

DREAMLIKE AND NARRATIVE NATURE OF SCREEN TEXTS

NATUREZA ONÍRICA E NARRATIVA DOS TEXTOS CINEMATOGRÁFICOS

NATURALEZA ONÍRICA Y NARRATIVA DE LOS TEXTOS DE PANTALLA

Sergey GRIGORYEV¹
Natalya SAENKO²
Polina VOLKOVA³
Natalya GONCHARENKO⁴

ABSTRACT: It is argued that the screen narrative is the most effective means of representing dreaming, the temptation of voyeurism. A gradual historical movement of a screen narration from literary work with plots related to dreaming and to oneiric as the poetics of a future film is noted in the paper. The feature drama of the French director François Ozon "In the House" (2012) is analyzed. The postmodern characteristics of poetics and semiotics of the film are considered. A model "the narrator and the listener" is proposed as a semiotic interpretation of the film.

KEYWORDS: Screen culture. Narrative. Dialogue. Hypertext. Cinema.

RESUMO: *Defende-se que a narrativa em tela é o meio mais eficaz de representar o sonho, a tentação do voyeurismo. Nota-se no artigo um movimento histórico gradual de uma narração em tela desde a obra literária com tramas relacionadas ao sonho e ao onírico como a poética de um futuro filme. O longa-metragem do diretor francês François Ozon "Na Casa" (2012) é analisado. São consideradas as características pós-modernas da poética e da semiótica do filme. Um modelo "o narrador e o ouvinte" é proposto como interpretação semiótica do filme.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Cultura de tela. Narrativa. Diálogo. Hipertexto. Cinema.*

¹ Russian State Agrarian University - Moscow Timiryazev Agricultural Academy (RSAU), Moscow – Russia. Department of Philosophy. Associate Professor. PhD in Philosophy. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9143-0636>. E-mail: grigoryevdiss@gmail.com

² Moscow Polytechnic University (MPU), Moscow – Russia. Professor of the Department of Humanities. Doctor of Science in Philosophy. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9422-064X>. E-mail: rilke@list.ru

³ The Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia (HSPU), Saint Petersburg – Russia. Professor. Doctor of Science in Philosophy. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1814-1840>. E-mail: polina7-7@yandex.ru

⁴ Volgograd State Medical University (VSMU), Volgograd – Russia. Associate professor. PhD in Philology. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2512-7545>. E-mail: nat_go@mail.ru

RESUMEN: *Se argumenta que la narrativa cinematográfica es el medio más efectivo para representar el ensueño, la tentación del voyerismo. Se nota en el artículo un movimiento histórico gradual de una narración en pantalla desde una obra literaria con tramas relacionadas con el sueño hasta la oniricidad como la poética de una película futura. Se analiza el largometraje del director francés François Ozon "In the House" (2012). Se consideran las características posmodernas de la poética y la semiótica del cine. Se propone un modelo "el narrador y el oyente" como interpretación semiótica de la película.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Cultura de la pantalla. Narrativa. Diálogo. Hipertexto. Cine.*

Introduction

The screen as a cultural phenomenon evolves and acquires extended functions, revealing its own modes, the list of which is open-ended, since the formation of the phenomenon of the screen is not complete, but it heads towards the transformation of the screen as a medium into a screen-substance. The first step of the evolution of screen culture is artistic cinematography, which many researchers compare to dreams, reveries, illusions, hallucinations, seeing a correlation between technical projection of the image on the screen plane and psychic projection (MIKHALKOVICH, 2006; POZNIN, 2021).

The thread that strings on itself dream, peeping, and cinema is visual perception. However, when the movie sounded and spoke (an auditory perception was added to the visual reception), it turned into a hypnotist, a great illusionist. Postmodern artistic cinema plays with self-quotation, ironic reflection, revealing, and demonstrating the mechanisms of the unconscious viewer at times, which is the true, ultimate screen projection (BERGSON, 1999; KORTUNOV, 2017). The dreamlike character, the temptation of voyeurism, the hypnosis of the narrator become attributes of the aesthetics of the film of late postmodernism. It seems to us that modern cinema, having gone through all the stages of evolution of the screen phenomenon (projection - television - PC monitor - touch surface), firstly, as a crucible of discourses and aesthetics, remelted the influences of these stages; secondly, returned cyclically to the initial form - the projection, which has the highest degree of oneiric aspects.

Problem statement

The problems of explication of the dreamlike nature and narrative nature of screen texts on the material of F. Ozon's film is solved in the paper.

Research questions

The following questions are solved in the research:

What characteristics of the screen as a means allow to realize narrativity and oneiric aspects of a feature film?

How are changes of the value picture of the world reflected in the dynamics of the techniques of the artistic screen?

Purpose of the study

The analysis of the cinematic narrative, which reflects, looks back at itself, pursues the goal of understanding its hypnotic character. The research goal was formed within the boundaries of our concept of cinema as an effective ideological resource (AKIM *et al.*, 2019; DELEUZE, 2004; SHCHEGLOVA; SAYENKO, 2016; SHCHEGLOVA; SAYENKO, 2019; TSVETKOVA *et al.*, 2021; VOLKOVA *et al.*, 2020a, 2020b).

Research methods

The methodological basis of the study is psychoanalysis. As a basis, the authors chose the Jungian model, suggesting that segments of the collective unconscious could find expressions in dreams, taking the form of stable plot structures there (JUNG, 1994, 1995, 1996). The interpretation of the materials of the feature film by F. Ozon is also correlated with semiotics and hermeneutics.

Findings

The drama of the famous French screenwriter and film director of the "New Wave" Francois Ozon "In the House" is based on the play by the modern Spanish playwright Juan Mayorga "The Boy at the Last Desk" and was shot in 2012. The theme of the moral decay of the intelligentsia in the modern world is relevant for F. Ozon in the context of not only social satire but also personal experience. The director was born in a family of university lecturers, experienced a lack of parental love, which was reflected to varying extent in each of his films. Therefore, it seems quite natural to us that F. Ozon chooses a play written by Juan Mayorga, professor of drama and philosophy at the Royal School of Dramatic Arts in Madrid, winner of prestigious theatrical awards, an intellectual who is a screenwriter of the works of Calderon,

Lope de Vega, Shakespeare, Lessing, Dostoevsky, Buchner, Ibsen, Kafka, Chekhov, Dürrenmatt. The central characters of the film "In the House" are a married couple. She works in the contemporary art gallery "Labyrinth of the Minotaur", excruciatingly searching for artists and artistic works for exhibitions. Excruciatingly, because it conflicts with commercial necessity and aesthetic disinterest. He is a failed writer, a teacher of French literature and philology at the lyceum, suffering from the ignorance and laziness of his students.

Other motifs, like voyeurism, homosexuality, children's complexes that grew out of relationships with parents, satirical images of bored intellectuals, and contemporary art are often discussed in reviews of François Ozon's works. In an interview with the director himself, we hear:

[...] through cinema, I have learned to overcome my insularity, to express what is called transgression – the relationship of a young person with the ugliness of the outside world. Something I couldn't express in any other way. I have learned to do and experience things in cinema that are forbidden in real life (PLAKHOV, 2002).

Such interpretations are well-known and understandable to us, moreover, we accept them as justified.

Of course, we are also close to concepts in which there is a high degree of citation, irony, and intertextuality in the film of F. Ozon.

This is a reference to the famous film by Pier Paolo Pasolini "Theorem", where an alien fatally changes the lives of all family members. And the mention of Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Flaubert in different contexts. And the (not accidental) appearance of iconic books in the frame, for example, "Journeys to the Edge of Night" by Louis-Ferdinand Selin or "Mental Turmoil of the pupil of Thurles" by Robert Musil (RANTSEV, 2013).

However, the poem by Joseph Brodsky "Dedication" (1987) became the symbolic guide for our interpretation of the film, where the poet, addressing the reader, writes:

*Ты для меня не существуешь; я
в глазах твоих — кириллица, названья...
Но сходство двух систем небытия
сильнее, чем двух форм существования.
Листай меня поэтому — пока
не грянет текст полуночного гимна.
Ты — все или никто, и языка
безадресная искренность взаимна.*

*You don't exist for me; I
In your eyes - Cyrillic, names...
But the similarity of the two systems of non-existence
Stronger than two forms of existence.*

*Scroll through me that's why – while
The text of the midnight anthem will not appear.
You are all or no one, and language
adressless sincerity is mutual.*
(Free translation)

This is a metaphorical model of creativity as it is, a model of genuine poetic interaction. In one of his interviews, F. Ozon said about the film "In the House":

The relationship between Germain and Claude is the prototype of any creative enterprise where there is an editor and a writer, or, for example, a producer and director. For me, it was a rare opportunity to talk about the essence of my work in cinema, inspiration, creativity and the role of the viewer in all of this (KINO-TEATR.RU, 2012).

Ozon builds a dialogue with the viewer, includes him in the process of creating his work, opens him the "kitchen" of creativity, in which morality is a rare ingredient, and freedom is the most popular. True freedom realizes itself in postmodernism through narrative and dreamlike practices. The conditions for the possibility of such freedom are the fundamental openness of any narration and the ability of the dream to be repeated, remaining unidentified. Scheherazade as a skilled-narrator broadcasts at night. Due to this, her fairy tales acquire the characteristics of dreams.

Narrative is a term denoting the process of narration, storytelling, which does not describe any reality, does not express the inner world of the narrator. The narrative is an independent reality, different from the actual and from the reality of the author's literary text. The narrative is infinite, polyvariant, but strives for finality, which allows to manipulate the recipient (GRITSANOV; MOZHEIKO, 2001, p. 490-492).

In our opinion, F. Ozon's film "In the House" is about the ability of the narrative to lead into temptation, to be an instrument of breaking of norms, a way of crossing the boundaries between sleep and wakefulness. And about the hypnotic power that narration bestows on the narrator. It is no doubt that the postmodern concept of narratology and the concepts of "narrative" and "narrator" determine the situation and functions of the characters of the film "In the House" more accurately than all the others.

Germain and Claude, who are they to each other? Why, at a certain point, does each of them become attached and dependent on the other? Why is each in dire need of the other in this interaction?

1) A teacher and a learner. A learner needs a teacher as much as a teacher needs a learner. The teacher is looking for a learner (ready and willing to listen), and, if he finds, becomes attached to him and becomes dependent on him, since the essence and being of the

teacher are supported only by the existence of the learner. The director's shift in the classical structures of character relationships is interesting. The teacher-learner structure gradually mutates. The traditional cultural situation gives the teacher the role of narrator. Germain, starting as a classical teacher of literary criticism, is seduced by his learner Claude's narrative and turns into a recipient.

2) Narrator and listener (reader). Both carry each other out in the process of narration. The archetypal plot of narration, in our opinion, is the tale of Kolobok (Bread Ball).

Kolobok rolls, not having the goal of his movement, the movement, and it began because of the trivial boredom and the impulse to overcome it. Kolobok fulfills himself in a song-story (a prototype of a narrative) about himself. "This song was in fact a 'text of creation', which, according to popular beliefs, in itself has a magical defensive power" (TSIV'YAN, 2004, p. 311). He is completely unsatisfied if not heard; his dependence on the recipient and his attention becomes disastrous for Kolobok - the narrator, who has managed to believe that only the recipient controls the narrator, but not vice versa. When Teacher Germain refuses to read Claude's text, who for the first time in the entire film explodes with violent emotion, anger, and insults, he acutely feels the danger of his decline, since only the listener grants being to the narrator.

Firstly, the narrative is never finished; the refrain of the film is the phrase "To be continued ...". Scheherazade broadcasted for a thousand nights until she found out that she had been pardoned. Kolobok sings his biography story to the saddest ending. At the same time, the final of the narrative is passionately awaited. Claude spends a lot of time and effort searching for the final, in the space of which his humanity pale and blinking, manifests itself, for the final found is the found of self and the approach of death. Not finding the ending and abandoning the uniqueness of the final of any narrative, Claude regains cold beauty and strength. It is implied (but not always implemented) that the narrator is primarily the carrier of knowledge about the end, and only because of this quality he is fundamentally different from another subject of the narrative story – its "hero", who, while existing in the center of events, does not have such knowledge.

Secondly, nothing in the narrative is asserted as what really happened, but it is not presented as pure fantasy. The beginning of the broadcasting (by Kolobok or Scheherazade) hypnotizes and puts to sleep, the listener becomes a spectator (we see dreams, although not with physical vision). The narrative procedure creates the reality of the dreaming, while affirming its relativity and its independence from the created meaning.

Claude: "But it's true!"

Germain: *"It doesn't matter if it's not interesting to the reader!"*

On the contrary, the sick fantasy is created by the interest of the reader. A text as a narrative is a story that can always be told in a different way.

Thirdly, the degree of value (for example, moral judgments) in the narrative is reduced as much as possible, this action is granted to the listener/reader to their great pleasure. The narrative, like the "echo chamber" (R. Barth), only returns the meaning it has introduced to the subject. In the film, another reader (and perhaps more interested than Germain) is the teacher's wife. Her words often sound like an echo, an echo of what she has read (but actually expected): *"... will be caught on the couch..."*, *"Did they have sex in his presence?"*

François Ozon personally performs the function of a narrator, building the text on the principle of double coding, which is similar to the use of the corresponding term by Eco (1986, p. 224): irony as a "meta-verbal game, a retelling squared". So, it is impossible to say certainly that the episode in which the teacher's wife describes "verbal painting" is an irony over actual art, or the author's self-explanation of the film. The meta-verbal game in Ozon's film is also Paul Klee's paintings' reproductions and their titles. Both episodes can be perceived by the viewer as serious, or as keys to the interpretation of the entire film, but F. Ozon hastily revokes them with the help of irony (verbal painting is criticized, and the names of Klee's paintings turn out to be just a translation of German words that Claude's father made). Here, Ozon, as a narrator, pretends to be someone who says certain things about a certain world, and then invites the reader to reconstruct the true situation, which forces the reader to distinguish between the narrator's speech and the author's implied speech.

F. Ozon unfolds the plot in a way where the inner and outer layers are outlined in the narrative fabric. Either what Claude wrote is visualized, or what he has undertaken falls into the text of the work; whether what is happening around the teenager affects his difficult to define, but clearly not fitting into the ideas about high school students, writing style, or Germain's private lessons determine how Claude will act when he gets into Rafa's house. Using nested narrative frames is a strong move to engage the viewer. Time may slow down or speed up; the same period of time can be repeated, but in a different interpretation.

3) The tempter and the tempted. The narrative is immoral in the sense that it is simply not moral, parallel to the space of morality. But it acts as a way of testing, or rather, the temptation of the listener.

Narrator Claude acted here as a tempter.

We realize that Claude himself, a teenager-manipulator, with the help of narration solves his own problems of an incomplete family and a sick father, embodies his fantasies and

forbidden desires in creative writing. He also seems to be "groping" the zone of his power, contributing to the dismissal of Germain and his divorce with his wife. However, we can see that F. Ozon did not stop on a typical portrait of a cynical teenager. Here we have a tempter, so skillful that he gives himself out only a couple of times, identifying himself as a Dragon or as Scheherazade.

An important role in determining Claude as a tempter is played by the appearance of the protagonist.

[...] Claude's face is endowed with the beauty of that nature which simultaneously frightens and attracts, its magnetism is combined with a mystery which is better not to know. Actor Ernest Umoer, being several years older than his character, brilliantly coped with his task so when watching it, the question arises: is this beauty angelic or diabolical? (RANTSEV, 2013).

With his shrilly and strange beauty, Claude is also absolutely neutral, indifferent, as if cold and empty (not devastated, but empty initially and fundamentally unfilled).

Germain and his wife, getting stuck unrealized in a state of boredom, as if set in motion by reading Claude's text and the opportunity to embody the unrealized (writing and lust). By the way, in V. Nabokov's book "Pale Fire" art is defined as something that is accompanied by laziness, vices, and lust. Germaine is seduced by the opportunity to free himself from boredom. Considering Claude's text unethical, he did not find the strength to refuse to read it and even more to stop writing it.

Germain is also driven by voyeuristic desires, this is openly stated several times in the film: *"to look at the world through the keyhole"*, *"the best place is the back of the class, no one sees you, but you see everyone"*, etc. Germain goes to deception and thievery, sacrificing professional honor for the sake of continuing the narrative. Eventually, we begin to suspect that Germain is not interested in the text. But the intimate details of what is happening in the house are interesting. Germain's attitude towards Rafa is certainly driven by an interest in the events in the house, as a result of which the student experiences humiliation. Rafa's suicide is a final tacitly anticipated by Germain, and therefore embodied by Claude.

His wife's infidelity, her affair with Claude, is an "echo" that has returned to Germain. Echo is secondary, thought and anticipation that characterize Germain is primary.

Both suicide and adultery are depicted, fictional, but done to please the reader.

Thus, F. Ozon portrays the intellectual Germain, who could not stand the narrative testing. Narration exposed all the moral imperfections of Germain's personality.

Successful narration provides power over the listener. In this sense, F. Ozon gave a peculiar explanation of the mass popularity and relevance of reality shows.

Conclusion

We approach the visual text of cinema to study cultural symptoms, the formation of an explanatory model based on visual anthropology, as well as the study of socio-cultural life using semiotic and psychoanalytic methods.

Thus, analyzing the history of cinema, we see that at a long initial stage, cinema kept relationships with literature and dreams were included in the narrative as grounded by the plot elements of poetics or methods of demonstrating the inner world of the hero. However, in the second half of the XX century, the active development of the dream screen space begins, which the temporal sequence, and often the logical connection, is broken.

The frequent emergence of films, which the oneirosphere is already openly dominating in, became the third, contemporary, stage. The screen, therefore, ceases to be just a technical means, it becomes a source of different aesthetics and poetics which correspond to the character of a person of postmodernity - *laminality*, fluidity, rejection of rigid identification. Still, a fragment of the film being analyzed, which describes "verbal painting", can be perceived as one of the many keys to its interpretation: "This is verbal painting. The artist invites the viewer to look at an empty frame or a bare wall. He describes the picture, and the viewer, in this case, the listener, becomes a co-author; he imagines the picture and projects his vision on an empty frame. The picture exists in reality, but the artist, having described it, just immediately destroys it. The artist mocks the cultural industry, which produces exclusively tangible, material objects. Instead of it, he offers something poetic, ephemeral, immaterial".

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