

The Righteous in Film

Attachment 5

Team 1

Task: Imagine that you participate in the competition of the best screenplay ideas, which takes place at the film festival. Your task is to convince the producers that the best kind of movie to present the stories of rescuing Jews during World War II is **a documentary film**. Your arguments may be based on your own knowledge, imagination as well as supplementary texts below. Write down your main theses on a large sheet of paper.

Supplementary texts:

Definitions:

CREATIVE DOCUMENT

Contrary to a traditional document, this film does not pretend to present the reality in an objective way but, by introducing creative means of expression (pioneer image and sound editing, sophisticated soundtrack or frame composition, novel ways of filming, the presence of allusions or quotations taken directly from other movies and various ways of provoking or staging events), it emphasizes the fictionality of the world presented on the screen and the fact that it has been created by the director for the needs of a movie. In a creative document, words or visual effects do not serve the informative function or cannot be understood literally - most often their meaning is symbolic or esthetic. Their purpose is to evoke emotions and arouse certain connotations in an audience. Editing, understood as a creative procedure, is of great importance. A creative document aims at creative conversion of reality. What is

significant (but sometimes also difficult) is to separate this film genre from a plot and from the so called mockumentary, which is a type of a film only pretending to have a documentary format, the so called false document.

Source: M. Przyłipiak, *Poetyka kina dokumentalnego (The poetics of documentary cinema)*

DOCUMENT WITH THESIS/PERSUASIVE-RHETORIC DOCUMENT

A film of this kind is like “a voice in discussion”. Its composition is arranged in such a way that the film may serve discursive purposes. Its domain is to explain and to argument. This type of a documentary film is a statement in which arguments are collected to explain a problem or convince an audience about something. A very important element of this film is the author referring to a set of commonly shared opinions, views, values as well as the use of commonly employed and familiar means of argumentation. A more radical and controversial form of a persuasive document is a propaganda film which uses rhetoric resources in an instrumental and unilateral way in order to manipulate an audience.

[...] On the other hand, educational or scientific films as well as movies with ecological, social or political purposes may be called partly persuasive too. The characteristics of a persuasive film appear to be more popular in American documentary cinematography (for example M. Moore’s productions).

Source: M. Przyłipiak, *Poetyka kina dokumentalnego (The poetics of documentary cinema)*

OBSERVATIONAL DOCUMENT

The author of an observational document aims at objectivity and tries not to interfere with the events presented in a movie. The author's commentary is replaced with the observation of events from a position of, as the saying goes, a fly on the wall, without unnecessarily attracting anybody's attention. That is why in the context of an observational document we can talk about the so called "invisible" or "transparent" camera, which is a specific way of recording that gives the impression of large authenticity in the characters' behavior - they simply should not notice the presence of the film crew. On the other hand, the producers should not implement strong means of expression (for example stylized movements of camera or the lighting of a film set, the narrative imitating a feature movie style). At the same time it should be remembered that even an observational document still presents reality as it is seen by the author himself – the choice of material and its concentration in the process of editing is the sufficient reason why this apparently objective sort of a documentary film cannot be accepted as the presentation of reality in a scale 1:1.

Source: M. Przyłipiak, Poetyka kina dokumentalnego (The poetics of documentary cinema)

Producers' comments:

The fundamental difference between a documentary producer and a film-maker orientated to obtaining the so called "meat" is that the latter ravenously switches the camera on in exactly the same moment in which the former switches it off. Of course, we are talking about the moments offering the possibility of cheap sensation: uncritical presentations of human falls, very intimate moments or the characters totally exposing themselves to the eye of the camera, for example at times of spectacular conflicts or uncontrolled emotions etc.

J. Bławut, documentary producer

I fear real tears, and I do not know whether I have a right to record them. I feel like a man entering restricted area.

K. Kieślowski, documentary and feature film-maker

The mystery should be left intact, also because its exposing is only the apparent discovery of the truth. [...] This is where the difference between eroticism and pornography lies. A man devoid of any mysteries ceases to be a true human being.

M. Łoziński, documentary producer

Every movie constitutes a major or minor departure from reality - this is obvious. But a movie is also the testimony on how the director uses or takes the advantage of the authority he is given to shape the audience's attitudes.

D. Wardęszkiewicz, editor

Source: www.filmowka.pl

Team 2

Task: Imagine that you participate in the competition of the best screenplay ideas, which takes place at the film festival. Your task is to convince the producers that the best kind of movie to present the stories of rescuing Jews during World War II is **a feature film**. Your arguments may be based on your own knowledge, imagination as well as supplementary texts below. Write down your main theses on a large sheet of paper.

Supplementary texts:

Excerpts from the publication:

In order to get involved in the experiences of the movie characters, an audience has to believe in the reality of the world in which those characters live. That does not entail naive reception of the movie, in which the equality sign is placed between the world on the screen and reality. Such an attitude may be considered to be a marginal one. But if an audience are to "enter" the world in the movie, feel the emotions, be frightened or laugh and love, they have to believe that this world is a plausible one, with a large dose of reality.

Cinematography is suitable for becoming the crown of the mimetic tradition. Thanks to a plethora of material, the cinema can do justice to many kinds of characters and receptions of reality. Here picture, color, sound and movement support each other.

[...] movement and sound help to create a plausible world on the screen, the credible illusion of reality. Thanks to images and sounds present on the screen which an audience know from their everyday life, they can easily get involved in the experiences of the characters.

The events shown on the screen are the ones which an audience can experience themselves... Cinematography satisfies the desires and constitute a counterbalance to

reality. Objectivity and realism facilitate emotional involvement of an audience. And the other way round: emotional involvement makes distrust and criticism disappear so that an audience may easily believe in the authenticity of events in a movie.

In a traditional film a viewer takes the position of a peeper. He observes people that are not aware of his existence. Even the most intimate situations take place in the viewer's presence, the situations which he would never be allowed to see in real life.

Another characteristic of cinematography is the intensity of the emotions evoked in an audience. No other art can arouse emotions in a spectator to such a degree as the cinema does. An audience sitting still before the screen only facilitate this process. In no way can they react to what they see on the screen.

Why is story-telling so popular? [...] the first answer that comes to mind is that the narrative form is the closest to reality, because it conveys reality as it is. [...] Is it truth? [...] A single situation can be depicted in many different ways. [...] In story-telling, first of all one has to make a choice. It is impossible to tell everything.

A documentary film cannot »simulate« a feature film without the danger of falling into internal contradiction, without auto destruction, whereas a feature film can perfectly imitate a document and its style – and it did it repeatedly, at least in fragments.

Source: M. Przyłipiak, Kino stylu zerowego. Z zagadnień estetyki filmu fabularnego (Zero style cinematography. Problems of feature film esthetics)

Producers' comments:

The fundamental difference between a documentary producer and a film-maker orientated to obtaining the so called "meat" is that the latter ravenously switches the camera on in exactly the same moment in which the former switches it off. Of course, we are talking about the moments offering the possibility of cheap sensation: uncritical presentations of human falls, very intimate moments or the characters totally exposing themselves to the eye of the camera, for example at times of spectacular conflicts or uncontrolled emotions etc.

J. Bławut, documentary producer

I fear real tears, and I do not know whether I have a right to record them. I feel like a man entering restricted area.

K. Kieślowski, documentary and feature film-maker

The mystery should be left intact, also because its exposing is only the apparent discovery of the truth. [...] This is where the difference between eroticism and pornography lies. A man devoid of any mysteries ceases to be a true human being.

M. Łoziński, documentary producer

Every movie constitutes a major or minor departure from reality - this is obvious. But a movie is also the testimony on how the director uses or takes the advantage of the authority he is given to shape the audience's attitudes.

D. Wardęszkiewicz, editor

Source: www.filmowka.pl