

Broaching an inner frontier. Scripting Cinematic Virtual Reality

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Panel 9 – TECH 2 (VR, IMMERSIVE, AI)

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Abstract

In an earlier paper (Journal of Screenwriting, 11:2, 2020) I propose that the VR screenplay is better understood as a Moebius strip than a linear narrative. I develop this argument further here, to explore how one could actually script a Moebius narrative.

Predicated on the three core terms in VR – immersion, presence and consciousness – it is the *turn* from presence (of technology) to consciousness (of self) that is of interest here. While both immersion and presence are in part enabled, even intrinsic to the technology itself, it is consciousness being counter-intuitive, that needs to be ‘scripted’ (as screenwriting and/or coding).

Drawing on a close reading of the CVR films *Testimony* and *Notes on Blindness*, this paper looks at Direct Address as a screenwriting method in CVR, that helps to broach the audience’s inner frontier.

Keywords – Narrative VR, CVR, consciousness, direct address, Moebius strip

Soudhamini (Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia) has a Masters in English Literature from Stella Maris College, Madras, and a Post Graduate Diploma in Film Direction from FTII, Pune. She began her career assisting *avant garde* filmmaker Mani Kaul and has since been working across platforms and genres making short fiction, feature length non-fiction and installation works, receiving commissions from India and abroad. Her work has been shown at many international venues, and she has officiated on International Selection Committees and Competition Juries. From 2013 to 2016, Soudhamini taught at the Film program at Srishti, Bengaluru. In 2017-18, she was Artist-Scholar in Residence at Chapman University, California, as Fulbright Nehru Research Fellow for Academic and Professional Excellence. In July 2018 she began her practice-based PhD in Narrative VR at the School of Communication and Creative Arts, Deakin University, Melbourne, where she is now based. Her academic writing, both published and unpublished can be found at <https://deakin.academia.edu/SoudhaminiVenkatnarayanan>

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