Summary

Mediated Subjectivization as Representation of Film Character's Experiences

The doctoral thesis concentrates on a type of film subjectivization, which the author calls mediated stylistic subjectivization. The work argues that there is a transmedial figure of representing a character's experiences, which appears in literature as free indirect speech while, in film, as mediated subjectivization. The text distinguishes two determinants of this figure, which are sufficiently detailed to capture its function and general enough to find equivalents in various media. First, the subjectivization of message at the stylistic level, and, second, the interference of external and internal focalization. Through the analysis and interpretation of selected films, the author frames the narrative treatments analogous to free indirect speech and reveals how this figure serves to represent various areas of human experience.

The first, theoretical part of the work abounds with literary and film examples. The first chapter discusses literary approaches to free indirect speech. Following Valentin Voloshinov and Paul Hernadi, the author assumes that free indirect speech simultaneously activates two perspectives: of the narrator and the protagonist. Contrary to its name, this technique represents not only the language but also the thoughts and impressions of the character. That is why the best tool to examine free indirect speech is focalization, which means the perspective from which the fictional universe or its fragment appears. The description of free indirect speech with focalization enables its capturing as a transmedial figure.

The second chapter introduces the context of film. It presents the history of subjectivization in the cinema, presents the state of research, discusses the issue of narration and focalization, and critically analyzes previous proposals for film equivalents of free indirect speech. As the concept of "cinematic free indirect speech" originates from a metaphor and is inaccurate, the third chapter introduces a new category, that of mediated stylistic subjectivization. To distinguish this form of narration from other means of approximating the character's perspective, the author distinguishes three types of internal focalization: narrativization, personalization, and subjectivization. The mediated subjectivization "marks" the characters' perception of reality, at the stylistic level, with untypical camera angles, lighting, staging, colors, editing, or sound. "Mediation" indicates that this type of narration does not create an illusion of a direct access to the inner world of the character, but foregrounds that a "higher" instance of narration transmits the internal states of the character. In the case of mediated subjectivization, the internal and external perspective do not exist in parallel but overlap.

The second part of the work consists of critical analyzes and interpretations of five films. Each of the films represents different character's experiences. The author examines cinematographic representations of unconscious desires and obsessions in The Cremator by Juraj Herz, emotional processes and moods in The Conformist by Bernardo Bertolucci, social experience in The Dancing Hawk by Grzegorz Królikiewicz, culturally-conditioned perception of reality in Natural Born Killers by Oliver Stone, and bodily sensations in Requiem for a Dream by Darren Aronofsky. This particular choice of works shows that mediated subjectivization may serve to represent various experiences. The narration in each of the films captures the deeply subjective feelings of the characters while simultaneously enabling the viewer to keep a distance from them; for instance, by ironically exaggerating some features of the characters' perception of the world. Such subjectivization allows for the presentation of internally divided (split) subjects with little control of themselves.

The analyses and interpretations prove the existence of the transmedial textual figure, which does not directly reflect the character's perspective but employs the interference of internal and external focalization. The author emphasizes the analogies between textual strategies in various media but remains concentrated on how the polysemiotic medium of film models and transforms this transmedial figure.