

Carlos Baer's Master's thesis entitled *Screenwriting in the Era of Binge Watching* is on a very up-to-date topic, and as the thesis supervisor I would certainly emphasise the author's courage in exploring what is happening now as regards new forms of the distribution and consumption of audiovisual content.

The thesis grapples with the problems writers have with topics of current relevance. The phenomenon has not yet been sufficiently conceptualised theoretically, and so the author has to conduct research often based on impressions of agents (producers, scriptwriters, interviews, etc.) and on anecdotal evidence. However, Mr. Baer has constructed a sound argument and gathered sufficient evidence to convince us that the phenomenon is happening and that it is important to explore the way it affects the story writing in serialised content. The lack of a theoretical background is probably the reason why the core of the thesis starts half way through the work.

If I consider bibliography I have to say there is broader bibliography to the topic than used in thesis. However the used bibliography is touching the subject itself (the effects of binge-watching consumption on storytelling).

The methodology chosen to verify the hypothesis that consumption affects storytelling is a comparison of two episodes of two different TV shows: one written for once-a-week consumption based on regular TV broadcasting; the other written for constant watching based on viewer's choice. The reason Mr. Baer chose this methodology and these TV shows and episodes is obvious. He compares shows with the same subject, namely White House politics, but from very different eras. The West Wing is a show from the late nineties, while House of Cards started in 2013. Mr. Baer uses a lot of well established and effective terminology from the theory of narration to describe the changes between the scriptwriting techniques of those two shows. Especially in the case of House of Cards we are not sure if description of narration in those terms is effective enough. This kind of the serialized content makes it possible to work with subtle motives and contexts that make the reading and analysis of narration with terms like conflict, act and arc difficult. But it can be also regarded as proof of the change of scriptwriting technique for platforms like Netflix, Amazon or Hulu.

I very much enjoyed the ending, where Mr. Baer is able to question his own conclusions and show the limitations of his method. What I really appreciate is that he is not trying to be an explorer of the "new continent" of narration, but is humble enough to admit that the changes might be just another use of traditional techniques of TV storytelling at a different time of consumption and production.

I propose an A grade.

Zdeněk Holý

31.05.2018

