THE DRAMATURGICAL SPACES OF ANIMATION

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Abstract

This book examines the broad field of animation dramaturgy and scriptwriting. It is the first overall theoretical work in this field in Bulgaria. The books about scriptwriting in animation are usually practical manuals. In most cases they present the scriptwriting formats, the animation storyboards and the specific terms and technical aspects in the process of creating animated films. The common practice is to reduce the problems of animation dramaturgy to the narrative models with examples from classical American cartoons, thus inevitably narrowing the boundless world of animation dramaturgy. The new technologies and computer generated images today have made the world of animation unbelievably rich as a space of endless experiments and innovations.

The Dramaturgical Spaces of Animation is an attempt to penetrate more deeply into the different dramaturgical approaches in animation, analyzing and systematizing the basic models and structures in this specific field.

The focus of the work is on the short films; it is connected with my long-standing teaching practice. The students' films are always short and understanding their structure needs a broader approach in which the poetic codes are often dominating.

Chapter 1. Animation dramaturgy as a specific dramaturgical field

In this chapter animation dramaturgy is examined as an integral part of the broad field of film dramaturgy where feature and documentary films coexist together with animation. They all share common dramaturgical spaces with basic structures and components of scriptwriting. On the other hand the specificity of animation scriptwriting is predetermined by the leading role of the visual codes in the art of the moving images. Animation images are not ontological, they are always artificially created – either hand-made or computer generated. In their endless variety these images need to be organized in specific spatial and usually highly imaginative plots. This is a plasmatic visual dramaturgy with its own specificity. A special attention in this chapter is paid to the specific life of animation characters. Another important focus is brought on the connections between mythology and animation.

Chapter 2. Dramaturgical approaches and models in animation scriptwriting

This chapter discusses the variety of approaches and models in building-up the animation script; the numerous narrative and poetic codes defining its specificity, their mutual dynamics. Various dramaturgical approaches and genre classifications are presented. The author prefers the broad two-part classification of narrative and poetic codes and respectively – dramaturgical models. The poetic codes are discussed in their variety, based on *Tale of Tales* by Yuri Norstein. The other parts of the chapter deal with the universal stylistic figures especially with the functioning of the visual metaphor, metonymy and symbols. The specific dramaturgical approaches and principles of creating an animation plot are examined in detail and depth. The problems that appear as a result of the overuse and overestimation of the scriptwriting formats are also discussed and actualized in this chapter.

In the plastic animation world the formats are often inadequate to express the authors' visions, feelings and ideas. The different experimental poetic plots need a really creative scriptwriting approach. That is why the understanding of the dynamic unity of different narrative and poetic codes is so important for the building-up of expressive animation plots.

Chapter 3. Contemporary dramaturgical practices

In this chapter the basic theoretical approach of this book – the methodology of seeking the unity of narrative and poetic codes in each animation plot is applied to concrete phenomena and authors of the modern animation world. The chapter is divided into 7 parts: *Hristo Ganev's Animation Scripts; The Expressiveness as a General Tendency and as a Key to the Success of Bulgarian Animated Films 2009-2013; Adaptations in Bulgarian Animation; Animation Poetry of 'Mark and Verse'; Parallels between Animation and Puppet Theatre – Plots and Plastic Expression; Dramaturgical Potential and Models in Students' Miniatures, Short Comics Plots of the Young Artists of Comixer.*