

Doctoral thesis-abstract

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My dissertation is an attempt to explain what television directing is.

Organising experiences and thoughts I've gathered over 24 years of practice as video mixer and video director, led me to discover and formulate my own definition of the role.

The aim of this piece is to expand this definition and demonstrate its validity.

Video directing means making an impression on the screen, of a world which in reality doesn't exist. It is building, from the ground up, a story about a situation, allocating it in a fictitious, agreed reality and based on principles of that agreement delivering programmatic content.

The content itself varies, however, the context of the story is based in a universe created by the producer and scenographer in agreement with the viewer, that it all happens here on the screen. That "here" is ephemeral because after the TV has been turned off, that universe remains only in that viewer's imagination.

Just like after the book has been read and put back on the shelf, moods, emotions, situations, and character's peripeteia remain in our memory.

That is why I will allow myself to bring up a part of a definition of the represented world from the Dictionary of Literary Terms to reveal how many similarities there are.

Themes are elementary units that construct a represented world; Their various combinations create entreties of the same kind as literary figures, plots and lyrical situations do; dynamic themes shape the time dimension of the represented world, static themes on the other hand it's space dimensions.

In my view the comparison is valid, as in the introduction to Art in World History by Mary Hollingsworth, written by Giulio Carl Argan we read:

Visual arts are communication through images, as poetry is communication through words, and music communication through sounds. (...) Art, as we have said, is related on the one hand to visual perception and on the other to a technical procedure.

That quote, although referring to the artistic actions of the most prominent painters and sculptors in the history of arts, captures the essence of transferring the artistic and aesthetic vision of the producer to television image.

In The Outline of Poetics we read:

The choice of rules for the motivation of represented world in a piece of work will always be influenced by the authors' specified worldview and his attitude towards literary tradition, which allow for a certain range of justifications. That range, naturally, will be different for Sophocles, Shakespeare, and Gorky, because it is based on differing conditioning of philosophical, social, and artistic attitude.

Television production seems to be no different. The way an event is presented on the screen by the producer is rooted in his/her education, artistic interests, and admired aesthetic influences.

Active participation in the process of creation of an image and continuous readiness to narrate new stories to viewers through the use of televised means of expression has encouraged me to reflect on the matter.

The profession, straightforwardly, relies on discovering paths to reaching the audience's perception, which consequently will extract entertainment, information, and knowledge about the world from the rectangular format of television.

Having spent years considering how the hypothetical spectator perceives the reality around him and inspecting possible ways of adjusting the means of expression in order to tell a story as clearly and comprehensibly as possible, I've drawn conclusions about the perception of on-screen reality, what the viewer recognises as real, and what as fictitious.

There's important advice in prof. Antoni Bohdziewicz's book *W warsztacie filmowca* I've always strived to take into account since I first read it back in the '90s while preparing new television productions. The audience will know about a situation, subject, or event only as much as we've presented to them on the rectangular screen.

Prof. Bohdziewicz also uses a comparison of film reality to literary poetics that's become very close to me.

In a written speech the construction of a sentence is governed by general rules of grammar and syntax. Complying with these rules is a necessary condition to reach, firstly, "legibility" of the wording, secondly its correctness. Construction of fragments larger than single sentences is contingent on poetics or theory of prose: rhetorics, dramaturgy, the theory of the novel.

The same is true for film (...). They constitute the "abc" of editing and generally teach a filmmaker to create what we call "film reality" in a rectangle of a screen.

Going further and adding supplementary deliberation to the important observation made by prof. Bohdziewicz, it is interesting that spectators will get an impression of participating in events, and will have a sensation of being a part of the presented world only if the producer skilfully describes the scope of the piece with an image.

After over eighteen years since writing my master's thesis under prof. Lidia Zonn titled "The influence of an editing method of television reportage on the perception of information programs based on examples of material from Tv Wroclaw, I'm in possession of excessive volumes of technical resources to fulfil my objectives. It made me think, however about the viewer's genuine needs - about conditions that have to be met in order for him/her to be fully immersed in presented on the screen world.

Television production means, among few more definitions, live editing of material. Mixing multiple cameras on the producer's console consists of choosing, in real-time, points of view and imposing that perspective on the spectator.

This "habitat" isn't equivalent to real-world reality, since the producer has unlimited possibilities for the creation of space, its manipulation, and imposing an impression he/she is determined to lay down in with this artistic statement.

Any imitation and transformation of reality by next generations of technology are in my opinion a mere pursue of, unparalleled in its colourfulness and heterogeneity of moods, nature.

I direct my attention in written commentary, to intentionality in use of modern television techniques, by describing my own work - a spectacle for children "Readers-Creatures" as well as other selected tv shows, I was working with.

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