The experience of reading screenplays as a scenaristic practice: pushing the boundaries of screenwriting studies

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Abstract

The experience of reading screenplays has been, so far, the subject of very few studies and the rare works addressing the act of reading screenplays tend to approach this question in a perspective that is, first and foremost, motivated by concerns mainly focused on screen*writing*. In this paper, based on our doctoral thesis (2019) and parsing questions in relation with the cinematographic screenplay, we propose to engage in a theoretical reflection about the experience of reading screenplays through the study and analysis of interdisciplinary concerns and intermedial issues that the act of reading screenplays (on its own) raises and binds. Such a perspective requires to apprehend the screenplay precisely as a textual object, while knowing how to take into account the different social contexts at stake. Therefore, our project affirms the experience of reading screenplays as an interpretative gesture, yet also as an act of mediation, appropriation, transposition, adaptation, projection, and even as an act of creative tenor. Thus, we question a tenacious belief (met both on the part of theorists and practitioners) that the only "truth" and "sole outcome" of a screenplay resides in a movie.

Keywords – Screenplay reading; Reading theories; Fiction; Intermediality; Legitimization of objects and cultural practices

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