

The Expression of the Social Experience in Film Narration: Cinematic 'Free Indirect Discourse' in the Dancing Hawk (1977) by Grzegorz Krolikiewicz

Authors : Robert Birkholm

Abstract : One of the basic issues related to the creation of characters in media, such as literature and film, is the representation of the characters' thoughts, emotions, and perceptions. This paper is devoted to the social perspective (or the focalization) expressed in film narration. The aim of the paper is to show how social point of view of the hero -conditioned by his origin and the environment from which he comes- can be created by using non-verbal, purely audiovisual means of expression. The issue will be considered on the example of the little-known polish movie The Dancing Hawk (1977) by Grzegorz Królikiewicz, based on the novel by Julian Kawalec. The thesis of the paper is that the polish director uses a narrative figure, which is somewhat analogous to literary form of free indirect discourse. In literature, free indirect discourse is formally 'spoken' by the external narrator, but the narration is clearly filtered through the language and thoughts of the character. According to some scholars (such as Roy Pascal), the narrator in this form of speech does not cite the character's words, but uses his way of thinking and imitates his perspective - sometimes with a deep irony. Free indirect discourse is frequently used in Julian Kawalec's novel. Through the linguistic stylization, the author tries to convey the socially determined perspective of a peasant who migrates to the big city after the Second World War. Grzegorz Królikiewicz expresses the same social experience by pure cinematic form in the adaptation of the book. Both Kawalec and Królikiewicz show the consequences of so-called 'social advancement' in Poland after 1945, when the communist party took over political power. On the example of the fate of the main character, Michał Toporny, the director presents the experience of peasants who left their villages and had to adapt to new, urban space. However, the paper is not focused on the historical topic itself, but on the audiovisual form of the movie. Although Królikiewicz doesn't use frequently POV shots, the narration of The Dancing Hawk is filtered through the sensations of the main character, who feels uprooted and alienated in the new social space. The director captures the hero's feelings through very complex audiovisual procedures - high or low points of view (representing the 'social position'), grotesque soundtrack, expressionist scenery, and associative editing. In this way, he manages to create the world from the perspective of a socially maladjusted and internally split subject. The Dancing Hawk is a successful attempt to adapt the subjective narration of the book to the 'language' of the cinema. Mieke Bal's notion of focalization helps to describe 'free indirect discourse' as a transmedial figure of representing of the characters' perceptions. However, the polysemiotic medium of the film also significantly transforms this figure of representation. The paper shows both the similarities and differences between literary and cinematic 'free indirect discourse.'

Keywords : film and literature, free indirect discourse, social experience, subjective narration

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