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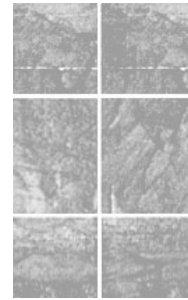
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Archive video footage in news: creating a likeness and index of the phenomenal world



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ABSTRACT

This article examines the use of archive footage in television news bulletins. Due to economic pressures and technological changes in the newsroom, there has been a general increase in the use of such secondary sources in news: press releases, public relations material, photographs from image banks and archive news footage. Looking at the contents of one film archive and several news items that use such material, we consider the implications of such footage for the nature of news as bearing witness. We also ask how viewers may interpret this footage. Do they see it as actuality or as indicative? Existing models of visual communication suggest two possibilities: that viewers will understand the footage in terms of the way it is anchored by language (Barthes) or that visual communication, like language, is made up of signs that form a grammar (Kress and Van Leeuwen), allowing viewers to 'read' the nature of what is communicated, such as whether it claims to be a true representation. We reject both views. Images can communicate without language, but there are important differences between images which form simple signs systems, and language which forms complex sign systems. Signs in simple semiotic systems are closer to the phenomenal world (Halliday, 1985) and closer therefore to the real world of our experiences. They powerfully index discourses within which the linguistic accompaniment can be contained. Thus, viewers are able to see archive footage as a sufficient likeness of the world through its ability to index the phenomenal world, and through the compelling nature of established news frames.

KEY WORDS

documentary • multimodality • new media technologies • news • television • video footage

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INTRODUCTION

You are watching a television news bulletin. There is an item on the possibility of future conflict for your government involving industrial action due to recent proposals for the use of private funding in a state-run system. Footage is shown of rioters struggling with riot police, although the images have been cropped so that faces are not seen. The images are slightly pixellated. In fact this footage was not filmed for the report but was taken, at low cost, from a film archive. Of course the conflict could not have been filmed as it had not yet happened. But this use of archive footage is now very common in news reporting.

The next item is on the conflict in the Middle East between Palestine and Israel. Footage is shown of mourners carrying a coffin, angry shouting women in close up. This is followed by a scene of men parading past the camera wearing ski masks, carrying flags, although the detail of these cannot really be made out. The clips are shown with added colours which saturate out much of the detail. Again this footage has not been filmed for the report and has been taken from a film archive. Any similar footage could have been used as it was meant to indicate generic terrorists rather than particular people acting in a specific place or moment in time. This is typical of such archive footage, which is widespread in today's newsmaking. It is used to make reports visually more appealing and entertaining and also because it is cheap and easy to access. A single editor can easily choose material from a commercial footage archive to create a bulletin or a report.

Of course, this isn't what we would expect from news, which should document actual events. Machin (2004) expressed concerns about the similar use of photographs in news and magazines that come from global commercial image banks. He argued that this is part of a move away from the use of the photograph as evidence, as witness, to the symbolic use of the photograph. So, rather than being used as records of say poverty, or a record of a particular instance of suffering, generic stock photographs are used to symbolize these things. For example, a close-up of the dirty face of a child might symbolize the chaos caused by war.

The result of this, Machin suggests (2004), is that we move into a realm where photographs *connote* rather than *denote*. These stock photographs, bought cheaply from image banks, provide us with a set of clichés which themselves become iconic of the things they would, in a former time, have recorded and bore witness to. The world in these images comes to resemble the limited world of the image banks, which is an ideologically pre-structured world, a world based on corporate capitalism and consumerism. Most importantly, these images are part of a move away from journalism as a checking of facts and of investigating issues, to a journalism of editing and processing, in which style, layout and marketing are central. This is part of a process whereby news media are becoming more and more reliant on secondary sources such as official press releases, public relations material and

other pre-packaged information (Bennett, 2005; Rampton and Stauber, 2000).

The video archive footage that we analyse in this article can be thought of in a similar fashion. But it is important to go a step further and ask how it is that such footage is able to symbolize, to connote, in this way. How is it that viewers are able to see disembodied footage of people as a riot? Why do they not immediately ask 'Where exactly is this taking place?', or 'Who precisely are these people?' We argue that this can happen in news for three reasons that we examine more closely throughout the article.

1. Viewers have been trained to see the world in news through established news frames (Allan, 1999; Galtung and Ruge, 1965; Hartley, 1982). They encounter these frames visually through memorable 'mediagenic' moments rather than complex socio-political processes. And they are trained to receive these in terms of the *reality of news*.
2. The history of film editing has established a different convention for documenting as compared to film fiction. In the latter, cuts must be evidence of the narrative. In the former, they need not be consistent but add up to an argument about the historical.
3. There are some important differences between images which form simple sign systems (Halliday, 1985) and language which forms complex sign systems. Signs in simple semiotic systems, Halliday suggests, are closer to the phenomenal world and to the real world of our experiences. Thus, we cannot assume that viewers will read their elements as a grammar which will connote the symbolic. Rather they will read them as a whole so that they index actual or symbolic events, places and moments.

Therefore, the visual in news has a powerful ability to index the real world 'out there', and, in turn, to restrict or even override the accompanying linguistic message.

DATA

The two data extracts discussed in some detail in this article have been selected from among 30 video news clips which use archive footage. The sample comes from 23 *Newsnight* (BBC2) and 7 *Channel 4 News* programmes videotaped between 8 May–15 June 2001 and 24 May–6 June 2001, respectively. The two examples analysed here come from *Channel 4 News*. The extracts have been transcribed in their audio and visual tracks.

CHANGING NEWS STANDARDS

There is now a large literature arguing that standards of journalism and news have fallen over the past 20 or so years. This explains the increased reliance

on archive material. There are two changes that lie behind this that concern us here.

First, there has been increasing commercial competition between news media (Bourdieu, 1998; Hallin, 1996), introduced in the UK by regulatory changes in the 1990 Broadcasting Act, which led to waves of redundancies in broadcast news. As a result, much smaller news teams have less time and financial resources to gather their own material. There has been a corresponding growth in press offices and public relations departments which now feed reporters and news rooms with prepackaged material. There has also been a similar growth in news agencies which operate to repackage and recycle news which they then sell on (Machin and Niblock, 2006).

Second is the arrival of new digital technologies in the newsroom that only require a small number of staff. In these times of downsizing, the journalists who remained were forced to become multiskilled and technically competent in fast editing (Ursell, 2001). Garcia Aviles et al. (2004: 87) demonstrated that journalists in both Spain and the UK were concerned with the demise of traditional reporting values in the speeded-up digital newsroom leading them to become 'mouse-monkeys'.

Bromley (1997) and Parker (1995) described the consequences of the move to new technologies in terms of changes in journalism where new recruits were primarily being trained in digital editing, and in script writing, rather than traditional core investigative techniques which centred on producing well-substantiated news. Much of the daily news, for example, that we hear on our radios, no matter what the station, will come from perhaps one electronic newsroom, spliced together from news feeds and archive material by at most two newsroom editors. This will then be syndicated out, free to users, supported by advertisers (Machin and Niblock, 2006).

Ekström (2000) argues that digital facilities in the newsroom have led to a television of 'attractions'. His point is that the use of the new technologies themselves can lead to digital theatrics. This is where news reports move away from investigation and documentation to the elaborate use of graphics, maps, tables and reconstructions. The archive footage we consider in this article can certainly be seen as part of the process of the move towards a dependence on secondary sources and can also, to some degree, be thought of as part of this process of digital theatrics produced by journalists-as-editors.

A FILM ARCHIVE: THE EXAMPLE OF ITN

The examples of archive footage we analyse in this article come from the ITN archive, which provides footage for all of the British commercial terrestrial news channels, along with sounds, for all commercial radio. It is one of the biggest commercial archives in the world. It has over 600,000 hours of film footage and offices in London, New York, Los Angeles, Johannesburg, Tokyo

and Paris, and its footage is accessed around the world. The ITN archive is just one example of many large archives, such as CNN and ABC, that provide stock footage for television and television news in many different countries.

In the ITN brochure they claim: 'Many of the world's prominent producers, broadcasters, corporations, new media ventures and film makers have used the ITN Archive to find exactly the right footage, shot or clip for their project.'

News and feature footage in the archive comes from ITN news, Reuters, Granada Television, Fox News and Channel Four, and others. It also licenses use of material from archives such as *Images of War* which contains hundreds of hours of 'premium' war footage, and, for more improvised-looking footage, *Sam Silver Films* which is an archive of amateur material. The commercial development of the ITN archive can be seen as one response to the weakening of ITN after the 1990 Broadcasting Act. New competition from the BBC and Sky meant that there was urgent need to build new outputs. It managed to outbid competitors for some news provision, but this meant finding more cost efficient ways of producing news, with more emphasis on smaller newsroom teams (Ursell, 2001).

At the time of writing, ITN was owned by a single company, ITV plc, the company formed by the merger of Carlton Communications and Granada plc, thereby placing one company in control of a huge slice of commercial television in the UK.

When a news editor is creating a television news bulletin one important factor influencing whether an event will become news is whether or not there is video footage to show (Hartley, 1982), which might include an event, a setting, or an interview. Footage archives mean that there is generally less problem with having access to such visuals. Additionally, electronic accessibility means that stock footage can be quickly searched and selected allowing reports to have visuals where none might be otherwise available. For example, a government report on the occupation of Palestine can be presented using stock footage of previous film of conflict in the area. Importantly, as with the images from the image banks (Machin, 2004), this footage is cheap. To send out a camera, lighting and reporter to a location is very expensive and time consuming.

The ITN archive can be searched under the following categories:

Accidents & Disasters

Arts, Entertainment & Media

Conflict

Crime & Punishment

Culture and Beliefs

History and Politics

Industry & Commerce

Life and Death

Lifestyle

The Natural World

People & Places

Science & Technology

Sport & Leisure

Transport

Each of these gives a further range of options, sometimes offering specific events and stock type events. Under the category of *Crime & Punishment*, for example, we have:

Anonymous Crime

Courts and Trials

Hooligan

September 11th

Hijack

Myra Hindley

Immediately, the ideological nature of the way that this material is classified becomes apparent. Hijacks and September 11th come under 'Crime', alongside a convicted serial killer, Myra Hindley, and Courts and Trials. In this section there is nothing on, say, the US occupation of Iraq, its feeding of arms into the Middle East and Africa, its support of Israel in developing nuclear weapons while denying the same to all surrounding countries. There is nothing on the British government's occupation of Northern Ireland, of the activities of the World Trade Organisation.

We might think about the contents of this archive as being highly ideological. This is certainly the case. But we must not assume that the archive itself is therefore constructed for political reasons. As has been mentioned above, sociologists of news (Bennett, 2005; Galtung and Ruge, 1965; Hall, 1983; Hartley, 1982) speak of the way that one criterion as to whether an event becomes news is whether or not it fits with an existing news frame. Such frames are established, widely trodden, themes that viewers will immediately recognize. These footage collections are designed with established news frames in mind.

Another way to think about these news frames could be as established discourses (Fairclough, 2001; Foucault, 1972). Here we mean discourses as

socially shared knowledges about the world and how it works. For example, in western society we currently hear much of official discourses of terrorism and 'enemies of freedom'. In this discourse, terrorists are fanatics and enemies of freedom. This discourse does not contain the reasons that motivate such people, for example, that their village and economy have been destroyed and family killed by the actions of a western government. When events in the world are chosen as news, they must to some degree fit with such existing accepted discourses or news frames such as terrorism. So, we can think of the archive as providing visual realizations of particular established discourses. The owners of the archive might argue that rather than being political, they are supplying what customers require.

But crucially the contents of the archive must be easily useable. This means that details of actual contexts and people must be reduced. Here is a description of the footage that is filed under 'Anonymous Crime':

A collection of generic pictures where people and places cannot be easily identified intended for use in crime stories. Shots have been selected which make recognition of individuals difficult and in most cases impossible. The collection includes anonymous shots of police officers on patrol, [including the RUC] stations and incident rooms, drug preparation and taking, dealing, busts and hauls, prostitutes, burglary, neighbourhood watch, property marking and dusting for prints, prison cells, corridors, officers and prisoners.

CNN, the leading archive footage supplier in the US, describes its collection in the same way, claiming to have film 'ranging from actual news events to generic b-roll of "people, places and things"' [<http://www.orgs.ttu.edu/CNNworldreport/video.htm>].

Such material therefore is designed to be used generically, for example in any news item that deals with say prostitution or drug dealing. In each film, the precise nature of the footage is described as follows, giving detail of camera angles and distances:

London: EXT GV police car pulling out from garage & along street / INT CAR SIDE LA MS police officer driving patrol car / CBV officers in front of patrol car as speeding through street / EXT BV police officer away down passage into building TRACK FORWARD / GV police patrol car along / INT BV police man & woman away through door in garage / INT CAR CBV police officers in patrol car as speeding down street / EXT LA MS pair of police officers' legs towards as on beat (GOOD GRAB) /

These kinds of film clips may be used many times to provide visuals to a range of items. This footage, therefore, can be used to symbolize 'a typical arrest', 'a typical prostitute', and so on. But these clips index a particular discourse of crime, that will be recognizable as such by viewers. This world of

crime, as many sociologists of journalism have argued, is not one that includes corporate crime, political crime or the accepted injustices of society (Bennett, 2005; Fishman, 1980; McChesney, 2004).

Machin (2004: 327) describes the photographic archive of Getty Images as containing images that have broad *meaning potential*. Drawing on Halliday (1978), he argues that images have a set of possible meanings which can be actualized in context. Therefore, footage is more valuable for archiving when it provides a connotative meaning potential, when it can be used to connote 'crime' or 'prisons' in general. Simply put, when footage is multipurpose. But in this case, it seems that the footage, and possibly the images described by Machin (2004), are designed to index specific discourses. Their meaning potential is therefore highly restricted.

ANALYSIS OF NEWS ITEMS

In Extract 1, we use a segment of a news broadcast from Channel 4. It is a news item reporting on what the New Labour Party plans for the National Health Service if re-elected.

Extract 1 Labour's new NHS policy (Channel 4 News, 24 May 2001)

Video	Audio
<p>Black background with red grid on it. To centre left is a red square with rounded corners. Below this are the words 'Public Promise'.</p>	
<p>Fade to OTS [over the shoulder] of lab technician, to right of screen facing slightly right, who is working. Grid can still be seen superimposed overframe, stronger at edges.</p>	<p>Noise of heart-rate monitor beeping over all archive footage. VO [voice over]: Labour was trying to put Tory NHS policy under the scanner . . .</p>
<p>Fade to view of hospital seen over sign 'X-ray Dept' at bottom of screen. Rounded square [about one-third of screen] flashes on screen. It contains different view of building. Again grid remains seen.</p>	
<p>Fade to OTS of woman technician working at right of screen facing slightly left. Grid remains. Square flashes onto frame with B&W hospital machinery in it. It is hard to make out details.</p>	<p>. . . claiming that a Conservative government would mean patients paying thousands for their . . .</p>

Fade to CS [close shot] of drip, panning down, blurred background. Square appears with same drip in it in B&W.	. . . operations. And Tony Blair was repeating Labour's tried and . . .
Fade to MLS [medium long shot] of porter pushing wheelchair containing woman, from left to centre frame. Square appears with B&W X-ray of human body.	. . . tested 'You can only trust Labour with the public services.'
Cut to head and shoulders of Tony Blair in front of brightly lit background.	[noise of heart-rate monitor stops] Tony Blair speaks: 'And in the end that's the choice the country's got to make and our choice is to carry on with the investment. Their choice is to cut it back. That is the election in a nutshell.'
Cut to MLS of panel with Tony Blair and three other Labour MPs. In front of stage journalists raise hands and one is pointed at by Blair.	VO: But Labour has sown confusion with its new emphasis on how . . .
Fade to CS of head and shoulders of two male nurses, facing left speaking on telephones. Square appears containing X-ray of skull and neck from right side.	[noise of heart-rate monitor starts] . . . the private sector might transform the NHS. Government advisors talk about the private . . .
Fade to CS of heart-rate monitoring machine.	. . . sector throwing a life line to public services. But . . .
Fade to low shot of hospital corridor. Four people walk towards the frame. The two at the sides can only be seen from chest down. Square appears showing X-ray of two full bodies next to each other.	. . . there is puzzlement and some anger at the heart of the Labour movement.

Analysis of Extract 1

The main part of the footage used in this item is typical of that taken from archives. Here is an example of some of the clips on hospitals held by ITN as they describe them:

Nurses with paperwork

Bed being made

Consultant examining patient

Male nurses dispensing drugs in ward

Nurse writing out prescription

The verbal part of the report comes from the New Labour press release. This is summarized to provide the text on the screen, but there is no additional investigation into the claims made by New Labour from the news programme. The item as a whole suggests that New Labour may increase private investment into the NHS. There is speculation that this might generate responses by the 'Labour movement'. To say exactly how we think the footage here works, we need to show what the news item does not cover, or what we believe is in fact the real situation with regard to this issue.

Since the 1990s there has been increasing private involvement in British health care, particularly the move to a commercial model of health care for consumers, along with severe constraints on public service spending (Prior, 1996). Since this time there has been massive outsourcing of services, sliced-up budget systems, market systems of accountability and increase in government by appointment (Daly, 1996). During the 1990s, local authority representation was removed from health authorities (Davis and Stewart, 1993). These writers describe a health service run by private management groups distanced from elected government whose policies will always be filtered out. Flinders (1999) argues that by the late 1990s the British health service had become a semi-private organization.

Yet in the news item, there is no analysis of what the effect has been of these changes, to the costs or the results in service. Most importantly the item fails to address who in fact now makes decisions on the way that the health service is run. In this case, the reliance on official sources means that there is no investigation.

Deacon (2004) warns that journalists are organized to focus on a system of political control that no longer exists. Public services in Britain, he comments, are now governed by private organizations, quasi-government, health trusts, advisory boards, and other committees. But these do not register on the traditional journalistic radar. In fact, as Deacon (2004) states: 'even experienced journalists struggle to cope with the complex and evolving structure of quasi-government in the UK' (p. 339).

We can see therefore that our news item is interpreted through a political model that belongs in a previous era. The voiceover tells us that 'the Labour movement' are 'puzzled' and 'angry'. Yet this movement no longer exists and speaks of a former time when the British political parties represented significant ideological differences. The linguistic representation of the social actors includes no players outside an older political system. But it would be difficult for journalists to generate material from these new kinds of sources; viewers might not be able to recognize them easily, and this would not sound newsworthy. Thus, the programme seems to use archive footage as part of the tested and unquestionable news frame that is 'reporting political party election campaign', in which the views of the three main UK political parties on key social and political issues are presented as three radically different ideological positions.

While referring to photography and suffering, Sontag (2004)

suggested that news photojournalism has encouraged us to think about the world of events in terms of memorable moments rather than lengthy complex processes. Drawing on Morley (1992), we can suggest that as news consumers, in the west, we are familiar with the way that the news sweeps us to these moments. The news claims to take us to these outbursts of the newsworthy. Of course, the reason the event is newsworthy, such as a famine, a war or a natural disaster, is partly precisely because it is recognizable through a news frame. It is framed in terms of wide-eyed children and other motifs that draw on western values (Benthall, 1993; Lutz and Collins, 1993). Yet, as Morley notes, these events are rarely given political or sociological context. Wars are simplified into good and evil. Famines are not connected to structural adjustment loans and the World Bank. Conflicts in Africa are not related to western governments supporting dictatorships for decades or a century of colonial meddling. These events seem to simply happen for the viewer. Their meaning is concentrated into that one memorable moment, which gets its meaning through its seeming to embody the essence of the news frame.

So we have a culture where viewers almost expect the world in news to be slightly mysterious and where events are accepted because they are part of a usual news frame. This is part of the history of the definition of news. Therefore, we can accept that we might not quite grasp in any concrete sense what is happening with the NHS. We are able to accept the moments we see in photographs and video footage as real moments of the historical world.

There is a further reason that we do not interrogate individual frames or news images. This is to do with the way that we have come to understand the meaning of images that do claim to document. Nichols (1991) argues that in the case of film fiction the different cuts should add up to a narrative. Each clip is, we might think, evidence for the believability of the narrative. In a documentary film it is different. The cuts do not have to be evidence of a narrative, but only of an argument. So there can be huge gaps, so long as it all testifies to a certain point about the world. Nichols says: 'At the heart of documentary is less a *story* and its imaginary world than an *argument* about the historical world . . . [So] documentary gives us photographic and aural representations or likenesses of the world' (p. 111).

It follows that news footage is offered as documentary and therefore viewers will not expect the cuts to be coherent, since they need not add up to a narrative. Critically, Nichols suggests that in the case of news, it is the reality of the news that is more a central issue than the news of reality. Viewers have been trained to view the memorable, and however fragmented, moments in the context of the reality of the news as *likenesses* of the world. This may also be the case for photographs that are offered to us as documents.

If we turn our attention to the detail of the clips of the hospital in Extract 1 in terms of their content, style and editing, we can see just how fragmented this likeness is.

Representation of participants as generic social actors

Participants, such as nurses, technicians and patients, are not individualized. Van Leeuwen (1996) suggests that this is either done through lack of close-ups – to which we would add cropping, say of heads, as in the clip where people walk down a corridor. Or it can also be done by representing actors generically through clothing, so they appear as generic doctors or nurses. This technique can encourage the viewer to accept the news item as suitable for a particular news frame rather than as part of a specific story.

Lack of defined space

There is no sense of laying out a specific space for the action. Bordwell (1985: 117) discusses the way that film narrative must lay out pertinent terrain. Nichols argues that documentary does the same. These shots do not. There are no cues telling us about spatial continuity. This means that we are encouraged to read them as being anywhere. Scenes are linked due only to membership of a category.

No relationship between shots

There is no suggested relationship between shots, no cross-cutting, e.g. moving between two different shots to link action. Each cut carries forward another instance or example of the same following on from the outside shot of the hospital.

Transitions to clips and fades

The clips move one into another using fades rather than clean cuts. In their classic book on film editing, Reisz and Miller (1968) suggest that such transitions are used to connote fantasy or dreams, rather than the real. Slow motion that is used in some of the clips also has the effect of drawing the action contained in them away from real time. Pop videos often use slow motion to give a sense of timelessness, which has in this case the effect of making the act appear more poetical.

Use of colour

All this footage is monochrome red, organizing it under the colour used to represent New Labour. The same footage is later repeated in the colours representing the other political parties outlining their plans for the NHS. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2002) have suggested that colour can sometimes have a textual function of linking items. For example, a magazine article might use red for a heading and for bullet points underneath, whereas the rest of the text is in black font. The red might also be found as a salient colour in an accompanying image. Kress and Van Leeuwen also say that colour can be used ideationally, such as on maps to mark out political territories. The use of colour in this footage seems to be a combination of the two. As in the case of a map, we might think about the colour drawing the meaning in a particular direction, e.g. the New Labour election manifesto.

Montage

In the age of digital theatrics, it is common in news to have a multitude of things happening on the screen at one time. There may be separate dialogue and information boxes. But such boxes should not float over the screen and appear and disappear abruptly even though this is what happens in the footage in the case of the inlays of X-rays and medical equipment. It is interesting that viewers do not see these floating images as problematic. This can be explained again in terms of Nichols' suggestion of documentary not being about coherence in the same way as fiction film, but rather an argument about the world.

These are ways we might think about the footage as being fragmented and presented as a *likeness* of the world. But does this mean that, for the viewers, this footage is not about the real world? Do they see it as 'true', as evidence, or do they see it as symbolic? After all, the footage was at one time about the real world even if it was staged. In the view of Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996), we might expect visual signs, such as unrealistic colours and decontextualization, to communicate to the viewer that this is less than real, or 'low modality', as they would put it. However, we do not accept that people necessarily judge the realism or meaning of images through any kind of components of visual grammar. To support our point, we now analyse another example of the use of archive footage. The following extract draws on the press release of the Mitchell Commission, whose role was to investigate the possibility for resolving the conflict between Israel and Palestine.

Extract 2 The Mitchell Commission recommendations (Channel 4 News, 29 May 2001)

Video	Audio
MCS [medium close shot] masked men carrying flags walk towards left-hand corner of frame in front of crowd of mainly children. Frame is monochrome with three horizontal stripes going from browns at the top to greys at bottom.	VO [voice over] The panel urged the Palestinians to take 'immediate steps to apprehend and incarcerate terrorists'
Over this appears the words 'Mitchell recommendations: Palestinian Authority'.	
Then the words 'immediate steps to apprehend and incarcerate terrorists' appear below as they are spoken.	
Words remain on screen but we cut to MLS [medium long shot] over crowd as three men hold guns which point upwards. There is a flag to the left. The words 'prevent gunmen from using populated areas to fire at the Israelis' appear below the other words.	and to 'prevent gunmen from using populated areas to fire at the Israelis'.

MLS tracking shot of tank moving to right, with bushes in foreground. Frame divided into three horizontal monochrome stripes, but this time highly saturated diffuse blue at top and bottom with sand in the middle.

The Sharon government, on the other hand has been told to: 'freeze all settlement activity in the occupied territories', to 'stop communal punishments such as economic blockades,' and

Words appear 'Mitchell recommendations: Israeli Authority' then below 'freeze all settlement activity in the occupied territories', and below 'stop communal punishments such as economic blockades'.

Words remain but we cut to MLS tracking some kind of bulldozer or agricultural vehicle moving to right. Frame still in blue and green layering.

to 'refrain from the destruction of homes'.

Words appear below others: 'refrain from the destruction of homes'.

Analysis of Extract 2

The ITN archive lists, among many others, these examples of footage from Palestine. The following clips are listed as filmed in 2000, although of course they can be used at any time:

Man sitting shoulder high at head of Palestinian rally in support of Hamas and Hizbollah

Rally

Marchers along with banners and flags

Mourners looking on

Israeli soldier standing guard with gun at checkpoint overlooking hills

UN armoured vehicle along road as gunfire heard

Rocket launchers on hillside

As with other topic areas, news editors can choose shots on the basis of subject and camera position. For example, the editor may want footage to support a press release about a suicide bomb explosion in Israel. One option could be to use footage of mourners. Suffering could be indicated more strongly in a close shot which would create more emotional intensity, drawing attention to the actors rather than the setting.

Before we move on to discuss how we believe that these clips work for viewers as a likeness of reality, we again wish to show what context is missed in this news item which is taken straight from a press release with no additional investigation.

Looking more closely at the Mitchell recommendations it becomes clear that, like other US proposals for peace in the region, the report revealed more than anything else the American reluctance to deal with Israel. The report does not call for Israel's withdrawal from the occupied territories in return for security guarantees. This withdrawal was in fact required under UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, long considered by the United States and the international community as the basis for peace. The Mitchell Report only called for a freeze on further illegal settlements, even though, according to Article 40 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, it was illegal for an occupying power to bring in its civilian population at all. Therefore under international law, all of the settlements were illegal. So we have a case where Palestinians were thrown off their land through Israeli military occupation, where settlements were then built. Yet the victims of this process are represented as shadowy terrorists and gunmen, not as political activists.

The report as presented on the news bulletin placed equal blame on Israel and Palestine. Yet it is Palestinian land that is being confiscated and colonized. It is the Palestinian people who are being denied the right to self-government. Clearly the violence would be unlikely to ever come to an end without the Palestinians being able to reclaim the land seized by Israel in 1967. Yet the Mitchell Report does not mention this and since the news item uses no other sources other than the official press release, this remains uninvestigated.

The members of the Commission, George Mitchell and Warren Rudmen, had themselves previously made it clear that they were strong supporters of Israel's expansionist policies. Both were Americans and were US appointed. The US refused to allow non-Americans on to a so-called international committee. This is a country that has provided Israel with economic and military aid to the tune of billions of dollars a year, even at times when Israel was acting highly aggressively towards the inhabitants of Palestine, Egypt and Lebanon. Although the US did at times criticize Israel for invading these countries, it continued to provide military aid (El-Khawas, 1984; Sarran, 1963), including help in developing a nuclear programme while preventing neighbouring countries from doing the same (Seymour, 1983). Israel's continuing refusal to permit the presence of UN arms inspectors was not acted against while this was seen as reason enough to go to war with Iraq.

What happens is that the press release is presented in an established news frame of the activities of terrorists. The verbal and written parts do not do this so precisely, but the video footage does. The verbal does actually refer to acts of aggression by Israel, but we see none. Visually, we do see extensive footage of iconic terrorists and crazed Arab types.

The categories of analysis we laid out for the previous news item also apply in the same way here. There is no mapping out of space. There is no linking of scenes in terms of causality or other relations. Participants are shown as generic rather than as individuals. This is done through cropping, lack of close-ups and the use of generic social types. Finally, the clips have been digitally coloured. The frame in each case has been split into three horizontal bands that use monochrome colours that are darker in shade at the top. The lack of articulation of detail of the participants and the use of low colour differentiation and high colour saturation would, in Kress and Van Leeuwen's (1996) terms, be 'low modality' or less than real.

ARCHIVE FOOTAGE AS A LIKENESS AND INDEX OF THE PHENOMENAL WORLD

However, as suggested earlier, it is not at all clear that viewers see such footage as less than real. For one thing, as we have already discussed, we have been trained in the 'reality of news' and its providing of a message or argument to which we as viewers will tend to subordinate our viewing. We are familiar with fragments and moments that are presented as likenesses. But we believe that this is also to do with the nature of images themselves.

Roland Barthes (1977) would say that we can think of images as 'polysemous', that is that they have many possible meanings and interpretations. This floating meaning is then anchored by the use of language. Decontextualized images therefore, in this view, might be said to have broad meaning potential which is grounded by language. So an image of a hospital corridor or a man in a ski-mask have their meanings realized for the viewer through language.

This idea has been rejected by Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) basically for two reasons. First, all texts are *multimodal*, that is they combine the linguistic, visual and other modes of representation. So language and images can work together rather than one being seen as primary. Second, the visual and linguistic 'both realize the same more fundamental and far-reaching systems of meaning that constitute our cultures, but . . . each does so by means of its own specific forms, and independently' (p. 17). In other words, we must think about visual communication as also being organized like a grammar.

Kress and Van Leeuwen argue that visual signs, like words, have meaning potential that can be realized through their combination with other signs. So, as Machin (2004) demonstrates, an image bank picture of a woman jumping may signify 'freedom' without language. We can look at the way her arms point outwards, rather than inwards, in what Kress and Van Leeuwen see as 'visual verbs', indicating energy and motion. We can look at the iconographic meaning of the setting, its colours, which might be flatter than in a natural setting, the level of illumination, which might be brighter than normal with no single natural source of light. By putting these together, the

viewer gets the meaning of the image. In the case of the woman jumping we might say outward-going energy with bright optimistic lighting and modernist colours. This can work *multimodally* with language but does not require language to anchor meaning.

While we would agree that visual communication does not require language to be read by viewers, we want to question the view that images necessarily communicate through combining sets of visual signs into formal, grammar-like structures. We believe that the footage we have considered works because it comes to index the real world through its likeness to a discourse. We argue that any language that accompanies the image is then contained by the world created by the image. This is because visual signs have a specific quality and are not so similar to language as Kress and Van Leeuwen suggest in *Reading Images* (1996).

To illustrate what we mean here we can look at an example given in *Reading Images*. Kress and Van Leeuwen show a picture of a man pointing a gun. They explain that we can think of the pointing as a visual verb, which they call a 'vector'. The term 'vector' is used in science to indicate the direction of force and motion, often represented graphically by an arrow. So this metaphorical association can be brought into naturalistic images. The meaning potential of this vector can then be realized by combining it with other signs. So, linguistically, we can have 'the soldier shoots the enemy'. We have actor, process and goal. The visual verb fits into the same kind of clause made up of visual signs. The actor is the soldier, the process/verb is the vector made by the pointing gun, and the goal is the man he points it at.

But we could ask: Do we need the visual verb or vector to see a narrative? We would argue that in the case of schematic diagrams, using geometric shapes and arrows, perhaps *yes*. But in the case of photographs or other naturalistic images, the answer is *no*. We can see more clearly how the sign of the man pointing the gun works for the viewer if we imagine, first, a slightly different image.

What if the man is not pointing the gun. Instead, the gun is now pointing downwards at the man's side and is only just visible to the viewer. And we can see the man who has just been shot as he lies on the ground but with his arm stuck pointing upwards as he fell awkwardly. Is this the vector? Is this how the viewer will judge the narrative? Of course we can still see a narrative but it is not based around the vector.

The same goes for another aspect of the visual grammar described by Kress and Van Leeuwen – modality. In our case of the footage of the hospitals, do viewers assess how real it is by modality markers such as articulation of detail? Let's think of another photograph, say, of Adolf Hitler where he is slightly out of focus. Does this mean that we will view the image as low modality? Or will we bring in a whole range of information available to us about the world and people in it, specifically in this case about the very real person who was part of some very real events? We argue that this is the case for the way that viewers interpret the footage of hospitals and of

terrorists. Do we see a picture of a group of men on their way to explode bombs on the London Underground in Summer 2005 as less than real, or claiming to be less than real, if the colours are undersaturated?

We think that we interpret images in this way because visual signs are different from linguistic signs. In linguistic grammar the word 'gun' and the verb 'shoot' get their meaning partly due to their grammatical characteristics. As Halliday (1985) has described, in complex sign systems, like language, the sign is separated from meaning by grammar. In contrast, in simple sign systems the meaning of the sign lies much more in the phenomenal world. So the sign of the man with a gun does not have its meaning potential due to its place in a system of grammar, but due to our lived experience of seeing guns in our lives. We know about guns and what they can do. We do not need to see a vector to understand a narrative where there is a gun in an image. We would certainly not base our narrative around the vector where the dead man's arm points awkwardly upwards towards a tree. The narrative in this image does not come through the arrangement of signs as would happen in a complex sign system. In this sense we might suggest that attempting to create a grammar of images is not unlike attempting to create a grammar of reality.

Possibly, as we stated, vectors might work more in the manner of linguistic signs in the case of a schematic diagram such as a flow chart. But this shows that the difference between a simple system and a language is only gradual (a cline, as Halliday would call it). To us, images seem to be too close to a simple system to be analysed or understood in the same way as language.

But while the visual is different to language, this does not mean that we have to take a step in the direction of Barthes (1977) and say that images are 'polysemous'. Since visual signs for the viewer are closer to the referent in the simple system they can have this power to mean, and for the viewer to connect to the phenomenal world.

In the case of the archive footage used to visualize terrorists analysed earlier, this footage has been placed in the archive as it can easily be used for a specific news frame. When the newsroom access and assemble the footage, they can assume that this will comply with accepted discourses about the conflict between Israel and Palestine.

It may not occur to viewers that these are not actual events and they will see them as part of the reality of news and of the documentary process of using cuts to make an argument about the world out there. The viewer will not need to read a grammar of signs, but will see these images as indexing something real in the phenomenal world. This is the nature of how we understand such images.

CONCLUSION

In the *Language of News*, Fowler (1991) defines news as 'a *practice*: a discourse which, far from neutrally reflecting social reality and empirical facts, intervenes in what Berger and Luckmann [1966] call "the social construction

of reality” (p. 2; see also Scannell, 2001; Schlesinger, 1987; Tuchman, 1978; Van Ginneken, 1998). Likewise, as we have argued in this article, archive footage presents us with typical versions of the phenomenal world which we take to be ‘real’ in the specific frame of broadcast news. However, these generic, decontextualized, and anonymized images do more than just construct particular visions of the world. They also iconize and legitimize them.

The reduction of the world to iconic instances has been discussed by Frederick Jameson (1991) in the context of movies. Jameson said that movies have led to certain depictions of US history becoming iconic of certain periods of time, when in fact they were only one isolated image or instance. When this happens much gets left out. He gives as an example the image of the idealized late 1950s when teenagers wore sneakers, went to the diner, the prom, and drove customized cars. This is a representation that has now become iconic of the US at this time – a time, Jameson reminds us, when the US was racked with civil liberties issues and urban inequalities.

Just as Jameson (1991) argued that our collective memory of the US in the 1950s had been iconicized by a handful of selective images, we can argue that our knowledge of our own societies, our hospitals and wars are equally essentialized by the repeated use of generic, stylized news video footage sequences. In this sense, it is possible to argue that our collective image of the NHS is that of efficient and balanced auxiliary personnel in hospitals doing tests in labs and ferrying patients across hospital corridors in wheelchairs; and our idea of the conflict in Palestine is associated with shadowy fanatical gunmen.

Moreover, the way archive footage emphasizes the generic supports the use of generic news frames rather than examination of specifics. Instead of being offered a thorough examination of specific events, places, people and situations, we are left with representations and realities of ‘typical’ hospitals and conflicts, in the same way as we live with powerful, conventional and habituated icons of a typical crime, or a typical terrorist attack displacing all other possible or actual instances.

But when we emphasize old news frames, say of industrial dispute or the conflict in the Middle East, and the footage is readily available to connote this frame, what happens if there are new actors, new forces at play? As we have seen, this may mean that they simply remain invisible and therefore ignored. The result of this may be that we will be unable to recognize anything other than the generic. Systems might change, the world might move on, but visually it could remain the same for years. Our knowledge of history is in crisis, Nichols (1991) says, but then so is our knowledge of the present and of the future.

In 2004, the journalist John Lloyd started a furious, although shortlived, debate about journalism in the UK. He argued that the news media no longer have a role in keeping in check the political system. Instead they have become an alternative establishment. They are highly critical, but

only of individual politicians, not of the actual institutions themselves (Lloyd, 2004). We really should return to this debate. We entrust informing the public and, checking the power of our politicians so that we can maintain our democracies only to journalists, to no one else. There is so little discussion about how this role is performed. Yet one can imagine how the debate itself might now be framed in the news media, complete with its own generic footage of journalists – of a kind that existed before the cut-backs and before the digital newsrooms.

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