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Livestrong or Lie Hard: A Pentadic Analysis of Deception
and Reputation Management in
'The Armstrong Lie'

Harper D. Anderson

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

Livestrong or Lie Hard: A Pentadic Analysis of Deception and Reputation Management in 'The Armstrong Lie'

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Kenneth Burke's pentadic analysis has been a staple within the context of rhetorical criticism since the early days of critical communication studies. Throughout the years it has evolved from a heavy text criticism to application to film and documentary. *The Armstrong Lie* is another documentary that highlights the controversial actions of former seven-time Tour de France champion, Lance Armstrong. This film provides an opportunity in which the pentadic analysis can be applied in order to really dissect the message that is being told. Through application of the pentadic analysis to *The Armstrong Lie* it is possible to identify the true motivation of the documentary's director, Alex Gibney. The present study seeks to identify the true message being told through the narrative of the documentary. Alex Gibney's motivations come under question as to whether or not he was exonerating himself by lessening the controversy of what Lance Armstrong had done by cheating in a highly competitive sport by characterizing him more as a product of his environment.

Keywords: Lance Armstrong, Alex Gibney, pentadic analysis, Tour de France, cycling, Kenneth Burke, rhetorical criticism, film, documentary, storyteller, motivation, act, scene, agent, agency, purpose, sports

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In 2013 the documentary *The Armstrong Lie* was released by Academy Award winning documentarian Alex Gibney (Alex Gibney, n.d.). The film profiles the highly publicized, highly controversial Lance Armstrong, who was stripped of his seven Tour de France (TDF) medals in 2012 due to the use of performance enhancing drugs (PEDs) (Walsh, 2012). Gibney originally approached Armstrong in 2009 with plans to produce a film that profiled Armstrong's return to the world of cycling after his first retirement in 2005, previous to which he won seven consecutive TDFs. But after Armstrong acknowledged that he had in fact doped during a televised interview with Oprah Winfrey (Winfrey, 2011), Gibney felt that Armstrong "owed [him] an explanation" (Gibney & Gibney, 2013, p. 8). What would have been a story about a great champion was now nothing more than a tale of lies and deceit. Armstrong had lied to Gibney, who, at that time, had already expended a great deal of energy and resources on his film (Gibney & Gibney, 2013). For perhaps this reason, Gibney produced *The Armstrong Lie* as a way of taking advantage of Armstrong or because Gibney was angry.

In its final form, the film presents two different versions of Lance Armstrong. One version is recorded pre-confession, before Armstrong appeared on *Oprah* and publicly acknowledged that he had engaged in blood doping and the use of EPO, a performance-enhancing drug (Winfrey, 2011). The other version is post-confession Armstrong. Both versions provide insights into how Gibney perceives the former cycling champion and the role he played in one of the sporting world's most notorious scandals. The objective of this thesis, therefore, is to provide a critical analysis of Gibney's documentary using Kenneth Burke's dramaturgical pentad as a framework for the critique and discussion.

Burke's pentad critiques the choices a storyteller makes in the construction of a story. Setting a scene, emphasizing characters' contributions to the story, who was involved, the importance of their involvement, how it happened, and why it happened, form a pentadic analysis of act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose (Burke, 1969). By utilizing Burke's dramatic pentad, I hope to shed light on Gibney's construction and interpretation of the events surrounding Armstrong's highly publicized rise and fall in the cycling world. The analysis reveals to what degree Gibney presented Armstrong as an actor in a scene of his own making and control. Did Gibney present Armstrong as a culpable agent or as a victim of a broader scene within a corrupt sport? The film's accumulation of just under \$400,000 gross income for its showing in theaters and DVD sales (Box Office Mojo, 2013) as well as the acclaim of its Oscar-winning documentary director, Alex Gibney, give an idea in regards to the popularity of the film and its impact on public opinion of Lance Armstrong. This thesis, and the Burkean Pentad, provide a heuristic framework for understanding how writers and documentarians create accounts of fallen heroes and what those former heroes might learn from failed attempts at image rehabilitation.

Along with the pentadic analysis, I triangulated the data gathered from watching the documentary with a private interview I conducted with Betsy Andreu, wife of a former U.S. Postal Service teammate of Lance Armstrong, Frankie Andreu, and one of the biggest consistent voices of opposition against Armstrong and his doping abuse throughout his riding years. The purpose of this is to help clarify and perhaps proffer new suggestions in terms of how this documentary is perceived by those on the other side of the fence. Gathering Betsy Andreu's thoughts on the documentary give a different perspective on how Gibney's motivations are

professed and whether or not Andreu felt if she was represented well or perhaps took exception to how she was represented in the documentary.

Chapter 2: Background

In 1998 the public image of cycling and the Tour de France in particular experienced a major setback when a trainer for the Festina cycling team was stopped by authorities as he drove across the border from Belgium into France on July 8, a few days before the start of the TDF. The police found that his car was full of more than 400 doping products, anabolic steroids, and EPO (erythropoietin) (Millar, 2012; Walsh, 2012). For years, questions about suspected “cheating” in the world of professional cycling had been raised by the media. The “Festina affair,” as it became known, provided indisputable evidence—at least for some. The media dubbed the 1998 edition of the TDF as the “Tour de Doping” (Thomsen & Anderson, 2015; Walsh, 2012).

In 1999 Lance Armstrong returned to the professional cycling scene after his year-long battle with testicular cancer. He dominated the race from start to finish, prompting more reporters to question whether he had been doping (Walsh, 2012). The American cyclist would go on to win seven consecutive TDF races until his first retirement in 2005, vehemently maintaining his innocence in the midst of growing rumors that he had cheated.

Throughout his unparalleled run of winning TDF races, Armstrong had gained a lot of loyal followers as well as lifelong enemies (Ballester & Walsh, 2004; Greenslade, 2014; Pugh, 2012; Rogers, 2013). One enemy in particular who had ostensibly led the charge against Armstrong was Irish sports journalist David Walsh.

Whether due to hesitance to incriminate the sport of cycling, or general lack of investigative journalism, there were not many journalists who were inclined to lead the charge in investigating the alleged doping still rampant in the sport of cycling while Armstrong was continually winning TDF Races (Greenslade, 2014).

Walsh was spurred to move forward in his investigation of Armstrong's doping allegations during the TDF by an article written by a fellow Tour rider Christophe Bassons (Lichfield, 1999). Bassons essentially posited that many riders in the TDF were angry with Armstrong due to his meteoric rise and, in particular, rather unprecedented lead through some of the race's toughest legs, which invariably led them to believe that Armstrong may have been doping.

One of the most vivid smoking guns that Walsh used to ignite the spark against Armstrong involved the controversial Italian doctor Michele Ferrari. Ferrari's controversy had ranged from undisclosed million dollar payouts from Armstrong (Weislo, 2012) to banishments from the sport and even serving a jail sentence for malpractice (BBC Sport, 2004).

Walsh's investigation of the alleged doping of Lance Armstrong concluded in 2003 and led to a book publication that included statements from people in very tight circles with Armstrong such as his masseuse, Emma O'Reilly (Ballester & Walsh, 2004). This led to an aggressive attack from Armstrong's camp that ended in an out-of-court settlement with the authors of the book and O'Reilly (Pilon, 2012).

The book eventually became a focal point in the investigation of Armstrong's doping by the USADA that led them to strip Armstrong of all of his Tour titles. This ultimately vindicated Walsh and the allegations that were made throughout his lengthy investigation of the major scandal.

Other major enemies of Armstrong's throughout the scandal were Frankie and Betsy Andreu, once friends turned foes. As a former U.S. Postal Service teammate of Armstrong's, Frankie Andreu had been in the foxhole with Armstrong through the thick and thin of competition in the Tour.

After a deposition in 2005, Frankie and Betsy Andreu acknowledged that Armstrong had admitted to doping in 1996 in an Indiana hospital to his doctor (Velonews, 2006). This incident ignited a fury of attacks from Armstrong's camp that had continued to torment and discredit the Andreu's for what they had claimed in their sworn testimony (McMahon, 2015).

Even after Armstrong's 2005 retirement, the accusations failed to completely die down, so, in 2009, the frustrated Texan announced he would return to the cycling world, specifically targeting the TDF. Armstrong thought that if he could win again after a four-year hiatus from the sport, he could quiet his critics.

If you look at the books and you look at the records, he [referring to himself] won seven Tours in a period where everybody thought, where everybody was dirty. If I win again, they're not going to - they can't say that. They cannot. Well, you can, but there'd be a few dickheads who'd say that, trust me, but... no way. (Gibney & Gibney, 2013, p. 21)

This only seemed to enrage his opponents further as the investigations became more frequent and spontaneous, as he displayed his frustration in *The Armstrong Lie*.

Now here we are yesterday we had a surprise UCI control, the 31st of the season, now this morning again. I see you pull up. Fine no problem, 32nd control, then, Higgs, look, USADA walks in, talk about a broken system. (Gibney & Gibney, 2013, p. 26)

All of this controversy eventually had a breaking point in 2012 when the United States Anti-Doping Agency ruled to ban Armstrong from the sport of cycling and strip him of his seven TDF titles (Macur, 2012). This led to a downward spiral for the controversial athlete that ultimately prompted most of his long-time endorsers to pull their association with him. One major endorser in particular was Nike, who had established a highly publicized relationship with Armstrong that even spawned a non-profit, *Livestrong*, a subsidiary non-profit organization of

Nike fighting cancer with Armstrong as the main figure representing them. It was even speculated that the now-defunct, world-renowned athlete had lost over \$150 million in endorsements (Rishe, 2012).

At this stage in his life, Armstrong likely felt he had no other choice but to appear in the eye of the public to address the situation of his doping scandal and allegedly confess to doping in his previous years of winning the TDF (Gibson, 2013). Armstrong decided to appear on the *Oprah Winfrey Show* on the Oprah network to confess to the doping allegations and ultimately confirm all the accusations of his critics throughout the years even referring to his success as “one big lie” (Schrotenboer, 2013, p. 1).

Gibney, a highly decorated filmmaker who won an Oscar for best documentary, saw a great opportunity to highlight the most famous cyclist's, perhaps of all time, comeback into the controversial world of cycling. Unbeknownst to Gibney at the time, Armstrong had cheated when he had won all seven TDF races prior to this comeback. This allowed Gibney to change the format of the originally planned documentary highlighting Armstrong's comeback, to highlight more of the doping scandal surrounding Armstrong and the entire sport of cycling.

Sports Documentaries

Sports documentaries is a genre that has grown significantly in the past seven years due to the construction of ESPN's 30 for 30 series, a set of documentaries that have the sole purpose of highlighting important figures in sports history (Schwartz, 2009). What first started out to be a movement to honor the anniversary for ESPN had blown up into a whole genre due to its ever-growing popularity and has prompted other major television stations such as HBO and Showtime to start their own line of sports documentaries because of the high demand from the general public (Ourand, 2014).

This new popular sub-genre within the documentary film has paved the way for this niche to become more mainstream further instilling it as a staple in our society. More critical approaches to sports documentaries will likely become popular within the context of communication/rhetorical criticisms. And like *The Armstrong Lie*, there may likely be a new sub-genre of sports documentaries that focus specifically on sports doping scandals.

To my knowledge, *The Armstrong Lie*, and *Stop at Nothing: The Lance Armstrong Story* are the only current documentaries that highlight the doping scandal of Lance Armstrong's Tour de France victories from 1999-2005 (IMDB, 2014). Due to the popularity of *The Armstrong Lie*, particularly that it was directed by Oscar winning director, Alex Gibney, grossed around \$380,000, nominated for seven documentary filmmaking awards while winning two (Box Office Mojo, 2013) it seemed appropriate to target this documentary for my analysis. And also Gibney's personal relationship with Armstrong called into question his motivation in creating this documentary from the beginning. *Stop at Nothing* did not register in box office mojo, making it harder to justify for a critique of this kind.

Cheating in Sports

Cheating has been rampant in society throughout the dawn of time among all ages and in all forms. This has been evident in society at large based off of the findings of Frank and Cook (1996) that the growing epidemic of cheating was due to our evolving society of a winner-take-all mentality, specifically, a society that allows a major discrepancy between the top 1% of income in the United States of America and the rest of the country. It's this mentality that encourages cheating in order to get ahead, because the reward is so valued. A mentality that likely shaped Lance Armstrong's determination to be the best cyclist in the world.

Along these same lines, Roig and Ballew (1994) showed that students in a classroom setting who were more tolerant of cheating believed their teachers to be more tolerant of cheating as well. This speaks to a bigger societal issue of cheating in general.

Cheating in sports has been a problem ever since there has been an incentive for winning. Garicano and Palacios-Huerta (2000) found “that an increase in the reward for winning increased... the amount of sabotage effort undertaken by teams,” (p. 13).

The Greeks dealt with cheating in the Olympics by issuing a large bronze statue of Zeus in order to punish athletes who broke rules in the games (Pausanias, 1959) with the name inscribed of the athlete in order to write their violation into history. It also served as a reminder to other athletes to hold the rules as sacred for the perpetration of good competition.

Although cheating has existed across cultures and within sport as a whole, cheating has never been limited to just one sport, but rather has been rampant across many different types of sports. Sumo wrestling in Japan had become a major problem in their culture and sumo wrestlers would lose on purpose in order to give their opponent more recognition and honor (Duggan & Levitt, 2002).

Cheating within the sport of cricket was particularly common (Piesse, 2001) extending all the way back to the eighteenth century (Underdown, 2000) in multiple parts of the world like Africa where it was revealed in The King Commission in South Africa that a captain of the South African cricket team, Hansie Cronje, accepted multiple bribes for fixing matches (King, 2000) as well as in Pakistan where the Qayyum Report found a Pakistani captain, Salim Malik, had fixed matches (Qayyum, 1998). India and England also had scandals rock their respective cricket leagues as well involving former captains of their teams (Bose, 2001, CBI, 2000).

Within cricket, an investigation of the governing body of the sport showed a whole environment that cultivated a society of intimidation and fear of bribery and cheating (Condon, 2001).

The ingestion of performance enhancing substances was a common occurrence right up through World War I and it was not considered illegal to the consumer or even taboo until Dr. Otto Rieser became outwardly vocal that it essentially demeans the overall spirit of sport (Hoberman, 1992). Even though it has not been confirmed, it is widely believed that German athletes were issued steroids in order to improve their performance in the 1936 Berlin Olympics (Francis, 1990).

There is not a clear history of when the ingestion of illegal substances to improve performance actually became illegal in sports, it is known that “test for substance abuse in the Olympics was in 1968 and involved alcohol. The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) maintains a list of prohibited substances and methods,” (Preston & Szymanski, 2003, p. 615). Preston and Szymanski (2003) specifically argued that performance enhancing drugs was likely the most prevalent form of cheating in all of sports: “Doping has probably been the biggest single problem relating to ‘cheating’ for sports administrators. Doping may be defined as the ingestion of illicit substances or use of illicit therapies,” (p. 615).

The prevalence of athletes using illegal performance enhancing drugs has influenced the use of illegal substances among children, some as young as eight years old:

The prevalence of doping in children and adolescents participating in sports is estimated at 3% to 5% with higher percentages in boys, older adolescents and those playing at a competition level. Use of anabolic steroids, as early as 8 years of age, has increased since 1990, especially in girls (Laure, 1999, Abstract).

Other studies have attempted to minimize the stigma of taking some performance enhancing drugs in sports, such as growth hormones, by claiming that they have little to no impact on the physical performance of an athlete (Baumann, 2012). Yonamine, Garcia, and de Moraes Moreau (2004) highlighted in their study of doping among sports athletes the idea that in some instances, athletes have unintentionally doped by either accidentally ingesting an illegal substance, inhaling second-hand marijuana smoke, etc. making the argument that a precedent has been set for doping allegations being denied from the beginning, and for good reason.

According to Koller (2008) it's the government, not the sporting institution that is to blame for the growing prevalence of doping in sports, specifically with the notion that, if the government were to take aggressive action against doping, it would potentially have a socio-economic backlash: "it is the perception that those who are caught are largely members of minority groups that reinforces negative societal stereotypes and, eventually, could pose troubling consequences for the credibility of antidoping initiatives," (p. 123). This perpetuates the mentality that the ramifications for getting caught ingesting illegal substances are relatively low, thus worth the risk.

Gordon Reddiford (1998) was able to articulate perfectly what may motivate an athlete to cheat in a sport, something that requires what he refers to as "self-deception:"

Self-deception in relation to cheating in sport is essentially a social matter, it involves the attempt to secure the reputation that one is not a cheating player. So appeals to the history of his fair play, and the attempt to gain recognition that he does play fairly, are essential to the self-deceiver's successes, (p. 236)

Here Reddiford is acknowledging that there is a major problem with cheating in sports, while also emphasizing that it requires a special personality to continually cheat in his or her

sport. Armstrong may have been the ultimate self-deceiver. Not only did he go to great lengths to silence his accusers, but he went to great lengths to silence himself and truly believe that he was the best at what he did.

Chapter 3: Kenneth Burke's Pentad and Rhetorical Criticism

Burke proposed the pentadic analysis “as a model to describe the dramatic nature of society” (Brock, 1990, p. 187). It helps answer the ultimate question of human explanation: “What is involved when we say what people are doing and why they are doing it?” (Burke, 1969, p. xv). With all the necessary tools to tell a story, Burke argues that dissecting the tools of the storyteller is what gives us the real answer.

The volatility of humanity in telling a story contributes to a slew of different ways to tell a story. How people choose to construct their story, setting the scene, emphasizing characters' contribution to the story, who was involved, the importance of their involvement, how it happened, why it happened, all converts to the pentadic analysis of act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose.

A big piece of what is being communicated by the storyteller, Burke (1969) argues, is what the storyteller chooses to emphasize in his story, which reveals his ultimate motive in telling the story or how he may wish the listener/reader to interpret the story. The story has been defined by Burke himself as “the use of language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols” (Burke, 1969, p. 43).

The Pentad

The pentad has been noted to potentially be the most “famous definition” of rhetoric in the twentieth century (Brummett, 1994, p. 23). As mentioned earlier, Burke's pentad consists of five major thematic elements that are used to deconstruct a rhetorical utterance: (1) The Act, which primarily denotes any action verbs in the message such as “what?” “What happened?” “What is the action?” “Who is responsible?” Specifically, Burke has noted the act as “any verb, no matter how specific or general, that has connotations of consciousness or purpose falls under

this category” (Burke, 1952, p. 14). (2) The Scene, which primarily answers the questions “when?” and “where?” Burke states the scene is “the background of an act, the situation in which it occurred” (Burke, 1952, p. xv). (3) The Agent, which primarily answers the question “by whom?” or “what person performed the act” or, in the case of this study, “who or whom is conveying the message?” (4) Agency, which identifies other involved details: “were more people involved in the action?” or “how was the action committed?” Burke specifically asks the question, what instrument, or instruments are the storyteller using. (5) Purpose, which answers the question “why?” within the message. Purpose brings together the whole analyses as a means to an end. Strictly speaking, purpose within the pentadic analysis identifies the motivation behind the message (Burke, 1969).

Pentadic Ratios

Burke (1969) suggests that rhetors often choose to emphasize one of the five elements over the others, creating what he has described as a “ratio.” Examining these ratios becomes a critical component of the rhetorical analysis and allows the investigator to draw reasoned conclusion about the rhetor’s structuring of an event and its perceived causes and consequences. In other words, pentadic ratios are what allow the critic to determine what the storyteller is emphasizing as the most important part of the story, “the ratios are principals of determination,” (Burke, 1952, p. 15). This is done by measuring the five components of the pentad against themselves to discover the most influential term (Burke, 1969). At this stage in the analysis, the five elements of dramatism are compared with each other in many different scenarios (Burke, 1969). For example, if a researcher wanted to compare each element, he could start with the ratios agent:act, agent:scene, agent:agency, agent:purpose in order to determine which is more influential, the agent or its analytical counterparts. By doing so, the researcher would then start to

take note of what is being dominated, the agent or the four other elements to which it is being compared.

If an agent acts in keeping with his nature as an agent (act-scene ratio), he may change the nature of the scene accordingly (scene-act ratio), and thereby establish a state of unity between himself and his world (scene-agent ratio). Or the scene may call for a certain kind of act, which makes for a corresponding kind of agent, thereby likening agent to scene. (Burke, 1969, p. 19)

Burke has posited that people will always emphasize one or two of the pentadic elements when they tell a story. A researcher will then step in to identify which elements are dominating the others in order to better determine an overarching theme (Brock, 1990).

Arguments are often made that on the surface of the pentadic analysis the terms themselves do not carry much weight in the realm of rhetorical criticism (Fox, 2002). This is perhaps why Burke (1952) emphasizes pentadic ratios as a way of revealing the true worldview the storyteller gives to their audience.

For the sake of this study, it is not necessary to individually list comparisons of pentadic elements throughout the analysis. In lieu of individually comparing ratios, I conducted an analysis that identified specific pentadic properties used in the film and determined which elements were emphasized more throughout the story that Gibney chose to tell.

Applications of the Pentad

Burke lived from 1897–1993 and published the majority of his works between 1920–1970, which include, but are not limited to, books, fictional pieces, and poetry (KB Journal). Brummett and Young (2006) noted that this was a time when the United States had experienced a rather large amount of political unrest with two world wars, the Cuban missile crisis, and the

Watergate scandal just to name a few. This is potentially what inspired Burke to mold his pentadic analysis and form a model that helps show the true intention of communication from the sender. Applying the pentadic analysis to these situations would provide a worldview of Nazi Germany amidst a time of bitterness towards the United States and other countries against Germany and its allies; such as the Soviet Union towards the United States, Cuba's worldview, the United States' worldview towards communism, and the worldview of President Nixon in regards to spying on the democratic party to name a few. Kenneth Burke developed a model to help explain situations quite like these and give clarification to the many wonderers of drastic motivation.

Because of the pentadic analysis' broad appeal in scholarship, there have been multiple applications using this theory.

David Ling (1970) became integral in making Burke's pentad a little more high profile through his critical application of Senator Edward Kennedy's public address to the people of Massachusetts following his controversial incident at Chappaquiddick Island, Massachusetts. From this point on, the pentadic analysis became much more instrumental in other communication scholarship (Brummett & Young, 2006).

Multiple scholarship argues that the pentadic analysis is best used when making a critical assertion (Foss, 2004; Fox, 2002; Hamlin & Nichols, 1973), and many more rhetorical analyses have used Burke's pentadic analysis to make critical claims regarding the motivations or worldviews of a storyteller. It has been applied to the rhetoric of Plato and his philosophical beliefs (Abrams, 1981), the analysis of Ronald Regan's speech on the U.S. decision to invade Grenada (Birdsell, 1987), the Republican primary debates (Blankenship, Fine, & Davis, 1983),

and the aforementioned study on Ted Kennedy and the Chappaquiddick incident (Ling, 1970) to name a few.

Storytelling often times has multiple ways of being interpreted, making way for the pentadic analysis to proffer more sound and whole statements (Burke, 1952). According to Burke, every statement offered by the storyteller is used to construct their motive. The storyteller offers their worldview of a situation and gives their audience an opportunity to accept or reject that worldview (Burke, 1978). This allows the pentadic analysis to take place in observation of a story and ultimately allow the audience to accept or reject the worldview of the storyteller; “If the rhetor identifies her/himself as the agent, then (s)he has said something about her/his motives. However, if the rhetor chooses to exclude him/herself...then (s)he has said something about someone else’s motivations,” (Senda-Cook, 2008, Pentad interplay and perspective by incongruity, para. 2).

Applying the Pentad to Film

At first, the Burkean approach was more commonly utilized as an analysis of rhetoric within writing or a “heavy theoretical emphasis” (Brummett & Young, 2006, p. 37). However, the more recent studies that utilize Burkean philosophies are making a shift to interpret more visual communication such as film and television (Brummett & Young, 2006). Burkean analyses have been applied to many different types of film, including *Oliver Stone’s Defense of JFK*, in which Benoit and Nill (1998) applied Burke’s philosophy of mortification and victimage to better argue that Stone was able to stir up renewed interest in the Kennedy assassination from the general public. Additionally, Burke’s guidelines have also been used to analyze horror films (Brummett, 1985) and *Batman Forever* (Terrill, 2000).”

Brummett's (1985) five films included: *The Shining*, *The Amityville Horror*, *The Hearse*, *The Haunting*, and *The Uninvited*. These films all represented a different motive for their audiences in different times. *The Uninvited* represented the most optimistic motive for its audience, a post-World War II film that encourages the audience to expect victory over chaos. Brummett noted that the most pessimistic films of the analysis were *The Haunting* and *The Hearse*, which were released during the Cuban missile crisis and the collapse of the détente, respectively. Brummett concluded that *The Shining* and *The Amityville Horror* suggest that "in a world of deadly disorder and paradox, the public does not need the motivation supplied by films which trap their audiences hopelessly within chaotic time and space, chained to visions of evil in the basement," (p. 259). Brummett makes the argument that these five films are telling a worldview for their time and appealing to an audience that can relate due to its environmental surroundings.

Terrill (2000) deconstructs the imagery of *Batman Forever* and how Batman's zeal for exposing corruption at every level represents the country's desire to see corrupt politicians be brought to light and judged by their wrongdoings. Terrill also argues that *Batman Forever* also represents a danger in attempting to expose corruption, which may serve as a potential warning to the audience not to be as much as a vigilante as Batman is in the film.

In recent scholarship, Burke's pentad has been applied to the well-known documentary by Michael Moore *Fahrenheit 9/11* (Senda-Cook, 2008) and suggests two different salient themes throughout the film. According to Senda-Cook, Moore's angle was to bring to light classism in the United States by highlighting the upbringing of former U.S. President George W. Bush versus the people of Flint, Michigan, a city in the United States notorious for its poverty and overall lack of wealth opportunity. The overarching theme of the film is to convey the

message that leaders like Bush who grew up in wealthy circumstances and made decisions that affected the hardworking citizens of the United States are out of touch. In this particular documentary, the people of Flint were highlighted because of their duty to their country, their willingness to answer the call to serve in the military when asked by leaders like Bush, and their very humble circumstances in comparison to the former president. This offered a clear juxtaposition of the two parties, giving Moore a clear path to portray two major, albeit different, agents in his documentary.

Senda-Cook (2008) makes the argument that the dominant ratio of the pentad was purpose, or President Bush's greed. Specifically, that is what Moore chose to highlight, that "Bush's description of facts by depicting Bush as driven by a purpose rooted in greed" (Bush's pentad section, para. 16). Moore emphasized that Bush was not acting as much as an agent or on behalf of the agency in his decision to invade Iraq, but rather that his purpose was to potentially become wealthier himself or to serve that purpose for others like him.

Senda-Cook (2008) further perpetuated the notion that Moore was masterful in his reinforcement of showing Bush as greedy by coupling purpose with act. Senda-Cook (2004) made the argument that "the act [was] a product of the purpose" (The soldiers' pentad section, para. 13). The act of going to war (put in play by Bush) strongly affected the people of Flint, Michigan, and made them look like true patriots dedicated to serving their country. Although they were subservient to what is argued as a sinister cause, they did it for the love of their country.

Documentarians hold a great responsibility when it comes to the content they choose to publish and how they publish it. The audience becomes very vulnerable to the issues that are being presented and the documentary often shapes their opinion based off of what is being

displayed in the film; “When rhetors cast the motivations of other people, they give audience members a lens through which they may examine those people. In other words, representing motives has a strong rhetorical function,” (Senda-Cook, 2008, para. 9).

The Pentadic Analysis and Sports

In the sporting world there has been no exception to employing the pentadic analysis as a way to understand what has motivated athletes to say or infer things in and out of their respective sport. To determine a difference in rhetoric approaches, Williams and Kuypers (2009) analyzed different athletes and their style of talking to the media and identified who the agents were in each interview. Across the different sports (such as football, basketball, and baseball), the athletes consistently identified the agents as themselves or their team/teammates. Williams and Kuypers also identified a major difference in how athletes conducted themselves versus NASCAR drivers, who were interviewed and primarily expressed through their interviews that the main agents were the teams for whom they drove. This shows the power of sponsorship within the sport and its impact on how each athlete conducted themselves in an interview. Because NASCAR involves different teams of drivers and not every driver has a say in which sponsorship they would like to represent, there was a major difference in how they conducted themselves in interviews versus athletes in the sports of football, basketball, and baseball that worked more independently from their own teams/teammates.

Rhetorical Criticism

The purpose of applying rhetorical criticism to this particular study is necessary due to the power of rhetoric in our society. Kupers (2009) argued that “communicators who wish to control the manner in which their messages are understood plan ahead” (p. 6) with the sole desire for their audience to agree with them. The importance for this rhetorical criticism is due to the

power that Alex Gibney has in telling this story in such a way that offers perspective that is under his sole control. Not only do I offer a different perspective and explanation by applying Burke's pentad to this film, but I also utilize a private interview that I had with Betsy Andreu who played a major role in the unfolding of the Lance Armstrong controversy.

This study suggests a different point of view that allows the average viewer of the documentary to consider different opinions and critique the motivation of Alex Gibney in producing this film. This approach perpetuates the power of rhetorical criticism in our society and emphasizes the power that documentaries can have on the general public.

Chapter 4: Methodology

As previously stated, the goal of this study is to apply Burke's pentadic analysis to the film *The Armstrong Lie*. By pointing out the basic pentadic properties of the film and examining the observed ratios therein, my goal is to explore Gibney's deconstruction of the Lance Armstrong story and his rhetorical strategies, as well as editing choices, employed to present the cyclist as either a victim or failed former hero. By examining pentadic ratios within his rhetoric, I identified what Gibney deemed to be the most important part of the story behind Armstrong's cheating in the TDF. Was Gibney's motivation to exonerate Armstrong from any wrongdoing? Was it to minimize the gravity of what he had done in the eye of the public? Using the pentadic analysis for this purpose, I examined the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the pentadic properties of Alex Gibney's film, *The Armstrong Lie*?

RQ1a: What is the hierarchy of presentation among act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose, and how are they constructed?

RQ1b: Of the pentadic properties, where is the greatest emphasis placed, and what does it tell us about the producer's motive?

RQ1c: Are there any secondary narratives that appear during analysis of the film?

RQ2: How does the pentadic construction address Armstrong's culpability?

Procedure

Grounded theory is the best fit in this approach of identification of Alex Gibney's motivations in constructing *The Armstrong Lie*. It was developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1987) in order to better understand social phenomena and show "a sensitivity to the

evolving and unfolding nature of events” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 9). This approach also utilized by Glaser and Strauss helped solidify my decision in using a more grounded approach (the pentadic analysis) in the process of deconstructing the message of this film.

The Film. *The Armstrong Lie* is a film produced in 2013 by Frank Marshall, Matt Tolmach, and Alex Gibney. It was distributed by Sony Pictures and was written and directed by Alex Gibney. It was formally released in select theaters in the United States in November, 2013, and has an official runtime of 122 minutes (Gibney & Gibney, 2013).

The film consists of interviews from multiple subjects involved in the Lance Armstrong scandal, most notable are Armstrong himself, David Walsh (the primary accuser of Armstrong), Frankie Andreu (former U.S. Postal teammate), Betsy Andreu (wife of Frankie and consistent accuser of Armstrong), George Hincapie (former U.S. Postal teammate), Michele Ferrari (Armstrong’s doctor and primary provider of illegal drugs), and Tyler Hamilton (former U.S. Postal teammate) (Gibney & Gibney, 2013).

The Armstrong Lie won a Golden Trailer award, a nomination for best documentary for the Chicago Film Critics Association Awards, and BAFTA (Gibney & Gibney, 2013). The film received highly positive reviews from the website Rotten Tomatoes, from critics and audience members alike (Rotten Tomatoes, 2013).

Coding. Burke (1969) made clear that every single statement by the agent is a part of the agent’s motive. In the case of Armstrong and Gibney, I analyzed the documentary’s transcript, first coding for basic themes and then identifying and coding for each of the pentadic elements.

The Armstrong Lie transcript was obtained through the official sonyclassics.com website, the official distributor of the film, as a PDF that is available for anyone to download.

I took an open coding and axial coding approach when deconstructing Burke's purpose in producing *The Armstrong Lie* (Strauss, 1987) which allowed me to "produce concepts that seem to fit the data" (p. 28). Open coding in particular was necessary to familiarize myself with the initial data (the film) and specifically to comb over the data "rather quickly" (Strauss, 1987, p. 31) and then confirm the data with axial coding. Axial coding complimented open coding due to its natural identification of core category data that "runs parallel to the increasing number of relationships becoming specified among the many categories" (p. 32).

The coding was broken up into groups of all five pentadic elements: agent, agency, scene, act, and purpose. The transcript was reviewed repeatedly, coupled with a repeated viewing of the film in order to encapsulate every individual element as it was extracted from the transcript. Not all lines from the subjects interviewed in the film were compatible with Burke's element of pentadic discourse, therefore it was necessary that the analysis took place as more of a collection of emerging themes rather than an analysis of every single subject's transcript throughout the film.

The pentadic analysis has been used before to identify themes and perspectives while forgoing the opportunity of critical examination of each motivation and the thought process of every piece of information offered up in the production. Fox (2002) provides further explanation of all that can be accomplished when applying the pentadic analysis as rhetorical criticism; "Burke provides us with tools that can produce more varied terministic screens for how critical researchers conceptualize, interpret, and analyze workplace communication," (*abstract*)

Foss (2004) helped outline the coding process when conducting a pentadic analysis. Two specific parts are emphasized in the coding process: labeling the terms and identification of the dominant term. Labeling terms requires an investigator to identify the artifact, more importantly

that all five of the elements be labeled clearly so that the coding process can move forward (see figure 1 for illustration). Whereas identification of the dominant term comes after all five terms are identified and one specific element is noted to be emphasized more than the other four throughout the display of the artifact.

For the purpose of this research, applying Burke's dramatic pentad helps identify Gibney's deconstruction of Armstrong's story and the meaning which he hoped to convey to his viewers. Specifically, with Armstrong's belligerent refusal to admit to doping during the 13-year span of allegations that led to lawsuits and the destruction of personal friendships, this analysis allows the reader to use Gibney's vision as a means of attempting to understand Armstrong's motivations and public behaviors. In turn, this study contributes to the overall body of communication research by pioneering the criticism of sports documentaries that choose to convey the messages of sports figures addressing particular past accusations, critiques of any wrongdoing, and so on. Specific points for future research on athletes to which this may apply will be addressed later on. Furthermore, this research may help pave the way for athletes who are compelled to confront a dire situation in their careers to better relay their message(s) to their audience(s).

It is also the purpose of this paper to show even more outlets to which Burke's pentadic analysis can be applied, including, but not limited to, the world of sports, particularly in the case of Lance Armstrong and his cheating in the TDF.

Through identifying all five elements of Gibney's pentad and the dominant terms in the ratios of his pentad, I offer strong evidence of what Gibney wanted his audience to believe was his worldview during the six years of Armstrong's cheating in the TDF combined with the seven

Pentadic Element	Example
Act	Lance Armstrong doping in Tour de France
Scene	Tour de France
Agent	Alex Gibney
Agency	The cycling world (other Tour de France riders)
Purpose	To minimize Armstrong's role in the doping scandal

[Figure 1]

years of defending his innocence, making it a total of 12 years he had been deceiving all of his supporters, critics, other cyclists, and the entire sport of cycling—essentially the entire world.

Furthermore, in order to dig deeper into the rhetorical criticism of pentadic ratios, it is necessary to define the emphases of Gibney's rhetoric within the documentary. Burke (1952) suggests that each pentadic element offers its own philosophical underpinning. If the act is the dominant pentad in the rhetoric, realism becomes the philosophy; when scene is at the forefront of the story, materialism becomes the corresponding philosophy; idealism and pragmatism philosophically represent agent and agency, respectively; and lastly, if purpose becomes the most emphasized pentad, mysticism becomes the primary argument of the rhetor. According to Rountree (1998), these terms help in understanding what each pentadic element really wants to convey.

Through the identification process, determining how the storyteller (Gibney) presents the five elements of the pentad—act, agent, scene, agency, and purpose—and the ratios/relationships between them, the worldview of the storyteller becomes easier to classify.

As the researcher, this allowed me to offer up a new and unique perspective in terms of Alex Gibney in identifying his true worldview according to Burke while he was documenting the cheating done by Lance Armstrong in the TDF and after Armstrong confessed to the world.

Senda-Cook (2008) argues that the creator of the documentary doesn't always have to have his or her own pentad. In her study of the well-known Michael Moore documentary *Fahrenheit 9/11*, she explained that Moore was merely the messenger and that it was up to the audience to form an opinion.

Although Moore is the creator of this artifact, I contend that his explicit involvement ended there. Just as an author of a history book does, Moore shifted the audience's focus from himself, as storyteller, to the drama of the story itself. Therefore, I do not identify him as a part of either pentad. (Grounding fahrenheit 9/11 section. para. 4)

Consistent in what Senda-Cook offers, I followed the same parameter by addressing Gibney's pentad from *The Armstrong Lie* and still treated Gibney as if he is the author of a history book, albeit a subjective one.

Primary scholarship representing the pentadic analysis uses it to make critical claims to motivations or worldviews of a storyteller (e.g., Abrams, 1981; Birdsell, 1987; Bizzell & Herzberg, 2001; Blankenship, Fine, & Davis, 1983; Brummett, 1994; Burghardt, 2005; Burke, 1978; Foss, 2004; Fox, 2002; Hamlin & Nichols, 1973; Ling, 1970). Storytelling often times has multiple ways of being interpreted, making way for the pentadic analysis to proffer more sound and whole statements (Burke, 1952). According to Burke, every statement offered by the storyteller is used to construct their motive. The storyteller offers their worldview of a situation and gives their audience an opportunity to accept or reject that worldview. This allows the pentadic analysis to take place in observation of a story and ultimately allow the audience to

accept or reject the worldview of the storyteller: “If the rhetor identifies her/himself as the agent, then (s)he has said something about her/his motives. However, if the rhetor chooses to exclude him/herself, as in *Fahrenheit 9/11*, then (s)he has said something about someone else’s motivations,” (Senda-Cook, 2008, Pentad interplay and perspective by incongruity para. 2).

This is indicative of a possibility for this paper to establish a clear difference between Gibney and Armstrong in regards to their roles in the documentary. As mentioned earlier, Gibney is treated as a messenger of history. However, Armstrong cannot be treated as an agent because Gibney ultimately has the final word for what he chooses to let the audience witness in regards to Armstrong’s words, thus making it ultimately impossible to determine Armstrong’s complete and unbiased worldview.

Using *The Armstrong Lie* as the only source for Gibney’s pentad, I first reviewed this documentary from an emergent approach allowing the themes to reveal themselves. Following the first viewing, I re-watched the film on six more occasions due to the same themes and elements repeating themselves through the analysis. Outside of producing the documentary for monetary gain, Gibney’s motivation, to this point, is unclear to the audience, which is why he is perceived as not only a deliverer of history but also the agent in this analysis. Gibney plays one of the biggest roles in the film as the editor and ultimate decision maker of what the audience is going to view, very similar to the role Michael Moore played in his *Fahrenheit 9/11* documentary. Dissimilar from Gibney, past scholarship has revealed what Moore’s motivations were. Moore wanted to effectively end President Bush’s campaign for second term as president of the United States, (Briley, 2005; Holbert & Hansen, 2006; Lawrence, 2005; Levin, 2004; Senda-Cook, 2008).

Gibney taking on the role as the rhetor of *The Armstrong Lie* gave him the ability to reconstruct Armstrong's motives in the film. Inserting Burke's pentad into the analysis allows me to see what Gibney's motives were in reshaping the audience's opinion of Lance Armstrong. We can speculate that part of it may have been to exact revenge on Armstrong for deceiving him and many others for many years and giving his audience a lens in which to see Armstrong in this exposing light. It could also be assumed that Gibney did it for primarily financial reasons, to exonerate himself from the stigma of fraternizing with Armstrong and perhaps cast a more positive light on Armstrong being more of a product of the cycling environment.

A rhetorical approach is critical to this study because it allows me as the researcher to not just analyze what Gibney is arguing by placing specific images, film, interviews, etc. in the documentary, but more specifically how he presents his argument. A narrative analysis would limit this study from a critical perspective, due to the criticisms that a rhetorical analysis can provide, and more importantly, the fundamental critique that the pentadic analysis contributes to the method.

The pentadic analysis is used to accomplish two primary things: to make a commentary on Gibney's motivation and ultimately give a clearer perspective on his worldview on the scandal involving Lance Armstrong.

Chapter 5: Analysis

Gibney's Pentad

The Armstrong Lie (2013) provides various narratives throughout the film that offer many different perspectives of the situation involving Lance Armstrong and his scandal with the TDF. This was seemingly done by Gibney to ultimately give the viewer more options to choose from in making a decision of whether or not to indict Armstrong in their own mind. I highlighted the elements of Gibney's pentad that are intended to further convey a clearer picture of what Gibney's intentions were in the production of this film.

Heuristics within the Pentadic Analysis

Kneupper (1979) explained that the pentadic elements essentially ascribe to a heuristic approach where "the pentad may also serve a heuristic function in adapting discourse to particular audiences" (p. 134). This argues that the lens in which the critic applies the pentadic analysis is a crucial element within the investigation.

Young (1976) argues that, in general, heuristic procedures produce questions that are ultimately provisional results that essentially give the critic a lower margin of error: "Although systematic, heuristic search is neither purely conscious nor mechanical; intuition, relevant experience and skill are necessary for effective use," (p. 317). This is meant to provide a reasonable justification in the critique while also providing a sense of flexibility within the process. This analysis is by no means meant to convey definitive statements when analyzing the motive of Gibney in making the film, but it is instead intended to provide a reasonable explanation of what his true emphasis may have been in identifying motive within the framework of the documentary.

Scene

At the forefront of the film the viewer is introduced to Armstrong addressing what he refers to as “one big” lie hours after his interview/confession on the Oprah Winfrey Network (Gibney & Gibney, 2013). A few hours after confronting his cheating in the TDF in front of the world, Armstrong is already starting to mince words to clarify that he did not live a lot of lies, but one big one; and he is immediately telling the audience of the documentary that “it’s different” (Gibney & Gibney, 2013). Armstrong also clarifies at the beginning of the documentary that the only person who can clarify for people what the true narrative is, is himself, the same man who had been lying to the world for 14 years previous to the making of this documentary. The fact that Gibney chose this to be the beginning of his film could quite possibly represent his own sentiment in making this documentary for the public. Gibney himself believes that the only true narrative for the viewers of this documentary to receive is through Armstrong.

This portrays to the audience that there are two different scenes within this pentad of this documentary. The first scene we’re introduced to, the talking head of Lance Armstrong, is the post-confession scene. The second scene is the depiction of Armstrong within the documentary that shows him talking to the camera before the scandal broke, making it the pre-confession scene.

The post-confession scene at the beginning transitions to the pre-confession scene showing Armstrong in a car on his way to start his comeback to the TDF and addressing his nervousness leading up to his return prior to stage one in July 2009 (Gibney & Gibney, 2013). Gibney is quick to say at the beginning of this scene as he narrates the documentary, “He had lied to me, straight to my face, all throughout 2009,” (Gibney & Gibney, 2013, p. 8). This

immediately sets a tone for the scene in terms of Gibney wanting an explanation from Armstrong for his deception and personally feeling as if Armstrong owes him a favor of explaining the process.

It is important to note that in 1998 the TDF was in hot water due to a very controversial year of cheating from the Festina affair, which was mentioned earlier in this paper (Millar, 2012; Walsh, 2012). This is a key indicator when setting the scene for Lance Armstrong and the beginning of his winning and doping in the TDF. The Tour was looking for a savior, someone to come distract the world from the culture of doping in the cycling world. Gibney admittedly bought into the hype as well when initially making the documentary that is a part of the pre-confession scene (Gibney & Gibney, 2013).

The scene introduces an interesting narrative when injecting Gibney's pentad. The pre-confession versus post-confession scenes within the documentary present a representation of both sides, but in the end, Gibney is really telling one story, which will be identified through the use of the pentadic analysis.

Act

Gibney's original intention of the act he wanted to highlight was the comeback of Lance Armstrong in 2009 after his retirement in 2005. This evolved into Gibney pursuing an explanation to why Armstrong chose to dope throughout his career: "When the truth came out I told him he owed me an explanation on camera" (Gibney & Gibney, 2013). By redefining his terms with Armstrong, Gibney gave Lance an opportunity to address his doping scandal once he was backed into a corner. The very first clip of the film is a talking head of Lance Armstrong addressing his doping scandal post-confession. This immediately puts the ball in Armstrong's court, and Gibney chose to let Armstrong have the first say in the documentary post-confession.

Gibney posited the question when referring to Armstrong's comeback in 2009, "Why did he come back?" right at the beginning of the film (Gibney & Gibney, 2013). Specifically, Gibney notes that after winning the TDF seven times in a row, it seemed like a good time to walk away. This appears to show a side of Gibney that would rather be making a triumphant film about Armstrong's highly touted accomplishments rather than highlighting one of the biggest cheating scandals in sports history. This may suggest that Gibney is offering a worldview in this scene that may be somewhat reluctant to telling this story.

Gibney asks whether or not this documentary would even be in existence if Armstrong would have never come back in 2009: "It might never have happened if he hadn't decided to take a victory lap in 2009" (Gibney & Gibney, 2013, p. 5). This is certainly emphasizing the act of the comeback of Armstrong in 2009 as part of the problem with Armstrong's cheating scandal, as if to diminish the overall concept that Armstrong cheated and the point of the documentary is to find out why and how.

The most prolific act that is portrayed in *The Armstrong Lie* is Armstrong's involvement with Dr. Michele Ferrari. Dr. Ferrari, apart from Armstrong, is potentially the most controversial character of the documentary. Ferrari is first introduced into the film as Gibney is explaining his origins from Northern Italy, which was apparently known for its group doctors that were determined to find a way to increase the performance of cyclers.

However, a theme that appears in the film is the idea of Ferrari being a victim of demonization from the media. Specifically, Dan Coyle refers to Ferrari as less of a controversial figure and more of a scientist; "That's the bit that gets lost a little bit. I think he comes across as sort of a cloak and dagger enabler, when, in fact, his whole story, his core interests, the way he educated himself is essentially scientific," (Gibney & Gibney, 2013, p. 15).

Gibney does not particularly curb this ideal in the film when he compares cyclists as biological racing machines and Ferrari as the “world’s greatest mechanic” (Gibney & Gibney, 2013, p. 15).

Ferrari first sought out Armstrong in 1995 due to what he referred to as his potential with developing power, specifically his lungs being huge (Gibney & Gibney, 2013). This temporarily deflects more of the attention away from Armstrong as the premiere antagonist. By specifically highlighting that Ferrari sought out Armstrong and that Lance was just a cog in his vast scientific machine, it minimizes the notion of Armstrong being the ultimate cheater of an ultra-competitive sport.

Gibney does note a particularly damning situation involving the relationship between Armstrong and Ferrari. In 2004 Ferrari had been convicted by an Italian court for sporting fraud, constraining Armstrong to cut ties with him and banning Ferrari from the sport of cycling (BBC Sport, 2004) however, an investigation by Italian police had uncovered a fact that Armstrong had been communicating with Ferrari’s son through email and sending money to the controversial doctor (Gibney & Gibney, 2013). This act shows the length and desperation that Armstrong would resort to in order to win this contest.

Agents

There is no question that the primary agent for Gibney’s film is Armstrong; however, Gibney utilizes other characters closely tied to the situation at hand to portray a specific worldview. For example, Gibney chose to highlight Ferrari as a prevalent agent in the film as well. In the documentary it is made clear to the viewer that Ferrari was not very friendly to interviews. Gibney points out that Ferrari does not often give interviews to outsiders, but he received permission from Armstrong’s camp in 2009 for the purpose of his original intent of highlighting Lance Armstrong’s comeback (Gibney & Gibney, 2013). During Gibney’s one-on-

one interview with Ferrari he specifically asks the doctor if he sought out Armstrong based off of his potential (Gibney & Gibney, 2013) and in doing so paints a theme that perhaps Armstrong was a victim of an advanced doctor wanting to maximize his potential. Here Gibney is indirectly proffering the question, would you do it if one of the most advanced doctors in your field of interest approached you?

Agency

Although he is not highlighted in the film quite as much as other people, Gibney early on shows the involvement of Hein Verbruggen. Verbruggen was president of the Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) from 1991 to 2005 (NOC*NSF, n.d.). In the documentary, when referring to his first TDF victory in 1999, Armstrong claimed that Verbruggen approached his camp essentially asking for an “excuse” as to why he showed up positive on a steroid examination (Gibney & Gibney, 2013). This setup within the documentary also contributes to the theme of other agents playing a big role in the scandal while minimizing Armstrong’s own volition.

Remaining consistent to the narrative of Armstrong not entirely acting alone, the documentary highlights, once again, the relationship Armstrong had with Verbruggen in the form of his association with Verbruggen’s organization, UCI, the governing body of sports cycling that oversees international competitive cycling events. This is displayed through Gibney’s narration citing a \$100,000 donation made to UCI from Armstrong for an alleged blood-testing machine in 2005 (Gibney & Gibney, 2013). This conveys the message that Armstrong and UCI together formed an agency that helped perpetuate the doping scandal in which Armstrong was the leading member.

This theme is prevalent throughout the whole documentary: Armstrong never really stands alone as a sole participant in his wrongdoing. At one point in the film there is footage of

chalk written on a road the riders of the TDF compete on saying: “MAFIA = UCI + Armstrong” (Gibney & Gibney, 2013). This theme is perpetuated by Armstrong himself who comments in the documentary, “The truth is that everybody was making money. Everybody. And, and I mean everybody,” (Gibney & Gibney, 2013). This all directly reflects on the agency in which Armstrong was acting.

Two salient themes are emphasized throughout the documentary that portray Armstrong as being more of a victim of the agency rather than the antagonist for which he is mainly known. When referring back to the 1999 to 2005 run, Armstrong insinuates that in order to compete in the TDF, they had “to play ball or go home” (Gibney & Gibney, 2013). This implies a problem with the culture of those that participated in the TDF. Daniel Coyle, the author of the book *Lance Armstrong's War: One Man's Battle Against Fate, Fame, Love, Death, Scandal, and a Few Other Rivals on the Road to the TDF*, may have summed it up perfectly in the documentary when describing the culture of cheating within the TDF.

When everyone cheats, then it becomes hugely distorted. It becomes a different contest, a contest of who's got the best doctor, who's got the most money, who's got the biggest risk tolerance. And the guy who was that guy for this era was Lance. (Gibney & Gibney, 2013)

This begins to change the conversation from Armstrong being the most notorious cheater to being the winner of a different competition. Gibney elected to highlight this aspect as the environment (agency) of what Armstrong was doing. Ultimately leaving the question with the viewer once again, would you have done the same thing?

Armstrong places himself in the environment again when referring to his return in 2009 and whether or not he was doping: “I can't speak for them, but, you know, I like to believe that

we all were basically clean,” (Gibney & Gibney, 2013). This shows that Armstrong once again is referring to his actions as a response to being in a certain environment. When he was cheating from 1999 to 2005, everyone was cheating, which heavily speaks to the agency element within the pentad. When he was riding clean for his return in 2009, everyone was riding clean.

Another agency shown in the film is the presence of the Andreu’s. Frankie Andreu was a member of the U.S. Postal Service cycling team from 1998 to 2000 who had testified of his and Armstrong’s use of performance enhancing drugs (Jones, Collins, & Westemeyer, 2006). Frankie Andreu’s wife, Betsy, had gained knowledge of cheating that was taken place by her husband as well as the rest of the U.S. Postal Service team and encouraged her husband to come forward (Affadavit, 2012).

Gibney also elected to highlight a former teammate of Andreu and Armstrong, George Hincapie, who considered Andreu a mentor that first taught him to take performance enhancing drugs in the TDF.

So, for me, that really bothered me that all the sudden [Andreu] changed and he wasn't racing anymore and said, well Lance is doping. Well, I mean, [Andreu] taught me how to dope. How could you stand by when you know that you did what you did. Lance never sat there and said, “Are you gonna dope or your out, or I’m firing you,” That's just not true, and they made it seem like that was the case. (Gibney & Gibney, 2013)

What makes this particularly interesting is the subtle exoneration that Gibney instills on Armstrong by allowing Hincapie to point out that Armstrong was never forcing anyone to dope, but rather that Andreu had “taught” him how to get ahead in the race by doping. The narrative shifts in this moment to be more about the aggression of Frankie Andreu than it does of Lance Armstrong.

In a private interview I had with Betsy Andreu, wife of Frankie Andreu, who is a prominent figure throughout the documentary, she explains the whole ordeal involving the “smear” campaign of Frankie Andreu in the documentary.

I was extremely disappointed that they gave George Hincapie carte blanche to say that Frankie taught him how to dope because that was not true, it was inaccurate, it was a blatant lie led to smear Frankie. There’s nothing in George’s affidavit. He even said in his affidavit that he started doping before Frankie did so there’s no way Frankie could have ever showed him. (H. Anderson, personal communication, July 18, 2016)

This conveys a major disconnect between the real story and what Gibney chose to portray in the documentary. Whether Gibney knowingly or unknowingly moved forward with this story is up for debate, however it shows a lack of dedication to getting the story straight as opposed to telling it with a certain narrative.

Betsy Andreu clarified her story even further when discussing her relationship with Hincapie and Gibney.

[George] apologized to Frankie, admitted that Lance put him up to saying what he said on *The Armstrong Lie*, that he never should have done it, he shouldn’t have talked to the free press. And when I had told Alex about that, and I like Alex, I think he is an honest man, I think he is a man of integrity, it was silence. I said, ‘You should never, ever, ever let anybody have the right to smear somebody when you are told that they’re completely lying without having a rebuttal.’ (H. Anderson, personal communication, July 18, 2016)

And Andreu also noted that a president of Sony also had a problem with the Gibney documentary on Lance Armstrong.

[Gibney] say(s) anything. I can tell you that when I met with one of the presidents of Sony pictures he told me that he wanted the initial movie shelved because he didn't think it was hard enough on Armstrong. He said this is a guy who lies through his teeth whenever he opens his mouth. He said, 'I saw through it, they didn't. It wasn't hard enough on Lance.' (personal communication, July 18, 2016)

Through this conflict, the Andreus had become a powerful opponent to Armstrong essentially incurring most of the wrath the media had pointed in Armstrong's direction (McMahon, 2015). The ultimate controversy throughout the film is the argument of whether or not Armstrong had admitted to doping to a doctor in an Indiana hospital in front of the Andreus (Gibney & Gibney, 2013; Velonews, 2006).

The biggest emphasis that Gibney makes when highlighting the agency in *The Armstrong Lie* is the fact that it ultimately consisted of Armstrong himself, UCI, his teammates, his coaches, and his own doctor. All these agencies ultimately were pitted up against the Andreus throughout the documentary.

Purpose

Gibney states at the beginning of the documentary that he is still unsure of Armstrong's motive for doing the documentary (Gibney & Gibney, 2013). This becomes a particular point of interest when considering their relationship. Gibney had set out to do a documentary on the comeback of Armstrong, indirectly acknowledging that it was to prove all of Armstrong's doubters wrong. There is no question at this point that Gibney and Armstrong had developed a positive relationship, which is also conveyed through old footage of interviews during the filming of the comeback (Gibney & Gibney, 2013). This has potential implications of Armstrong

agreeing to the interview perhaps because he knew his friend would not try and pin all the blame on him.

Another potential purpose throughout the documentary is to highlight Lance Armstrong's non-profit foundation to support cancer, *Livestrong*. Gibney specifically notes that he did not buy into the notion championed by others that *Livestrong* was just a front for all of his doping, noting that the foundation had actually raised over \$300 million. The documentary shows a clip of Armstrong addressing a reporter that had ridiculed Lance's comeback in 2009 by specifically referring to Armstrong as the "cancer" that has returned to the sport (Gibney & Gibney, 2013). The clip shows a very upset Armstrong at a press conference indirectly referring to the *Livestrong* foundation and all it has done: "I am here so that I don't have to deal with it, you don't have to deal with it, none of us have to deal with it, my children don't have to deal with it," (Gibney & Gibney, 2013). Although the reporter may have been particularly harsh on a sensitive subject, Armstrong is not pulling any punches when he uses everything he has accomplished, his foundation and what it has advanced in the medical field, as a way of transcendence for all the cheating that he had previously done, and Gibney certainly wanted the viewers to be aware of this confrontation as well.

Gibney's reasoning for compiling the documentary is conveyed through the way he packages the entire film. Armstrong's secret of doping throughout his entire TDF career is public knowledge now, so how does Gibney proceed when highlighting this magnificent downfall? Gibney chose to interview Ferrari in order to stifle the wrongdoing committed by Lance because doctor's certainly come from a place of authority and the audience can certainly relate to a doctor's admonition.

The construction of Andreu's interviews in the documentary may not be as much for an opposing viewpoint as much as it may be to lend credence to Gibney's overall argument: Armstrong never acted alone. By displaying a devil's advocate in the documentary, he is able to argue to his audience that this documentary is not as one-sided as people may think. All other pentadic elements seem to point to this purpose within the documentary.

RQ1: What are the pentadic properties of Alex Gibney's film, *The Armstrong Lie*?

Based on the results section it is clear that Gibney employed all of the pentadic properties: act, scene, agent, agency, however, purpose was unidentifiable throughout the film. Perhaps Gibney did this to come across as an objective storyteller.

The identification of the pentadic properties that Gibney employed allows me to confidently determine the result of RQ1a:

RQ1a: What is the hierarchy of presentation among act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose, and how are they constructed?

Based on analysis of the results section, Gibney demonstrated where he chose to emphasize the pentad throughout his documentary, illustrating to all the viewers that the hierarchal order to the story are as follows: agency (the cheating culture of international cycling as a whole) agent (Armstrong himself) act (doping/cheating) scene (the Tour de France) and purpose (unknown).

Ratios

In analyzing and discussing the five pentads, the salient pentad throughout the film is the act coupled with agency. There is clear evidence that Gibney emphasizes the act of cheating while also conveying Armstrong's involvement with third parties who contributed to his cheating ways or cheated with him. Coupling act with agency shows the true purpose of the documentary.

It is clear that Gibney conceived of the act and agency as products of the purpose. Act and agency, when working in tandem, show that the act alone was not committed by Armstrong but rather an agency had contributed to the overall culture of cycling that enabled Armstrong to respond accordingly.

RQ1b: Of the pentadic properties, where is the greatest emphasis placed, and what does it tell us about the producer's motive?

Act and agency in particular show that Gibney wanted to highlight all the wrongdoings of those involved in the process and not just Armstrong's. This was not a sole attempt at exposing Armstrong for being the innovator behind the conspiracy but rather an attempt at showing Armstrong as the best at covering his tracks and most aggressive at defending himself. The subcomponents of the act encompass a hierarchal order to the misdeeds committed: Specifically, the Festina affair involving an associate of Team Festina being caught in Switzerland with an assortment of performance enhancing drugs (Millar, 2012; Walsh, 2012); Armstrong being a part of a U.S. Postal Service team that had already incorporated cheating in cycling into their method; and the act of Armstrong involving himself with a famed (or defamed) doctor in Michele Ferrari because Armstrong did not know "who to trust" (Gibney & Gibney, 2013) all imply that perhaps Armstrong was more a product of his environment.

The scene paired with purpose indicate that Gibney was certainly attempting to paint a picture of corruption in a bad environment. The scene is set with Armstrong telling his story, which quickly turns more into an explanation of the background. Armstrong is returning to an event that had been riddled with a history of corruption and the use of performance-enhancing drugs. The scene does not hesitate to paint a picture in the viewer's mind that Armstrong had been stepping into a sport that had already been plagued.

Kneupper (1979) described the act-agency ratio as “give a child a hammer, and everything will be treated like a nail” (p. 133). This analogy highlights a message of exoneration in the child, identifying the fact that the child cannot be at fault for his or her actions much like Gibney presents the ultimate message that Armstrong cannot be at fault for his actions. Rather the culture of the sport at the time, his teammates, and his doctor all provided Armstrong with a hammer, and all he did afterwards was hit the nail.

The information gathered from the private interview with Betsy Andreu contributed to the agency telling a new story due to the insight of Gibney not responding to her inquiry of an explanation of why Hincapie was allowed to paint a terrible picture of Frankie Andreu in the documentary. The non-response from Gibney to Betsy Andreu can inform us that Gibney may have perhaps wanted to lessen the severity of what Armstrong had done by highlighting the role of the agency in the analysis.

The subtlety of Gibney’s purpose is impressive in attempting to paint an objective picture. He certainly cannot be compared to the overtness of Michael Moore in trying to implicate George Bush in a grand conspiracy over the Iraq war (Senda-Cook, 2008); however, his exposé of Lance Armstrong perhaps was not intended to exonerate Armstrong but rather himself and his association with arguably the most infamous cheater in the modern era of sport.

RQ1c: Are there any secondary narratives that appear during analysis of the film?

No other secondary narratives were determined throughout the analysis of the documentary. Due to the nature of how documentaries are made, it is not too surprising that the story Gibney was telling was straightforward, but rather the way in which he chose to tell it was under scrutiny.

RQ2: How does the pentadic construction address Armstrong’s culpability?

Gibney did address Armstrong's culpability insofar as the documentary itself confronted the issue of Armstrong cheating throughout his seven Tour de France victories. However, based on the analysis, Gibney did not address Armstrong as being the most culpable, rather the association he was a part of (agency). More of this sentiment will be illustrated in the conclusion of this paper.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Discussion

Mark Grace, a former first basemen for the Chicago Cubs was quoted as saying, “If you’re not cheating, you’re not trying hard enough” (Levitt & Dubner, 2005, p. 19). This attitude is what blurs the line that separates sports and cheating. Cheating has become rampant in today’s society, with former sports heroes such as Lance Armstrong being one of the strongest examples.

The significance of cheating in professional sports culture has an impact on society as a whole. As citizens of the United States, it is not uncommon to create heroes in the sporting realm who have accomplished tremendous feats against all odds, modern day Greek Gods, so to speak. Mark McGuire and Sammy Sosa involved in a competitive home run race in the 1998 major league baseball season captured the attention of the nation, only to fall flat on its face once all of the doping allegations came out (Wilson & Schmidt, 2007). This was then followed up by a huge steroid scandal by the current home-run record holder, Barry Bonds (Fainaru-Wada & Williams, 2006).

Most recently the world was exposed to an unprecedented scandal involving the Russian government and the role they played in a major doping scandal involving their Olympic athletes (Ruiz, 2016). Major scandals like these potentially point to a whole new line of scholarship involving apologia and sports athletes suffering from scandal.

For Lance Armstrong, *The Armstrong Lie* becomes somewhat of an apologetic response engineered by Alex Gibney. Apologia has been applied to some cases of sports athletes (Husselbee & Stein, 2012; Thomsen & Anderson). Future research becomes necessary in order to fully dissect *The Armstrong Lie* as a form of apologia on behalf of Armstrong’s actions, but for now I can confidently determine that this paper lays a foundation for that potential.

Implications

Analyzing the tactics that Gibney employed while producing *The Armstrong Lie* will offer a potentially unique observation: because Lance Armstrong was motivated solely as a brand he had made on his own and by protecting his own image, or perhaps for even more of a financial gain, audience members may not be as affected as if this had been motivated politically (Ling, 1970; Senda-Cook, 2008) or from athletes in different sports responding to questions about their own performance-based critiques (Williams & Kuypers, 2009). Lance Armstrong will take full responsibility for his own deception, cheating, lying, etc. and be held fully accountable, giving him no relief from being a part of a bigger body that could have been involved as well, like in the cases of other athletes on a team or politicians as part of a bigger political party.

Since its conception by Burke (1969), the pentadic analysis has helped rhetoricians dissect motivations from all types of sources. This form of rhetorical criticism gives a new avenue for understanding the strategy involved in the production of explanations, which in this case is of Alex Gibney and Lance Armstrong and the motivations of their actions in the documentary.

The hope of this study is to contribute to the overall body of knowledge when conducting an analytical approach to identifying truth in storytelling. As previously mentioned, there are multiple cases of a storyteller selectively emphasizing certain elements of the story to proffer a different story than what truly may have taken place. Situations such as Ted Kennedy and his version of the incident at Chappaquiddick (Ling, 1970); Oliver Stone and his depiction of events in film of John F. Kennedy (Benoit & Nill, 1998); Ronald Reagan and his emphasis of events on the suicide bombing in Beirut, Lebanon, and the murder of over two hundred marines (Birdsell, 1987); and many other examples where the pentadic analysis has been applied all point to a

concept that every story not only can be questioned but perhaps should be questioned, particularly in high-profile occasions when the salient voice is that of a highly motivated, heavily involved figure.

The pentadic analysis provides an outline of questioning that can provide critics with a better lens in which to view and critique stories. Not only does this encourage more objective storytelling but also offers a democratic approach to how observers of the story should be treated, like respectable members of society that should be worthy of being told a true story.

Limitations/Delimitations

Past literature has questioned Burke's pentadic analysis in the form of whether or not it is really five or six elements, thus actually making it a hexad (Anderson & Althouse, 2010). The potential sixth component of Burke's dramatism that the authors point out is attitude; however, they admit that Burke has before classified attitude through act, agent, or agency. For this reason, a delimitation of this study is the sole focus on the use of the pentad and not incorporating another component making it potentially a hexad.

One limitation to this study is the fact that Gibney has full control over what Armstrong says in the documentary. Since he is a filmmaker with full editing rights, the study cannot automatically assume an unadulterated version of Lance Armstrong and his viewpoints. Also, it will be impossible to pinpoint exactly in what chronological order Armstrong is making his statements and to what exact questions he is responding.

Another limitation is that I only chose to analyze *The Armstrong Lie*. Future research could incorporate not only *The Armstrong Lie* but also any situation/interview where Armstrong was faced with answering questions about his cheating in the TDF, starting with Oprah Winfrey.

After repeatedly reaching out to participants of the documentary and ultimately being unsuccessful apart from the interview with Betsy Andreu, another limitation for the study is the aforementioned heuristical approach to the critique. Because there is limited reinforcement of the analysis at hand, my interpretations and heuristics to the documentary and the interview with Mrs. Andreu are the only analyses being presented.

Conclusion

Gibney did not directly exonerate Armstrong through his documentary *The Armstrong Lie*, but he attempted to minimize Armstrong as a solo acting individual with only his best interests at heart. Gibney makes it clear to the audience that not only did Armstrong have support from teammates, his coaches, his doctor, and even the organization that governed international cycling, but he also chose to highlight *Livestrong*, the non-profit organization Armstrong created to help fight cancer. However, the title of the documentary is *The Armstrong Lie* and, as such, implies that it is Lance Armstrong's lie and no one else's. There is no doubt that there are clear indicators of Gibney's purpose when considering the title of the film *The Armstrong Lie*. This could possibly be an eye-catching title that is meant to grab the attention of as many viewers as possible who may want to educate themselves on the stories and intricate details of what happened behind the scenes of the TDF with Lance Armstrong and company; however, after watching the film, the viewer will then be led to believe that the lie was not solely partnered with Armstrong, but his entire agency and the agency of the TDF.

It is worth noting that my own subjective view can come into play during the analysis as well. The qualitative/heuristical approach signifies that it is my worldview that comes into play throughout the analysis of the documentary. Although objectivity is desired, it is not fully achievable due to the nature of the approach. However, through deep analysis of the rhetoric and

choice in coverage throughout the documentary, coupled with the interview with Betsy Andreu, it is my belief that the analysis at hand conveys a strong result with a high probability of truth.

Because I have used a qualitative method to conduct this research and qualitative research favors social constructivism as its primary ontological assumption, it is worth noting that I, as the researcher, am inseparable from the meaning that is derived from this analysis. This is not a critique of the approach. Rather, it is an acknowledgement that social constructivism recognizes that any meaning derived from the research at hand is not generalizable and comes from my own socially constructed reality. As such, reflexivity becomes a major part of the analysis (Sherry, 1991) and certainly informs the interpretation of the analysis of the documentary.

Considering reflexivity throughout this approach, it was clear that Betsy Andreu felt that Alex Gibney provided a good piece of information concerning the Lance Armstrong controversy. However, in my own analysis, it is my belief that Gibney may have had ulterior motives in producing this documentary and perhaps had the desire to exonerate himself with his association with Lance Armstrong and, certainly to a degree, to exonerate Armstrong himself. This documentary manifests the idea that Gibney was ultimately defending Lance Armstrong until the very end. Through Gibney's own admission, he had wanted to believe Armstrong rode clean (Gibney & Gibney, 2013) and ultimately felt that he was betrayed and needed to clear not only his own name but as much of Armstrong's as he possibly could.

Along with Betsy Andreu, I reached out to the director, Alex Gibney, Frankie Andreu, and George Hincapie. Although Betsy Andreu was the only one who agreed to an interview, her insights and overall view of the documentary may have been the most important interviewed I could have acquired outside of talking to Gibney and Armstrong.

It is worth noting, however, that Betsy Andreu's own insights and feelings towards the documentary may be biased as well. Reflexivity applies to me as the researcher and to Betsy Andreu as well in that her worldview affects her opinions of the documentary that Gibney had constructed and the overall message he was trying to convey.

Overall, the interview with Andreu proved to be very fruitful, and her insight informed the conclusion that otherwise would not have been possible. Campbell and Fiske (1959) were the earliest qualitative researchers within the social sciences to argue the importance of triangulation within the nature of this research. Triangulation is meant to explain "operation in context" (Cronbach, 1975, p. 126) and thus doing allows the story to have more than one perspective shared.

In the context of this paper, it is not the role of Andreu to confirm my findings of Gibney's motivations for producing the documentary, but to rather add another point of view that may help this study inform the reader of different points of view. In this case, one point of view coming from someone directly involved in the storyline, and the other coming from an outsider's perspective. Neither of which are invalid.

As mentioned earlier, Burke noted philosophical underpinnings exist when the elements of the pentad are unveiled. According to Burke (1952) agent/agency represent idealism and pragmatism. This falls in line with overall theme of *The Armstrong Lie*, that Armstrong was merely being pragmatic in his approach to being a competitor in the Tour de France. It was Armstrong's pragmatism and idealism that convinced him that cheating in that sport was just a way of staying competitive with all the other cheaters, as Gibney illustrated in the documentary.

Roig and Ballew (1994) were able to show a correlation between students in an academic setting who were more tolerant of cheating believed their professors to be more tolerant of

cheating as well. Although in an academic setting, it may show a bigger picture that those who are more willing to cheat, and perhaps even look at it through a softer lens may think that their superiors are more willing to be tolerant of cheating. Thus is the case with Lance Armstrong, that his motivations were perhaps exacerbated because of how he thought those refereeing the sport would not have punished him as harshly.

This coincides with the idea that Armstrong believed he was acting as an organism of a bigger ecosystem, and that everyone was cheating, he was just cheating better than everyone else.

Studies have shown the impact these athletes who choose to dope can directly affect young children (Laure, 1999). This particular phenomenon points to a greater societal issue that athletes are role models whether they choose to be or not; and that what they choose to do/consume can directly affect the motivations of young children who aspire to be like them. It is important to consider the impact that someone as famous as Lance Armstrong can have on society at large when you see this as a growing trend among children. This is why it is necessary to verify that proper punishments are issued out to offenders, and that the athlete who consumed illegal substances was truly remorseful for what he had done. In the case of The Armstrong Lie, we do not see a remorseful Armstrong regretting his actions.

As mentioned previously, Reddiford (1998) identified self-deception as a key contributor to what causes an athlete to cheat in their respective sport. Not only was Lance Armstrong one of the great deceivers of all time, but perhaps one of the best self-deceivers as well. And due to what we know because of this particular application of Burke's pentad of The Armstrong Lie, quite possibly still is.

Koller (2008) argues that the government shows a clear lack of motivation to enforce antidoping across sports due to backlash from a socioeconomic standpoint. Whatever may be due to the hesitance to enforce deterrence against such a growing epidemic needs to be widely evaluated in order to enact strict sanctions against the offenders. Lance Armstrong sought after the fame and fortune of being the best cyclist in the world, and did mostly undetected throughout his whole career. If our society indirectly perpetuates these cheating actions due largely to the inability to conduct a proper investigation, it is likely that we may need to reconsider how we view doping in sports in general. This is perhaps one reason why we see an overall lack of remorse in Armstrong's demeanor throughout the documentary; he may truly believe he still hasn't done that much wrong in the eyes of society.

This pentadic analysis of sports controversies/cheating scandals is the first of its kind and potentially lays groundwork for future research because of what we can truly discover based off of this particular application. This study offers a critical lens involving motivations of a representative of a cheater in sports. By conducting this documentary, Gibney became a representative of Armstrong, and based on evidence from the pentadic analysis, tried to defend his actions of cheating in the sport by minimizing the offense and trying to portray it as an issue of the cycling culture.

If we are able to more readily identify the motivations behind why an athlete chose to cheat in their sport through the pentadic analysis, we can help understand better the culture of sports in general and try and instill a new ideology against cheating and dispel the notion of being a part of a certain cheating culture does not exonerate the offender. The pentadic analysis helps pinpoint how an athlete's motivations may be influenced in cheating and can help us better

understand similar situations involving cheating in sports and how to manage them appropriately.

Ultimately, this study questions the motivations of documentary filmmaker, Alex Gibney and his purpose in constructing *The Armstrong Lie* outside of a monetary gain by applying Burke's pentadic analysis. And this application led me to believe that ulterior motivations were apparent through the manner in which Gibney told the story, which would likely not be possible if certain characteristics such as act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose are not applied to the story.

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