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PECULIARITIES OF IMPLEMENTING A DIRECTOR'S IDEA IN CONTEMPORARY AUDIOVISUAL ART

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Abstract

The purpose of the research is to analyse the peculiarities of the implementation of the director's idea in fiction and documentary films using new hybrid genres that influence the specifics of contemporary audiovisual art, to determine the role of the mockumentary genre in modern cinema and to understand its impact on the creation of a film product. To explore the psychological impact of documentary films on the viewer's perception and change of their worldview. To outline the standard and distinctive features of the director's approach to making documentaries and fiction films. **The research methodology** is based on the following scientific methods: theoretical – for analysing the psychological factors that influence the perception of an audiovisual work, understanding outstanding examples of world cinema; comparative – for drawing parallels between fiction and documentary cinema. The research also uses structural-systemic and general scientific theoretical research methods (analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction, generalisation, classification, etc.) **The scientific novelty** is that, for the first time, the approaches to documentary and fiction filmmaking are compared; the details of the phenomenon of the hybrid cinematic genre of mockumentary are established, and its psychological impact on the viewer is studied; the influence of the mockumentary genre on the formation of an audiovisual work through associative editing is outlined. **Conclusions.** The article analyses the embodiment of the director's idea in fiction and documentary cinema with the help of new hybrid genres that influence the specifics of contemporary audiovisual art. The role of the mockumentary genre in modern cinema is determined, and its influence on the creation of a film product is studied. The psychological factors of the viewer's perception of documentary cinema, which help to change their worldview, are investigated.

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Problem statement

Cinematography appeared later than other forms of art. Its birth was connected with the development of science at the end of the 19th century because it was at that time that its technical basis appeared. It took time before mechanical invention became an art with its language, expressive possibilities and outstanding works. As a result, cinematography turned into a synthetic art, absorbing the assets and experience of other types of art that existed before it.

In the process of technology development, the range of tools that the stage director can use to realise his idea in fiction and documentary films is expanding.

It is essential to understand that despite all the innovations and technological discoveries, the direction of various types of screen art must leave behind certain unique features to ensure the final product's quality. Understanding the difference between directorial approaches to filming a documentary or fiction film is extremely important for modern society. Thanks to the rapid development of mockumentaries, two fundamentally different schools of creating audiovisual products have merged into one.

Film and TV production authors need to be aware of all the subtleties and finer points of creating a film within the scope of screen arts to have the right to claim to call their creative product audiovisual.

Recent research and publications analysis

Taking into account the research of well-known researchers of cinematog-

raphy, the fundamental work of Directing as an art and a profession was written by V. Kisin (1998), where he analysed the stage director's profession and the peculiarities of its work in fiction and documentary films.

V. Vasyanovych, in his work "When you are not making movies, you get the feeling that you are living for nothing", considered precisely the methods used by the stage director during the creation of the author's idea (Badior and Stepanska, 2016).

A. Michelson (1984), in the book *Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov* (*Kino-Eye* is understood as "what the eye cannot see"), examined the origin and development of the documentary film and the phenomenon of Dziga Vertov.

The reasons for the emergence of pseudo-documentary cinema and the development of its popularity during the second half of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st centuries were analysed in the article by S. Honcharuk, O. Levchenko and N. Tsimokh (2022) "Mockumentary Genre as a Cinematic Phenomenon of the Postmodern Age".

R. Shyrman and D. Syz, in the article "Peculiarities of the Implementation Specificity of the Director's Idea in the Screen Work" (2020), concluded that due to the genre specifics of the realisation of the stage director's idea of screen work, editing could be a tool for expressing an idea, according to the genre of the screen the work.

Ukrainian scientist O. Moskalenko-Vysotska, in the article "Genre-thematic features of the films of Ukrkinchronics 2011–2013" (2019), for the first time in Ukrainian film studies, managed to study

the genre-thematic spectrum of the films of the Ukrainian Studio of Chronicle-Documen- tary Films, which were created at the beginning 21st century. The author provided a comprehensive description of the process of combining genres in the context of the concept of the chronotype of documentary cinema.

Also, the author V. Demeshchenko, in her work "Peculiarities of genre formation in 21st-century cinematography" (2023), considered modern genres in cinematog- raphy and their hybrid forms, both in docu- mentary and fiction films.

I. Zubavina (2021) studied virtual space's reliability fundamentally. Topical issues of multifaceted understanding of the fea- tures of the phase transition to the age of digitalisation are singled out and system- atically considered in the work "Ontology of Virtual Space".

H. Chmil and K. Pshenychna gave a com- prehensive definition of cinematographic editing in the article "Film Editing: From Avant-garde Films to Modern Editing Practice" (2018), where the relevance of film avant-garde editing principles for to- day's directorial practice is argued.

Bezruchko O. and Sukhin M., in the arti- cle "Animated Documentaries in Modern Cinematic Art: Specifics of Production" (2023), analysed the peculiarities of pro- ducing animated documentary films in the modern film process.

Modern American researchers Gary D. Rhodes and John Parris Springer, in their work "Docufictions: Essays on the Intersection of Documentary and Fictional Filmmaking" (2006), considered new hy- brid genres in documentary filmmaking.

American authors also devoted their works to this topic: B. Nichols (2001) "In- troduction to Documentary"; M. Camp- bell (2007) "The mocking mockumentary and the ethics of irony"); D. Roscoe and

K. Hight "Faking It: Mock-Documentary and the Subversion of Factuality" (2001); K. Hight "Mockumentary. Encyclopedia of Humor Studies" (2014); M. Renov "The- orizing Documentary" (1993); K. Marley "Expanded Documentary: The Aesthetics of Pleasure" (2019); S. Lumet "Making Movies" (1996).

The purpose of the study is to analyse the implementation of the stage director's idea in fiction and documentary films with the help of new hybrid genres that impact the specifics of modern audiovisual art. To determine the role of the mockumen- tary genre in modern cinema and its influ- ence on the creation of a film product. To analyse the psychological impact of docu- mentary film on the viewer's perception and the change in his worldview. To out- line the standard and distinctive features of the director's approach to filming docu- mentaries and fiction films.

Main research material

In the cinema of the 21st century, the border of screen works between docu- mentaries and fiction films can be pretty blurred and unclear. Moreover, some pic- tures can contain and organically com- bine elements of both types of screen creativity, so this issue can undoubtedly be considered relevant for the future consideration and transformation of cin- ematographic works.

Victor Kisin, in his publication "Direct- ing as an art and a profession", points out that directing a documentary and a fiction film has some standard and dis- tinctive features. He emphasises: "... in the performing arts, not the behaviour it- self, but its image is demonstrated. <...> In the documentary film, we are dealing with imitative behaviour. However, it can be perceived as real and productive. <...>

Therefore, directing is the art of creating any spectacle" (Kisin, 1998, p.7). To sum it up, we can say that the stage director of a fiction or documentary film must first create a performance for the viewer.

A similar position can be found in the work of B. Nichols, "Introduction to Documentary". One of its key ideas is that documentary cinema has the potential not only to reproduce reality but also to influence the perception of viewers and stimulate a change in worldview. He proves that the stage director, choosing specific frames, stylistics, editing solutions and sound design, actively influences the audience's perception and can even change their opinion or feelings (Nichols, 2001). The scientist writes:

"Compared to 'What story to tell?' the question 'What should I talk about?' brings our mind back to the public sphere and social interaction with others on a topic of common interest. Not all documentarians take this position, but it is one of the most common ways of structuring a documentary". (Nichols, 2001, p.14)

It should be noted that B. Nichols, in a book aimed at explaining the basic principles of documentary cinema to the reader, emphasises the importance of the staged plot to create the necessary conditions and atmosphere. However, the author does not call for the complete rejection of the observation factor. It is worth emphasising that, to a greater extent, B. Nichols followed an attitude that can be compared with that defined by Dziga Vertov (Myslavskiy et al., 2020).

A. Michelson, in the collection of records of the Soviet artist Dziga Vertov, *Kino-Eye: Notes of Dziga Vertov*, cites excerpts from his diary for 1924. In one of them, it is said that the cinema eye is understood as "what the eye cannot see",

as a microscope and telescope of time, as "life catch it unawares", etc. Different formulations mutually complemented each other because, in the cinema eye, it was assumed all methods and means that can serve to reveal and show the truth (Michelson, 1984, p.41). There have always been cinematographers who believed that documentary cinematography should be inviolable from the director's side when what happens in the frame is decided by "fate", not the crew (Myslavskiy et al., 2021).

Valentyn Vasyanovych also chose this absolute inviolability of the events in the frame for himself in creating the film *Black Level* (2017). In an interview with LB.ua, the director emphasises that today, he is against scripts because, in documentaries, they are conditional. According to the artist, this was the case with his film *Black Level* (2017). He followed the character and filmed how the future character lives and breathes. He watched this video at home, considered expanding it, and then offered the actors to act (Badior & Stepanska, 2016). In the same article, V. Vasyanovych was asked why his work *Against the Sun* (2004) is considered a documentary but looks like fiction. The director replied that they wrote a simple story: Tymofiy takes clay, goes to the island, and sculpts a woman. However, the stage director says this is not enough for the movie. The group started filming. They put Tymofiy in front of the camera and told him what to do. The film's character worked as an actor in a modern fiction film, but he played himself (Badior and Stepanska, 2016).

This interview demonstrates how blurred the line between documentary and fiction film is. In the example of the screen mentioned above, the works of the Ukrainian artist, it can be seen that

any techniques inherent in both types of shooting can be used to achieve the goal set by the stage director. The main thing is that the author must understand why he is shooting this tape (Bezruchko and Chaikovska, 2020). As an argument, let us quote Sidney Lumet's statement from his book *Making Movies*:

"The most important decision: What is the movie about? <...> What is it about emotionally? Personalisation of the film is important. I will have to work on it in the next few months. The picture should have a meaning. The word 'meaning' can be interpreted in an extensive range". (Lumet, 1996, p.14–15).

This attitude takes place in the direction of any film, regardless of the type of cinematography. This can be considered the most important common feature of various types of screen works.

As V. Demeshchenko (2023, p. 56) notes in his work "Peculiarities of Genre Formation in the 21st Century Film Art", using the example of the formation of cinema as a synthetic art, researchers have a rare opportunity to follow the general laws of the formation of art forms and test existing theories, because, being at the origins of the process and receiving factual information directly from artists, modern aesthetics and art history already have a somewhat developed and conceptual apparatus for understanding the processes that take place in modern cinema.

The peculiarity of the art form, as V. Demeshchenko (2023, p.57) noted, for example, of cinematography, is born at the intersection of its immanent genre system and technical means of objectifying an artistic idea. Genres in the process of art's functioning play the role of regulators of human artistic activity; they coordinate both the processes of formation and

the processes of perception. Species coexist in morphological subordination, and if we do not touch on the issues of species generalisation according to their significance in the distribution of the spheres of influence of art, then their structure is easily arranged within the limits of the hierarchical system.

At the end of the 1920s, there were controversies about the authenticity and objectivity of documentary cinema that lasted for more than a century (Bezruchko et al., 2020). With the transition to digital technologies, his claim to the image's authenticity is questioned because they allow you to interfere with the fixed image and manipulate it while creating the impression of altered verisimilitude (Gavran et al., 2023).

Filmmaking in the animated documentary genre blurs the boundaries between different types of cinema, documentary and fiction film, poetry and information, social drama and privacy, author and viewer. O. Bezruchko and M. Sukhin, in their work "Animated Documentaries in Modern Cinematic Art: Specifics of Production" (2023), reveal the specifics of the combination of facts and events with animation of the sequence of storylines in films. Unlike other types of cinematography, the reality on the screen is created by hand, recreating events from a blank page. When working on a film, the director-artist can do it without actors, layouts, pavilion, plein air, celluloid, camera, and, of course, without a large budget.

Modern American researchers Gary D. Rhodes and John Parris Springer (2006) propose introducing a new term, "docu-fiction", to denote popular hybrid forms, which denotes the mixing of game and documentary elements in screenwork. Along with docu-drama, it also includes another genre – **mockumenta-**

ry, a wholly or partially fictional product faked as a document.

A mockumentary is similar to a docu-fiction in that it borders fiction and documentary films but tends more towards the latter. In the very term, the English documentary is combined with the word mock; this genre reproduces the aesthetics of a documentary film with a fictional plot for mystification or parody. Document stylisation can sometimes be a technique, as in Woody Allen's *Zelig* (1983) or Rob Reiner's *This is Spinal Tap* (1984). Many films of this genre have an element of provocation. In the genre of mockumentary, the film by the Italian director Ruggero Deodato based on the script by Gianfranco Clerici, *Cannibal Holocaust*, which was released on the screens in 1980, was successful and very provocative. This film became the most scandalous in the history of cinema due to violent scenes of violence and the actual killing of animals. Initially, the tape was banned in almost sixty countries, and the matter even reached the court.

The British Peter Watkins made the film *The War Game* (1965) in the same genre for the BBC three years after the Caribbean crisis and a year after the escalation of the American invasion of Vietnam. It was the first war in history that was chronicled on television. The director explained that his work reflects the sense of madness and chaos that the mass media constantly produced on TV screens in the 1960s. According to the plot of the picture, the Soviet Union inflicts a nuclear attack on Great Britain, America attacks China, and a full-scale World War begins. These events are told through news reports and supplemented by footage of the devastated Kent city streets and interviews with survivors. Among them are a general and a bishop who justify nuclear war.

Despite the provocative and somewhat fantastical, the American Film Academy agreed that, in a certain sense, the events of *The War Game* are a reality. Although the picture was never shown on the BBC channel, it was released in 1967. In 2008, he received the prestigious Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Oscar for the best documentary film.

It is important to note that, in addition to the fact that mockumentary is a hybrid genre on the border between a fiction film and a documentary film, montage plays a significant role. It is worth agreeing with the voluminous definition of the term editing, which is noted by G. Chmil and K. Pshenychna (2018, p.101) in the work "Film Editing: From Avant-garde Films to Modern Editing Practice":

"The concept of 'editing' is ambiguous and reflects various types of activity. Editing is a technical assembly of a film into a single whole and a way of displaying reality on the screen. Montage is a specific way of organising cultural life, adopted by cinematography and used for various artistic purposes".

When creating a film in the mockumentary genre, associative montage is used, which is best suited to such films.

Pseudo-documentary is a new hybrid form of screen art and an independent cinematographic phenomenon that combines the main principles of fiction film directing and the stylistics and techniques of shooting a documentary film (Chmil et al., 2024). Over time, the boundary between reality and fiction has blurred more and more in films, which helps directors achieve greater immersion in the world of the work by the viewer (Chmil, Korablova, Bezruchko et al., 2024). Due to this, in the further development of modern art, the rapid development of pseudo-docu-

mentary cinema can take place because this form of narration most successfully performs the function of a guide between potential viewers and the world created by the stage director.

The relevance of the mockumentary genre lies in its ability to convey a particular atmosphere and expressiveness that may not be available in other examples of documentary or fiction films (Shyrman, Kotliar and Suprun-Zhyvdrova, 2018). It allows authors to use creative techniques to create a unique story and characters that can be more interesting and appealing to the audience.

M. Campbell, in the article "The Mocking Mockumentary and the Ethics of Irony" (2007), explains the essence of the combination of satire and irony against the background of the British-American comedy film directed by Larry Charles Borat. The author of the tape very successfully chose the form of the picture of pseudo-documentary because it is a great way to add a sense of unreality and reality at the same time, making the film "shocking and provocative" in the eyes of critics (Campbell, 2007, p.53). Based on M. Campbell's research, we can say that the use of the mockumentary genre in itself creates a sense of irony and satire of everything that happens on the screen. The levels of cruelty of jokes and bullying are different.

These levels were defined by the pseudo-documentary theorists D. Roscoe and K. Hite (2001, p.5) in the work "Faking It: Mock-Documentary and the Subversion of Factuality", divided the most diverse films of the corresponding genre according to the scale of harsh irony and satire, introduced a scheme of three levels of mocking documentary cinema, depending on from the nature and depth levels of the plots. According to their distribution,

films of the first degree include pictures focused exclusively on the benevolent (or unintentionally reflexive) use of consistent and stable documentary codes and conventions in creating a fictional environment. The purpose of these works is, as a rule, to parody some aspect of popular culture (Roscoe and Hight, 2001, p.100). The second level is films based on more purposeful abuse and criticism, often political (Roscoe and Hight, 2001, p.131). The authors call the third and last link "deconstruction" because they include works "which may or may not expect the audience to identify their fictionality easily, but which include a more obvious degree of reflexivity towards the documentary genre. These mock documentaries represent an 'aggressive' appropriation of documentary techniques..." (Roscoe and Hight, 2001, p.160).

K. Hight (2014) himself has a separate article of the same name devoted to mockumentaries in the book *Encyclopedia of Humor Research*, where he draws attention to the popularity of this genre among viewers and critics, as well as its influence on the development of comedy art. Special attention is paid to examples of famous mockumentaries and television shows, such as *This is Spinal Tap* (1984, dir. R. Reiner) and *The Office* (2005–2013). The author analyses the style, humorous potential and importance of these works in the context of the genre and proposes to analyse this type of cinematography as a form of entertainment content and a means for expressing specific ideas and criticism. It examines different approaches to making a mockumentary, including acting improvisation, directing techniques and editing. This helps readers understand the complexity and creative process of creating such content. In addition, the

article also draws attention to the importance of mockumentary as a genre for the development of humour and the discovery of new talent. It points out that this genre allows artists to express their creativity in unpredictable ways, expanding the boundaries of humour and attracting the audience's attention (Hight, 2014, pp.515–516).

Continuing the topic, we can note the article "Extended Documentary: Aesthetics of Pleasure" by K. Marley (2019) for the French magazine InMedia. The author demonstrates the importance of the aesthetics of pleasure in extended documentary cinema and its influence on the viewer's perception. She explores how aesthetic elements such as visual appeal, sound design, and interactive technologies can enhance the viewer's emotional experience and ensure viewing pleasure. Also, an equally significant place in the article is occupied by the poetics of the new "extended documentary", which, in my opinion, includes mockumentary (Marley, 2019). C. Marley (2019, p.5) notes: "The poetic mode can be seen as having a much more complex pattern of signification than other more conventional modes such as observation, explanation, and participation. Viewers are invited to engage their senses more deeply and enjoy decoding a text where the discourse is not so obvious". Close to this understanding of the intricacies of documentary cinematographic works is the work *Theorizing Documentary* by M. Renov (1993, p.35), who notes:

"...the ability to evoke an emotional response or to evoke pleasure in the viewer through formal means, to generate lyrical power through nuances of sound and image without verbalisation, or to engage

the musical or poetic qualities of language itself, should not be seen as mere distractions from the main event".

Since M. Renov was the predecessor of K. Marley, we should note that the aesthetics and poetics of documentary cinema fascinated artists even earlier and developed with time. The result can be called the appearance and interest of the audience in the mockumentary genre since the directors intend to create a sense of presence in the viewer, to simulate an accurate observation, adding, according to their design, a particular idea through the characters or the environment.

Conclusions

To sum it up, it is worth emphasising that specific, apparent differences exist between fiction films and documentaries, and it is thanks to them that viewers can still divide films by genre. However, there are many more standard features because everything that can help the director realise his idea will be used in the form the author considers necessary.

In addition, it should be noted that the peculiarity of the "mockumentary" genre is its ability to combine the technique of documentary cinema with elements of art to create a unique effect since the directors try to recreate in the viewer a sense of presence in the frame, to imitate reality, adding a specific idea according to their intention through the characters, environment and circumstances.

This "freshness" of view, provided by such a genre, allows the viewer to gain new experiences and psychological sensations and the director to understand a new way to convey his ideas to the audience.

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ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ВТІЛЕННЯ РЕЖИСЕРСЬКОГО ЗАДУМУ В СУЧАСНОМУ АУДІОВІЗУАЛЬНОМУ МИСТЕЦТВІ

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Анотація

Мета дослідження – проаналізувати особливості втілення режисерського задуму в ігровому та документальному кіно за допомогою нових гібридних жанрів, що чинять вплив на специфіку сучасного аудіовізуального мистецтва. Визначити роль жанру мок'юментарі в сучасному кінематографі та осмислити його вплив на створення кінопродукту. Дослідити психологічний вплив документального кіно на сприйняття глядача, а також зміну його світогляду. Окреслити спільні та відмінні риси режисерського підходу до зйомки документальних та ігрових фільмів. **Методологія дослідження** полягає у використанні таких наукових методів: теоретичного – для аналізу психологічних чинників, що впливають на сприйняття аудіовізуального твору, осмислення видатних прикладів світового кінематографа; порівняльного – для проведення паралелей між ігровим і документальним кінематографом. Також у науковій розвідці використано структурно-системний і загальнонаукові методи теоретичного дослідження (аналіз, синтез, індукція, дедукція, узагальнення, класифікація тощо). **Наукова новизна.** Вперше зіставлено підходи до знімання документального та ігрового кіно; встановлено деталі феномену гібридного кінематографічного жанру мок'юментарі та вивчено його психологічний вплив на глядача; окреслено вплив жанру мок'юментарі на формування аудіовізуального твору за допомогою асоціативного монтажу. **Висновки.** В статті проаналізовано втілення режисерського задуму в ігровому та документальному кіно за допомогою нових гібридних жанрів, що чинять вплив на специфіку сучасного аудіовізуального мистецтва. Визначено роль жанру мок'юментарі в сучасному кінематографі та вивчено його вплив на створення кінопродукту. Досліджено психологічні чинники сприйняття глядачем документального кіно, за допомогою яких відбувається зміна його світогляду.

Ключові слова: кіно; відео; зйомка; монтаж; режисура ігрового кіно; режисура документального кіно; кадр; мок'юментарі

