. Her honesty and critical awareness is an important part of any success I may have achieved. The second thing I would like to mention is that I never started this research with the idea that John Dewey would become an influence on my thoughts about documentary film; it simply evolved that way. That means that the mode of inquiry throughout this process was grounded in a belief in process without prior agendas. The irony of this is not lost on me. This does not mean that I did not have a point of view but that I arrived at this conclusion through a process, which I understood previously as an organic process but now am able to define it as a Deweyan process.

CHAPTER I: MY FILMS

“Never start out to make a film with an agenda.”²

Barbara Kopple

I wanted to become a filmmaker and saw advertised a summer workshop at New York University. I had taken several courses in film as an undergraduate while at Northern Illinois University and the idea of becoming a filmmaker excited me. I had just seen a film called *Harlan County USA* and thought about becoming a documentary filmmaker. What impressed me this type of filmmaking was the personal dedication that the filmmaker Barbara Kopple showed in the course of her filming the epic struggle of the striking miners. She had lived with the miners in their homes and was fired upon by gun thugs. Ms. Kopple reflected on her experience:

I was sort of a political young woman at the time, and I had been reading about this incredible movement known as the Miners for Democracy. A man named Jock Yablansky had been murdered simply because he wanted to run for union president and up from the ranks of the coal fields came these three candidates who were coal minors, who had never any practice and I wanted to see if they were going to become corrupt like other people who get into power or they were going to really stick behind the coal miners. I understood what life and death was all about. We were machine gunned with semi-automatic carbines. A minor was killed by a company foreman; women took others to the picket lines, at nights we had to carry guns because we were told if we were caught alone at nights we would be killed. So it was almost like guerrilla war.³

This type of engagement with events intrigued me, as did the commitment Kopple had made to the idea of direct action and filmmaking. I had enjoyed documentaries as a child. In fact, *The 20th Century*, featuring Walter Chronkite, was among my favorite programs, but *Harlan County* was different. Kopple's engagement with the miners resonated with me as something more than merely recording the strike. Kopple was living the experience and sharing this with her audience. Her explanation of how the struggle of the miners became a part of her life intrigued me. "I was there, and I lived there for a long time, and I lived with them and wanted to stay with them."⁴ Ms. Kopple's and the miner's stories became one story. I was a working class person who identified with the miners. Watching the film, I saw that it was possible to challenge authority through filmmaking. The possibility of being part of a struggle for democracy by making a film seemed very exciting for me.

I went to NYU for a summer workshop in film in 1976 and came home from my experience with a film of my own in hand. I soon enrolled in a class at Columbia College in Chicago where I produced a small documentary about the restoration of a painting. This was a simple documentary with a voice-over done by the art restoration specialist. I returned to New York in 1979, and after several years there, saw an ad about producing cable television programs. Caryn Rogoff was a media activist and a future co-coordinator of the cable access series for Deep Dish Television. She was a very open person and together we produced a cable access program about Black History Month in Harlem. The program went on to win an award, The Hometown Cable Access Award, an award for the best independent cable access program in the United States. Since cable access was in its very early stages, it was much like being a headwaiter in a three waiter restaurant

nevertheless; it gave me the confidence to continue. As a consequence, I began to develop a program of my own, focusing on the Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW).

The Importance of Chance

I moved back to Chicago and, instead of continuing to work with the New York VVAW Chapter, I began speaking with Barry Romo of the Chicago chapter of the VVAW. Romo invited me to a speaking engagement to record the event, which he had booked at a high school in Chicago. There he spoke to the young students about the Vietnam War and why he became an anti-war activist. The VVAW were legendary to those in the peace movement, with their dramatic display of protest in Washington, in which they threw their medals onto the steps of the Supreme Court. The talk Romo gave was inspiring. I knew very little about video at the time but was aided by friends who shot some footage of his lecture and the subsequent question and answer period following Romo's presentation. The idea of planning a narrative structure at this early point in my career was foreign to me. But even with my limited knowledge, I knew this footage was a documentary.

Then an opportunity presented itself. The Vietnam veterans in Chicago were given a "Welcome Home" parade by the City of Chicago. Veterans of the Vietnam War had come back home, not with the blue ribbons that greeted the veterans of World War II, but alone and often suffering with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Now, over twenty years later, parades were being held across the country to properly acknowledge the sacrifices the veterans had made in Vietnam. The VVAW did not want to join the Chicago parade at first, but later decided to march with their fellow veterans. They felt

their presence was necessary to help prevent the parade from seeming like a requiting effort for the services.⁵

In order to add to my initial footage, our crew followed the Chicago parade and the VVAW. I wanted to explore the parade from the point of view of the anti-war veterans. The results were gripping as I soon learned how chance plays an important role in a documentary film's narrative development. In retrospect, I was following the idea that if I would trust the situation, the situation would take care of me. We interviewed the VVAW veterans and were able to wiggle our way into the local press, who were questioning former Vietnam commander General William Westmoreland. We shot material from different sections of the parade with the understanding that we would meet the VVAW members at the end of the parade route. We could not find them as thousands of veterans spilled into Chicago's historic Grant Park, which was the scene of the infamous 1968 convention. We decided instead to ask veterans questions at random about what the parade meant to them. What followed was an intense but friendly exchange between different veterans, one a former lifetime member of the services, and the others were several former veterans. This conversation was followed by a member of VVAW commenting on the situation in Nicaragua.

Soldier Clip

This riveting exchange became the centerpiece of the documentary. Bill Nichols describes this kind of interaction between filmmaker and subjects as the interactive text. "The interactive text takes many forms but all draw their social actors into direct encounter with the filmmaker. When heard, the voice of the filmmaker addresses the

social actors on screen rather than the spectator.”⁶ Our encounter with the veterans remains one of my favorite scenes, which I have ever filmed.

Democracy, John Dewey and Narrative

The argument between the retired sergeant and the African-American soldier, followed by a VVAW member speaking about the U.S. involvement in Central America, is an example of what John Dewey calls an experience. We understand that the conversation can go in various directions and this conversation, or experience, was prompted by us throwing ourselves into the situation. Then the historic disagreements within the veteran’s movement played themselves out in a natural (organic) fashion. The film, *I Would Never Do That Again*, won an award and appeared on the local PBS station in Chicago. When I look at it now, I see this documentary as an example of cinema verite and the participatory mode of representation. The difference between this and observational filmmaking, often referred to as direct cinema, is that in the participatory mode the filmmaker is not a passive observer, or the fly on the wall. The filmmaker engages with the characters and through questioning and interaction with them creates the narrative. This type of filmmaking is unscripted and free from the constraints of commentary. It uses the participants as instruments of agency for the narrative. I sought to represent the veterans and let them reveal their own stories without viewing their actions as mere spectacles to be commented upon.

I contend that this type of filmmaking is also tied to the principles of “Participatory Democracy,” where the narrative construction becomes part of the democracy of participation, which emanates from the point of view of the participants rather than a representative form that limits or controls the extent of representation. In

this mode, the idea of art and democracy meet in the thoughts of John Dewey, who said about democracy that it is “faith in the capacities of human nature; faith in human intelligence and in the power of pooled and cooperative experience.”⁷ Democracy is most often seen as a representative form of government. We elect officials and then, in theory, they act as our representatives. Dewey sees democracy as more inclusive and as an experience that demands engagement with the community. He sees democracy as an organic entity, which is evolving all the time. Scott London defines Dewey’s view of democracy in this way:

Formulated in this way, democracy could be seen as “organic” as synergistic and evolving, rather than “atomistic” -- composed of individual parts held together by a social contract. A society was not an entity unto itself, Dewey said, but rather an aggregate of individuals who grow and evolve. By extension, only a society that could grow and evolve as its citizens did would be truly free. Dewey maintained that the ends of democratic politics were to secure the conditions for the self-realization of all the individuals in a society.⁸

This idea of what I saw as chance in my film is really tied to the idea of experience in a democracy. This philosophy also fits the idea of engaged filmmaking. The filmmaker is part of a democratic experience, which is different than mere representation. This type of filmmaking is an artistic and political experience, which is in a state of evolution. Dewey’s view of democracy is one example of politics being part of the filmmaking experience; another is the transformation of dialectics to filmmaking, which is very much part of the films of Emile de Antonio.

The Importance of Dialectics and Emile de Antonio

In 1987, I started to work for a small video production company called MPI. I edited some programs for them, which were quickly done from public domain footage and then released as new programming. These down and dirty programs were straight narration- driven expository documentaries. The footage illustrated the spoken text, with pictures qualifying what was being said. While nothing was stylistically interesting about them, they all reflected my point of view about history. They were grounded in the tradition of commentary documentaries, which took few artistic risks, with little engagement with the subjects of the film.

Eventually, I managed to convince MPI to let me use their footage and editing equipment to develop a documentary about the Black Power Movement. PBS had just shown the series *Eyes on the Prize* and MPI possessed some remarkable footage about those turbulent times, including inspiring footage of Stokely Carmichael, who I would later meet in the course of this project, lecturing about the theories of Franz Fanon and violence.

Carmichael Clip

I invited a colleague named Deb Ellis, who was also doing some editing at MPI, to join me in making the film. Deb saw video as a tool for activism, which opened up, for me, the idea of documentaries being part of the process of democracy. We started with some footage, a topic, and little else. At first, we thought that this would be a story about the rise of the militancy in the civil rights movement but it soon became something else.

I was especially interested in the radical films of Emile de Antonio at the time and our film borrowed on the techniques that de Antonio used. I had seen *Millhouse*,

Antonio's scathing documentary on Nixon while in college and had completely enjoyed it. MPI had acquired the distribution rights to the work of Emile de Antonio, so I was able to watch all of his films. I became especially interested in the film *In the Year of the Pig*. The film was about the history of the Vietnam War and the American involvement in the war. This film became an important influence in my view of filmmaking and the development of narrative structure. I have seen it over thirty times. De Antonio's films were unique in that they sought to explain that meaning is established and meaning comes along with a set of codes through which alternative meanings can develop. The theorist Bill Nichols explains it this way:

With de Antonio's films, the active counter pointing of the text reminds us that meaning is produced. This foregrounding of an active production of meaning by a textual system may also heighten our conscious sense of self as something also produced by codes that extend beyond us.⁹

Emile de Antonio has described himself as a radical scavenger and, although he would describe deconstruction as arcane, he was quite aware of the deconstructive tendencies in his films.

I deconstructed the accepted images to create a positive result, a pro-Vietnamese construction...The deconstruction of these images was effected by placement, and by sound and music and, for example, the images of the French Foreign Legion in Saigon in 1934, which were seen in U.S. and French newsreels and had a deconstructive meaning in 1967.¹⁰

One of the techniques that I still use today is a dialectical strategy, which is used by de Antonio to "irritate the viewer into thought."¹¹ One can see this in de Antonio's

representation during the French surrender at the battle of Dien Bien Phu. In the scene, we hear the French national anthem and see how it is used to deconstruct the meaning of Le Marseilles. The music was composed by Steve Addiss, a student of John Cage, who used traditional Vietnamese folk instruments to deconstruct the famous song.¹² This is a form of dialectical editing, where the meaning of the song changes when juxtaposed with images of the French defeat at the hands of the Vietnamese. We carry meaning into the cinema. We remember images from films like *Casablanca*, where the song becomes a stirring symbol of resistance, but now, in the hands of de Antonio, it is the symbol of colonial control and the rise of the nationalistic sentiments of the Vietnamese people. It is a deconstruction of the historical process and de Antonio, who described himself as a Marxist, uses it to create a thesis/ antithesis/ synthesis style of editing. The audience is given responsibility for following the historical thought process and arriving at their own conclusions. I watched the film again and again and learned from de Antonio's process of editing, specially his use of sound and music, which presented the documentary as a dialectical process:

I used to have a very big office space and also had a friend who makes cardboard boxes. So I used to get enormous pieces of cardboard, almost as big as that wall, and I would start pasting transcripts of the track, along with the idea for images. I'd then try the track material on Steinbeck with different images, so the process was always one of collage. You are always cutting away and always trying to make two or three things happen at the same time, and those who get it get it, and those who do not get it, and it doesn't really make any difference anyway.¹³

Armed with de Antonio's lessons, Deb and I set out to read everything we could about the Black Power Movement and, being from Chicago, we started by reading about the murder of Fred Hampton, the charismatic young leader of the Black Panther Party (BPP) by the Chicago Police Department. He had been shot and killed during a police raid on the party headquarters in the winter of 1969. Hampton, we later found out, was drugged by an FBI informant named William O'Neill who provided the floor plan of the Panther headquarters to the Chicago Police Department who murdered him.¹⁴ The local television station WBBM proved to be useful fools for the police's inaccurate description of the raid. The police ran the reporters through a dog- and- pony show replete with police distortions about what had actually happened in the raid.¹⁵ The official story presented was that there was a gun battle between the police and the Panthers and that the police had fired in self defense. The truth was far different.

We learned that all of the bullets fired in the raid, with the possible exception of one fired by Mark Clark, were fired by the police.¹⁶ The bullets holes that came into the building were all shots that entered the building from the outside. There were no exit shots from inside the building, which indicated that all the shots were fired by the police. We spoke with former BPP member Bobby Rush and the attorney's for the civil lawsuit on behalf of the survivors. Rush, then an alderman in Chicago and now a United States Congressman, talked about what had happened. We learned from our interviews of the existence of an FBI program named Cointelpro. The programs mission statement said: "We Must Prevent the Rise of a Black Messiah."

Cointelpro

COUNTERINTELLIGENCE PROGRAM

BLACK NATIONALIST - HATE GROUPS

RACIAL INTELLIGENCE 3/4/68 [...]

GOALS

For maximum effectiveness of the Counterintelligence Program, and to prevent wasted effort, long-range goals are being set.

1. Prevent the COALITION of militant Black Nationalist groups.

In unity there is strength; a truism that is no less valid for all its triteness. An effective coalition of Black Nationalist groups might be the first step toward a real "Mau Mau" [Black revolutionary army] in America, the beginning of a true black revolution.

2. Prevent the RISE OF A "MESSIAH" who could unify, and electrify, the militant black nationalist movement. Malcolm X might have been such a "messiah;" he is the martyr of the movement today. Martin Luther King, Stokely Carmichael and Elijah Muhammed all aspire to this position. Elijah Muhammed is less of a threat because of his age. King could be a very real contender for this position should he abandon his supposed "obedience" to "white, liberal doctrines" (nonviolence) and embrace black nationalism. Carmichael has the necessary charisma to be a real threat in this way.

3. Prevent VIOLENCE on the part of black nationalist groups.

This is of primary importance, and is, of course, a goal of our investigative activity; it should also be a goal of the Counterintelligence Program to

pinpoint potential troublemakers and neutralize them before they exercise their potential for violence.

4. Prevent militant black nationalist groups and leaders from gaining RESPECTABILITY, by discrediting them to three separate segments of the community. The goal of discrediting black nationalists must be handled tactically in three ways. You must discredit those groups and individuals to, first, the responsible Negro community. Second, they must be discredited to the white community, both the responsible community and to "liberals" who have vestiges of sympathy for militant black nationalist [sic] simply because they are Negroes. Third, these groups must be discredited in the eyes of Negro radicals, the followers of the movement. This last area requires entirely different tactics from the first two. Publicity about violent tendencies and radical statements merely enhances black nationalists to the last group; it adds "respectability" in a different way.

5. A final goal should be to prevent the long-range GROWTH of militant black organizations, especially among youth. Specific tactics to prevent these groups from converting young people must be developed.

TARGETS

Primary targets of the Counterintelligence Program, Black Nationalist-Hate Groups, should be the most violent and radical groups and their leaders. We should emphasize those leaders and organizations that are

nationwide in scope and are most capable of disrupting this country. These targets, members, and followers of the:

Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)

Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)

Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM)

NATION OF ISLAM (NOI) [emphasis added]

Offices handling these cases and those of Stokely Carmichael of SNCC, H. Rap Brown of SNCC, Martin Luther King of SCLC, Maxwell Stanford of RAM, and Elijah Muhammed of NOI, should be alert for counterintelligence suggestions.¹⁷

The FBI statement sent a chill down our spines and we began to wonder exactly what this program was about. We learned that it was an FBI program designed to disrupt and destroy the Black Nationalist movement in the United States. Its targets included Malcolm X, Dr. Martin Luther King and the charismatic former leader of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Stokely Carmichael. Our impulse now was to tell a parallel story about the period, one that was not part of the official narrative regarding the civil rights movement.

It was clear to us that the FBI also viewed Fred Hampton as a possible successor to King and Carmichael, along with BBP member Geronimo Ji Jaga Pratt. Pratt was serving a life sentence, at the time when we were filming, for the double murder of a couple in Los Angeles. Pratt claimed, which was confirmed by former FBI Special Agent Wesley Swearingen who was in the Los Angeles office at the time, that he was being framed for this crime.¹⁸ The raid against Pratt occurred only two days after the raid in

Chicago. But Pratt a, highly decorated Vietnam War veteran, had fortified his headquarters in Los Angeles. The police, due to Pratt's fornications of the BBP headquarters, were unable to execute the Panthers as they had done in Chicago. The FBI continued to pursue Pratt until they were able to frame him for the double murder of a Santa Monica couple.¹⁹ This information, along with an interview with former SNCC members Stokely Carmichael and Cortland Cox, caused us to change the focus and scope of our documentary. We were also reading Ward Churchill's book, Agents of Repression, which helped us understand the extent of the FBI's program. Our film changed because of what we were told by our subjects and our own social inquiry into the subject.

Once we started to edit our film, we looked at the footage and decided that it should not be a traditional linear documentary. We then began to alter the narrative, wanting the story to work from the inside out, meaning we would start from the middle and work our way back, presenting the narrative in a very modernist, fractured way. We began with a montage, followed with the murder of Fred Hampton and ended the film with the Pratt story. Everything in between became the exposition about the FBI's Cointelpro program, which tied the two incidents together. This is, according to film theorist Bill Nichols, one of the functions of documentary film.

Representation that involves arguments (or interpretations) of the historical world necessarily draws us into the realm of law, into those patterns of control that gives social system coherence. Representations moralize about this law: for or against, conservative or liberal, reactionary or radical.²⁰

What Hayden White says of the role of the historian can be applied to the documentary film as well:

The more historically self-conscious the writer of any form of historiography, the more the question of the social system which sustains this, the authority of this law and its justification, and threats to the law occupy his attention.²¹

Our film existed outside the mainstream of thought and we were examining a social system, which was capable of subverting democratic systems. In doing this, we were following the framework of the organizations we were portraying. Each of them, and for that matter the VVAW as well, in their representation of veterans abused by the Veterans Affairs Division of the government, sought to establish an alternative type of structure. SNCC provided “freedom schools” for young students. They did so because the Southern Democrats and the public schools did not represent them, but the forces of segregation.²² The BBP began social programs, such as the Breakfast for Children Program, which served young black children who often went to school in the morning hungry. To combat police violence in their communities they challenged the legitimacy of the police. Staughton Lynd in his essay on participatory democracy says of this type of parallelism:

For the moment participatory democracy cherishes the practice of parallelism as a way of saying no to organized America and of initiating the unorganized into the experience of self-government.²³

The FBI's War on Black America became a film that illustrated that there really was a war that took place against citizens of the United States during this time period. It

was an alternative story that challenged the overlooked historical occurrences of coercion by our government. Once we understood this, we came to see ourselves as representatives of those who had no voice. Through our inquiry into the official history, we were able to find our own voice.

One of the things we wanted to do in this film was to deconstruct the images we used and give them new meanings. We took campaign commercials by Hubert Humphrey and Richard Nixon, and using the audio from the commercials inserted different images. An example of this can be found in the ad by Vice President Hubert Humphrey. Humphrey spoke during the ad of those want to change in a peaceful manner and those who did not. This was an obvious attack on Stokely Carmichael and the Black Power Movement. We took the images of Humphrey talking about peaceful change and showed police officers beating a black bystander, clubbing him to the ground, over the audio. Since all the major rebellions during this time occurred because of incidents of police brutality, we felt that it was not the militants but the police who were a hindrance for peaceful change.²⁴ Our aim was to deconstruct the official image of the time with what we felt the truth was from a black perspective.

Commercial Clip

The film was widely praised in the black community and shown on various PBS stations. In fact, it is still shown today. The segment on Geronimo Pratt was used in fundraisers for his defense teams. About seven years after we had finished our film, a judge who was appointed by Ronald Reagan looked at the facts of the case and ordered a new trial. The Los Angeles District Attorney refused to try the case a second time and Pratt was freed. He later sued the United States government and the Los Angeles Police

Department. Although Pratt received a 4.5 million-dollar settlement, the authorities could never give him back the time he had done.

I have continued to use the FBI as the basis for several additional films, cumulating in a documentary about the former director of the FBI, J Edgar Hoover. The Hoover film, which was titled *John Edgar Hoover and the Great American Inquisitions*, was created with special attention to de Antonio's comments about laying down a logical argument. Though well received, especially by the Chicago Reader and critic Jonathan Rosenbaum, who gave it a "Critic's Pick of the Week" designation, the film was not distributed for eleven years.

The world premiere of an engrossing two-hour video documentary Portrait by Chicago filmmaker Denis Mueller, who will be present for the screening. A hatchet job, though a convincing one, this compilation of intelligent talking heads and fascinating archival footage documents Hoover's behind-the-scenes involvement in major historical events and wisely eschews such personal matters as his closet homosexuality to concentrate on the illegality of many of his Investigative methods and procedures, a litany of abuses ranging from blackmail to embezzlement and beyond. Little of the indictment is new, but as a lucid survey and historical refresher course this is essential viewing.

I had grown weary of making documentaries based on FBI abuse of power, which allowed little agency for the viewer. I found that these commentary films were devoid of any hope and pointed to the limitations of films like these. They did not offer, either

through form or content, a way out of the situations we find ourselves in. They seemed nihilist to me, especially the film on J. Edgar Hoover and his trampling on our Constitution. They also left little hope for activism, which I felt was the only answer to our problems. Plus, the type of interaction that attracted me to filmmaking was not there. I also felt that these films did not speak to the audience in the democratic fashion that I sought. They were more radical versions of history but they did not have the type of dialectical exchange with the subjects that I was seeking.

With this in mind, I began looking for something different for my Master's thesis at Northern Illinois University. I raised money for another film on the VVAW. This film would focus on the history of the VVAW. I wanted the story to be told from their point of view without analysis from me about their reasons for their dramatic change in their world views. I will come back to this film later but it is important to note that the story of the VVAW caused me to question what is actually represented in documentary studies of history, which led to the larger question of "What is history?"

Howard Zinn: The Individual is Not Powerless

I was in London, having flown in from a shoot in California for the VVAW projects, and was quite tired from the jet lag, so I began to look around at the used book stores in Soho and came across a book by Howard Zinn called, *Failure to Quit*. I bought it wanting something short that I could read in the wee hours of the morning. I had read A People's History of the United States some years before and as I began to read this new Zinn title, I began to think about my idea for a film on the nature of history.

Upon returning to the United States, I called Howard Zinn and we agreed to meet in front of his office at Boston University. When I arrived, the staff was happy to learn

that he was coming into the office that day. Zinn had supported the striking clerical workers back in 1980, risking his job, and was very popular with the staff due to his solidarity with them; while other faculty members walked through their picket line, Zinn had honored it despite John Silber's threats to fire him. We talked outside for about two hours and found that we had some things in common. We shared a world view that was shaped by our own experiences and working class backgrounds. Howard Zinn is many things; he is a writer, a historian, a former bombardier, a legendary teacher, an activist, a playwright, a parent, a husband and a man with a devilish sense of humor. I was taken in by his quiet charisma and knew that I had something. Performance plays an important part in character development. It also influences the narrative structure of a film along with influencing the kind of narrative that will develop from this interaction. You must, when doing a film, find characters that can carry the story in an entertaining manner. In Howard Zinn's case, here was a man who was engaging and charismatic and said many things quite out of the mainstream. His common sense approach disarmed critics and made his radical comments palatable. He also had been one of two senior advisors for SNCC and was an advocate of direct democracy.

This tendency to seek out social actors with expressive capacity becomes one of the main avenues by which subjectivity enters documentaries. Even though the film might adopt an objective shooting style and abstain from cinematic attempts at interiority like point of view shots or flashbacks, expressive individuals heighten the possibility for empathetic identification and involvement on the part of the viewer.²⁵

Howard Zinn's personality required the narrative of our documentary to be structured around him. I decided to interview Zinn and went to film his lectures at the beginning of the film. My aim was to get to know Zinn and start to feel at ease with me. I read his books, especially the *New Abolitionists*, which I found to be fascinating. Zinn was not just a teacher but had been there for some of the most historical events of the sixties. Zinn was there waiting for Schwerner, Cheney and Schwab, to return to the SNCC house. They would never return. The events in Mississippi shocked the country and led to the voting rights legislation in 1965. Zinn was at the march on Selma and he courageously stood behind the Spelman students as they questioned the paternalism of Spelman College. He was fired for his efforts on behalf of the students. In the words of Bob Moses, Zinn was an observational participant in history.²⁶

The other thing about Howard Zinn was his passionate writing style. His writing flowed off the pages, combining history with the best of the new journalism. The question for Deb and I was how to capture this passion and his unique observations on America and its history. He also spoke of SNCC as an experiment in American democracy. His writing set into practice the idea of participatory democracy.

The nation has suddenly become aware that the initiative today is in the hands of these 150 young people who have moved to the Deep South to transform it. Everyone waits on their next action: the local police, the state officials, the national government, the mass media of the country, Negroes and whites sitting at their radios and television sets across the land. Meanwhile these people are living, hour by hour, the very ideals which this country has often thought about, but not yet managed to practice: they

are courageous, though afraid; they live and work together in a brotherhood of black and white, Southerner and Northerner, Jew and Christian and agnostic, the likes of which this country has not yet seen. They are creating new definitions of success, of happiness, of democracy.²⁷

I started to follow Zinn, hopefully to capture the unique point of view that sprang from the pages of the *New Abolitionists*. I knew from reading his autobiography, *You Can't be Neutral on a Moving Train*, that living in the south was the most crucial time of his life. This would have to be at the center of any film about Zinn so much so that my co-producer Deb Ellis felt that perhaps this experience in the south was the film. It certainly would have been a film unto itself, a struggle worthy of telling, but it was not the film that we would make. It was difficult to reconcile the early thoughts about Zinn with the changes of emphasis that Zinn's personality was bringing to the film.

One of the problems that we ran into when we started editing a sample tape was that the footage of him speaking was not transferring well to the screen. The footage was dead, and although what Zinn was saying was very moving, no matter how we tried to jazz it up, the result was one deadly boring sample. It was also pretentious sounding, a devastating combination, and a certain recipe for failure. We seemed distanced from Zinn and the film cried out for us to get to know this man.

On the other hand, the interviews describing Zinn were spectacular. We were speaking to icons of the American left; Daniel Ellsberg, Tom Hayden, Daniel Berrigan, Bob Moses and former students such as the president of the Children's Defense Fund,

Marian Wright Edelman and author Alice Walker, all of whom were more than willing to share their experiences with us.

Dissenting Voices, Objectivity and Representation

One of the questions we asked ourselves was whether we should include dissenting voices in the film. Should we interview people, such as former Boston University President John Silber, about Zinn, to capture a dissenting view of the activist professor? The battles Silber had with Zinn, which we later turned into a segment of comic relief in the film, were legendary. However, we decided that since the film was being told in first person, it was rather unlikely that Zinn would contradict himself. In a question and answer period in Berkeley with Howard Zinn and Studs Terkel, an audience member stepped up and provided the opportunity to use Zinn's wicked sense of humor, as way to have fun with the battles Zinn had with Silber.

Silber Clip

A friend of mine, a playwright, musician and writer, suggested we have someone say something contrary to what they had just heard in praise of Zinn. He felt that this would be dialectical. His suggestion would work as follows: if we had Marian Wright Edelman saying something good on behalf of Zinn, we should follow with someone saying something bad. This seemed to be to me a very simplistic view of dialectics. What good would it do? Zinn's point of view lay outside the norm anyway. The more we thought about it, the more we rejected the idea of just having someone come in to criticize Zinn. This is an important point. We felt that to present an opposing view of Zinn would have required us to follow the commentary model of representation and history. Since we did not believe in the whole idea of objectivity and neither does Zinn, it

would have made no intellectual sense to make a film which would even attempt to be objective. Howard did not believe that objectivity was possible and neither did we.

Another problem we faced was how to acknowledge the contributions of Zinn's wife Roz, who was at the center of his story. We knew we needed to bring her into our documentary but we had a hard time figuring out how to do it. I asked to interview her. While she was most cooperative and helpful to us, Roz would not consent to an interview. At first we tried to compensate by using the interviews where other people explained her importance. Next, we tried using segments of Zinn's play about Karl Marx as a way of making allegorical references to Marx's wife in the play, suggesting that these were also allegorical references to Roz. This all seemed too confusing to us and to people who viewed the early versions of the film. We also tried, in earlier drafts to put Roz's importance at the head of our film. We had seen plenty of documentaries which introduced the wife of their film's subject and then forgot about her. We did not want to do this so we put her right at the beginning of the film. This proved to be problematic and when people's comments from subsequent screenings of people seemed vague, we were sure that these segments were being lost on the audience. Instead, we ended up using family photographs, filming her at her desk and standing off to the side while Zinn was speaking, marching in a protest with him about the pending war in Iraq. We never really felt we had an adequate answer as to why there was not an interview with Roz, and at subsequent screenings people would ask us why we did not interview her for the film.

The biggest problem that we faced at the outset, however, was that the idea of capturing Zinn's ideas about history and transforming them into a narrative and after

three years of filming and collecting footage, we were no closer to a narrative than when we started. We had no story.

911 Clip

The attack on September 11 caused us to rethink our whole program and, when war in Iraq seemed inevitable, we knew we had our narrative. No longer would the film speak about Zinn as if he was a historical figure. Instead, we portrayed him as a man of action speaking out against the idea of war. In our case, serendipity played a huge role in shaping the story. Narratives in documentaries are shaped by what happens in the historical world and it is crucial that the filmmaker not only understand this, but be adaptable to changes that occur in that world.

Zinn's journey through history had been remarkable; he seemed to be everywhere, and so we decided to concentrate on Howard Zinn and the idea that the individual is not powerless. We also decided to use a linear approach to the narrative. Zinn is, after all, a narrative historian so our view of narrative would reflect his style of presenting history. Our new structure would have Zinn tell his own story in a set of interviews for the first third of the film. This section would take the audience up to the time when he moved to the south. The next section, in standard expository style, would explain his importance. We used the interviews done with former students, such as Marian Wright Edelman, Ray Mungo, Jay Cravin and Alice Walker. We also included SNCC members Bob Moses and Cleveland Sellers, along with Oscar Chase. Finally, in the third section, we turned to Zinn speaking out as an activist, doing what he has always done, which is providing the context for dissenting views. Since he was speaking about contemporary issues, the distance that was present earlier when he was reminiscing about his life was gone and the

urgent appeal against the militarization of our society rang true to the viewer. The film would change tone as the narrative went along. The use of cinema verte in our film gave it more life. It put the audience in a position to follow the flow of Zinn's story.

Through the development of the Howard Zinn film, I learned that my narratives are always tied to the idea of democracy and its possibilities. These thoughts are tied to Dewey's observations about participatory democracy, which is a faith in the public. Zinn's work is grounded in the same belief. He believes that we can use history as a means toward achieving democracy. In fact, in a scene we eventually cut out, Zinn says he became a historian because he wanted to change the world.²⁸ His work with SNCC, and his perspective that this type of co-operation and faith in democracy is the only answer to our problems, drove me to examine the idea of creating meaning and democracy in the documentary narrative. This viewpoint argues that the artist, and the romance of the creative genius, is replaced by a principle that says that narratives are built by face –to-face interactions and that these interactions create an experience. Therefore, the voice of the film is created by the possibilities of allowing situations to develop and not in pre-establishing a film's agenda. It is an unending social inquiry. My inquiry into my own work has led me back to the idea of the filmmaker being part of specific democratic expression. I see the filmmaker as part of a community and film as a tool of inquiry to be used in a community-based approach to express the idea of an art based on a collective experience

In Chapter Two, I will next examine the work of several other filmmakers such as Barbara Koppel, Gordon Quinn, Jerry Blumenthal, Eric Scholl, Cyndi Moran and Stephanie Black and illustrate how narrative development is tied to the ideas John

Dewey, his theories on participatory democracy and the idea of art in experience. I intend to illustrate that the Dewey model of social inquiry and democracy applies to the documentary film. In fact, it is, I believe, the perfect model to the idea of art in experience.

CHAPTER II: DEWEY AND ART IN EXPERIENCE

I began to understand the vital links between theory and practice in documentary film. During my Master's program at Northern Illinois University, I was introduced to the different modes of representation in the documentary film. This early scholarship led me to examine the meaning of social inquiry in filmmaking, art in experience, and the filmmaker as an engaged citizen. I also learned that these are integral aspects of John Dewey's philosophy and participatory democracy. It became increasingly clear to me that there were important links between John Dewey's works, the process of filming, and the modes of representations established by documentary theorist Bill Nichols.

My aim here is to illustrate how the intent and development of a documentary film can be seen through the prism of John Dewey's view on art in experience. I intend to show how a new mode of representation has emerged, which has at its heart a kind of shared experience with its subjects. This mode has become increasingly significant as a model for filmmakers. I will illustrate that it is a mode of inquiry that is tied to Dewey's view of art and democracy. I intend to use a series of interviews with several filmmakers along with some short clips to help illustrate my points; I have chosen to examine these four films as examples for this study:

Harlan County U.S.A. by Barbara Kopple

Golub by Kartemquin Films

At the End of a Nightstick by Eric Scholl, Cindi Moran, and Peter Kuttner

Life and Debt by Stephanie Black.

Before looking at these films, however, I would like to reexamine the modes of representation presented by Bill Nichols. Nichols' work is very helpful here because, not

only has he established a way to categorize the various modes of representation, but his modes can also serve as a means for the to review the historiography of the development of these various forms of representation and provide us with insight into the historical progression of the documentary film.

The Expository Mode

The first mode is the expository mode. In these films, which can be seen on PBS, the History Channel and CNN, as well as other mainstream broadcasting outlets, the off-screen presence is often a male and is referred to by documentary filmmakers as the “voice of god.” These films use narration as the voice of authority whose words become the informing logic of the film. The argument of the film, augmented by file footage providing the proof of the occurrence, shapes the narrative along rhetorical lines. In some ways, it reverses the idea of the image being the most important piece of information in film because the images become subservient to the written word. This genre has its roots in the works of John Grierson and news radio of the 1940s. One can see the influence of radio news reports in the early CBS programs done by Edward R. Murrow. These documentaries, such as the classic *Harvest of Shame*, which exposed the conditions of migrant workers, operate in the tradition of muckraking journalism. Their reports are presented as objective truth exposing the inequities of society. This type of presentation gives the reports their authority through what is presented as a logical conclusion while the images provide the evidence. The subjects serve as commentary upon the spoken word and are often used to verify what is being said or implied by the narrator. This type of film assumes that there is a logic-dictated progression of thought within a pseudo-objective point of view and that anyone, given the information representing the facts of

the matter, would come to the same conclusion. It is often used in a film requiring the need for a solution to a problem or a historical event, which follows the chronology of events. In either case, it is the narrator who becomes the authorial presence of this mode. The documentary subjects who are interviewed are subservient to the text and pass commentary upon the narration by providing evidence for the argument. The danger of all this is that this can become a pseudo-dialogue between the subject and filmmaker. In his type of interview, the witnesses are used to validate the logic of the text. But what happens when important elements of the story are left out of the narrative, elements that, if they were contained in the text, might lead to different conclusions for the viewer?

I watched a documentary on PBS, which questioned whether the atomic bomb was necessary to end the war in the Pacific or whether the Japanese were ready to surrender. *Victory in the Pacific* maintained that there was no real evidence that the Japanese would surrender, and that this was pretty much agreed upon by Truman's advisors, which left no other recourse except to drop the weapon. The rationale given in the film was that the Japanese would never surrender and that millions of American lives would be lost in the invasion. I'd like to point out a section in the program where the reader can see how witnesses become part of a pseudo-dialogue, which appears to be a dialogue but is in fact an extension of the narration. Bill Nichols defines this type of questioning as "pseudo-dialogue" because of its paternalistic structure that prohibits an equality of participation by the subject.²⁹

Narrator: That happened to be the night Secretary of War Henry
Stimson sent a wire authorizing the use of the atomic bomb.

Barton Bernstein, Historian: There was no reason not to do it. It made good sense. And it was not a weighty matter. In the framework of mid-1945, for Truman and those around him, the answer was self-evident. Nobody around him had any sustained and serious doubts about using the bomb. It was the implementation of a long-run assumption, rooted in the FDR administration, and sharing many of the same advisors.

Conrad Crane, Historian: “There’s no way that any American president, faced with the expenditures that’s been put into the project, faced with the casualties in the Pacific, could not have used that bomb. What would have come out later if all of a sudden the invasion went in and had all these casualties, and the American public found out later that, well, we had this super-bomb but we didn’t want to use it because we thought we were going to kill too many Japanese? Just couldn’t make that decision.

Richard Frank, Historian: Nobody knew for sure what it would take to get the Japanese to yield. We’re going to do everything we have been doing, and we’re going to add the Soviets, and we’re going to add the bomb, and we’re going to add the invasion and hope that at some point in this process the Japanese crack and surrender.

Narrator: Truman was advised he might save American lives if he dropped the demand for unconditional surrender and allowed Japan to keep the Emperor. The idea had originated with Joseph Grew, former ambassador to Japan, now the Undersecretary of State. Secretary of War

Henry Stimson also favored this conditional surrender. Truman had sailed to Europe with Stimson's draft of a warning the allies would give Japan. He recommended the Emperor remain as a constitutional monarch like the King of England. But it was James Byrnes, the Secretary of State, who had Truman's ear aboard ship. The Nazis had surrendered unconditionally, and he believed, Americans would demand the same of Hirohito.³⁰

This sounds very logical. How could anyone disagree? Yet, as historian Howard Zinn has often pointed out, the greatest lies in history are actually omissions of evidence.³¹ Historians such as Gar Alperwitz, John Dover, and Howard Zinn have studied whether the Japanese were ready to stop the fighting, and they have come to the conclusion that the United States knew full well that the Japanese were ready to surrender, with one of their chief sources being General Dwight David Eisenhower. General Eisenhower described his position on whether it was necessary to drop the bomb during a discussion with Secretary of War Henry Stimson. He long maintained that "we didn't have to hit them with that awful thing."³²

During his recitation of relevant facts, I had been conscious of a feeling of depression and so I voiced to him my grave misgivings, first on the basis of my belief that Japan was already defeated and that dropping the bomb was completely unnecessary, and secondly because I thought that our country should avoid shocking the world opinion by the use of a weapon whose employment was, I thought, no longer mandatory as a measure to save American lives. General Dwight David Eisenhower.³³

General Eisenhower's reply seems to indicate that the necessity of the weapon was discussed and questioned, contrary to what the film implies. The omission of evidence by *Victory in the Pacific*, in a mode of representation that claims objective truth, is troubling and serves as an example of how at times, what seems to be sound reasoning together with selective representation of facts can be used to create an illusion of truth. The viewer follows the empirical logic of the argument but the narrator left out vital bits of information while alternative viewpoints to the argument were ignored, which challenged the narrator's predetermined view of the truth. However, despite the limitations in representation, the expository mode is still an effective mode for documentaries when it comes to presenting an argument or exposing a scandal. That is, it is possible to make a good expository documentary, despite the dangers of its method of presentation. A good example of this can be seen in the film *Enron: The Smartest Guys in the Room*. Here the expository documentary achieves effectiveness by revealing the chronological order of events and scandalous cover-up by Enron officials. The effect leaves the audience aghast at the greed, corruption, and arrogance of energy traders and the Enron executives. In the film, we hear the energy traders linked to Enron laugh at how they created the energy crises in California. The film becomes a crime story in which the viewer is positioned as the juror. The film *An Inconvenient Truth* is another expository documentary. It builds a strong case for the dangers of global warming, with its visuals of melting glaciers and impending crises surrounding Al Gore's doomsday scenario. This is also the mode that most often comes to the public's mind when they think about documentary film. However, other modes of representation have arisen to challenge its authority and to question its assertions of objectivity.

The Observational Mode

The development of new portable equipment during the 1960s allowed filmmakers in the field to easily record sound and film at the same time. These equipment innovations helped create two new schools of documentary filming: direct cinema and *cinema verite* advocates claimed that direct cinema, which I will concentrate on for the present, was a mode that captured events as they unfolded. This fly-on-the-wall technique eschewed voice-over commentary and concentrated on what was happening in the present tense. They would film reality unvarnished. It developed out of an experiment by NBC News, which hired Robert Drew to produce, what was then, this revolutionary new method of reporting the news.³⁴ Drew achieved his first success with the filming of the documentary *Primary*, which followed the Wisconsin primary of 1960, in which Senator John Kennedy defeated Senator Hubert Humphrey. The campaign showed the tedium of politics and the power of the emerging Kennedy machine. D.A. Pennebacker, who actually invented some of the camera equipment used in the film, said this about Kennedy:

Primary was about a person and, in the end, what really came to life was Kennedy. The sections that Ricky Leacock shot of Kennedy gave it the feeling that we were in a special place, which is what really makes those things work.³⁵

Drew and his company maintained a close relationship with Kennedy and filmed the events leading up to the confrontation at the University of Alabama, between Attorney General F. Robert Kennedy and the segregationist Governor of Alabama, George Wallace. *Crisis* followed the chain of events that led Governor Wallace to block the entrance of the first black students to the university. The film used no interviews or

voice-over to follow the attorney general and the governor as they went through their activities on that historic day. There were no commentary voices explaining to the audience what was happening. It was, in many ways, history unfolding before the viewers' eyes. Pennebacker went on to make the direct cinema classic *Don't Look Back*, that captures the performances of Bob Dylan while he was on tour in England in 1965. Early direct cinema films used events to give them structure. The filmmakers chose following an event as a drama, the event itself giving the film its dramatic tension. This type of filmmaking was not without criticism. The depiction of an event that occurs before the camera involves a matter of choices. There is the choice of the event, when to film, and editing decisions that are based on necessity and aesthetics. What has justifiably troubled critics is the observational claims of "purity" that are often at odds with its practice.³⁶ The idea that the filmmaker is capturing reality is always open to question but, as Stella Bruzzi points out in her book, New Documentary, this is not the main point.

The core of direct cinema films is the encounter before the camera, the moment when the filmmaking process disrupts and intrudes upon the reality of the world it is documenting. This neither invalidates it as a means of recording and conveying reality, nor does it mean that documentary is simply an elaborate fiction.³⁷

The point of Bruzzi is making here is that since the camera intrudes upon the events taking place, there is no such thing as an independent reality to be mirrored or received by the viewer. As we will see, this is a crucial feature in Dewey's concept of experience, which informs current documentary practice and is central to its own mode of representation.

Another school of filmmaking developed at the same time as direct cinema, and its influence over the documentary film has been substantial. The *cinema verite* school of filmmaking at the same time and its influence has been considerable. *Chronicle of a Summer*, directed by Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin, is one of the most influential films in documentary history. The term “*cinema verite*” is now used generically to categorize all unscripted films but it appeared first as a type of cinema in which the filmmaker interacted with the subject and reflected upon that experience. Jean Rouch felt that the filmmaker could never really be objective. Instead he sought to open up the subject through interviews and interaction. Direct cinema proponent Ricky Leacock felt this kind of intervention inhibited people from being themselves.³⁸ Rouch countered by saying it is exactly this kind of intervention and reflexivity that allows people to reveal themselves in ways that were previously unattainable. Other critics, such as Stephan Mamber, choose to define the observational mode in a way that makes their differences a moot point.

At its very simplest, cinema verite can be described as a method of filming employing hand-held camera and live sound. This is a base description, however, for cinema verite should imply a way of looking at the world as much as a means of recording...The essential element of cinema verite is the use of real people in undirected situations.³⁹

This argument brings us to Nichols’ next mode of representation, which he describes as the interactive mode.

Interactive Mode

The interactive mode uses the interview as the basis for its informing logic in the film. There are two schools that developed within this mode. The first can be seen in the work of Emile de Antonio. De Antonio uses the interview as a means of replacing the voice-over as the authoritative voice. In the case de Antonio, it is the filmmaker who organizes the arrangement of the evidence, the controlling factor in establishing the narrative. This mode, in its use of archival footage, is especially helpful in the reconstruction of history. In the film *In the Year of the Pig*, we see a reconstruction of history that is at odds with the official position of our government. The oppositional voice is clearly de Antonio's, and he achieves his revisionist construction of history through his arrangement of events. The use of dialectics heightens his view of the important historical oppositions with governmental versions of events. De Antonio's dialectical approach is important because it differs from films such as *With Babies and Banners*, *Seeing Red*, and *Union Maids*, where the film's voice is that of its witnesses. The shift is important and is at the center of de Antonio's hostility towards other practitioners of this mode of representation.⁴⁰ What both these types of interactive films lead to is a shift in the emphasis of power from the narrator to the subjects. This is present in de Antonio's films as well, despite his dialectical editing techniques. The interactive mode requires a sharing of authority. The experiences of the subjects in these films become, especially in revisionist histories, the voice of believability.

Some academic critics, such as British critic Noel King, maintain that these films accept the realism of the voices of the film without any self-reflection. Historian Jesse Lemisch lamented the absence of direct questioning and the reliance on the social actors

that leads to a film that exists in “the first-person heroic.”⁴¹ Further criticism by film scholar Michael Renov suggests that these films reduce history to a series of private histories. While these criticisms are correct to a degree, all of these critics essentially miss the point. The lack of the use of dialectics in the witness films changes the interactivity of the films in this mode. However, their attacks on the films in question, which were an important foundation in the importance of women in history, are troubling in their patriarchal tone.

The films *With Babies and Banners* and *Union Maids* are part of the historical tradition, which highlighted the stories of ordinary people and acknowledged their importance in the historical process. This was because, as Francis Fox Piven explained in an interview for the film *Howard Zinn: You Can't be Neutral on a Moving Train*, historians like E.H. Carr, Gary Nash, Francis Fox Piven, Howard Zinn, and others championed the importance of the masses of people and their contributions to human development. The filmmakers sought to follow in this tradition. Professor Lemisch, who laments the absence of a James Earl Jones–like narrator for these films, seems to be advocating for the elitist baggage that the historians and filmmakers are seeking to replace. The historical perspective of these historians and filmmakers reclaiming stories that have been ignored by the documentary and historical professions in the past is a quite worthy story unto itself. Do these critics—all white males, by the way—really think we should not tell the stories of women who have been left out of previous versions of history? The aim of these films was to acknowledge a perspective of history and experience that was previously absent from the public discourse. These films were funded during the Carter Administration by a very progressive National Endowment for

the Humanities and National Endowment for the Arts who were both interested in the forgotten histories of women.⁴²

However, despite my strong reservations about the criticisms used by these critics, they did have a point. It just was not the point that they were trying to make. There is a difference between de Antonio's films and the witness films: the importance of dialectics, which were used in the construction of the narrative for de Antonio and absent for the others. The interactive mode carries these two traditions of interactivity. One is an oral history tradition and one was a dialectical tradition. De Antonio juxtaposed images, changed the order of events, and used music as a dialectical instrument, which allowed the contradictions of US foreign policy to emerge. The dialectic occurred between de Antonio and the text. His use of figures like Senator Morton of Kentucky as a spokesperson for the idea that Ho Chi Minh is the George Washington of Vietnam, heightened the visibility of the contradictions in Vietnam. On the other hand, the more witness-based accounts in the labor films were seeking to reclaim lost stories. Bill Nichols sums up the difference this way:

The difference is quite significant, but the important point here is the shift in emphasis from the authored centered voice of authority to a witnessed centered voice of testimony. When interviews contribute to an expository mode of representation, they generally serve as evidence for the filmmaker's or text's argument. When interviews contribute to an interactive mode of representation they generally serve as evidence for an argument presented as the product of the interaction of filmmaker and subject.⁴³

What the interactive mode does is acknowledge the importance of the filmmaker's involvement with its subjects. The use of witness testimony was an attempt to represent those who were left out of history, but what the critics said about the lack of self-reflection was accurate. This led to the next documentary movement and mode of representation.

Self-Reflexive Mode

Nichols' fourth mode concerns itself with the process of representation. Self-reflexive films are especially interested in hijacking the authoritarian voice as a means to question objectivity. The idea of questioning representation and realism in the documentary film has long been part of its tradition. This goes back to Louis Bunuel's surrealist classic *Land of Bread* and Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera*. There are various forms of strategies that are used to achieve reflexivity. In *Land Without Bread*, Bunuel goes to the heart of the ethics of the documentary film by deconstructing its claim of truth, presenting a film that seems to be something it is not. Constructing the film as some sort of strange travelogue, Bunuel makes us question whether what we are seeing is "on the level." Is it possible for the narrator to be so cruel, we wonder? Bunuel questions the idea of truth in the documentary film by challenging its claims of representation. He does this by examining its images by using irony, as an example as a tool for deconstruction. The Russian filmmaker theorist, Dziga Vertov, in his film *Man with a Movie Camera*, makes us aware of how reality is constructed through editing. This allows us to reflect on the process of filmmaking and makes us aware that this is a process without an impersonal objective truth in view.

This questioning of the idea of truth in the documentary is continued with films such as *No Lies*, *David Holtzman's Diaries*, and *Daughter Rite*, all of which draw attention to the idea of representation by questioning the truth of the authorial voice. They are all disguised fictions which force the viewer to confront the realist assumptions of documentaries. *Chronicle of a Summer*, on the other hand, uses a different style. The film has its subjects watch footage of themselves, and others in the group, then decide who or what seems real. This becomes what Nichols calls “a meta commentary” of the process of filmmaking itself.⁴⁴ This mode aims to place the viewer in the position where they will have a heightened awareness of the relationship between form and representation. Its strategies can be problematic by revealing a lack of concern for its subjects, sometimes treating them as props to be used. This happens most often when the filmmaker makes him- or herself into the protagonist of the film. An example of this can be seen in Michael Moore's film *Roger and Me*. To complete his story, Moore uses the individuals of the film as dupes—helpless, indifferent, or worse. In the end, as Bill Nichols points out, “Michael Moore” seems as removed from the unemployed workers as Roger Smith, the man he chases.”⁴⁵ This is also the preferred mode of representation for many academics because of its pre-occupation with textual concerns.⁴⁶ This preference can isolate academics from the concerns of art based in community, subjecting their academic analysis to an alienation from the concerns of both the filmmaker and the subjects or general audiences.

The Experience Mode

Bill Nichols' modes have provided us with a way to organize criticism around the various modes of representation. In recent years a new mode has emerged, born out of

the observational tradition, but also from the interactive mode as well. These films follow either an event, an issue, a political contest, or people's lives over long protracted periods of time. The films are usually, although not necessarily, without voice-over commentary and are based on a series of encounters. In this sense, they are within the direct cinema and *cinema verite* traditions but they also use archival footage, interviews, and a host of other mechanisms to create a style. The main question in the building of the narrative is how to link these encounters together. In the experiential mode of representation, solutions to narrative problems are solved in a very pragmatic fashion. This is a narrative that uses narration, interview and direct cinema with the idea being, what will be effective in its formal presentation is what is pragmatic. What they have in common is adaptability to the changing narrative while the filmmaker is making the film. This type of engagement with representation has previously been absent from the direct cinema and interactive modes. The filmmakers are with their subjects for very long periods of time. This time period can last several years before the filmmaker is ready to edit. This allows the "dialectical" interruptions in life to become part of the narrative. These films also challenge notions of certainty by allowing the episodic shifts of experience to become part of the narrative as it develops. The surprises in the narrative become an experience for audiences. This was seen in the film *Hoop Dreams*, in which audiences rooted for two kids from the black sections of Chicago who were trying to follow their dream of making something of their lives through their love of basketball. The film followed these young men and we watched as the problems of poverty intervened in the lives of the two families. Audiences were moved, as Professor Jeff Chown explains:

There was nothing predictable about *Hoop Dream*. Three baby boomer, white independent filmmakers with very little money got an idea about making a documentary about playground basketball culture. They crossed a cultural divide and befriended two families who took big risks with them. They spent five years on the project, a substantial chunk of anyone's life, and they created something quite unique—a three-hour long documentary that had people purchasing tickets on a Friday night in suburban malls.⁴⁷

The ground-breaking support for the film *Hoop Dreams* helped to usher in a new era for documentary films. The narrative problems of direct cinema included a reliance on dramatization of public events to structure its narrative. These events took relatively short periods of time. The filmmakers usually did not seek to follow their subjects over long extended periods of time. The type of journey films that Chown speaks about seemed to connect to an audience eager to share experiences. These journey films eschewed the need for certainty by emphasizing the uncertainty of documentary production. This process-oriented film connects with its audience by leading them down that same experience of encounters the filmmakers have had, thereby recreating an experience for the audience that is reminiscent, through the audience's own subjectivity of the filmmakers and film's subjects.

John Dewey

These films have a direct link to the ideas expressed in John Dewey's theories of art in experience and participatory democracy. One of the giants in the documentary world, Chicago's Kartemquin Films, uses John Dewey's thoughts on experience as the

foundation for their films.⁴⁸ This method of inquiry can be seen, I maintain, as a type of encounter, with its organizing principles and methodology as an integral aspect of this mode of production. Before going any further, we need to define what Dewey means by “experience”. Dewey saw inquiry as the first stage in the development of an art based upon experience. There are four phases in this process. The first phase begins with a problematic situation where the concepts and understanding of our world and the continuing patterns of action around the problem “are inadequate for the continuation of ongoing activity in pursuit of needs and desires.”⁴⁹ Hence, there is a problem, and the filmmaker begins to intercede to find out what that problem is and how he or she will approach their film. This coincides with Dewey’s view of the engaged citizen and idea of the public’s intelligence and collective problem solving capacity that are enhanced in a democracy. In the second phase of an experience, a person makes observations, does research while gathering information. The filmmaker acts in a similar fashion. He/she looks at the situation and observes, sometimes filming, but always conscious of the problem and how he or she intends to tell the story. In the third phase of experience, the person reframes his or her concepts and considers how to proceed by trying different methods. The filmmaker begins to make adjustments to their original idea as the narrative, and the events of historical world begin to intervene with the narrative. This intervention is not just concerned with the narrative itself but with the events in the historical world as well, which are creating the dialectic where the narrative will evolve accordingly. The intervention by the filmmaker is based on the idea of experience. The fourth phase is creation of the piece of art itself. If this inquiry has been followed in their proper stages, then the work becomes a piece of art that has its roots in experience. The

artist creates a piece of art that is linked to multiple human experiences and community. The work is able to exhibit the fruits of direct engagement with the problematic events in question. This creates a collective intelligent response to the problem, which is not necessarily a unitary point of view. However, it is a developed sense of the dimension of the problem. The various stakes and perspectives, when taken into account result in an experience that is not necessarily a resolution of the problem, but if there has been direct engagement with the problem by those involved, the viewer will see the "end point" of the work as one of growth by all those concerned. By the same token, every completed work is the jumping off point for a new problem, a new inquiry and a new work.

This view of art, from a Deweyan perspective, gives the viewer a tool to look at the methods of narrative construction by filmmakers of this genre. I will illustrate how this fits into Dewey's views of theory and engagement with works of art and using adaptability to various problems in an organic sense. In this mode of representation, the filmmaker becomes a part of the experience of direct democracy while making the film. I would like to clarify this by examining the links between participatory democracy and filmmaking, which will be followed with practical examples of the methodology of inquiry by the various filmmakers and see how these inquiries are related to Dewey's ideals of democracy and art.

Participatory Democracy and Filmmaking

John Dewey felt that democracy and community were fundamentally linked together and that the citizen must participate in solving the problems in a modern democracy. We can see from this concept of experience why democracy is important as an instrument to collective problem solving. Dewey felt that to do otherwise was to be

dogmatic and that the unleashing of the intelligence of the public would occur as people participated in a democracy. By analogy and by application, we can see that the same should be true with a work of art. Like democracy, a documentary can be an instrument for unleashing public intelligence regarding shared problems. However, this can only be done if the documentary is made in such a way as to call upon that public intelligence. “We lie in the lap of an immense intelligence,” Dewey said. “The difficulty was to unleash this intelligence, which remained dormant until it possesses the local community as its medium.”⁵⁰

Democracy is a form of representation. It can come in a parliamentary form, where there are checks and balances, and the people choose between those who wish to govern for them. Democracy, Dewey maintains, is more than merely casting votes; it is about how the decision-making concerns of everyday affairs are part of the growth process of human beings and citizens. Journalist Walter Lippman believed that it was the responsibility of elites to govern because it would be unrealistic to think the public to possess “a knowledge beyond their reach.”⁵¹ As elitist as it sounds, it was a popular idea of the progressive forces of that era. They believed that the public had been misled by corrupt politicians and had failed to elect worthy candidates. Democracy advocates argued, as Dewey did, that these poor choices were the result of citizens not being actively engaged and leaving their governance to others.⁵² Dewey also points out that “the world has suffered more from leaders and authorities than from the masses.”⁵³ The main point I am trying to make is this: the filmmaker in the Deweyan model of democracy becomes the engaged citizen. The filmmaker is reacting to the unsolved problems that threaten the environment by intervening and becoming a part of the

experience. In each of the films I have chosen as examples of this process, the viewer can see the filmmaker following the Dewey model of participatory democracy by seeing a problem, forming strategies of inquiry, processing the information, and then acting. The final stage of action becomes the film. It is a real experience born out of situations of lived experience. Since this experience is a true event the formulaic questions of theorists about observational cinema and representation are almost irrelevant; the question is whether this experience is a “real experience.” This is what Kartemquin founder, Gordon Quinn, means when he says, “It’s reality, but is it truth?”⁵⁴ This Deweyan mode of representation is based on the truthfulness of the experience and that experience is, in part, where the filmmaker becomes an engaged citizen in a democracy. I would like to start by examining of the methodology of inquiry by various filmmakers and how that is related to Dewey’s ideals of democracy and art. Then, I will examine the idea of the organic process in narrative development, which will be followed with an explanation on how a piece of art becomes real based on experiences, using several films and interviews as my examples.

I intend to illustrate that this experience can be broken down into the following stages of inquiry: The establishment of a problem; the beginning of the film’s inquiry, which calls for early shooting with the camera used as an instrument of social inquiry and the adjustments made during the film, which come out of the interaction between the filmmaker and the subject and the historical world. The filmmakers shoot events, see the historical world, and intercede with their experience, thereby creating a different experience that becomes the film. The ebb and flow of events becomes part of the story. As the narrative begins to be structured by these events, a new experience occurs between

the subjects and the filmmaker. With this in mind, I would like to begin our study into several films and filmmakers to ask the filmmakers about their own methods of inquiry. However, I will first give a short synopsis of the films to be examined in this study.

Films

Life and Debt is a film about the consequences of globalization and how decisions made by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) affect developing countries' economies. Stephanie Black had spent a lot of time working in Jamaica making reggae videos⁵⁵ when she decided to do a film about the IMF and its economic consequences for Jamaica. Her film used the farmers and workers as spokespersons for their own point of view. This faith in the intelligence of the public is one of the foundations of the ideas of direct democracy. *Life and Debt* uses metaphors, such as following a group of foreign tourists to illustrate its points as well. The film required Black, in her own search for knowledge, to understand the effects of globalization as she working making in Jamaica. She saw herself, like the tourists, without any knowledge of the society that she was visiting.

The second stage of inquiry consists of the filmmaker beginning to shoot some things. This starting point occurs when the filmmaker first goes into the field after identifying a problem. In the film *The End of a Nightstick*, the thrust of the filmmakers' inquiry caused them to make certain decisions, which were based on what they had learned. In the Deweyan film, the documentary filmmaker interacts with his subjects and dialectic with them is established. The formulation of experience becomes a process of trust for both parties. It is a dialectical process. We will look at this dialectical process and see how the film becomes an experience. The aim of this section is to demystify the

idea of the term organic and explain, what filmmakers refer to as organic is really a dialectical process that is being determined by the give and take relationships that occur during the making of a film. In this clip, we see the basic problem being established and the principle players are identified.

Harlan County U.S.A. director Barbara Kopple was a political young woman who had worked with direct cinema pioneers the Maysles brothers. She also worked on the film *Winter Soldier*. In *Winter Soldier*, former veterans of the Vietnam War testified about the atrocities they had committed or witnessed in Vietnam. The film marked the beginning of the Vietnam Veterans against the War. In the early 1970s, Kopple began her film *Harlan County U.S.A.* The film won an Academy Award for its telling of the miners' stories about justice and the establishment of a union. I have chosen this film because in many ways it is the pioneer of these types of films. Kopple created a relationship with the miners that exists even to this day and stands as a blueprint for the type of democratic involvement that underlines the idea of art born out of experience.⁵⁶ *Harlan County U.S.A.* began as a slightly different project. Her involvement took her in a different direction than she anticipated. While making her film, Kopple found herself lying on the floor to avoid the bullets from thugs with guns who sought to intimidate the miners and the film crew. The filmmakers completed this film despite a lack of money that often found them begging their lab, Du Art, to process the film with promises for repayment at another time.⁵⁷ They would return to New York City to edit, again with no money, while people rallied behind the film because of the importance of the miners' story. The film achieved astounding success but no one considered the possibility at the time. Barbara Kopple and the other filmmakers were fighting the miners' fight. They were part of a

struggle that had been going on for over one hundred years at that point. Kopple started out from a grass roots view of union, as represented by the Miners for Democracy, which evolved from her experience with the organization. Their interconnectivity with the people of Harlan County is a process that began as an idea to tell a story about justice and democracy. Kopple never started out to make the film she did but in the process of filming this struggle the film took on a life of its own. This kind of political involvement is part of the tradition of participatory democracy in “that the economic experience is so personally decisive that the individual must share in its full determination⁵⁷.”

In the film *Golub*, we see how the art in experience is consummated, but interestingly, this time it occurs in both the art gallery audience and the film viewing audience. It also is linked to the idea of experience, in the Dewey view of art in experience. What they are tying the viewing audience to is the experience. We see Golub’s paintings and the filmmaker’s own experience emerge with the reality of life. Leon Golub’s work looks at the dark side of human relationships and misuse of power. Here, the viewer sees Derry during the British occupation of Northern Ireland, the death squads in Central America and other areas of the world showing a pattern of cruelty, which is depicted in the work of Golub. We also see similar reactions of horror in both the gallery audience and in the film-going audience. Their experiences create a kind of overall understanding, which becomes an art based in experience.

The first stage of inquiry begins with the identification of a problem. Most documentaries start with this as a premise. In the first film, *Life and Debt*, the problem identified is the effects of globalization upon local economies. The effects of policies instigated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have resulted in the demise of local

agriculture and industry. They cannot compete with the more advanced economies of countries like the United States. In this phase of the Deweyan mode of inquiry, the filmmaker begins to learn how existing understanding of the problems facing third world countries, such as enormous debt resulting from IMF loans is identified as a problem. The so-called help of the IMF, which results in a staggering debt that cripples the economies of countries like Jamaica, is challenged by the knowledge resulting from the inquiry of the filmmaker. This is the first stage in the Deweyan mode of inquiry. The citizen, in our case the filmmaker Stephanie Black, sees a problem and decides to act.

Clip from film: *Life and Debt*

SB: I actually went to Jamaica in the '80s to make a documentary about a temporary workers program for cheap labor in the U.S. Ten thousand Caribbean men were brought to Florida every year to cut sugar cane. I went to Jamaica to film the workers, and the film spoke of the substandard living and working conditions. I went to Jamaica to film an interview with Michael Manley and also to show where the men come from and where the force is that kind of drives them to have to keep working under such extreme circumstances in Florida. And I fell in love with the country, as many people do with regards to Jamaica. I fell in love and I made a tacit promise to myself that as soon as I was done with the first documentary, I would try really to go back. And I was able to do it. I decided to live in Jamaica for awhile. I worked for a local production company there, and I came to understand just by living in the country what it is to be living under an IMF 'structural adjustment program.' Before

that, I had no idea what the IMF policies were that had such a negative kind of day-to-day impact on the running of a country. Before then, I thought the IMF was somewhat akin to the Red Cross. They lent money. They gave money. That was it. So it was just from everyday living in a country under ‘structural adjustment’ mandates that actually made me make *Life and Debt*.⁵⁸

The second stage of inquiry consists of the filmmaker beginning to shoot some situations. This starting point occurs when the filmmaker first goes into the field after identifying a problem. In the film *The End of a Nightstick* the thrust of the filmmaker’s inquiry caused them to make certain decisions, which were based on what they had learned. In the Deweyan film, the documentary filmmaker interacts with his subjects and dialectic with them is established. The formulation of experience becomes a process of trust for both parties. It is a dialectical process. We will look at this dialectical process and see how the film becomes an experience. The aim of this section is to demystify the idea of the term “organic” and explain, what filmmakers refer to as organic, is really a dialectical process that is being determined by the give and take relationships that occur during the making of a film. In this stage of inquiry, we see the basic problem being established and the principle players are identified.

Eon-end of nightstick

Clip from Film: *End of a Nightstick*

DM: Could you explain some of the problems that were encountered during the course of the project?

ES: The Committee to confront police violence was actually going through a pretty big crisis that was getting to the point where we were thinking maybe we should not do this. It was fascinating, it was a crises based on race because the committee to confront police violence, mostly a white organization, that was dealing with organizing against violence against African-Americans and they didn't feel it was right for white people to go into black neighborhoods and say this is how you organize and this is how you do it. What they wanted to do was to work with other organizations that came out of the community.

CM: They were struggling through what the direction of this organization was, where are we going to stop police brutality and how does this fit. This is a grassroots organization and a lot of issues going on and there were issues about how is this being represented, who is doing the representation. It was difficult for Eric and I to figure how we fit in because some of the political arguments were who are they organizing to fight. The organization was mostly white folks, educated, white, middle-class people, which is great but who are they organizing?

DM: That was the historic question for the white people organizing in SNCC.

ES: Exactly! The idea was white people are causing this problem, you organize with them. There were a few people who didn't like the idea, who felt anyone who wanted to be part of the organization should be part of it. It seemed like we were doing more arguing on this topic more

than we were doing on police brutality. The crisis kind of resolved itself with a lot more cooperation between this organization and other organizations and it was a good resolution that made for a good film and so we featured some other people from other organizations as well. We included the other voices for the tape but focused on the Committee to Confront Police Violence.⁵⁹

The third stage of inquiry is different because the filmmaker, in this case Barbara Kopple, has begun to shoot the film beyond her preliminary investigation but was open to the changes that would soon develop. The quality of the intervention is important here, allowing the understandings of participants/subjects to be articulated. In the case of *Harlan County U.S.A.*, those points of view become more apparent, as does Koppel's involvement. This is the meat and bones of the participatory democratic quality of this experiential mode of representation. The result of her filming sent her off into another direction, which climaxed in this breathtaking confrontation between the miners, the scabs and the police.

Clip from Film: *Harlan County U.S.A.*

DM: You spent a couple of years involved with the film—which just grew. How did you come to the subject in the beginning? I assume it must have started off as a much shorter, more specific project.

BK: In the beginning, the idea was to just film the Miners for Democracy movement. After Yablonski was murdered there was this whole siege within the miners' movement. They were sick and tired of dictatorship and wanted new leadership. A leadership which they said

would really represent them. They wanted the right to ratify their own contracts. Things like that. And that was how the film began. We wanted to record that moment, that turmoil. I thought it would be incredible to hear three men, one of whom had worked 26 years in the mines and was disabled with black lung, running up against Tony Boyle. Plus there had never been a real election in the United Mine Workers Union... When I first came to Harlan County I was lucky, because a lot of people who were organizers had fought for the Miners for Democracy movement. Since I had just been doing that for a whole year I knew people. I remember the first morning I got to Harlan County. We left Tennessee very early and got to Harlan about 4:30 in the morning and asked him, "What's happened?" He said, "Go down to the road. Go over the bridge and you'll see people on strike. The state troopers are there as well.

I lived there for 13 months and after a while people didn't recognize us without equipment. I remember Lois, the heavy-set one who pulls the gun out of her dress in the film saying to me, "OK, Barbara, you can be on the picket line," And I'd say "Shush, We're filming you. You're not supposed to say that." And she says, "I know. But I have to write your name down. You just got to be there."⁶⁰

In the film *Golub*, we see how the experience is consummated, but interestingly, this time it occurs in both the art gallery audience and the film viewing audience. The film also ties together the idea of experience, in the Deweyan view of art in experience, with the idea of emotion, which is critical to establishing this symbiotic relationship of

the filmmaker, subjects and audience. What the filmmakers are tying the viewing audience to is the experience. We see, in Golub's experience and the filmmakers' own experience of filming the story of Golub, materialize with the reality of life in Derry during the British occupation of Northern Ireland. We also see similar reactions of horror in both the gallery audience and in the film-going audience. Their experiences create a kind of overall understanding, which becomes an art based in experience.

Clip from film: *Golub*

DM: How did you begin your relationship with Leon?

JB: He had never seen any of our work. He knew of us. He knew that we had done films about labor situations and social situations, socially conscience filmmakers is basically what he knew but he hadn't seen our work, he had no evidence that we were any good (laughs) but that we did make them. It was a very personal kind of rapport that is in the movie. You see it happening as the story develops. You see that they are not just standing off to the side watching him paint. There engaging with him, his story is their story.

GQ: He is interested in us as we are interested in him and the process of making the movie was an ongoing dialogue. We were far from invisible.

DM: The idea of process you immediately link up with that you had already done in filming of the process of strikes by labor.

GQ: We were always interested in process. We were also in this period doing a lot of industrial work for our bread and butter, whatever it

was, McDonald's, medical stuff, but we had always been very interested in the process of things. There are the social interactions, the process you see in a *Taylor Chain* and you see people over time going through something. We have also been very interested in the physical process of how things get made, we find that fascinating. So the idea of seeing how someone makes a painting, seeing how you get from not just this, what is going on in someone's mind, what their looking at the whole visual aspect of creating a painting that was like totally fascinating.

JB: One is that the film we had just finished before making *Golub* was interestingly also about process, We went back to *Taylor Chain*, to see what was going on at the plant ten years later because there was new ownership and the new owner was very progressive, entrepreneur, an industrial engineer with very forward looking ideas to put this rickety *Taylor Chain* plant back on its feet and that was interesting in and of itself. What one of the things we did was film a lot of his thinking about how a chain gets made, how to do it more economically, do it more efficiently, how to compete with the Japanese.

GQ: But we didn't really show that in the movie. We wound up making the movie about labor negotiations, the process of labor negotiations.

JB: The other thing about the process with *Golub* is that when he describes to us, going back to what I was saying a moment ago about our first meeting with him, he described to us of how he actually makes these

paintings, how he scrapes the surfaces with the cleaver, how he deletes stuff, how interested he is in using photographs not just for their content but for gesture. We sort of saw the film unfolding before our eyes as he was describing the way he works that it wasn't just taking a pad or a pencil or a brush and adding something onto a canvas, almost a very crude pre-industrial technology that he had invented to create the field he wanted to create these kinds of images.

GQ: The scraping, the meat cleavers, clearly you can see it in the film; it's a process that has a real art to it.

GQ: We went there with him where the paintings going to be unveiled there it's the first time the public is going to see it.

JB: We didn't know where the painting is going to end up. We did know that we wanted to follow the painting. The stroke of luck was that it ended up at a place that was so pertinent you know. If it had opened for example, even if it had opened in New York City or Los Angeles it wouldn't have been the same.

GQ: It's the same kind of thing. There we are in Derry with the show and Nancy's show; the painting that we followed is now being responded to by these people, how could you not go out into the surrounding community? The people who were looking at his paintings lived with art, which is on the side of these buildings, that lived with helicopters going over, that lived with the soldiers in full combat dress. There goes little girls walking to school and here's a soldier and I pan to

the little girl and what comes into frame is a guy who looks like he is in Iraq or something. It's like they're occupied, how could you not film that given what Golub's paintings are about?

DM: When you see the "Free Derry" sign it's opened it up and we're in the real world, the art world and merging with the reality of what Leon's paintings are.

GQ: And that's constantly what the film, I mean the whole time, is playing that. We're bringing you, bringing the world, which Leon does his art and which the viewer experiences, it is constantly being brought into the film with different kinds of images when we go to Ireland it's different. Earlier in the film, we have the video bars coming through, we say its media but when you get to Derry it's our images, it's real, it's not video, it's real it's there, it's a little different you know.⁶¹

For a documentary filmmaker, the social dimension of documentary tradition has long and deep ties to the past. This experience-based film has become a particular type of American *verite* in recent years. This type of art seeks to push the viewer into a social experience. John Dewey expresses it this way: "Every art communicates because it expresses. It enables us to share vividly and deeply in meanings to which we had been dumb, or for which we had but the ear that permits what is said to pass through in transit to overt action."⁶² The view of the documentary film being part of an experience of the community, which becomes an overt action, is a participatory community-based experience. The modes of inquiry established by Dewey become a virtual blueprint for understanding the documentary film. We start with a problem, followed by initial inquiry

that uses the camera as its research tool; this is followed by the adjustments made from the changes in the historical word, which result in an art based in experience. The filmmaker does not pretend to be neutral but has a political point of view grounded in the knowledge that they, and their subjects, have acquired. Both of them together seek to either bring light to a problem or to initiate action based on the faith in the intelligence of the public to solve its own problems without the guidance of elites. This is what democracy looks like in the Deweyan mode. The filmmaker is an engaged citizen in a democracy. This model seeks to establish involvement by the audience as well by making the audience part of this democratic expression.

We trust the experience we are seeing so, through our own subjectivity, we establish a similar bond of trust that is established in the film and the audience becomes part of a democracy through process. The thought process creates an emotional response, which is essential to the process. Emotion, as Dewey sees it, “is the capacity to become involved with the subject matter.”⁶³ This agency by all parties gives these films the type of power that has moved the documentary film out of obscurity and into popular culture.

In my next chapter, I will discuss the practical usage of these theories to the experience of my own films. I will then take the viewer through the step-by-step thought process of the construction of the films and how I am building upon the ideals of participatory democracy and experience in my own work. These practical examples will serve as test cases for this mode and we can see, in true Deweyan terms, a practical application of the theory in art in experience.

CHAPTER III: SOLDIERS OF PEACE

I intended to make a film for this dissertation as an illustration of narrative construction in practice. With this in mind, I decided to create another new film about veterans. Initially, I wanted the film to be about Iraq veterans returning home from the war. However, I quickly realized that I could not mount the necessary time it would take to complete such an ambitious project, so I was forced to abandon this idea.

After taking stock, I decided that I could use some new footage recently shot at a peace march in Chicago to update a previous work, *Citizen Soldier: The Story of the Vietnam Veterans against the War*, as a way to illustrate the theories of narrative construction that are at the heart of this dissertation. Before moving ahead with an explanation of this project, I think it is necessary to review the narrative development for the documentary I planned to update and how it achieved, or did not achieve, the goals I set out.

Citizen Soldier: The Story of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War focused on social movements and the existential qualities of activism. My aim was to explore the nature of political activism in social movements and the historical development of the organization Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW). Its members, largely combat soldiers during the Vietnam War, became a crucial element within the anti-war movement. I felt that this history of protest was had not been given its proper importance in other films about the resistance to the war in Vietnam. There were four basic questions that formed the core of my documentary. Why was the VVAW able to continue as an active organization while other groups from the 1960s anti-war movement had long ceased to exist? Second, did their long-standing activism arise from post-traumatic stress

disorder (PTSD)? If this was the case, then how did the confrontations with the government over U.S. war policies ease their transition home? Third, was their commitment to social activism consistent with social movement theory? Finally, how were the soldiers indoctrinated with a racist viewpoint of the Vietnamese?

In developing the original version of this documentary, my first task was to find a stylistic structure that adequately explored these questions. Many historical documentaries use interviews as a way of reinforcing what the narrator has already outlined. I had no intention of using a single-voice narrator. I wanted the story to emanate from the veterans' experiences. The hope was that their voices would lay the groundwork for their transformations from soldiers to peace activists. The veterans had to tell their own stories so I used open-ended questions, with no direction from me regarding what I wanted from them.

When they began to tell their stories, it became apparent to me that their first-person testimony carried a great deal of power and authenticity. Authenticity is at the heart of the documentary. Bill Nichols defines its importance as such:

The guarantee of authenticity we feel in the presence of the documentary image is a guarantee of authenticity born of our own complicity with the claims of the text. The image and the text, its conventions and techniques, combine to provide the basis for our inference or assumption that the photographic image's stickiness has within it the stuff of history.⁶⁴

The archival footage that accompanies many historical documentaries is usually tied to a literal interpretation of events. A description of what was read by the narrator is followed by a shot exactly like what is being described. I used this technique, but

concentrated on footage that needed to be placed within the context of the interior personal experiences of the veterans.

When these changes are made, the images then cease to be historical artifacts and instead become clearly intertwined with their first-person testimony. This is crucial in this film because films about social movements are driven by stories, whether they are about injustice, as in the case of the civil rights movement, or the utopian narratives of Eugene Debs and the socialist movement in the early 20th century. The story of *Citizen Soldier* tried to explain the soldiers' military indoctrination, and how their anti-war activism and working with the homeless and then-returning Gulf War veterans, became their salvation. This is the key point of the film.

It is also the key to understanding the organization's longevity and why it still exists today. The veterans were successful and continue to be an inspiration to new veterans because the VVAW knew their place in history. They were able to translate their understanding of themselves into direct action against the very forces that had created these stressful memories. The VVAW did this with the manipulation of symbols, such as their protest in Washington in which they threw their medals onto the Supreme Court steps in protest of the ongoing Vietnam War. This, and other protests that followed, include the VVAW protest at the 1972 G.O.P. convention, where they confronted the Nixon administration and were gassed by the police and spat upon by the Young Republicans as they attempted to reach the convention floor.⁶⁵ In *Citizen Soldier*, I sought to visually express the emotion of this movement by showing the veterans in action, working with the homeless, confronting the GOP at the convention, and organizing "rap-ins" to deal with their own anger. The history of their movement was brought to the

present by the Gulf War. In the original film, I interviewed a Gulf War veteran who had recently joined the VVAW, to illustrate why the organization remains significant. Little did I know that their importance as examples to another generation of veterans would bring me back to my own film some ten years later?

Citizen Soldier Re-Edit

Several factors were involved in my decision to re-edit and update *Citizen Soldier*. One was that the piece never seemed quite finished to me. I never achieved any success with the film, nor did I try that hard, in its previous distribution. It had its problems, one of them being that the film never could decide whether it was an examination of the Vietnam War or the veterans' experiences during the war and their subsequent radicalism. Second, it seemed to me that when *Citizen Soldier* was completed, the VVAW seemed like a relic from the past. We were in a time of peace, and the organization's significance was long lost on the public.

I began to think about revisiting *Citizen Soldier* because the United States was embroiled in a new war, with a new generation of veterans who would have to face the lasting effects of the experiences of war. In addition, similarities between the veteran communities from the two wars began to emerge with an eerie resemblance. Second, I also wanted to explore some of my ideas; especially the connections to John Dewey's theories on participatory democracy and the importance of art in every day life, to the film as an example of how his theories influence narrative development. To do this, I felt that the film needed a more interactive quality. This interactivity is tied to Dewey's belief in the intelligence of the public and its input, which I intended to tie to the narrative structure of this participatory film.

I started my process by deciding to add some footage that I had shot at a march in Chicago. We wired longtime veteran consular, VVAW member Ray Parrish and conducted an interview with him. As Parrish walked down Chicago's famous Michigan Avenue, I asked him questions while he was actively taking part in the march. I was not the center, nor the focus of the interview. Indeed, I looked like one of the vets as I walked with them holding a sign, which gave me a degree of transparency as we engaged in conversation. The cameraman had no instruction to either include or exclude me from the frame.

My original intent was to do a whole film in this style, which would be about veterans returning home and trying to adjust to civilian life while suffering the effects of PTSD. While I decided I could not develop an entirely new film, I was very pleased with the results of the shoot. The footage was excellent, well shot, with good sound, and the content of the interview along with the backdrop of the demonstration, was quite powerful. In this interactive context, I was filmed as an equal with the social actor, in this case Parrish so that the narrative would greatly rely on the experiences Parrish has had with returning veterans, with me serving as one of the audience. Because I was now a participant in the march, Parrish and I engaged each other on a common ground. This removed the hierarchical overtones of the interview and allowed me to engage the social actors as equals, removing some of the barriers that exist between filmmakers and their subjects.

Clip from Film: *Soldiers of Peace*

In the footage at the peace march, Parrish spoke about the problems that he sees when he speaks with returning veterans, including the problems they are having with the

Veterans Administration (VA) and the military, and the guilt that they feel from their experiences in the war. I knew that the veterans' continuing saga and the effects the war had upon them were opening a new component for the narrative, culminated from my two previous films and the newly-shot footage. I edited the scene with Parrish into the old *Citizen Soldier* and then decided to include a powerful *cinema verite* section of my first tape, which I had previously not used because it never seemed to work stylistically in the second film. The interactivity of the footage with Parrish allowed me to open up the narrative for this other footage. I could see that the *verite* aspect of the old scene fit well into the new narrative. It flowed seamlessly into the new version of the film. The new film fell more in sync with the participatory/observational mode that Bill Nichols writes about and became less of an expository documentary done with interviews and archival footage.

The next thing I decided to do was cut any footage that discussed the history of the Vietnam War and the political decisions behind going into that war. It was not meant to be a film about the war itself, but rather the experience of the anti-war veterans. This meant that many of the juxtapositions I had previously used disappeared from the film. The fact that the audio was not of great quality during some of these segments certainly helped make my decisions quite easy.

I was left with a different film that was still about the same length as *Citizen Soldier*. When I showed it to my colleague, Deb Ellis, she pointed out that in the prelude I seemed to be giving away the meaning of whole film. I decided that she was right and eliminated it. I wanted this film to be about how activism can be used as a means of combating PTSD, so I needed to get to the sections where the veterans take action on

their own behalf. It was a film about resistance. The experience with Howard Zinn film had made me more aware that history is made by people who chose to be part of a historical struggle. This plot point, the point where the vets turn to resistance, occurred some 23 minutes into the film instead of 31 minutes into the film, getting the viewer to the main point earlier. The veterans' activism constituted the rest of the film and it was more clearly the main focus of the story.

The beginning of the new version of *Citizen Soldier* is about the veterans' are experiences and how this led to them becoming anti-war activists. Their experiences carried a great deal of credibility. While the beginning of the film is still interview-driven, it is much more experience-based, which is tied to the thoughts Dewey expressed in *Art and Experience*. The second section, now the focus of the film, uses footage of the veterans' activities during the last thirty-five years as a way of illustrating veterans standing up for their rights.

Citizen Soldier still had one very large problem; it had no ending. The original film never really had an ending either, so I decided to allow the ending to come from another situation I intended to film. I set the ending as the 2006 Veterans Day action in Chicago. I asked my friend Barry Romo, the former national coordinator of the VVAW, if I could put a wire on him for the event. I didn't realize that Barry and some of the older vets would not be speaking that day, but had instead passed the torch on, so to speak, to the Iraq Veterans against the War (IVAW). At first I was wondering what to do, but soon realized that this was my ending. When we got to the event, which was held in downtown Chicago right next to the Chicago River, Parrish was hosting the proceedings. We set our camera up, shot some cut-a-ways for editing purposes, and proceeded to videotape the

program. What happened next is a perfect example of how trusting a situation can allow the filmmaker to not just control events, but to be a part of a greater narrative that is happening in the historical world and bring that story to the text.

The podium was turned over to the IVAW and one of their members went on to speak about how he heard about the VVAW, what that meant to him, and how this knowledge inspired him to join the IVAW. The next speaker was a man I had been trying to contact for several weeks, Kyle Snyder. Snyder is an Iraq veteran who went off to fight the war in Iraq, but became a war resister after he saw how the people of Iraq were treated. This treatment by the United States military caused Snyder to go to Canada to seek asylum. He had been there for a year when he decided that he wanted to return to the United States. His attorney, Jim Finnerty, had thought Snyder had set up a deal with the army. Finnerty had bargained, and the army had agreed, to take it easy on Snyder if he would turn himself in. The army went back on its agreement and Snyder was at this celebration speaking out against the war while being considered to be AWOL. Snyder spoke about how he watched his fellow soldiers in Iraq shoot down people without regard for whether they were innocent of any crime. The soldiers did it because they could, Snyder explained. With his speech, my film had a real ending with substance and the title changed to *Soldiers of Peace*. The fact that these Vietnam veterans had seen so much, suffered so much from that awful war, is made worse by the continuing cycle of war, the inhumanity, and the stupidity of it all. Snyder's speech demonstrated that.

At the same event, VVAW member Bill Davis, who appeared earlier in the film, gave a short interview that discussed the historic mission of the VVAW. The main part of the film was done, but I still needed a prelude. My former prelude never really worked.

When my friend Deb Ellis explained that I was giving the whole meaning away right at the beginning of the film, I did not intend to give the whole meaning in the prelude, but the question was what could I do about it? I had previously toyed with the idea of using the song Gary Owen which is used in John Ford films and was the song of the Seventh Calvary; I began to reconsider that option as a way to deconstruct the song.

Clip of Song

My friend Warren Leming, a long-time musician, whom I have worked with for many years, agreed to put together a small band for a recording session. It would consist of a banjo player, a guitar player, and a violin player. My aim was to use the song Gary Owen in a different way and to give it a completely atypical meaning; after all, the VVAW had been very good at using symbols and icons and deconstructing their original meanings, The VVAW called themselves “Winter Soldiers,” marched from Lexington to Concord in protest of the Vietnam War, threw their medals away in a demonstration in Washington, and used army symbols as a way of deconstructing the patriotic symbols. As a result, the use of the song made intellectual sense to me. The musicians had recorded two different versions of the song. One version was in regular time, while the second was a slower version. I decided the slower version was much sadder and fit the mood I was trying to establish. It had a feeling of regret, which was exactly what I wanted.

I decided to start the prelude out with former UN Ambassador Adlai Stevenson making a speech at the UN about Vietnam, followed by a segment from President Johnson’s Gulf of Tonkin speech. I selected that speech because it was actually based on a lie. It is questionable whether the second incident in the Gulf of Tonkin had ever occurred and in the first incident the United States may have been seeking to provoke an incident by

drifting into North Vietnamese waters.⁶⁶ The speech was followed by images of the Vietnam War in all its horror. I wanted to drain all the romanticism out of the song, so I chose strong images of the war followed by footage of the VVAW in protest. Something was still missing, however, so I decided to include segments from the film.

I used some of the same stylistic elements that I had learned from de Antonio's films. It is a dialectical approach that puts forth a thesis, the audience's knowledge of the original song with the memories of all those early westerns, followed by an anti-thesis, which uses the slower version of the song along with images that we do not equate with the glory of war. The synthesis is the audience processing the new information and coming to their own conclusions. It is also a form of deconstructing the text. In this case, the text is the song. With the inclusion of the song, my new film was complete, or so I thought. However, some things came up in screenings that caused me to further explore the connection between the Vietnam and Iraq veterans.

The ideas that I have learned from the works John Dewey have convinced me that this experience is not yet complete. The introduction of the IVAW, as well as the audience responses to their being included in the new film, has been interesting. The similarities and the history of anti-war veterans' movements make it possible to construct obvious allegorical references, but in my mind it is the relationship between the two groups requires further inquiry. This relationship made it clear to me that the upcoming anniversary, with IVAW participation in the VVAW event, will give closure to my twenty-year chronicle of the VVAW. In August of 2007, I shoot the event and was very pleased with the result.

My idea of narrative construction has changed throughout the years. I started out without the knowledge of film theory. I used a very interactive approach originally, but drifted away from that later on, only to return to it again armed with a solid knowledge of theory. The argument between John Dewey and Walter Lippman over the nature of democracy is very important to me because it pertains to my ideas of narrative construction. I believe that for any piece of art to be authentic it must be rooted in the idea of shared experience. Lippman contended that policy could not be informed unless it is directed through scientific knowledge.⁶⁷ He felt that it was the job of elites to provide leadership. In documentary film narratives, I contend that this translates to the idea that narratives must be guided by an experienced professional who then seeks to create consensus around his or her point.

Dewey, on the other hand, sees a greater role for the public and an expanded role for the media, where “a genuine social science would manifest its reality in the daily press, while learned books and articles supply and polish tools of inquiry.”⁶⁸ For the filmmaker who believes in the idea of public involvement in the decision-making process, the question then becomes how to include the public in the development of the narratives and how to do it in a fundamental way, so that when it comes to telling about people’s experiences those stories are not interpreted by the filmmaker, or journalist, into some kind of oligarchic arrangement of their experiences, but rather are part of a narrative built through an organic process of shared experience. A look at narrative in this manner offers a glimpse into the full possibilities of actual “experience in its integrity.”⁶⁹ This integrity is closely tied to the belief that people maintain authorship of their own experiences.

Peace Has No Borders

Early on in my career, I decided that my films would be about the working class. I felt that the working class had been represented quite well in the union films of Barbara Koople, Julia Riechert, and Lorraine Grey. These filmmakers also brought women into the picture whose roles had been previously omitted from films about the union struggles during the 1930s. However, like the role of women in the union movement, I believed that the plight of veterans, and especially veterans who spoke out against militarism, had not been adequately examined in the public arena. If the public had been aware of veteran opposition to the war in Vietnam, and that the VVAW represented over 50,000 veterans during the war,⁷⁰ then the Swift Boat political attacks of the 2004 election would not have been quite so successful. Unfortunately, the public was not aware of this. The history concerning veterans treats them as a commodity to be used and discarded.

It was with this in mind that my colleague Deb Ellis and I stumbled upon our next film. I was surfing the internet last May when I came upon an event that caught my eye. It was a two-day protest in support of war resisters in Canada. I passed along the information to Deb with a recommendation that we go film this event. The event was called “Peace Has No Borders.” Deb agreed and came across a story that caught her attention that gave our trip a slightly different focus. When she sent the link to me, I knew that this might be our next film or at least part of it. The story revolved around a war resister, Patrick Hart, their son, Rian, and Patrick’s wife, Jill. We were both looking for something that would be different than our two previous films. Both of us wanted the mode of representation in our next film to be more observational in nature. The story was

multi-dimensional and spoke to the war but it was also a story about health insurance, family, love, and resistance.

I have included the whole proposal in its entirety below so that the reader can see how the development of narratives, and their objectives, can be seen as formulating right at the beginning of the process. The camera becomes a research tool. I see this as an extension of my other work with veterans' groups. I have made contacts throughout the years with this community and see veteran opposition to the war as a beleaguered community speaking out. In our appendix there of our new film, *Peace Has No Borders*, including the biographies of other people associated with the film as well. I include them to underscore the fact that it takes a group of people, forming a community in many ways, to make a film.

CONCLUSION

One of the things that I have tried to do with this dissertation is to increase the understanding of John Dewey's work and to expand on the notion that narratives in this documentary mode come out of community and experience. The films I looked at in the last section were films that were born out of an impulse to stand up for those who cannot speak for themselves. In *Harlan County*, Barbara Kopple stood with the miners as they were fired upon by thugs with guns and told their story. Audiences responded to her film with horror and shock at the idea that this could happen right here in the United States. Kartemquin Films had been looking around for a new film before they decided on *Golub*. The fact that Leon Golub was a political artist, and that the film would follow the painting process of Golub, was an important aspect regarding their decision to do the film. Eric Scholl, Cindi Moran and Peter Kuttner were filming short pieces for activist groups regarding police brutality before they settled on the Burge case for the focus of their film, *End of a Nightstick*. In *Life and Debt*, Stephanie Black's quest for knowledge led her to articulate the effects of globalization from the point of view of the farmers who had lost their livelihood because of the International Monetary Fund's trade policies.

In each case, the filmmaker's activism played an essential role in the decision-making process. The victims depicted in Golub's paintings, as well as the sufferers of police brutality, were a constituency that received little or no representation in the media. While there was debate reported on the support of the Contras, few newscasts centered on the victims of violence in Central America depicted in Golub's paintings while little was reported on United States' support of terrorist activities by the Contras. The same could be said of newscasts in Chicago about the subject of police brutality until a citizens'

group conducted demonstrations on the subject. The story of the miners of Harlan County was hardly the concern of the nightly newscasts. The effect of globalization regarding the human cost of the implementation of its policies in third-world countries is left off American newscasts.⁷¹ The traditional view of veterans never presents them as resisting the forces that sent them to war. It does not matter if all of this has happened or is happening; these communities lack representation and the ability to control their own images or the mythology constructed around their service.

The documentary film is one of the few outlets that can achieve a limited presentation of neglected viewpoints. John Dewey felt that art was far superior to journalism when it came to reporting the truth about events.⁷² Documentary's intimacy with its subjects is perceived by the audience as authentic. Its point of view is straightforward with no pretenses. The audience believes that this is an honest account of events from the perspective of its characters. It is believable because of the authenticity the experience carries and the situations the audience has in common with them. Bill Nichols writes of these relationships between the filmmaker, the subjects, and the audience by saying:

It suggests what kind of relationship the viewer is expected to have with the film by suggesting what kind of relationship we are expected to have with the filmmaker...To ask what we do with people when we make a documentary film involves asking what we do with filmmakers and viewers as well as with its subjects. Assumptions about the relationships that should exist among all three go a long way toward determining what

kind of documentary film or video results, and the effect it has on an audience.⁷³

To do this, the filmmaker must negotiate a position with their subjects to achieve the type of closeness necessary to present the experience. If this process is to be successful, the position must be built upon a fundamental belief in the possibilities of community, most importantly the community being established in the filmmaking process. This is the dialectic within the Deweyan concept of art. The interaction established by the subject and filmmaker is crucial. To be actually concerned about people's existence means finding out why things are happening, which requires the Deweyan film to surrender to the situation in which its characters find themselves involved and to create a film out of their collective experiences. All of this has its roots, as I have argued, in the premise of participatory democracy and in the organic element that comes with the fluidity of actual circumstances understood as experience in the Deweyan sense. This is what filmmaker's mean when they use the term "organic." The term is tied to the mutual respect established with the film's subjects and the knowledge gained from the process itself through engagement with the community.

Alfonso J. Damico, in writing about the social theories of John Dewey says, "In its richest meaning, community is always a matter of local, face-to-face relationships."⁷⁴ These face-to-face relationships come out of the process of discovery by the filmmaker. In the democratic narrative, the filmmaker emerges as part of the community they seek to represent. Kartemquin filmmaker, Jerry Blumenthal, stated that Dewey's thoughts on democracy and community and filmmaking as an instrument of social inquiry are at the

heart of their philosophy of filmmaking and engagement. Their influence in this area has been substantial.⁷⁵

This type of respect shown to the social actors is based on a belief that people can change things; it is people who set in motion the wheels of change, which break down the problems that citizens face in their lives. The relationship with the world and its possibilities is tied to the belief of filmmaker's, going back to the Russian filmmaker Dziga Vertov, that film has the ability to change the world. Filmmakers writing on the idea of representation always go back to the ethical questions regarding the relationship between filmmaker and subjects. In this dissertation, I have argued that how we forge our relationships while making our films is connected essentially to the principles of human experience and participatory democracy as expressed by John Dewey. If experience has the structure that Dewey claims, then documentary film should embody this same structure. It becomes essential that if documentary film is to serve the needs raised by the problematic character of experience, it must be created within a participatory democratic structure that allows the collective intelligence of a community to be an integral part of the construction of its narrative. At its core, participatory democracy says that citizens must be engaged in democracy; it is a belief in community and the experience created with social interaction. The idea of democracy, to Dewey, "is not an alternative to associated life. It is the idea of community life itself."⁷⁶ Dewey goes on to say that:

The highest and most difficult kind of inquiry and a subtle, delicate, vivid and responsible art of communication must take possession of the physical machinery of transmission and circulation and breath life into it...Democracy will come into its own, for democracy is a name for a life

of free and enriching communion...It will have its consummation when free social inquiry is indissolubly wedded to the art of full and moving communication.⁷⁷

My own work started off being very much influenced by the films of Emile de Antonio and Barbara Kopple. De Antonio's dialectical approach to manipulating images and sound in editing, along with his relentless search for the truth, remain very much a part of how I view film today. At first, I wanted my films to be like de Antonio's but, with the exception of *The FBI's War on Black America*, I never quite achieved that mix of dialectics and history. Instead, they became commentary films but recently have gone back to my early roots in participatory narratives. Emile de Antonio's work remains an influence in my filmmaking but his blend of modernism and politics is very difficult to achieve. However, his grounding in the idea of the dialectic being instrumental in the filmmaking process remains one of my chief concerns. My other main influence has been Barbara Kopple and Kartemquin Films. Their films seek a somewhat different type of dialectic than that of de Antonio. Their narratives arise out of a unique democratic experience with their subjects. What the de Antonio, Koppel and Kartemquin share in modes of inquiry is an honest attempt to understand the problems that reflect today's society without the use of roadmaps leading to predetermined conclusions, which are not based on the film's own organic inquiry. My view of film and the construction of narratives has changed over the years. I would like to describe how these notions of inquiry reflect the dialectical situations that occur in the world in Deb Ellis' and my latest film.

The IVAW

I went to Washington D.C. to film the Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW). The IVAW planned to re-enact the treatment that local Iraqis received in Baghdad at the hands of the occupying Americans. The veterans had recently been in Iraq doing this exact thing, so here they were representing themselves in their guerrilla theatre action. The aim of the IVAW was to bring the war home to the citizens of Washington, D.C. This was done with the intent to remind the Washington residents that this is what is happening over in Iraq. The IVAW model for this was the guerrilla theatre tactics employed by the VVAW during their protests against the war in Vietnam. The Iraq veterans were eager to illustrate to the citizens of the nation's capital just how their tax dollars are being used in Iraq.

Deb Ellis and I had met several of the IVAW in Buffalo and Toronto when we did our first shoot for *Peace Has No Borders*. They were there in support of the war resisters in Canada. We also had footage of their first press conference in 2004. So when we learned of their proposed action in Washington, coupled by the fact the veterans would be leading the march to the Pentagon, we became intrigued about the possibilities of filming this event for our project. I exchanged some e-mails and conversations and was invited to hang out with them at their camp on the Sunday, which would be a day before their action in Washington.

I went to their camp purely by chance, which was only twenty minutes from where I was staying. Upon arriving there, the veterans and I began to introduce ourselves to each other. I told them something about myself and a bit about the film we were making. I told them that we were a little unsure, at this point, of exactly where we were

going with the project but were committed to portraying them, not as victims, but as heroic men and women displaying the courage to speak out against the war. We wanted to show them as people standing up for what they believe. One of the vets, Aaron Hughes, was quite close to some of the VVAW people I knew in Chicago and said, “Joe and Barry love him and I trust them, so I trust him.” The point of all of us this is to illustrate that I was engaged in shaping what became the narrative of my film. This was a moment of inquiry based in the idea that there is a problem. The war is the problem. The treatment of veterans is a problem. The death they have just seen is the problem but they have decided their engagement as active citizens in a democracy is the solution to these problems. This engagement was a crucial moment for both of us. I was asking for permission from them to share in their lives and join their struggle.

The following day was very exciting. I followed the veterans from their camp to the train station, onto the subway trains, and out among the statues that decorate the front of Union Station where they decided to begin their action. The ride to the station was full of black humor and surrounded by the tension of the situation. These men and women had just been to war. They were about to embark on an action that took them back to the trauma center, which had so morally repulsed them in the first place that they became activists against the war. As they hit the streets, Washington residents looked on with bewilderment and support for their action. Many smiled as they walked by while some tried not to pay any attention. The day took us to the steps of the Capitol where Capitol police surrounded the vets, seemingly threatening arrest, but what happened next was not as it seemed to be. A colleague of mine and long-time Chicago filmmaker Tom Palazola once said to me that “documentaries need unguarded moments.” In a Deweyan sense they

need to be born out of experience. The bond that exists between the soldiers and the police, along with help from the attorneys of the Lawyers Guild, allowed this guerrilla action to continue. In fact, the parties involved were all smiles as they went on their collective way.

We asked questions of the veterans later on and videotaped a press conference where the veterans spoke about their opposition to the war. The day was exciting, and I was completely moved by the experience and how our film had been thrust into another dimension by our decision to film the event and become part of their action. The direction of our film is uncertain but the dialectic built into the action of veterans protesting has led to punitive action by the military towards the veterans. This is how the contradiction in a situation begins to reveal itself in a film. The dramatic protest by the IVAW in Washington so angered the Marines that they changed Adam Kokash's discharge status from "honorable" to less than honorable and threatened to do the same to Liam Madden despite the sacrifices Madden and Kokash made to their country. We later learned in a subsequent shoot how Kokash had challenged the military's decision. These veterans were not just anti-war veterans, but also included the influential and quite conservative Veterans of Foreign Wars organization. This is how dialectics enter into a film based upon experience. The obvious contradiction between the military's response toward the IVAW and their contention that United States is fighting to bring democracy to Iraq is apparent. Are veterans a commodity or individuals whose experience is important in understanding what has gone wrong in this shameful and illegal war? This incident has led us in a direction that we never envisioned. Our film is becoming a multi-character story about the idea of participating in a democracy and resistance. We have entered into

the second stage of inquiry, and we are beginning to react to what we see in the historical world as the situation reveals itself to us. Our aim, in this film, is to create a narrative following the steps of inquiry that Dewey has outlined in his ideas about the actions of a concerned citizen in a democracy. Since this is a work in progress, we cannot project—nor would we want to, because that would be imposing our own agenda—a path for the narrative of the film. What we do seek is a film based on our experience and the experience of the veterans who have chosen to stand up and be a part of the idea of democracy. We seek a truthful experience, which emanates from an art based in experience.

In many ways, this is the logical progression of Deb Ellis' and my work together. We had made a film about the FBI's response to the rise of the black power movement. Our next film was about the historian-activist Howard Zinn, who spoke about the possibilities of participatory actions of citizens in a democracy. We are now doing *Peace Has No Borders* devoted to the idea of direct democracy in action. Our style, as illustrated in our trailer, demonstrates a different type of engagement by us. I see our new film as a Deweyan film. The construction of the narrative will reflect our conscious decision to throw ourselves into this story and work with our characters in face-to-face relationships as they reflect upon their community of veterans, both new and old, and their associates. This is a film that consciously uses the ideas of art in experience expressed by John Dewey. It represents a new way of doing films for us and in a Deweyan sense, it ties theory to practice, a prominent concern for John Dewey. This has led to a new film, which I am now pleased with.

A New Film

I had started out thinking about doing a new film for this dissertation but decided to reflect upon a previous film, update it, and reshape it to coincide with the theoretical concerns of this study. Since I am a filmmaker, it presented a unique opportunity for self-reflection. I have only recently begun to learn about John Dewey's ideas on democracy and art, so this film was not guided by John Dewey's concepts of inquiry when it started, but it ended that way.

While *Soldiers of Peace* is a very nice update, it lacks something. I have had screenings and am aware of how it creates the sense of emotion with the audience, but it is not yet a complete experience. The ending suggested the connections between the IVAW and the VVAW but it was still not clear enough for me. The VVAW's upcoming 40th anniversary will complete the circle by making it a film based on experience. I filmed this event with the idea of bringing the characters the viewer has seen in interviews, done ten years ago, back to the present. I am well aware of the connections implied at the end of the film that ends with the IVAW. These connections with the IVAW are there and part of both the VVAW's and my overall experience, but the film cries to go back and follow our collective experience to completion.

I have followed the VVAW for over twenty years and these people have become a very important part of my life. It is important that we film this event, which will solidify the connections with the IVAW, allow the film to have a self-reflexivity expressed by its characters and honor the bonds between soldiers expressing the ideas of peace. As a filmmaker, I have chosen to make films about soldiers, activists, and racial injustice. In each case, I have tried to get closer to my characters, in a representational

sense, while coming to the realization that, in the Deweyan sense of art in experience, this is not the point. The question really is whether this is a “real” experience. Truth is an elusive subject, its definitions are constantly shifting, but experience is not. Experience is human activity in the constantly shifting world. I believe that using my own films as models will be a beneficial method of inquiry for scholars, filmmakers, and students because it gives each of them the opportunity to tie the idea of theory to practice. In doing this, I have been very glad to join a long tradition of documentary filmmakers who have shared their experience for the benefit of others. This was my aim with this project and will continue to be my goal in future works of my scholarship as well.

I have tried to illustrate how the process of filmmaking in this Deweyan mode is tied to the theories of participatory democracy, community, and experience. I would also add that these thoughts are crucial in achieving the type of authenticity that documentaries need in the eyes of the audience. The relationships that are constructed in the moment of inquiry have a great deal to do with what the text will become when completed. The film’s communication with the audience is established by the filmmaker during the process of filmmaking and continues through the post-production stage and becomes the film’s interaction with the audience. The film’s authenticity is derived from the honesty the audience perceives from the filmmaking process and the triangle of communication between the film, the text, and the audience.

The process of communication is the essence of democracy because it comes out of a community experience. Dewey’s work allows us to understand the narrative process of documentary film and its relationship to democracy and community. The intent of the film is part of the process of communication, and in the type of films I speak to, it is an

attempt to build community through an artistic experience. I will close with a quote from John Dewey. It stands as an example of the kind of art I urge all artists to make:

Communication is uniquely instrumental and uniquely final. It is instrumental as liberating us from the otherwise overwhelming pressure of events and enabling us to live in a world of things that have meaning. It is final as a sharing in the objects and arts precious to a community, a sharing whereby meanings are enhanced, deepened and solidified in the sense of communion... They are worthy as means, because they are the only means that make life rich and varied in meanings. They are worthy as ends, because in such ends man is lifted from his immediate isolation and shares in a communion of meanings... When the instrumental and final functions of communication live together in experience, there exists an intelligence which is the method and reward of common life, and a society worthy to command affection, admiration and loyalty.⁷⁸

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APPENDIX

Statement of Objective

Peace Has No Borders (working title) is a feature documentary film that will follow the Hart family as they rebuild their lives in exile in Toronto, Canada. After serving nine years in the Army, Patrick Hart's discomfort with the Iraq war and a gnawing concern about how to provide for his family's health care needs led him to go AWOL in the summer of 2005, leaving family and country behind. Funding, at this stage of development, will be used to support research, develop a creative approach to the subject, and create a fundraising trailer and Web site that will serve as a focal point for fundraising and distribution. The funding is being requested for the pre-production stages of the project.

Narrative

After nine years as a noncommissioned officer, Patrick Hart went AWOL in August 2005. Leaving his country after so many years spent serving in good faith was not an easy decision. Between 1965 and 1973 more than 100,000 Americans made their way to Canada, refusing participation in the Vietnam War. Thirty years later, soldiers opposed to the current war in Iraq are faced with a similar choice—to stay in the military and fight a war they feel is unjust, immoral, and illegal, or to resist by going to Canada or jail.

Typically, young people join the military believing eager recruiters who make promises of career opportunities, a college education, health care and bonuses. Too often, these same people leave the service disillusioned and struggling with PTSD and other health problems. *Peace Has No Borders* will shed light on how some veterans have chosen to fight back.

Patrick Hart grew up in the working-class section of Riverside, New York. After graduating from high school in 1991, he worked a series of dead-end jobs before enlisting in the military in 1992. The Army gave him a sense of purpose. “I was so proud and motivated to be part of something bigger,” Hart said. When he returned home three years later, he thought his honorable discharge would help him land a factory job at Powertrain or Dunlop Tire, but instead found himself bouncing from one low-paying job to another, caught in the crosshairs of the deindustrialization of the rust belt.

Hart married his girlfriend of five years, Jill, in 2000, and re-enlisted later that year. The couple spent the next four years assigned to Fort Riley, Kansas. Jill worked as an assistant to the base commander. In 2002, their son Rian was born. At the outbreak of the war in Iraq, Hart was flown to the Kuwaiti desert where he served as a supply sergeant for the troops in Iraq. Hart did not understand why the United States was waging war in Iraq. “I was fully ready and prepared to go to Afghanistan,” he said of the Taliban-led country that shielded Osama bin Laden. “I didn’t see the correlation with Iraq.”

Hart’s disillusionment grew as he heard stories from friends returning from Iraq. They showed him grisly photographs and made disturbing remarks about what they had seen and done. Hart remembers, “One of my buddies is telling me that he has a six-year-old daughter, but now he sees the faces of these Iraqi kids that he’s run over every night before he goes to bed.”

While in Kuwait, Hart learned his son was suffering seizures. In 2003, Rian was diagnosed with epilepsy. Despite his growing reservations about the war, Hart re-enlisted in 2004, primarily to maintain health care coverage for his son. He was afraid that if he

left the Army, it would be impossible to afford health insurance because of Rian's pre-existing condition.

Back in the States after his Kuwait assignment, Hart found himself in line for redeployment, this time to Iraq. He watched his friends' behavior change as they became affected by PTSD, and he knew he did not want to bring that terror of war into his home and to the son he loved so much. Hart feared what would happen if he went to Iraq, and as deployment there became imminent, he began to consider options. "There was no way I could get out of the Army and get immediate health care coverage for my son. The only other option I could think of was coming to Canada."

Hart contacted the War Resisters Support Campaign in Toronto. On leave one weekend, he went to Buffalo for a Bills' football game and made the decision to cross the border. The War Resisters Support Campaign helped Hart apply for asylum in Canada, making him eligible for a work permit and health care immediately. His parents, Jim and Paula Hart, offered unconditional support to their son. But when Hart called his wife and told her where he was, she was furious.

Jill was working helping families prepare for deployment. Hart had not told her about his growing unease and emerging plans because he suspected she would turn him in. He was right. When he called her she said, "I love you more than anything in the world, but you're breaking the law." As Jill explained later, "The way I was raised, you don't break the law. I gave 150% to that unit. I was the biggest flag-waving spouse you could ever see."

Jill's allegiance to the army quickly crumbled when the base commander threatened the family's health care coverage saying, "I hope Rian doesn't have another

seizure.” Then the commander suggested that Jill try to trick Hart into returning by telling him she had been so violently sexually assaulted that he would have to come back to claim custody of his son. At this point, Jill decided to join her husband in Canada and says, “When the commander said those things to me, everything flashed. I’ve bought into all this propaganda for nothing. They don’t care about me, they don’t care about any of these families; they only care about the one who pulls the trigger.” Jill decided to give it one month. It has been now been over a year since she and Rian joined Pat in Toronto. *Peace Has No Borders* will explore the complexities faced by young people who join the volunteer services today. Seeking economic security, educational and career benefits, and health insurance coverage, they often have no opportunity to question the conditions of their service once they enlist. Then, when the army is ready to terminate their “volunteer” status, they often find themselves caught in a web of obligation and debt. Sent to war for multiple tours, faced with unemployment, psychological problems, and lack of health care after their service, many choose to re-enlist. Others resist. This is a story of the bravery of one family that has chosen to resist war.

Peace Has No Border is in pre-production. We have identified our primary story. Now, we need pre-production research time in Toronto to develop our approach. We need to spend time with the Harts and their support network to find the structure of the film. Our current goal is to spend three four-day visits over a period of four months. A development grant from Independent Television Service will allow us to conduct extensive primary research with the camera as an instrument of social inquiry, leading to discovery of the voice of this documentary. Our intent is to use a combination of observational documentary and interview material to weave a story of strength and choice

in the face of war. The backdrop of the project will include resister organizations including Veterans for Peace, Iraq Veterans Against the War in the United States, and the War Resisters Support Campaign in Canada. The War Resisters Support organizations function as a modern-day Underground Railroad that supported veterans who no longer support the war. We will spend time with these groups to provide a context for our individual family story.

We also intend to develop a trailer during this pre-production phase. The trailer will be used to work out a visual example of our evolving approach to the subject and will be used to support our on-going fundraising efforts. We see *Peace Has No Borders* as being intricately connected to veteran-affiliated support groups that seek justice for the military families. To help facilitate this, we intend to create a Web site that will serve as a focus for our fundraising and as a portal to information about veterans and resistance.

To date, we have conducted two shoots in the Buffalo/Toronto area. The first shoot covered a bi-national three-day event designed to acknowledge and celebrate war resisters on both sides of the Canadian-U.S. border. At this event, we first made contact with our primary subjects, their friends, and family and were introduced to a number of national members of the current war resistance movement. The second shoot covered Patrick and Jill's first amnesty at the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada. Patrick and Jill's story continues to develop as the reality of their decision begins to sink in. We will follow their story over the upcoming two years, following the choices they make in the wake of their initial move to Canada.

Co-Producer/Director Bios/Filmography

Deb Ellis, Co-Producer/Director, is an award-winning documentary filmmaker and educator with over 20 years experience. Ellis' most recent documentary (co-produced with Denis Mueller), *Howard Zinn: You Can't Be Neutral on a Moving Train*, was short-listed with twelve films from which the 2005 Academy Award nominees were chosen. The film was released theatrically in late 2004 and is now available on DVD, distributed by First Run Films. Earlier work includes *Skin Deep*, an examination of the development and promotion of the subdermal contraceptive, Norplant; *The FBI's War on Black America*, an examination of targets of Cointelpro, an FBI program instituted in the 1960s with a mandate to "prevent the rise of a Black Messiah"; *Unbidden Voices*, about the immigrant experience of an Indian woman working in Chicago; and *Doris Eddy*, an intimate portrait of a Vermont woman who lived alone on her farm with 50 horses.

As an independent producer, Ellis works with clients including individual artists, education and arts organizations, and local nonprofit organizations. She continues her active participation in the independent community in Vermont, serving on the board of the Vermont International Film Festival and as an independent producer.

Denis Mueller, Co-Producer/Director, has produced many documentaries. His documentary, produced and directed with Deb Ellis, *The FBI's War on Black America*, became a favorite of the black community and has been shown on WNEW in New York and KQED in San Francisco. It won the award for Best Documentary at the Athens Ohio Independent Film festival. Many of his film, including *John Edgar Hoover and the Great American Inquisitions* are distributed by MPI Home Video. He has produced several programs on the plight of veterans returning from the Vietnam War, including *I Would*

Never Do That Again, which was shown on Chicago PBS station WTTW. His most successful film, *Howard Zinn: You Can't be Neutral on a Moving Train*, produced and directed with Deb Ellis, was released nationally by First Run Features. It was critically acclaimed, appeared on the Sundance Channel and has played at and won awards at festivals around the world. Mueller is currently finishing his Ph.D. at Bowling Green State University in American Cultural Studies.

Additional Key Personnel

We are currently in conversation with additional key personnel. We look forward to working with our previous collaborators, including:

Cyndi Moran, On-Line Editor/Project Advisor, is a Chicago-based documentary filmmaker with 15 years experience as a professional editor of commercials, television shows, documentaries, and high-definition television. Her documentary (with co-producers Eric Scholl and Peter Kuttner) *The End of the Nightstick* aired on PBS's acclaimed independent showcase *P.O.V.* Her films and videos have won numerous awards and have been screened in festivals across the country and internationally. She is also a frequent contributor to the Emmy-award winning Chicago arts program, *Artbeat*. Other credits include series editor for three-time Emmy award-winning *Ben Loves Chicago*, and finished work on the Sundance-awarded, *The Return of Navajo Boy*.

Richard Martinez, Music Composition, credits include music for *Bossa Nova* and score for *The Daytrippers*. Other credits include music for recordings by Dave Valentin, B, S & T and Al MacDowell as well as music for all major networks and cable. He is presently producing music for *Nero Wolfe* on A&E and *For The People*, on

Lifetime. He has served as music producer for film score composers Elliot Goldenthal, Michael Small, and Wendy Blackstone. His films include: *Frida*, *In Dreams*, *Batman & Robin*, *Heat*, *Interview with a Vampire*, *Batman Forever*, *Michael Collins*, *A Time to Kill*, *Alien 3*, and *Drug Store Cowboy*, to name a few.

Alex Lisman, B.A., B.F.A., Intrinsic Audiovisual Productions. A

professionally- trained camera technician with experience on major U.S. television series and feature films, and an independent filmmaker, Alex's most recent short film, *Let Them Stay: Voices of U.S. War Resisters in Canada*, is featured on the National Film Board of Canada's CitizenShift Web site and will be broadcast to over 25 million homes in the United States through Free Speech TV, a public satellite channel.

Project Advisors

Lee Zaslofsky is the coordinator of the war resisters support campaign in Toronto. Mr. Zaslofsky was a war resister who settled in Canada during the Vietnam War. He has been involved with Canadian and union politics during his thirty years in Canada. He provides housing, contacts for attorneys, and other assistance for resisters coming to Canada.

Bruce Beyer is the coordinator of Peace Has No Borders and works with the war resisters group in Canada. Beyer is a long-time activist who provides help and counseling for resisters who want to go to Canada. In June of 2006, the group Peace Has No Borders carried on two days of activity on both sides of the border to draw awareness to the issue.

Howard Zinn is the long-time activist/author whose book, *A People's History of the United States*, has sold over one million copies. Zinn has been a participant in social movements for over nearly seventy years. He is a critic of United States militarism and

the subject of Denis Mueller and Deb Ellis' documentary, *Howard Zinn: You Can't Be Neutral on a Moving Train*, which is based on his autobiography.

Army Colonel Mary Ann Wright resigned her post on March 19, 2003, just two days after the invasion of Iraq. After 29 years of service to America, she decided she disagreed with the administration's policies too much to serve in the military. She supports the resisters and views them as people with courage and integrity.

Distribution and Marketing

Peace Has No Borders is a story of bravery, love, commitment, and choices. We anticipate an audience interested in the most important issues in our current cultural landscape: economy, health care, and Veterans' issues.

We have the support of key veterans' organizations, including Veterans for Peace, Vietnam Veterans against the War, and Iraq Veterans against the War, among others. These organizations will work with us to support our fundraising and distribution by offering access to their membership through e-mail and web presence. Their involvement helps us develop a broad grassroots constituency early in the project that will be key when we are ready for distribution. Other organizations we are in touch with include the National Lawyers Guild, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, and the American Friends Association. These grassroots constituencies will be the base support for our outreach efforts. If we can build interest early in the process, we will be one step ahead when we are ready to reach our audience.

We intend to seek co-production funding through participation at The Independent Film Projects pitch sessions or at either Toronto Hot-Docs. This strategy

was very successful with our last project, and we intend to use these contacts to expand our reach.

Our intent is to align the broadcast date and release of a DVD version to coincide with initiatives in collaboration with our partnering organizations. Based on our experience with our last project, *Howard Zinn: You Can't Be Neutral on a Moving Train*, we hope to work with a distributor who has the resources and connections to expand the reach of the project. First Run Features, the distributor for the Zinn film, has expressed interest in our current project, and has provided a letter of recommendation.

We are aware of one existing project that deals directly with a similar subject. *Breaking Ranks*, a Canadian documentary, examines the phenomena of U.S. soldiers seeking refuge in Canada through biographic portraits of five veterans currently in Canada. The documentary aired on CBC in November 2006. Subjects include several of the people we have come to know through our research. It does not cover Patrick and Jill, nor does the film spend the length of time with veterans' families that we intend to spend.

We do not believe there is a conflict between our film and *Breaking Ranks*. What makes our film unique is that we do not present the subjects as victims, but rather as people who have made difficult decisions and are now facing their lives positively, resisting through standing up. The complexities thrust upon veterans are often left out of the mainstream media. The combination of health care issues in this particular case makes our story particularly poignant. We feel this story will resonate for our audience.

