

Joanna Preizner

Film studies.

**An Introduction
to Movie Narration**



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Preface

We have lived with movies since early childhood and their existence is so obvious to us that we cannot remember the moment of the first screening in which we participated. We treat cinema as something natural that has always existed, although it is a very young art, as it is less than 130 years old.

Cinema is a narrative art - it tells us stories that we need, ones we are looking for; the stories that give us joy, pleasure and hope; or the stories that provide the emotions we need at this particular moment of our life. Narrative stories have always surrounded us, and we can find them everywhere. We live in a world of narration because narrative form is the closest to reality itself - it imitates it most accurately and that's why we have no problem to understand the stories we watch and listen to. Even if magical characters or non-existent places appear in the story, the characters follow similar desires as we do and organize their lives in a similar way to ours. They care for their family, have relationships with the others, and defend values that are important to them in a similar way the common viewer does. We understand film characters feelings, emotions and motivations because we are guided by them as well.

The first tales told or read to us by our parents take the narrative form. The most common request we address to them as children is "please, tell me a story". We love the moment when someone sits down next to us and devoting all their attention creates an amazing story. Memories and stories about the history of our family are also narrations. We tell the stories reporting on the events of the days that passed. The same way we tell dreams, although they almost never have an ordered structure. The literature we learn at school also tells stories. commercials take a narrative form so that we can identify with their characters and buy the products they are advertising. If we profess a religion, it also consists of stories about some gods, saints and characters that we should follow or not. Realistic paintings and sculptures, theatre plays, advertising posters - they all tell us stories. We find narratives in the daily press and in scientific books. Growing up, we learn to understand, respect, and finally we create them ourselves.

Today, we are unable to function without audiovisual media. No wonder that we give audiovisual form to our stories. We reach for them when we want to feel better, when we want to forget about our problems, or when we want to have a good time with family and friends (or alone), when we want to evoke certain emotions, when we want to stop being bored, when we want to learn something,

when we want... There are as many reasons for our interest in cinema as there are people in the world.

In film stories we are looking for a lot of different things, but many of them are also common for almost all of us, because people, as human beings, are very much alike. We all want love and safety. We enjoy similar things. Similar matters worry us. We are all afraid of pain, death, illnesses and loneliness. And we all understand film stories that are constructed in such a way that viewers, regardless of the culture they come from, the language they speak, the religion they profess, their sexual orientation and political beliefs - can understand them in a similar way.

We need narrations because they help us organize our life experiences. We need them because they are based on other people's experiences and allow us understand different perspective than ours. Very often they are the source of our knowledge about the world and its history. Sometimes, they happen to be a bridge between people - they give us topics to talk about, force us to reflection, influence our life attitudes, change our points of view. Movies allow us safely experience emotions and adventures that could not happen in real life (or we wouldn't really want them to happen). When watching a movie or series, we have a sense of control over what happens during the projection - we are looking for specific feelings and emotions, but if the image does not meet our expectations, or we find that we feel anyhow uncomfortable, we can stop watching at any time.

And finally - film narratives are relatively easy to read. We do not need specialised scientific knowledge or exceptional skills to understand the film story. Since childhood, we have been trained to listen and tell stories, so they are understandable to us - especially if they are well constructed. But movies have also one more wonderful feature that fairy tales, family memories and books don't have. Movies not only tell stories, but they show them too. We live in a world of image, in a culture of image - not the culture of words that used to dominate for millennia. There is an old Chinese saying, claiming that „one image is worth more than a thousand words” - and it's hard to disagree with it. One film frame, one look at the face of a character experiencing life success or struggling with life tragedy, gives us more information and appeals to our emotions more strongly than white pages filled with black letters. The picture is faster than words. It's more literal, and usually leaves no space for doubts.

You are holding an academic script titled “Film studies. An Introduction to Movie Narration”. We will go deeper and deeper into the world of film narration, side by side trying to understand how movies are constructed and where their strengths

come from. We will learn how it happens that with so little data and information we get, we are able to believe film characters, believe in the world they live in, and in the cluster of scenes and sequences see a story lasting for many days, months or years. Each issue will be explained on many different examples, taken from Polish and foreign films - contemporary and made many years ago. We will discuss very good and important films in the history of cinema, but we will also use popular cinema. The schemes of the stories and the means that we use to show the film story are largely repetitive and we meet them both in artistic, original and author's cinema, as well as in B or C class productions. They are also needed and have their place in contemporary culture.

Each example will be provided with information about its location - the minute and second in which it starts and ends. Thanks to this, the readers will be able to independently find a particular excerpt, carefully watch it, and then try to confront their views with the description from the script.

Of course, this script does not run out all issues related to film narration. This is not possible in a publication with such a small number of pages, intended to help students participate in the academic course run by the author of this book. The task of this work is only to familiarize the readers with the most important ways of shaping a film story and encourage them to explore the world of film narration on their own. I would like the readers to watch the feature film a little more carefully after reading this publication. That they would see not only a story shown on the screen, but a precise construction consisting of many levels and elements. Each of them must be carefully thought out, planned and implemented in order to make an amazing phenomenon - a feature film.

Chapter I.

What is a feature film and what it is made of

We will deal with a feature film, so we need to know how to understand this concept and be able to recognize, name and define the individual elements that make this type of film. Then we should start with an important distinction between **diegesis** (story) and **syuzhet** (plot - French: sujet).

Syuzhet is a concept created in the 1920s by Russian literary theorists called formalists. Their methodology of scientific research was adapted by film critics, and the concept and definition of the syuzhet became also known to film theorists. Although this term may sound strange to Western viewers, it is still widely used. So, we will also use it.

This leads us to important definitions regarding any feature film:

Syuzhet is all that we see on the screen: all the images and information that are physically present on the screen. Including subtitles, captions, opening credits, all sounds, as well as diegetic and non-diegetic information (for example, illustrative music), that the characters have no access to.

Diegesis (story, narration, film world - we will use these terms interchangeably) is the whole story that we reconstruct based on syuzhet, our knowledge about the world, our life experience and other movies that we have already seen. So, diegesis is a whole narration, a whole story: everything what we see, hear and what we reconstruct, imagine and guess. Thus, while the syuzhet is always the same, the diegesis is slightly different each time - just like the viewers reconstructing it.

Feature film - a type of a film in which, basing on syuzhet, the viewers reconstruct diegesis. It is a fictional and imaginary movie, even if it is based on real events and stories about real characters.

And here comes the first problem that filmmakers face when they want to tell a story. What to show and what not to show on the screen? Which events to choose? What situations to decide on? Let's remember that the action time of most of the

films we watch, is much longer than the screening time. No viewer could withstand a projection lasting weeks or years. It is also not possible to make and produce such a film. We must therefore choose the most important events, situations and information that we want to show to the viewers. The events, situations and information that we choose, usually constitute a negligible percentage of the whole story. So, before we start building the script, we need to think carefully, about this what we consider the most important, how to show it, and how to do it, so that the viewer does not get lost in our narration. If we skip, at least one important element, the story will be incomplete, and the viewer will feel unsatisfied and confused.

Over the years, the cinema has created several rules that the storytellers follow choosing the events. So, we decide for:

- events that are necessary to understand the story,
- events that carry the biggest informational load,
- events that carry the biggest emotional load.

Let's remember that nothing that appears in the frame should be accidental. Everything we see and hear should be an indispensable element of the film puzzle - each element should perform a specific function. From the first frame, the viewers should enter the world of the story and believe in it, even if it is very far from their everyday experience - as in historical films, westerns or science fiction movies. We should also be able to identify with the characters - or at least understand their motivations, e.g. if they are bad people who are not worth identifying with.

So, what makes the story understandable? It is a construction of the movie and correctly selected elements that make it. Usually, we understand those stories best, that from the first scene to the last, lead to a logical ending, and the characters have their goal to achieve. We recognise this goal, almost from the first shot, although we do not always realise it clearly. Our expectations do not have to be fulfilled - the film's action may be full of unexpected twists and turns, and the story's finale does not have to be exactly how we expected and what we would like for our protagonist. However, the story must be probable and the ending should be one of the many possible, logical and acceptable variants of a particular sequence of events.

If the film director decides to deviate from this rule, the viewers stop feeling safe in the world of diegesis. They may also have the sad impression that they have been cheated and the director underestimated their intelligence and perception. Sometimes the feeling of being lost or angry is so strong that we give up watching the movie. This danger, however, is unrealistic if the author of the film remembers to put the following elements in the syuzhet:

Patterns of the story or the genre schemes

Each genre is realized in several or a dozen or so narrative patterns. They may undergo various transformations and variations, but to a large extent, if we carefully follow the events in several films of the same genre, we will see that they are similar to each other and that they repeat the pattern. They share the iconography (the place of action, the appearance of the characters, the objects they use) and the final message. We will deal with this later, but it is worth giving a simple example even at this point. Let's have a look at the romantic comedy.

The vast majority of films of this kind are constructed according to the following scheme:

1. We get to know a pair of characters who differ from each other by some important feature (not necessarily gender :)). Though, they start to be interested in each other.
2. They fall in love with each other.
3. An obstacle (another person, fate, accident, misunderstanding) separates the characters.
4. Characters cannot forget about each other, so they consciously or unconsciously strive to connect with a beloved one.
5. Characters clear up their misunderstandings.
6. In the final scene of the film, they decide to get married or just stay together.

Moreover, in every romantic comedy we deal with many funny situations, jokes and gags. Often, in the background of a main couple, there is a second one, who helps the main couple, comments on what they do and encourages them to take various actions.

And now try to recall a romantic comedy you have watched recently. Fits? That's right :).

Events related to the goal the character wants to achieve

Feature films very rarely present constant, unchanging situations. Watching a character lead a monotonous life would be simply boring. Even if the image of the daily routine opens the story, usually something happens very quickly and forces our character to do something, to take a proper action. The character must make a choice, decide to get involved in some actions that lead to the next event. The

characters often set a goal that they want to achieve - or other people set it for them. Then as we already know the narration is based on events that lead to this goal and in the film's final scene or sequence the character will either achieve it or lose.

Let's try to explain it on an example. In 2019 Sam Mendes made a film titled *1917*. This is a story set in France during the First World War. The heroes of the film are two young English soldiers. They are ordered to break through so-called "no man's land" to another English unit to give their commander the order to stop the planned attack. If they fail, thousands of people will die, including the brother of one of our protagonists. It's because the attack is a German provocation. From now on, all the events we see lead to the final goal – to hand the order, stop the attack, and save thousands of lives. Although one of the heroes dies along the way, the other one manages to reach the English unit and hand in the order. The goal was achieved, so a moment later the action is resolved and the story ends.

Conflict between protagonist and antagonist

In many movies, a man or a group of people, must fight to save themselves, their loved ones, their homeland, or simply protect some moral and ethical values. The character may fight not only with an evil man or a group of people, but also with a totalitarian state or representatives of another galaxy. They may struggle with their illness or the illness of their loved ones. They may try to overcome their own weakness, addiction, negative character traits. They may fight bad luck or faultless misfortune. Their opponent may be an unreal character: a mythical or legendary monster, a zombie or a vampire. Every time there are two opposite sides in a feature film (even if there is a man on one side and an immaterial element such as illness or totalitarian ideology on the other), we talk about a story based on the conflict.

A lot of movies and series you have seen use either all three of the above elements simultaneously or at least one of them.

Each narrative, regardless of whether it is a film, literary or any other narration, is made up of four elements: events, characters, time and space. If any of them is missing, we are not able to build a story. Each story must focus on characters with whom the viewers can identify and whose fate they may follow. Each story must happen at more or less specific time, but still in a recognizable and named space. Finally, each story must be based on events in which the characters take part. In the following chapters we will explain and analyse all these concepts.

Event and situation

Trying to define an event, we must use the concept of situation which is in opposition to it. The event takes place in a closed unit of time and in a specific place, so we are dealing with the unity of time and place. It is characterised by a change between the initial and final state. It usually pushes the action forward.

The situation, however, gives us information about the characters, place and time of the action, but it does not push the action forward. It helps us understand where and when the narration takes place and who takes part in it. It gives us time to get to know the relations between the characters and the most important questions of the story. However, it does not cause any change in the diegesis.

A good example of the movie situation is the opening sequence of Jan Komasa's film *Suicide Room* (2011). The first scene takes place in the philharmonic hall. The camera shows the singer and the audience, and after a while stops at three people sitting on the balcony. Two of them are very elegantly dressed middle-aged couple, and next to them sits a young man, probably their son. His dark outfit - T-shirt, black jeans, jacket - definitely doesn't suit this place and the occasion. The camera stops at an older man and contemplates his face in close-up for a moment. We jump to the first situation presenting this particular hero: he comes to work in an expensive, well-kept car. A young, attractive woman greets him in the parking lot, and provides him with information about the conference that is just beginning. The man takes part in it and answers journalists' questions.

There is no event here that would push the action forward. The state between the beginning and the end of this passage does not change. The viewer only receives a number of information about the man. We learn that his name is Andrzej Santorski and he is a high-ranking ministerial official, "an expert in economic affairs". He is a handsome man who cares about his own appearance (careful hairstyle, smoothly shaved face, well-tailored suit; he also uses moisturizing lipstick, which is not a common behaviour among men, especially in his age group). He also probably has an intimate relationship with his assistant, much younger than him. Small gestures, facial expressions on their faces, and finally a compliment that Andrzej Santorski pays the young woman, allow us guess that they must have an affair. The viewers, however, suspect that the image of a successful man is not entirely true, and Andrzej is afraid of something - he carries a gun in a car locker, which is not that common in Poland.

We go back to the concert hall and this time the camera focuses on the face of a middle-aged woman sitting next to Andrzej Santorski. After a while, we also see the woman at work - she turns out to be the president or owner of a company doing advertising campaigns. She talks to a colleague who made a beautiful suit for her son's prom. Then we see her conversation with an employee who did not manage with the task. Finally, we see the beginning of the meeting with clients.

Again, nothing is happening here that would push the movie action forward. We only meet the heroine and we get to know her name – Beata Santorska. We also learn who she is and what she is like. She is a woman, who cares about her appearance a lot. She is very well dressed and has a perfect make up. She is probably very wealthy too. She achieved her success thanks to her diligence and hard work, but also due to the lack of scruples. We see that she is quite strict with her employees. She forces them to work overtime, but she works very hard too. She is sharp, effective and can quickly adapt to the situation. She can hide her real emotions. She probably has an affair with a younger colleague – we can guess that by the exchange of their glances and their handshake, longer and more cordial than usual.

We go back to the concert hall again and this time the camera stops at the face of the boy sitting next to the married couple we have already met. He is the son for whom Beata's employee sewed a prom's suit, so he must be 18 or 19 years old and is a high school student. We see him in a taxi that drives him to school every day, and then at school, where he takes an oral literature exam. Then we also learn his identity - Dominik Santorski.

Again, we are dealing with a situation, not an event here. The scene in the car and the next at school allow us get to know Dominik and make an opinion about him. The boy is very patronizing with the driver employed by his parents. In a very unpleasant way Dominik urges him to turn off the music in the car. He just can't ask for it but creates a situation, that humiliates the taxi driver. The boy is convinced of his superiority, which is provided by his parents' money, attending a private school and wearing expensive designer clothes. He tries to build the image of an outsider, distanced from reality. However, he wants his peers' approval, but they don't like him - a classmate waiting for his turn, tries to disturb Dominik during his exam. The boy gets nervous and hardly returns to his interrupted thought. We don't know with what result the exam ends.

These three situations presenting the three characters last 7 minutes and 22 seconds. None of the activities shown during this time moves the action forward.

They show no change. Without this introduction, however, it would be difficult to understand the relationships in this family and believe in the story that will now be presented. *The Suicide Room* is a tale of enormous loneliness of people who think they have everything - because they can afford everything and have achieved an excellent social position. Meanwhile, their images of successful people are largely artificial and untrue. Although they are a family, they know little about each other. They cannot see the symptoms of the coming crisis, and when it comes, they do not know how to handle it. Only tragedy makes them aware of what is really important, but it is too late then for anything to change.

Now that we understand what the situation in the movie is, let's return to the issues related to the event. Diegesis consists of many events, but of course we have no possibility of showing them all, or at least some of them. We must therefore choose only those that are the necessary elements of a syuzhet - if we skip at least one of them, the story will become in some part incomprehensible and incomplete. Also, it will not be logical anymore. Writing the script, scriptwriters always think very carefully which events to choose, so that the story was clear and understandable for the viewers, and that it is not overloaded and too long. Selecting events and completing them with situations that convey information, is usually the most difficult element at this stage of making the film.

Let's analyse the beginning of the movie *Shakespeare in Love* (1998) by John Madden. The film tells the story of the creation process of one of the world's most famous love stories - *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare. The hero of the film is a young, at that time little known author, Will Shakespeare, who suffers from creative inability. However, whether or not he delivers a new play to a theatre owner, Philip Henslow, depends whether the theatre "The Rose" is going bankrupt or not. In the opening movie scene, we see the interior of the theatre. In a long, steady shot, the camera shows the central part of a beautiful wooden building - the stage, seats for spectators, theatrical decorations. Suddenly it moves to a room where the theatre owner is tortured by a creditor, because he did not give the money back. Henslow is tied up, and his feet are being burned by some thugs. Men surrounding the debtor also threaten to cut off his ears. All this is aimed at forcing Henslow to give the money back or sign a promissory note with the exact date of refund of the money. The terrorized Henslow finally signs a contract promising to repay the debt as soon as he stages a new William Shakespeare's play. Right after that, moaning in pain, he runs to the playwright to convince him to write the text quickly.

In the described fragment we deal with one event only - the signing of the contract by the indebted theatre owner. A long shot showing a beautiful building is not an event - it only introduces us to the place of action and the era in which the story takes place. Torture and threats against Henslow are also not events - these are situations showing the problems protagonist has. It is only the signing of the contract that pushes the film's action forward - the theatre owner must now do everything to make money. To get them, he has to stage a new, excellent play that everyone will love. That's why he must force Shakespeare to finish his work. There was a change between the initial and final state in this scene.

Let's take another example - the film *Paris, je t'aime*. This is a movie made in 2006 by many directors, each of whom made a short film story on love in Paris. Artists from different parts of the world, using different languages and representing different cultures, created 18 short episodes that made the feature film. One of these directors was Gurinder Chadha, who made a short story entitled *On the Seine*. The entire ten-minute story consists of three parts. The first one takes place on the river. Three twenty-year-old boys try to pick up attractive girls. Two of them are extremely active, but the girls do not pay attention to them, because provocations are stupid, primitive and sexist. The third boy sits a bit to the side - he does not participate in provocations, but he also does not protest against foolish statements of his friends. At one point, he catches the glance of a beautiful Muslim girl whose expression clearly shows what the girl thinks about the boys' behaviour. After a while, she gets up and walks away, but stumbles over a stone and falls. The boy runs to her and offers his help. The girl accepts it, which becomes the beginning of an interesting conversation. The conversation makes the boy decide to know the girl closer, despite the differences between them (religion and origins).

What is a situation in this short passage and what is the event? Boys picking up girls on the coast – it's a situation. The moment when a girl and a boy catch glimpses of each other is also a situation because it does not push the action forward. The most important moment is when the girl stumbles over the stone and the fall caused by it. If the girl had not stumbled and fell, the boy would have no reason to approach her and start a conversation. A mere exchange of glances was not enough to make contact. The fall, however, resulted in a conversation between two young people and allowed the action to be pushed forward.

However, events are not enough to build a story - they must be somehow connected. Most often we use a few proven methods, although we do not always deal with all of them. This what links events together is:

a) A character or a group of characters

In syuzhet we find those events that tell a story of a particular character or community (but even then, some people come to the fore). If this way of linking the events is the most important one, it is often suggested by the title, which is the name, surname, nickname or profession name of the main character. For example, *The Godfather* (1972) by Francis Ford Coppola, *Blade Runner* (1982) by Ridley Scott, *The Pianist* (2002) by Roman Polanski, *Citizen Milk* (2008) by Gus van Sant, *Django* (2012) by Quentin Tarrantino, *Wałęsa. Man of Hope* (2013) by Andrzej Wajda, *Jackie* (2016) by Pablo Larraine, *Maria, Queen of Scots* (2018) by Josie Rourke, and many, many others. In this kind of films, we show those events that involve the main character, who is present in every or almost every scene.

b) A common cause that all the events relate to – the main topic of the movie

The idea or belief that film characters share may be a main topic of the movie. In the name of this idea, the characters take specific actions, make decisions and decide to fight for it. This idea may be freedom, survival, victory in war, defeating an enemy or illness, achieving a goal, fulfilling a dream, and bringing justice. The main topic of the film - a problem that concerns a particular community, society or nation - may also be a common cause that links the events together. The problem may be an addiction (e.g. on social media, pornography or stimulants), a widespread social phenomenon (change in the way of life, emigration, increase of right-wing moods and increasing acceptance for criminal ideologies) or some issue affecting all people in the world (e.g. climate change). In this kind of movie, some characters may disappear, and others may appear. In the centre of the story, however, there is still a common cause.

Also, in this case, the movie title often suggests that this way of linking the events together is the most important here. For example *Psycho* (1960) by Alfred Hitchcock, *Cabaret* (1972) by Bob Fosse, *The Shining* (1980) by Stanley Kubrick, *Sex, lies and video tape* (1989) by Steven Soderbergh, *The Piano* (1993) by Jane Campion, *The Fifth Element* (1997) by Luc Besson, *Solidarity, Solidarity* (2005) by many authors, *Katyń* (2007) by Andrzej Wajda, *Shame* (2011) by Steven McQueen. And thousands of others.

In the above-mentioned *Paris j'taime*, the most important thing is love that happens in Paris. The characters of all 18 stories do not know each other. It's not

always about love between a man and a woman, understood in a typical romantic way. And yet we are constantly talking about love and it is a topic that connects individual stories.

In *Night on Earth* (1991) by Jim Jarmusch the events are linked in a similar way. The film consists of five different stories about people who do not know each other and do not know about their existence. However, they share the fact that they decide to travel by taxi the same night and at the same time. A thread of understanding is established between the taxi drivers and their passengers, and the conversation changes both sides (sometimes ultimately, like in the history taking place in Rome...). Drivers and passengers talk about difficult, sometimes painful and sometimes intimate matters. They learn from each other and under the influence of another person try to change their own point of view or understand other perspectives. The title of the film refers to the night on Earth, but the emotions and feelings of people living on this planet - beings the most lonely and defenceless at night - are the most important here.

Awarded with many Oscars *Green book* (2018) by Peter Farrelly is also an example of a story in which a certain idea - in this case absurdity and cruelty of racism - is the most important element connecting particular events. The film takes place in the sixties in the United States - so at the time when racial segregation was in force. The unemployed father of the family, a petty clever Anthony Vallelonga, decides to take a job as a driver of the black pianist Donald Shirley. The primitive white racist is to spend two months on the road with a black, well-educated, subtle musician caring for elegance; and be not only his driver, but also a bodyguard. Both men are very different, and it is very difficult for them to communicate with each other.

The difficult situation is even more complicated by the fact that the concert tour takes place in the American, openly racist South. Moreover, Donald is gay, which at a time when homosexuality is criminalized, becomes another problem.

The "green book" from the title is a guide for African Americans who travel to the South. It contains a list of places where they can stay and where they can have something to eat. Usually, these places are very gloomy, badly maintained, of a very low standard. The guide becomes a symbol of shameful prejudice. Anthony, who initially treated this book as something normal, gradually begins to understand what its true meaning is. Although he began to work with Don with great reluctance, he gradually notes how beautiful, wise, decent and good man his employer is. He begins to understand that judging others only by skin colour is foolish. Learns to respect Donald and soon defends him not only out of duty, but

also out of real belief. Traveling together - as it usually happens in road movies - is not only a way to a specific destination, but also a journey deep inside themselves.

c) Cause-effect relation

The cause-and-effect relation is a very popular, useful and understandable way to tie events into a story. We recognize it without any problem, because it is based on our life experience, knowledge of the world and confirms them. If the character says, "I'm hungry" and then starts to prepare a meal, we consider it logical and natural way to deal with the problem. If the character accidentally spills coffee while eating a meal, we take it for granted that he does not happily accept this fact and changes his clothes immediately. If the character breaks his leg in one scene, and in the next we see him on a hospital bed with his leg in a cast - the cause-effect relation here is clear to us. We also understand the relation between a girl tripping over a stone and her fall. It is also logical that the boy who witnesses it, runs to the girl to offer her his help.

In each of these examples we easily indicate what is the cause and what is the result. It is also clear how much time has passed between these events. However, the cause-and-effect relation is not always so obvious. Sometimes, seeing it requires some intellectual effort, knowledge and experience, as well as following the story carefully. The relation between cause and effect is not always as close as in the situations described above - sometimes we see that the cause and the effect appear many scenes later or it can be deduced only after watching the whole story.

In one of the most famous and the best films in the history of cinema - *Citizen Kane* (1941) by Orson Welles - we follow the story of the creator of the press empire. After his death, an inquisitive journalist tries to discover what a word "rosebud" means - that was the last word spoken by Charles Kane. For this purpose, he reaches the people who used to know Kane at various stages of his life, but none of them can explain the meaning of "rosebud".

An attentive viewer, however, would pay attention to the fact that Kane as a child was entrusted by his mother to the care of the bank. Funds for the boy's education and living were located in the same bank. There is a scene when a boy, taken from a home by a stranger (bank employee), violently protests, clinging to the sledge, on which a small rose is painted. The sledges are left at home and slowly covered with snow.

The boy deprived of the care and love of his parents grew into a ruthless man, accustomed to achieving any goal at all costs. He could not build a valuable relationship with a woman or keep any friendship. He died lonely and unloved. The word spoken in agony was probably a reference to his childhood, which was the only bright period in his life. Sledges left at family home became its symbol. In this case, the cause is giving the child to the strangers, and the effect is the fact that the child grew into an emotionally injured and unhappy man.

Speaking of cinema classics, it's also worth mentioning the masterpiece of Stanley Kubrick - *Space Odyssey 2001* (1968). The film begins with a very long sequence showing various episodes from the prehistory of the human race. Apes, which as a result of evolution will become homo sapiens, hunt, copulate, fight for food and water or kill. One day in the desert where they live, a mysterious black monolith appears. Monkeys don't know how to treat a finding. Soon after, they learn to use simple tools - they discover that the bone of a dead animal can be used as a toy, a tool, and finally a weapon. One of the monkeys, showing joy after winning the fight, tosses the bone very, very high. It glides and smoothly moves into the shot of a spaceship similar to its shape. The viewer is surprised - what's going on? We have just watched a film happening on Earth in very old times, and now we suddenly move to science fiction aesthetics? However, if we think more carefully, we will see a clear cause-effect relation here. Due to the fact that thousands of years ago apes learned to use tools, today people can build spaceships. The first use of a primitive tool was, after all, the first step to create very advanced tools. Despite the passage of thousands of years of evolution separating these two scenes, there is a cause and effect relation between them.

d) Time

Each film takes place in a specific place and time. To feel safe while watching a story, viewers should know when and where the action takes place. They should also be able to understand how long the events shown on the screen last and how much time passes between individual scenes and sequences. Finally, the viewers should be able to organize individual events in the correct order if they are not shown chronologically. But all the issues related to film time - or rather film times, because there are many - will be talked about in the next chapter.

Chapter II.

Time in the movie

Time in a movie is a very broad concept and when we use it, we must indicate precisely which kind of film time we mean. There are many of them, and at the same time (in the same film or its fragment) we can deal with several aspects of film time. The film story must have a very precise construction, among other things because of the time. The viewers should know where and when the story takes place. They should be able to recognize the signals informing about it and know when the time of action changes. They should also be able to guess how much time has elapsed between each situation and event. If the filmmakers do not care about showing the time relations in the film, the viewers quickly get tired and lost. Unable to orient themselves in the course of the action, they most likely give up watching.

There are of course films in which uncertainty about the time of action and the sequence of events is the intended effect - e.g. *Memento* (2000) by Chris Nolan. Seriously disturbed chronology, time flowing backwards, and parallel threads are to make the viewers identify more strongly with the hero who has lost his short-term memory. After the tragic death of his wife, he tries to find and punish her murderer, which in the face of the disease he is struggling with, is almost impossible. "Games with time" are therefore justified here, but it does not change the fact that *Memento* is a film very difficult to receive, although interesting, original and well done.

The actual screening time

It's the easiest to define and easiest to recognize movie time. It specifies the objective and clock-measurable screening time. It's always the same - for example, if a movie lasts 1 hour 32 minutes and 27 seconds, it will always last the same. It is the actual screening time that we use when giving the movie data in the description of the DVD or in the note posted on the website.

The time of personal reception

Here, the matter is not so simple, because the personal reception time is associated with the subjective feelings of the viewers. Therefore, each time it

is slightly different, because there are no two identical viewers. There are many factors that affect this type of movie time. It also has two different aspects.

The first of them is related to the very moment of projection and our well-being during it. After all, the way we perceive a story is influenced by how we feel, what stage of life we are at, what life experiences we have already had. What is important to us at the moment, what we think and worry about, what we want and why. Not every story is able to “pull us” in the same way and make us forget about the whole world. What makes a huge impression on one viewer leaves another one indifferent. Thus, the personal reception time is influenced by our genre preferences, favourite topics, a specific way of storytelling. Finally, such mundane and banal matters as whether we are rested, full, physically and mentally healthy.

When we are distracted by hunger, pain, fatigue and worry, we are not able to fully devote ourselves to the movie we watch, which we would otherwise consider better. The movie, which we find boring and tiring, starts to seem longer than it actually is. And vice versa - we perceive interesting films viewed in comfortable conditions as shorter - we don't even notice the passage of three or more hours, we don't feel tired, we forget about hunger and we try to postpone the visit to the toilet as long as possible. This is certainly understood by anyone who has watched the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy (2001-2003) by Peter Jackson, the *Star Wars* saga (1977-2019) by many authors or several episodes of their favourite series in a row (oh, *Game of Thrones*!!!). I'm sure you all know the feeling when we promise ourselves to finish the episode and finally start working – but we never fulfil our promise and as soon as the episode ends, we start watching another one :).

There is also a second aspect of the personal reception time, which relates to how deep is the impression that a film made on us. How long do we remember and think about it? Has the movie changed us in any way or influenced our decisions? Has our view on any problem changed? Do we return to the film, tell other people about it, refer to specific scenes or situations? Understanding in this way, the personal reception time can last up to tens of years. There are movies that we regularly recall. That touched us deeply and made us interested in a topic. The author writing these words as a teenage girl saw *Korczak* (1990) by Andrzej Wajda. The black and white film taking place during the World War II in the Warsaw Ghetto shook her so deeply that she began to search for information about the Holocaust on her own. She read hundreds of scientific books, thousands of memories of the Survivors, saw dozens of documentaries. As an adult woman, she has explored the memory of the Holocaust in Polish feature films. She wrote a book and many

articles on the subject. Therefore, the personal reception time of Andrzej Wajda's film continues for her to this day.

The relation between the actual screening time and the duration of events in the world of diegesis

To understand the difference between these two times we need to refer to our life experience, intuition and knowledge about how the world works. We usually know or guess how long certain activities take. For example, we know that preparing a cup of coffee is a relatively short process and should not take more than 2-3 minutes. We also know the stages of the whole coffee brewing process and millions of other viewers know it too, so there is no need to show all these activities on the screen.

But let's imagine that for some reason the director decides to do so. So, the hero – let's call him John – enters the kitchen. He goes to the cupboard with cups and pulls out one. Then he goes to the cabinet where he keeps sugar and coffee, and to the fridge for some milk. John puts two teaspoons of coffee into the cup. He pours water into the kettle, turns it on if it is an electric one, or puts it on the stove if it is not. Then he waits for the water to boil. Waits. Waits. Waits... and the viewers get more and more bored and nervous. However, if they can stand until the water boils, they watch the hero pour water into a cup, then add milk, sometimes sugar, mix the liquid, and finally try the finished drink. Three minutes of screen time passed, but nothing significant happened, the action was not pushed forward, and the viewers die of boredom and wait (or no longer wait ...) if something finally begins to happen.

Now imagine that each or most of the actions are presented this way. Making such a movie would not be possible, let alone that it would be impossible to watch it. This does not mean, however, that situations such as those described above do not happen at all – but they usually perform a function. Showing them the filmmakers accomplish some goal. In general, we must use the **ellipse**, i.e. omitting irrelevant or unnecessary information. The viewer is usually able to reconstruct it. In the scene which description I used above, this situation would be reduced to a few seconds, although the activity itself lasts much longer.

When talking about the relation between the actual screening time and the time of events and situations, we must therefore refer to the viewers' intelligence, perceptiveness and knowledge. The filmmakers believe that the viewers do not live

in a vacuum and are able, thanks to the **signals of the time passage**, to guess how much time passed between individual shots or scenes. The most frequently used signals of the time passage are listed below.

Change in the physical appearance of the characters: their growing up, puberty, aging, changes caused by illness or misfortune.

We are all more or less able to estimate the age of another person, so if we see a delightful baby in one scene, and a boy learning to read in another one, we guess that about seven years passed between these two scenes. If in the first scene we see a beautiful young woman, and in the next one a grey-haired, wrinkled old woman who is barely moving, we know that much more time must have passed – probably several decades. In the last sequence of James Cameron's *Titanic* (1997), we see Rose, who, saved from catastrophe, looks at the Statue of Liberty. Putting hand in her pocket, she is surprised to discover a precious necklace. A second later, a very, very old woman holds the same necklace. We know that both are the same person, but at different stages of life. About eighty years passed between them.

Changing the appearance of objects, buildings and plants

Here again we refer to our experience and knowledge of how the world works. Building a house is usually not a short-term process, especially if it is a large, solid, brick building. This process would probably be presented in a sequence, where in the subsequent shots we would see some of its stages. We would guess how many months or years have passed since its beginning. We also know that a tree does not grow overnight (no, we are not talking about beans or bamboo; we are also dealing with a realistic tale, not a fairy tale where everything is possible), so if in one scene we see the moment of planting a seedling, and in the next one there is a branchy, stately oak, in the shade of which children are playing, we know that several dozen years must have passed from the moment of planting.

More often, however, the ellipse does not cover such a long period of time. Hero of *The Pianist* (2002) by Roman Polański - a Jew hiding during the World War II on the Aryan side of Warsaw - as a result of the unreliability of the man who was supposed to look after him, begins to starve. He tries to keep the last potato as long as possible, and the passage of time is suggested by the change in the appearance

of this potato. Vegetable shrinks, shoots grow out of it. The hero himself is also changing - he gets thinner, paler and more and more overgrown, because he has no strength to take care of his appearance in this situation. The changes in appearance of man and potato let us know about a time passage. However, our knowledge is also important here - we are aware that a person cannot survive without food for more than two weeks, so probably this is how long it was from the moment when the "guardian" last brought shopping, until the hero was visited by friends worried about him.

Other popular signals of the time passage are:

- change of seasons
- changing calendar dates and clock times
- change of light - viewers are generally able to distinguish morning, early and late afternoon light
- weather change and changes in the environment (e.g. we know that falling snow gradually covers the earth's surface, but it usually takes more than half an hour, for example, to form snow drifts - from our life experience it shows that it is much longer process).
- changes in fashion
- more and more technically advanced devices and cars
- using items that were not popular or did not exist at the earlier stages of the story
- music and songs from a particular era
- referring to events or problems commonly known and understood at a certain historical moment.

Let's try to show how many signals of the time passage can be used in one short sequence and how much can be told with them. William is the hero of the film *Notting Hill* (1999) by Roger Michell. He is thirty years old owner of a small bookstore in London's Notting Hill. He is lonely, lives in a small apartment with his geek-friend who constantly puts him in embarrassing situations and in trouble. One day Anna, a very famous and beautiful actress, enters William's bookstore. Although the first meeting of these two is not very successful, soon there are others. They slowly fall in love and one day the actress decides to stay in William's apartment. They spend the night together. This makes William engage in a relationship with

Anna even more and this night is for him a proof of her feelings for him. But Anna leaves in the morning and breaks contact with William. The man suffers.

The director of the film in a very interesting and original way showed how long William's breakdown lasts. At 1:28:05, a very long and technically difficult, but a perfectly realized shot begins, accompanied by a Bill Withers' song *Ain't no sunshine when she's gone*. William walks through the market on Notting Hill, and the time passage is marked by using many signals at the same time. The man begins his walk in the fall, as evidenced primarily by the goods that are sold at the market: apples, other autumn fruits and vegetables, no flowers. The type of light also indicates the season – it's warm, but slightly dimmed, not as intense as in summer. William passes a woman in advanced pregnancy, and his sister, who, smiling, cuddles up to a boy. The boy, however, seems to be unimpressed by this fact. William holds the jacket in his hand, but after a while it gets cooler, it darkens and begins to rain, so he puts his jacket on.

The rain turns into a gusty wind that carries leaves. It starts snowing and it gets colder, so William puts his hands in his pockets and puts on the collar of his jacket. Christmas trees and Christmas decorations are already sold at the market. The light is typically winter. Passers-by, sellers and customers wear solid winter clothes. It gets brighter, and finally the market is flooded with spring, intense sun. Now, fabulously colourful spring flowers are sold here. Walking man passes a woman with a child of several months in her arms - we saw the same woman pregnant at the beginning of the shot. William also passes his sister who, crying and screaming, beats another ex-boyfriend - the same one who was not delighted with her caresses before. People wear light clothes. William also takes off his jacket and puts his face to the sun. Finally, he smiles, and the viewers know that the worst suffering is behind him. Thanks to time signals, we know that depression after losing a loved one lasted about 9-10 months. Meanwhile, screening time is only one and a half minutes.

Screening time is equal to time of the events

Movies in which the action time is equal to the screening time are very rare. It is worth knowing, however, that sometimes such productions are made. In classic cinema, the film *Cleo from 5 to 7* (1962) by Agnes Varda is often recalled. The heroine of this story is a young woman, a popular singer, who waits for two screen hours (and two hours of action time) for test results to confirm or rule out cancer. During

these two hours she tries to deal with anxiety in various ways. At 7 she finds out that she is actually sick.

A contemporary example of a film in which the two times are equalized is *Victoria* (2015) by Sebastian Schipper. The action of the film made in one long shot (!) lasts 2 hours 20 minutes – as much as the screening time. The film is about a young Spanish girl who has recently moved to Berlin. She works in a small cafe, although her life dream was to become a pianist. She accidentally meets several boys and establishes a closer relationship with one of them. They all decide to rob the bank, but a badly prepared, spontaneous action ends in a tragedy. Victoria takes the stolen money and leaves. Then the shot ends.

Note that in both films briefly described, the action of the story is very short - just two hours. It is therefore possible to follow the fate of the heroines during this time. Usually, however, the film's action covers a much longer period. It is therefore assumed that the equalization of action time and projection time takes place in shot (although there are also exceptions to this rule - as in the famous *Russian Ark*, 2002, by Alexander Sokurov; there is 300 years of Russian history told in one shot) and in the scene. It is worth stopping at these concepts for a moment.

The shot is the smallest dynamic unit of the film - a fragment from cut to cut on the tape. Long, calm, slow shots are used in calm, static scenes. Action scenes in which the events occur quickly one after the other are built from many short shots. So - the faster and more dynamic the action, the more cuts (and therefore shots). The calmer - the fewer shots, and therefore fewer cuts.

Scene - a dynamic unit of film limited to one place, time and action. We are dealing with one place, usually the same set of characters (although new characters may appear during the scene and those who were there when the scene started may disappear) and an action lasting as much time as it would in real life. The scene usually consists of a few, a dozen or so, or even several dozens of shots (less often several hundred). If the scene is made in one shot - then we are talking about a **master shot**. However, the unity of place, time and action is still preserved.

A beautiful example of a master shot is the beginning of Sam Mendes' film **1917** (2019), mentioned in the previous chapter. The story begins with a soothing shot of a spring flowering meadow. The reversing camera reveals soldiers resting on this meadow, including two heroes, whose lives we will follow from now on. The boys

are ordered to report to the headquarters. The camera follows their path through a swampy field, field kitchen area and canteen, trenches, up to the entrance to the bunker where the general is. Two boys pass hundreds of other soldiers who perform various activities. The master shot lasts about 4.5 minutes and is perfectly implemented. Thanks to this solution, from the first seconds of the film the viewers are forced to immerse themselves in the world in which young soldiers live. Their everyday life is not a beautiful meadow, where sometimes they manage to take a nap for a while, but consists of things completely different: hunger, fear, darkness, dirt, crowds, uncertainty. The end of the master shot is at 0:05:06. The young soldiers descend into the command bunker and the moment of cutting the tape is invisible. The next scene begins with changing the location of the action (underground instead of the surface) and with the new set of heroes.

An example of a scene can be found in each - yes, each - feature film. For the purposes of this script, however, I chose a scene which meaning is extremely close to my heart. It's a scene from the movie *Three Billboards outside Ebbing, Missouri* (2017) by Martin McDonagh, and lasts from 0:19:41 to 0:23:16. The heroine of the film is Mildred, a middle-aged woman who tragically lost her teenage daughter. The girl was brutally raped and murdered. Despite the passage of many months, the investigation has not progressed. The desperate mother rents three billboards, on which she places sentences reminding of the crime and pointing out the inaction to the local sheriff. The woman's gesture evokes various reactions, mainly negative - members of a small community prefer to forget about the case. They also do not want their popular but ineffective sheriff to be attacked. A similar opinion is held by a priest who invades Mildred at home and tries to bring her to order in a way typical for representatives of The Catholic Church, when someone's action does not fit the patterns expected and forced by this institution.

The scene we're talking about begins when Mildred enters the kitchen, where her embarrassed son and very confident priest await her. Despite the late hour, the priest believes that he has the right to pay such visit, as well as to instruct an adult, mature and strong woman who has had nothing to do with The Church for a very long time. Assuring her of his support (so far unnoticeable), he rebukes her lack of empathy towards the sheriff and the local community. Mildred calmly listens to the priest, and then wisely and bluntly counteracts his false compassion and concern. She compares The Catholic Church to a gang whose members, even if they did not personally commit any crimes, are responsible for them simply by being members of a criminal group. Mildred believes that a priest, who speaks on behalf of an

organization that for decades has concealed paedophilia, violence, harassment and rape, has no right to instruct her or anyone else. Seeing the analogy between the gang and The Catholic church, Mildred says:

“You’ve got your colours. You’ve got your clubhouse. You’re - from lack of a better word - a gang. And if you’re upstairs smoking a pipe and reading your Bible, and one of your fellow gang members is downstairs fucking an altar boy... Well, father, just like those Crips and just like those Bloods, you’re culpable ‘cause you joined the gang, man. I don’t care if you never did shit, you never saw shit, you never heard shit. You joined the gang, you’re culpable. And when a person is culpable to altar boy fucking or any kind of boy fucking, ‘cause I know you guys didn’t really narrow that down, then he kind of forfeit the right to come into my house and say anything about me or my life or my daughter or my billboards. So why don’t you just finish your tea, father, and get the fuck out of my kitchen.”

Mildred turns and walks out, ignoring the priest’s firm face. The scene, which lasts about 3.5 minutes, does not end when the woman leaves - we still see the face of Mildred’s son, proud of his mother, and the priest’s reaction. The scene ends only when we change the place of action to another and we are aware of the passage of time between the event in the kitchen and the next one.

Feature films usually have a very precise design, built of units of different sizes. Above we have discussed two of them - shot and scene. The shot is the smallest movie unit. A scene built of shots is a unit larger than the shot. In turn, the unit larger than the scene is the sequence.

Sequence - a fragment of a film composed of a few, a dozen or so, or several dozens of scenes connected by one coherent thread. Therefore, we usually have the unity of action (the same subject, the same characters), but we do not keep the unity of place and time. In the sequence, the characters trying to achieve a specific goal or busy with some problem, change the place of action, and some time passes between the individual scenes. The viewers, however, have no problem determining how much time has passed and how much time the events presented in the entire sequence may have lasted.

Traditionally, let's try to discuss it on the example. This time we use Adrian Lyne's movie *Flashdance* (1983). This is a story about a young girl who works physically in a factory. After hours she prepares complicated choreographic arrangements and dances in a nightclub. She dreams of studying dance at a ballet school and becoming a professional dancer. In her environment and family no one supports these dreams. Alex does not believe in herself and for a long time she does not have the courage to apply for admission to school and take the dance entrance examination. Only a relationship with a man who believes in her and supports her gives the girl the strength to take on the challenge. The sequence we are going to discuss concerns Alex's decision to take to school. The sequence starts at 1:03:20, ends at 1:05:29 and consists of 5 scenes:

1. Alex enters the secretary's office and talks to the secretary about admission to school. She takes the forms that she must complete.
2. Alex leaves the building, runs down the stairs and gets on her bicycle. Nick, her partner sitting in a car parked nearby, watches her.
3. Nick enters the same office where the girl was a moment ago. He asks the secretary about the girl and the secretary informs him that Alex wants to get to school.
4. Nick is in a cafe, from where he calls a friend asking him for a favour related to the Alex's exam.
5. Alex lies on the floor in her apartment and completes the form received at the secretary's office.

All these scenes take place on the same day, which we guess based on our knowledge and life experience. It took probably a few minutes between Alex leaving the secretary's office and the moment when she was running down the stairs of the building. Probably the same time passed before Nick got out of the car, entered the building and found the right room (we do not see these activities, because they are not necessary to understand the action - we know that it had to happen, so showing them does not make sense). There had to be more time between Nick leaving the building and the phone to the friend - after all, Nick had to get to the cafe. It took Alex more time to get to the house, which is located in another district of the city (we know this from the information presented earlier in the film - the girl is not wealthy, she lives on the outskirts, and the ballet school is located in the city centre). After returning home, the girl changed clothes and

before she began to fill out forms, she probably did a few other things, for example, taking care of the dog. Only then she could think about what to write in the form. The time passage is also indicated by the change of light - it is no longer as intense as when Alex was going down the school stairs.

So, we are dealing here with a change of place and time, but the characters are the same. There is the same theme in the centre of the sequence, and it connects the individual scenes into a coherent whole. The unit larger than the sequence is the whole movie - made up of several, dozen or several dozen sequences, constituting a closed story.

However, the difference between the scene and the sequence is not always as visible as in the examples described above. Sometimes the boundaries between these two concepts become blurred and a specific fragment has the features of each of them. Then we use the term scene-sequence.

Scene-sequence: we maintain the unity of place and action, but there is no unity of time. The time passage can be more or less subtle, but nevertheless it is obvious to the viewers, who can also indicate how much time passed between individual events. Scene-sequence usually shows some process, some change taking place in the world of diegesis.

In the aforementioned classic film by Orson Welles, *Citizen Kane*, the story of the marriage breakdown is presented in the form of a scene-sequence. A reporter seeking the truth about Charles Kane reaches his friend from his youth. His words that Kane's first marriage was like any other ("after a few months they only met at breakfast") open the scene-sequence. It starts at 0:51:31 and consists of six scenes which take place at the same place - the dining room; with the same heroes - Mr. and Mrs. Kane; and in the same situation - eating breakfast together. The only thing that changes is time.

1. One of the first breakfasts of a young couple right after the wedding - the couple spent the whole night at the ball, but despite the tiredness they are happy. The young spouse serves his wife a meal, pays her compliments. At her request, he decides not to go to the editorial office that day and spend time only with her.
2. The wife makes excuses to her husband, who spends all the time in the editorial office, and he is not there for her. He assures her that the newspaper he runs is

her only rival. He no longer treats his wife with such adoration and admiration as in the first scene.

3. The wife complains about the unfavourable way of describing the president of the United States, who happens to be her uncle. The marriage talks to each other with barely contained aggression, without a smile. They cannot reach an agreement.
4. This time the reason for the argument is the way of raising "a junior" towards whom each of the spouses has different plans and a different vision of who the boy should meet and how to spend time.
5. Violent exchange of views on articles printed in the husband's newspaper.
6. None of them say a single word. The wife, looking provocatively at her husband, reads a newspaper opposing his own.

Each of these scenes is separated from the previous one by a whip pan, which blurs the image for a moment, suggesting the time passage. When the image stabilizes, we see the same characters, but slightly changed - in every next scene they are slightly older, they wear different clothes and have different hairstyles, and the man seems to put on weight. In each subsequent scene, the spouses behave towards each other with increasing reluctance and distance. The time passage is also suggested by the topics of their conversations showing the growing conflict and the inability to communicate with each other. At some point, the topic of the child appears - and therefore years must have passed, the boy is certainly no longer an infant. Probably about 10 years passed between the first and the last scene, while on the screen the whole sequence lasts just over 3 minutes (ends at 0:53:47).

An interesting example of a scene-sequence is also a fragment of Henry Bean's *The Believer* (2002). The hero of this story is Danny, a young Jew who turned away from his community and joined a group of neo-Nazis. Because he is intelligent, looks good and has the ability to convince others, he is urged to give anti-Semitic "lectures". He tries to convince his audience (though this is stupid, absurd, inconceivable and extremely cruel) that hatred towards Jews is something normal, legitimate and necessary (no, it is not - like any kind of racism, xenophobia, homophobia and other such attitudes). Every time more and more people listen to him, and Danny conducts meetings more and more confidently and smoothly, encouraging hatred towards his own nation.

The scene sequence begins at 1:03:10 and ends at 1:04:35. It is very short and dynamic, and the illusion that we are dealing with a scene rather than a scene-

sequence is compounded by the fact that Danny's speech is smoothly continued in all three parts of the scene-sequence. If we listened to the soundtrack only, we would be convinced that this is one coherent scene. About the fact that we see several different meetings, between which some time had to pass, we are informed by the change of Danny's clothes (each time he wears a different shirt) and an increasing number of listeners coming to meet him. We deal with the unity of the place - always the same lecture hall, with the unity of the action - the same situation (lecture) and the same characters (lecturer and listeners). However, time is changing. Since Danny's look doesn't change at all, we can assume that no more than a few days or weeks passed between meetings.

The actual screening time is longer than the time of the events shown on the screen

This is not a common situation in the cinema - as we already know, filmmakers need to save time and generally try to give as much information as possible in the shortest possible time. Therefore, stretching screen events over time must have a solid justification and meet a specific goal that cannot be achieved in any other way. This situation usually occurs in two cases:

- a) when we want to show an event from several different points of view
- b) when the event requires the viewer to watch it very carefully, and due to the dynamism of the action and the very short duration of the event it is not possible in real time. Then we use the slow motion.

Let's try to discuss this phenomenon with examples. Let's start with the classic film by Sergei Eisenstein *The Battleship Potemkin* (1925), made on the 20th anniversary of the 1905 revolution. The Bolsheviks saw in this rebellion the symbolic beginning of the communist revolution. Although it is clearly a propaganda film, it is also a masterpiece in which many innovative solutions were used and which is an example not only of perfect directing, but also of brilliant editing.

The Battleship Potemkin tells of the revolt of the ship's sailors who rose against the tsarist commanders. Their rebellion also embraced Odessa; whose inhabitants were brutally pacified by Cossacks on the famous stairs. It is the sequence of the massacre on the stairs that is one of the most analysed and cited in the history of

cinema. It is also an example of the extension of an event that in real time lasted less than it was shown on the screen.

The leitmotiv of this sequence are the Cossacks going down the stairs. The men walk calmly, firmly, still in the same rhythm. They should therefore reach the end of the stairs in about a minute, but the sequence starts at 0:48:03 and lasts until 0:54:18. Scenes showing the tragedy of individual people from the crowd gathered on the stairs, occupy over six minutes of screen time. We see a young woman who is shot and falls on a baby stroller. The stroller rolls down, probably the child will die too. An older woman with a seriously injured boy of several years is trying to convince the Cossacks to stop the massacre - to no avail. Soldiers shoot the mother and go on, trampling her and her son's bodies. A disabled man without legs tries to escape from the Cossacks' boots, but he has no chance. An older terrified woman screams desperately. Other people are looking in panic for a hideout.

By focusing on some inhabitants of Odessa, the director gets the sympathy of the viewer for them. The impact of this sequence is much greater when we see individuals whose emotions we can study. We identify with them and want them to avoid a tragic fate. This would not be possible if the whole situation was presented using only distant plans, and if the march of soldiers lasted about a minute, uninterrupted by scenes of cruelty. That is why extending screen time turns out to be so important and necessary here.

In the example discussed above, we are dealing only with a certain fragment. However, there are entire feature films in which this type of situation occurs. Although they are not many, it is worth mentioning such a phenomenon. Its example can be a film by Jerzy Skolimowski entitled *11 minutes* (2015). The actual screening time is one hour and 21 minutes, but the action time is only 11 minutes. A group of people who do not know each other, live in a big city. From their perspective, we are still watching the same 11 minutes during which something different happens to each of these people. Their fates will unite in the eleventh minute of the action (but it is not the eleventh minute of screening time!), when it comes to a certain event that will make their lives never be the same again.

I mentioned above that we also extend the screen time when we want the viewer not to miss important details, and because of the dynamics of a scene and its emotional load, it could easily be done. Let's see how it looks in practice. The heroine of *Flashdance* is finally admitted to the exam and the board of examiners consists of demanding professors of the ballet school. Alex prepared a complicated choreography and performed it perfectly (despite the initial error). The climax of

her dance is a jump, which is shown in such a way that it gives the impression that the girl is flying in the air for a few seconds. This is of course not possible. An attentive viewer notices that the fragment between 1:25:16 and 1:25:19 is composed of three different shots from three different cameras. Moreover, these are slow motion shots, and therefore there is also a physical distortion of time (we will discuss it in the next part of this chapter). So, the jump, which in real life lasted a second at best, on the screen lasts over three, so that the viewer can see it and admire the girl's talent and her excellent skills.

A similar solution performs a completely different function in the movie *Platoon* (1986) by Oliver Stone. The story takes place during the Vietnam War. The hero of the film is Chris, a boy from a wealthy family who joined the army because of his ideals. Watching what the war really looks like, he quickly ceases to believe in it and only dreams of returning home. The unit in which he serves is headed by two conflicted commanders: calm, prudent and good Elias, and Barnes, who is a violent, full of hatred and dishonest man. Barnes takes the opportunity to get rid of Elias - he shoots him and convinced that Elias is dead, leaves him in the area occupied by Vietkong. Seriously wounded Elias, however, tries to get to his soldiers who are being evacuated in helicopters. Barnes prohibits the crew from returning to Elias. The soldiers in the helicopter look with horror at the death of their commander, presented in slow motion. The passage I'm talking about covers the fragment from 1:16:02 to 1:17:15.

The question is: why did the director decide to extend this scene with the help of slow-motion pictures? Elias' death shown at a normal pace would not be so shocking, touching and dramatic. Thanks to the slow motion, Stone forces the viewers to be concerned about the hero's tragedy, to feel a bit of his suffering. Every shot shaking Elias's body, every grimace of pain on his blood-drenched face - all this must be experienced and remembered to complete its function. *Platoon* is an anti-war film showing what war really looks like. This is not a game of big boys, nice and pleasant, but a swamp full of human tragedies, unhappiness and death, which do not leave anyone innocent and which destroy the most valuable people.

Physical deformation of time: slow motion, fast motion and freeze frame

Physical deformation of time is done in three ways - freezing the frame, slow motion and fast motion. This is one of the easiest to recognize and name movie tools. The problem, therefore, is not in noticing them, but in answer to the question

why at this moment of the story the director decided to stop the frame, speed up or slow down the shots. The same solution can have a completely different function and bring completely different meanings. Therefore, a lot depends on the viewers' perceptiveness, sensitivity, empathy and ability to understand the less obvious meanings of a story.

Above, we discussed one way to use physical deformation of film time - slow motion. Let's now try to deal with the reverse of this situation - fast motion. We usually use this method when we want to show a lengthy process, but we have no way to show it in full, and we do not want to use ellipses.

An interesting example of such a situation is the sequence from *The Secret Garden* (1993) by Agnieszka Holland. The film is set in the late nineteenth century, and its heroine is a girl about 10 years old who lost both parents. She is given over to a distant relative and lives in his great, beautiful, but very dreary and neglected house. The child is very lonely, lost and unhappy. In relation to the others she often behaves aggressively. Her parents didn't give her their time and attention before they died, Mary didn't interest them. They did not teach her to love and respect other people or to appreciate nature. But the girl needs attention, love and friendship very much. Thanks to accidentally made acquaintance with a rural boy who teaches her to recognize species of animals, birds and plants, and to care for a neglected garden, Mary becomes a happy, calm and sensitive child. Together with a friend, she helps her cousin recover and the three of them spend time together in a "secret garden". This place becomes something like a one more character of the film and reflects the changes taking place in Mary herself. The garden, which at the beginning of the story is grey, sad and seems to be dead, thanks to the girl's care starts to live again.

Pictures of nature are a very important part of the film - but not as a static contemplation of beautiful landscapes but showing dynamism and changeability of nature. This would not be possible without the use of fast motion, thanks to which children (the movie is addressed to them) can see the entire process of flowering, growing plants, pupation of the pupa in a beautiful butterfly and many other changes occurring in nature in spring (fragment 0:55:15 - 0:56:26). Moreover, fast motion performs a kind of magical function here - nature changing at a rapid pace gives the impression that it happens under the influence of a magic spell.

The use of fast motion in Darren Aronofsky's *Requiem for a dream* (2000) has a completely different meaning. The theme of the film is drug addiction. Harry is convinced - like all drug addicts - that he has full control over what and

how he takes. In turn Sara, Harry's mother, who is obsessive about weight loss, unknowingly begins to take amphetamine as weight loss pills. Sara, dissatisfied with her progress in getting slimmer, takes more and more pills and slowly gets a mental illness. She could stop taking medication at the right moment and save her modest, but predictable and safe existence, but absorbed in thinking about the possibility of appearing on her favourite TV show, she does not take this into account. She does not pay attention to alarming symptoms - a sudden increase in energy after taking medications and its sudden decrease when they stop working, changes in perception of the environment, hallucinations, itchy skin, hot flushes.

In the fragment from 00:35:22 to 0:36:52 we can see how the drugs work. The whole process is presented with fast motion pictures. Sara takes the pills, drinks her coffee, and then starts cleaning her small apartment. It takes her many hours - she performs so many activities and it happens so fast that even for a young, healthy person it would be exhausting, and Sara is an old lady. There is something terrifying in this picture - under the influence of drugs Sara behaves differently than usual. She becomes someone else, someone strange, incomprehensible and disturbing. This is how we usually perceive people under the influence of psychoactive substances and fast motion pictures are a perfect metaphor in this case. Watching the action at a faster pace, the viewers immediately see that something abnormal and bad is happening here - there is no magic or beauty in the image like it was in *The Secret Garden*. Therefore, using the same solution may mean something completely different and lead to completely different conclusions.

When after many hours "the medicine" stops working, slow motion appears - Sara suddenly loses energy, unnaturally caused by the drug. She falls asleep in the armchair in front of the TV, not even having the strength to wash herself and go to bed. Here, slow motion reflect the terrible fatigue of the woman and her inability to perceive the world in the right way.

Freezing is the last way to physically deform time. It consists of stopping the frame and holding it for a second or several - it usually doesn't take longer because it would be very tiring for the viewers. After all, cinema is the art of moving pictures and we expect the frames to change rather than stay still on the screen. The exception is the situation when the last frame of the film is also the background of the end credits - then it may last on the screen much longer than a few seconds and it does not bother us, because we do not study its composition, but the payroll.

What drives the author of the film when they decide to stop a frame for a moment? Most often, they try to draw the viewers' attention to an important

element and emphasize the meaning otherwise the viewers would miss if they watched the movie at a normal pace. An interesting example of using the still image is the movie *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1973) by Norman Jewison. It is a musical that achieved great success on Broadway and was transferred to the screen. It tells a story about a group of students who go to Israel to play a performance inspired by biblical history. They want to play it on the land where the tragedy of Jesus took place two thousand years ago. Contemporary dressed, using modern gadgets, singing and dancing, they tell about the events that led to the capture, conviction and killing Jesus.

I would like to draw your attention to two subsequent scenes. The first shows the arrival of Jesus in Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. Inhabitants of the city enthusiastically welcome the Messiah, put palm leaves under his feet, smile, greet, encourage their children to come to him. Jesus promises salvation to all. But in the joyful song he is greeted with, the words "Hey, JC, JC, would you die for me?" suddenly appear. Then the camera gets closer to Jesus's face and the frame stops for almost three seconds (0:28:50 - 0:28:53). Now we can see that Jesus's face suddenly shadows - the man is sad, all his joy goes away, he looks sad and scared. After a while the projection starts again, but this short moment reminds us how this story will end - after all, the same people who now cheer on Jesus, in a few days will condemn him to death and will mock him during the way to the cross and under the cross. Jesus is not only a man (thanks to that he can feel human emotions), but also God, so he knows what awaits him and this does not allow him to enjoy a wonderful welcome in Jerusalem. He did not come there to live and teach, but to die.

Still images also appear in the next scene, but they perform a completely different function than in the fragment discussed above, although we are talking about the same solution used in the same film. Here we have a group of young Messiah's followers praising him with song and dance. Dozens of people perform a complicated and very difficult choreography, simultaneously doing turns and jumps. Due to the tempo of the dance (it is very dynamic) and gravity, complicated figures are performed very quickly. If there weren't slow motion pictures in this fragment, the viewers would underestimate the difficulty and perfection of the dance because they simply would not have time to notice it. In the fragment from 0:29:04 to 0:33:51 both these solutions (slow motion and freeze frame) were used several times, always in the most difficult moments of the choreography.

In the already mentioned *Flashdance*, the freeze frame closes the movie. Alex passed the dance exam perfectly and runs out of the building, smiling. Nick waits

on the sidewalk with a bouquet of roses. The girl who sees him for the first time since their quarrel, hesitates for a moment whether to approach him. After a while she starts running, hugs Nick and kisses him hard. She pulls one rose out of the bouquet she has just got and gives it back to her partner thanking that he helped her achieve success. The frame stops at 1:26:11 and lasts for seven seconds closing the film. Watching this the viewers are convinced that from now on the couple will live happily ever after. Freeze frame is also intended to keep the viewers' good emotions and allows them to leave the cinema with a positive, beautiful image under their eyelids. And it works :).

Simultaneous pictures and / or multiplication of the frame

Each of you probably once saw the following situation in the cinema: two people are talking on the phone; the frame is divided in half and we see one interlocutor in each half of the frame. When the conversation ends, the frame division disappears, and we stay with the character who will be followed in the next scene. This solution is also an example of **simultaneous narration** (i.e. showing events that take place at the same time but in different places) and **multiplication of the frame** (i.e. dividing the frame into two or more parts in which other images are shown). However, the multiplication of the frame does not always have to mean a simultaneous narration.

Frame multiplication is not a frequently used solution, and if the film director decides to do so, it usually lasts very short. We are not able to follow several events happening at the same time in different parts of the frame, with the same care. This is only possible for a moment, when the frame is divided into only two parts, and the characters in each of them do not take rapid actions - for example, they talk on the phone. However, the problem arises when we try to divide the screen into three or more parts, and dynamic events take place in each. We don't know which one is the most important, so we instinctively try to follow all of them. In the long run this is not possible because the mechanism of human attention is not so perfect and divisible. So, if the director does not limit this situation to a few seconds, they risk the viewers' fatigue and, consequently, their decision to give up watching the movie. One of the parts of the divided frame is usually the most important and the viewers can feel it. It is on this fragment that they focus their attention, and the remaining elements are only a background.

Let's show this on the examples. *The Drifters* (1989) by Stephen Frears tells the story of three people - a mother, son and his lover, who are professional cheaters. Wanting to get a large sum of money, they are preparing for a large-scale scam. The story begins with an introduction in which Roy - the son - explains the mechanism of cheating at horse races. In the sequence starting at 0:02:25 we first see Lilly - Roy's mother. An elegant elderly woman, very spruce and giving the impression of being very rich, parks her car and enters the building. She climbs the stairs calmly and gracefully, and at 0:02:56 the screen is divided in half to make room for her son Roy, who also comes to the same place.

It is on him that we focus our attention now, while Lily slowly goes up the stairs. Roy gets out of the car, puts his things in the trunk and begins to walk at the same pace as his mother. At 0:03:16 the screen is divided into three parts - on the left we still see Lilly, in the middle Roy (both are walking), and on the right appears Myra, who also arrives by car for horse races. She gets out of the car and walks to the building door. For a few seconds the screen is divided into three parts, but in each of them the characters do the same (they go), so the viewer can easily follow their behaviour. We also know that the three characters are in three different places, but at the same time. Therefore, we are dealing here with both frame multiplication and simultaneous narration.

The moment of its ending is interesting too - at 0:03:43 all three characters are shown in half close-ups, each in their part of the frame. Although they don't really stand next to each other, they make such an impression. Thanks to this, the similarity between them is noticeable - all three have sunglasses, although they are already in the shade (in the building or under the roof). So, they do not need protection from the sun, and therefore the conclusion is that they are trying to hide something. Their glasses are a kind of mask behind which they hide their real faces. All three are also very elegantly dressed and carefully combed, and the women have perfect make-up. All three, however, give an artificial impression - they look unnatural and behave unnaturally. From the first shots the viewers know that they cannot be trusted and even though these people stay away from each other (after all, only multiplied frame connects them), they certainly must work together - they are so similar.

An interesting example of using the frame multiplication that simultaneously presents the events is a fragment of the movie *Loneliness on the web* (2005) by Witold Adamek, which lasts between 1:19:03-1:19:36. This is a story (not the best, unfortunately...) about a young woman who, tired of her marriage, meets

an interesting man online. They both fall in love and after many hours of online talks they finally decide to meet. They choose Paris as the meeting place - a city of love and lovers, but also a place where no one knows them and where they can slowly get to know each other. The girl comes first to the capital of France and waiting for her beloved one decides to explore the city. This process is presented with multiplication of the frame and it's just a thirty second fragment. The camera records situations and objects that attract girl's attention. The frame multiplication consists of chaotic images. We see the bride, little bridesmaids, tourists, cafe customers, sellers of trinkets and souvenirs whose stands are located on the Seine. The pictures give the impression of being chosen at random, as if the heroine did not have a plan, where she wants to go and what she wants to see. And this is probably the case - after all, her thoughts are occupied only by the man she is waiting for. Although she is in one of the most interesting and beautiful cities in the world, it does not matter to her - she tries to explore Paris although at the moment she is not interested in it at all. Nothing can focus her attention or keep her for longer. The multiplication used here perfectly captures the heroine's emotional state.

The multiplication of the frame does not have to mean the same as a simultaneous narrative. This is what happens in *The Taste of Life* (*L'Auberge espagnole*, 2002) by Cédric Klapisch - a film about a French student who decides to move to Spain for six months as part of the Erasmus scholarship program. The decision to leave France is caused by the hope for a better job after returning from the scholarship, but also by the desire to free himself from the partitioning mother, who still treats her adult son like a child. Despite the fact that the hero does not approach the idea of departure with enthusiasm and encounters a number of difficulties getting through all the formalities, his stay in Spain turns out to be one of the greatest experiences of his life. The fragment in which the director used multiplication starts at 0:05:41 and ends at 0:06:18. Xavier tries to complete the documents necessary for the trip, which turns out to be a long, tiring and boring process. His bustle between university buildings, corridors and offices is shown using a divided frame - but we see Xavier in several parts of the frame at the same time. So, we can't talk about simultaneous narrative here, because it is not possible for Xavier to be in several places at once. At some point the boy comments: "there is an unwritten mess", and the multiplication showing a series of unnecessary wanderings and conversations with more or less helpful secretaries, proves that the hero is right. Despite the pessimistic beginning, the film is a comedy. Simultaneously with the multiplication,

fast motion photos are used, which is a common procedure in comedies, especially classical ones. Thanks to this, the director saves time and emphasizes how tired of completing his dossier Xavier is.

Historical time of action

Before we deal with this issue, I would like you to think for a moment about the question of how we learn history. Where do we get information on this topic? Do we take it out of school? Do we get it by learning dates of historical events, names of kings and rulers? How do we get iconic images of historical events that we have in our heads? Do we get them from photographs in school textbooks? No, of course not. Very few of you were lucky to find exceptional history teachers who were able to infect students with their passion. Unfortunately, more common experience is boredom, fatigue and reluctance to remember dates, names and facts.

We get our knowledge of important events and famous historical figures mainly from the cinema. The films that reconstruct historical events in a more or less picturesque, spectacular and convincing way, are our main source of knowledge about history. A documentary film is invaluable in this case, using authentic recordings made during the event or shortly after that. However, we do not deal with the documentaries in this script.

The feature film has a certain advantage over the documentary film - it can use fiction (of course, provided that it remains faithful to historical truth, and does not shape a new, false vision of history by subordinating it to, for example, political propaganda...). By creating fictional characters whom the viewers want to identify with, the director can show their fates against the backdrop of authentic historical events and thus make the dates and facts important to us.

Millions of lives killed during World War II are - however frightening and cruel it sounds - just statistics. But if for two or three hours we follow a character who lives in a specific time and specific place - for example Warsaw in the years 1939-1945 - and it so happens that he is a Jew, the case looks completely different. The life of the on-screen pianist - because I was thinking about the Roman Polański's film - would look completely different, were it not for the outbreak of war, moving to the ghetto, loss of loved ones, hiding after the so-called Aryan side, the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising, and finally the necessity to survive several winter months in deserted, burned Warsaw. Władysław Szpilman was an authentic figure, but many other people, situations and events presented in Polański's film are fictional scenes

which task is to convey the typical, collective experience of those times. Fiction allows us to go deeper into this story and take it over more strongly than black and white documentary pictures commented by historians.

Throughout the narration Roman Polański repeatedly informs the viewer about the dates of specific events: September 1, 1939; April 19, 1943; August 1, 1944... This is historical time.

Historical time of the action is setting the film story at a specific time and place of the action. The plot - often fictitious - is based on events that actually took place. The authors of the film use iconography typical of a specific era - and therefore, care for the scenography and costumes is very important here.

Providing the date of a historical event in the form of an inscription on the screen is a very common and reliable way to inform the viewer about the time of the action. It is often used, for example, by the authors of the series *The Crown*, which tells about the reign of Elizabeth II, the current queen of England. The first episode begins with the inscription "1947, Buckingham Palace". In the same way, we are informed about the year of action of almost every episode.

The aforementioned Sam Mendes film, *1917*, announces the date of events by means of the title (in a moment I will show that this is not an isolated case). Because the story presented in the film really happened (it was told to the director by his grandfather, a soldier of First World War), its exact date is also known- April 6, 1917. This inscription appears on the screen before the viewer sees the first shot of the film.

The outstanding Polish director Andrzej Wajda also used this method. In the last years of his life he began to realize that what was a life experience for him, for most viewers of the young generation is prehistory. So, he could no longer talk about Polish history in the same way as he did at the beginning of his career - referring to the knowledge and intuition of the viewers. In the film *Wałęsa. Man of Hope* (2013) Wajda talks about the famous Solidarity leader who significantly contributed to the overthrow of Communist regime and became the first democratically elected Polish president after 1989. Important dates - both in the post-war history of Poland and in the life of Lech Wałęsa himself - are given in this film with subtitles.

Information about the historical time of the action sometimes appears in the title of the film: e.g. *Warsaw 44* (2014) by Jan Komasa, *1984* (1984) by Michael Radford, *Poznań '56* (1956) by Filip Bajon, *1492: Conquest of Paradise* (1992) by Ridley

Scott. A more common way to notify the viewers when (and where) the story is taking place is to use subtitles that open the movie. They usually consist of several sentences, which inform the viewers not only about the year of the action (and sometimes even the exact date), but also about its place. They also provide other basic information that is necessary for the viewers to immerse themselves in the film narrative. This is usually information about the characters, their relationships and / or their situation.

Warsaw 44 by Jan Komasa begins with the following inscription:

"World War II is underway. Warsaw has been occupied by Nazi Germany for 5 years. Warsaw residents are experiencing acts of inhuman terror and violence. Rebellion is growing in young people hungry for freedom and new life. In the summer of 1944, the Soviet army is approaching Warsaw. It raises hope for Germany's defeat."

The scene that follows this inscription takes place in the apartment of the main character - a young boy involved in the anti-Nazi underground. The viewer, aware of the historical time of the action, is therefore not surprised by the furnishings typical of the era and the "strange" clothes of the hero, his mother and younger brother. When the boy goes out into the street, the Nazi flags, unusual costumes of passers-by and antique cars become understandable. Confirmation of the terror that the opening credits told us about, are the bodies of people murdered by the Nazis. We also see the ghetto wall, "navy blue" Polish policemen in the service of the Germans, a tram with a section intended "for Germans only". Scenography and costumes are therefore perfectly matched to the time and situation in which the story takes place.

The film *Elizabeth* (1998) by Shekhar Kapur also begins with the subtitles informing about the time and place of the action. It's a story of the path of Queen Elizabeth I to the throne and the beginnings of her reign.

"England 1554. King Henry VIII is dead. The country is divided. Catholic against Protestant. Henry's eldest daughter Mary, a fervent catholic, is queen. She is childless. The Catholics' greatest fear is the succession of Mary's protestant half-sister. Elizabeth".

Here the situation is more complicated than in the previous example, because the director talks about times much older than World War II, and definitely less known than the history of the twentieth century. It is true that Polish contemporary

history, about which *Warsaw 44* tells, is largely unknown to foreign viewers, but there is probably no one in the world who would not associate the symbol of swastika on a red background with World War II. In the case of events taking place in the 16th century, associations are no longer as clear and obvious. Elizabeth I is to some extent an iconic figure, as one of the most famous and effective rulers in the world. She was strong, wise and independent, and certainly ahead of her time, which kept her legend alive. However, this does not change the fact that even if contemporary viewers are familiar with this character, remembering the date of her father's death and the circumstances of the conflict with her sister, can be problematic. Initial captions not only specify the historical time of the action - 1554 - but also convey the meanings necessary to understand the following scenes. Of course, the visual side mentioned above, i.e. care for faithfulness to historical realities in the field of stage design and costumes, is also very important here. The viewers expect to see interiors, dresses and behaviours typical of the Renaissance era - and their expectations are met.

The author of the extraordinary film *The lives of others* (*Das Leben der Anderen*, 2006), Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck, also takes care of the accurate determination of historical time. Although the story did not happen long ago, the lack of introductory inscriptions on the time and place of action would mean that for many viewers, especially from countries that were not in the orbit of Soviet Union influence, the story would be incomprehensible. The introduction reads as follows:

"1984, East Berlin. Glasnot is nowhere in sight. The population of the GDR is kept under strict control by the Stasi, the East German Secret Police. Its force of 100,000 employees and 200,000 informers safeguards the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Its declared goal: To know everything."

Thanks to this information, the viewers can understand the scene that follows. In a normal, democratic world, it would not be possible to interrogate a person for two days without the possibility of sleeping, eating, using the bathroom, notifying a lawyer. The reason for arrest also would not be help in leaving the country - because you can legally leave a democratic state and return to it without hindrance. However, since we know that the action takes place in a totalitarian country, where human rights are not respected, citizens have no right to protest and the borders are closed, the scene of the interrogation becomes understandable.

We can inform the viewers about the historical time of action in many ways. The above-mentioned are the most obvious and the easiest to perceive from the viewers' point of view. Sometimes the date of events shown on the screen does not appear in the first scene, but in the next one and not necessarily in the form of an inscription on the screen. It can appear in the conversation of the characters, it can be marked with a calendar, or displayed on the screen of the phone or computer. The hero can read the current newspaper (the date is always printed on it), listen to the radio news or watch an information service on TV.

Sometimes orientation in the time of the action requires the viewers to have some historical knowledge, perceptiveness and ability to associate facts. This happens, for example, in the movie *Jackie* (2016) by Pablo Larrain. The movie shows the events - the first hours, days and weeks after the assassination of President John Kennedy - from the perspective of Jackie Kennedy. The exact date of the assassination (November 22, 1963), or even the year of the tragic death of the legendary US president, do not appear in the film. However, it is such a well-known fact from the history of the twentieth century that the director rightly thinks that the viewers can easily recognize the place and time of the action. The context of the events is reproduced with such a great care, that it is even difficult to notice the difference between authentic documentary shots taken in 1963 and used in Larrain's film, and contemporary staged pictures. But it would be enough to show a beautiful dark-haired young woman in a characteristic pink costume stained with blood, so that viewers immediately understand with whom and in what context they are dealing with.

Referring to characteristic images and commonly known events is a popular way to inform the viewers about the historical time of the action. For modern viewers, the image of planes sticking into the twin towers in New York is clear, and they do not hesitate to give the date September 11, 2001. The shot depicting the demolition of the Berlin Wall (November 9, 1989) - one of the most important events of the 20th century history of the world - would probably cause more difficulties, but viewers (especially older ones) from Eastern European countries can easily place them in autumn 1989. The image of soldiers in German uniforms destroying Polish border barriers and stepping on the Polish national emblem is unequivocal as of September 1, 1939. Crowds in today's unfashionable costumes celebrating in Times Square, New York, and a sailor kissing a nurse - this is certainly August 1945. And so on.

Wojciech Smarzowski, director of the movie *Rose* (2012), seems to think the same way. The film begins with a shocking scene - a wounded young man, covered with blood, lies in the ruins of a demolished building. There are dead bodies around him, the houses are burning. We hear a desperate moan of a raped woman surrounded by several men in uniforms. After a while one of them shoots her. When they leave, the young man crawls to the woman's body, kisses and hugs her.

Where and when does this story take place? Who are the dead people in the ruins of a burning city? Who was the raped woman? Who were the soldiers who tormented her? An average viewer, especially one who is not Polish and is not interested in Polish history, probably finds it difficult to immediately determine the date and place of this event. However, when we think for a moment and carefully look at the scenery and costumes, we quickly come to the conclusion that this must be the end of the Warsaw Uprising, last days of September 1944. How do we know that? Dead men on rubble have white and red armbands which the insurgents wore because of the lack of uniforms. On an abandoned German helmet (they had a very characteristic shape) someone painted a white and red flag. The girl was a nurse - she has a band with a red cross on her sleeve. Soldiers who raped her, wore German uniforms typical for World War II. Finally, the picture of destroyed and burning city belongs to the iconography of the Warsaw Uprising. It resulted in the expulsion of the city's population and the almost complete razing the capital to the ground.

In one film we can use all the above discussed ways to inform the viewer about the historical time of the action, or just one of them. Regardless of the solution the director chooses, if they want to tell a story which background and / or theme are authentic historical events, they must always ensure that the viewers correctly recognize and understand them.

Narration time versus action time

When watching a movie, we usually don't think about who tells us the story and from what perspective they do it. Most often we expect immersion in the world of diegesis and we do not want to be reminded that "this is just a movie". We usually do not see or hear the one who tells a story - like in an epic novel, where the omniscient, third-person narrator is a sort of God the Creator who builds the whole world of diegesis without revealing himself. We want to believe that history "happens by itself", without any interference, because it guarantees the fact that we

believe in it. For the purposes of this script, we will use the term 'cinematographic instance' in cases of such 'invisible narration'. Sometimes, however, the narrator's presence is more or less noticeable and visible.

a) The narrator is one of film characters and tells the viewer about the events from a time distance. Voice-over narration

It sometimes happens that the narrator reveals their presence, and the story they tell is reported to the viewer from a certain perspective and time distance. The narrator sees it a little differently than when it was taking place. They had time to think about the events they were taking part in and find out things they had no idea about at the time. When in a feature film we deal with such a situation - both in the whole film and in its part - we talk about the difference between the time of narration and the time of action.

Narration time is the moment we tell a story.

Action time is the moment the story really took place.

The event in question is shown as past. The viewers are aware of two levels: the level of the event (past) and the level of narration (now). They are usually able to recognize and name the narrator – he/she is one of the characters of history and performs the act of storytelling. We can see their face and / or figure on the screen (but we don't see them talking!) and we hear their voice. We usually easily adjust the voice to the character, even if we guess that many years have passed between the events and telling about them. This is the case of the film *The Name of the Rose* (1986) by Jean-Jacques Annaud.

The story is set in the Middle Ages. Two monks: younger, less than twenty years old, and older - mature and experienced in life, guardian of the younger - come to the Dominican monastery to take part in a debate. The debate is about whether the garment that Jesus Christ wore belonged to him or not. Contrary to appearances, this is an extremely important issue - if the outcome of the debate is positive (the garment belonged to Jesus), it will mean that The Church as an institution can and should get rich (well, we already know how this story ends ... :)) . If not, it should remain poor. On the spot, however, it turns out that there have been some mysterious deaths in the abbey for some time. The monks keep dying tragically even after the arrival of Wilhelm and Adso. Thus, both characters try to solve the

criminal mystery, and theological (or rather economic...) issues are removed to the background.

Before we even see the first shots, the screen remains completely black and in the background of disturbing music we hear the voice of a very old man who says:

"Having reached the end of my poor sinner's life I prepare to leave on this parchment my testimony as to the wondrous and terrible events that I witnessed in my youth towards the end of the year of our Lord 1327. May God grant me the wisdom and grace to be the faithful chronicler of the happenings that took place in the remote abbey in the dark north of Italy. An abbey whose name it seems even now pious and prudent to omit."

Only after this announcement the opening inscriptions appear, the background of which is the image of two monks traveling on donkeys. They slowly descend from the mountains, carefully observing the hostile, gloomy space. The viewers have already guessed that the narrator is the younger of riders - after all, we are to observe events that took place long ago, in the speaker's youth. This hypothesis is confirmed when we hear the voice of the narrator again, but we see the face of a terrified young boy on the screen. The hero anxiously observes the weird welcome in the abbey, feels its strange atmosphere and flinches at the sound of the closing gate, cutting off his path of possible escape from this unpleasant place. We hear the words:

"May my hand not tremble now that I start to relive the past and revive the feelings of uneasiness that oppressed my heart as we entered the battlements".

So, we are sure that the old man at the end of his life, whose voice we hear, and the young boy we see, are the same person. The time of action is 1327, while the narration time is probably several dozen years later. In the Middle Ages people did not use to live as long as today, and the sixty-year-old was considered a decrepit old man, so about 40 years passed from the time of the events to the moment of narration. The hero also tells us about the past from today's perspective (that is - let's say - 1367), and therefore he had enough time to think it over, put things in order and understand his role in the events. His today's story is therefore different than if a very young boy spoke to us.

b) The narrator performs the act of storytelling during a film narration

In many films we deal with a situation where one character tells another about the events of the past - then they become the narrators themselves, and they, rather than the "invisible" cinematographic instance, tell us a story. We see a character performing the act of storytelling, and the image that appears in front of our eyes most often relates to the past.

The wise and really funny comedy *Keeping the Faith* (2000) by Edward Norton is about the friendship of two men who met in their childhood. They were also friends with Anna, a girl from the same class. They lost contact with her when her parents moved to another part of the United States. The boys grow up and even though they come from different environments - Jake is a Jew and Brian is a deeply religious Catholic - they still stick together and understand each other perfectly. Jake becomes a rabbi and Brian becomes a Catholic priest. Then Anna appears in their lives again and both men fall in love with her.

The film opens with a shot of a completely drunk Brian, who can't keep upright and falls on the street. He enters Paul Chopra's bar and ineptly tries to talk to an attractive blonde. The girl looks at him reluctantly and leaves. Then the bar owner, interested in the reason for the condition of his late customer (the bar is already completely empty, the chairs are arranged on the tables, so it must be very late), begins the conversation. Brian cries and stares at the photo of three kids, so Paul is convinced that they are Brian's children and the man despairs because his wife left him taking the kids. However, the matter turns out to be more complicated when Brian shows a choker - so it is clear that he is a priest and (at least officially...) he cannot have a partner and children. Paul asks for an explanation ("I must hear this story"), so at 0:05:52 Brian begins to talk about his friendship with Anna and Jake.

We go back in time - so we are dealing with a retrospection (this issue will be discussed in the next part of this work). We hear the voice over and we know it is Brian's voice. Showing Paul the picture, Brian has already explained that the blond boy in it is himself in childhood. So, when we see the same boy on the screen, we already know that we went back in time. From then on, we are at the "past" level. At 0:07:10, the listened-up Paul pulls Brian out of his story, so we return to the level "now", which in this scene is also a time of narration. Brian gets nervous, so Paul tries to calm him down and asks to "keep talking." At 0:07:24 Brian returns to the interrupted story - we again see him and his friends as children, but we hear the voice of an adult male. Therefore, we are at the "past" level again. In this case, the

moment when Brian tells Paul about his childhood is a time of narration. And the childhood situations and events that we see on the screen are a time of action. Our life experience tells us that it must have been more than several years between both of these times (about 10-15).

The film *Citizen Milk* (2008) by Gus van Sant has an interesting narrative opening. This is a fact-based tale of the first San Francisco city supervisor who, being a gay, did not hide his sexual orientation. From the moment he became involved in public activities, he devoted himself mainly to the fight for human rights. He was shot dead by another city supervisor - an unstable man full of hatred and homophobia.

Let's follow the list of subsequent scenes in the opening sequence the film:

1. Documentary photos taken at the end of the sixties (as evidenced by clothes and cars; a visible date appears on one of the newspapers - 1967) showing police raids on bars where gays used to meet. Homosexual men are arrested, handcuffed, and taken away in police cars.
2. A board with the inscription "1978".
3. The hero - a middle-aged man - sits at a table in a small kitchen. There is a notebook and a tape recorder in front of him. He starts recording:

"This is Harvey Milk speaking. It's Friday, November 18. This is only to be played in the event of my death by assassination. During my early campaigns I began to open speeches with a line that became a kind of a signature."

4. Harvey Milk is standing on the stairs, surrounded by a group of policemen and several dozen people. He says through a megaphone: "My name is Harvey Milk and I want to recruit you." The assembly is enthusiastic about these words.
5. Kitchen. The hero records:

"When I was speaking to a hostile audience or mostly straight one, I tried to get their attention with a joke."

6. Harvey Milk in a suit speaks to a large group of men dressed in jeans and checked shirts. They look like workers.

"I don't know what you have expected but I left my high heels at home." The reaction of the gathered men is laughter.

7. Kitchen. The hero records:

"I fully realize that I am a person who stands for what I stand for. An activist, a gay activist. I can become a target for someone unstable or insecure."

8. In the course of the above statements, documentary photos taken on the day of the attack on Harvey Milk appear. We see the City Council building surrounded by the police, media and onlookers. There is panic inside, people are trying to leave this place as soon as possible.

9. Kitchen. The hero records: "It's very likely because we've broken the dam of major prejudice in San Francisco."

10. Documentary photos, night. Stairs in front of the City Council building. Policemen are trying to control the situation. A woman about 60 makes a statement:

"As the president of the Board and the supervisor it is my duty to make this announcement. Both Mayor Moscone and supervisor Harvey Milk have been shot and killed."

Cries and shouts of despair and anger are the reactions of the crowd.

11. Kitchen, the hero records: "I wish I had time to explain all the things that I did. Almost everything I've done was for the benefit of the gay movement."

A board with the movie title appears: *Citizen Milk*.

Leitmotifs (the recurring threads, images, sounds or symbols) are here the scenes of making a recording, taking place in the kitchen. This moment is a narration time in this passage, while the narrator is the hero of the film. Action time, however, is both retrospections - the hero goes back to the past and we see the events from the past; as well as futurespections (we are looking ahead), i.e. documentary

photos taken after Milk's death (he died on November 27, 1978). Of course, the hero cannot talk about his death - he only guesses that he may fall victim to the attack and accurately predicts it. Let us remind that he makes the recording 9 days before his death. Nevertheless, in futurespection scenes, he is no longer the narrator. Then "a cinematographic instance" tells us the story - "someone" (of course, it is not only one person) who takes care of the form and content of the whole story.

c) An omniscient narrator who is not the character of the film

A storyteller can also be an omniscient narrator. They are not any of the characters we see on the screen and their voice is heard from outside the frame (voice over / off-voice). We – the viewers - are privileged because we are the only ones aware of the narrator's presence - the characters in the film do not hear the omniscient narrator and do not know that they give the viewers important information. Most often we are not able to name the narrator - it is "someone", without age, gender, profession and other identifying features. The biggest omniscient narrator's advantage is the fact that they "know everything". The viewers also see them as someone who maintain objectivity, even if emotional phrases and expressions appear in their language.

This situation occurs in the movie *The Book Thief* (2013) by Brian Percival. It is a story about a girl who just before the beginning of World War II is put under the care of a married couple living in the suburbs of Munich. The girl is so neglected that even though she is around 10-12 years old, she still cannot read. However, she learns it quickly. Under the influence of care and love of wise guardians, and thanks to friendship with the Jew hiding at their home, she learns to understand and appreciate books. The film begins with a picture of beautiful winter scenery filmed from a high altitude, accompanied by the voice over of a narrator. A male voice informs the viewers:

"One small fact. You all are going to die. Despite every effort no one lives for ever. Sorry to be such a spoiler. My advice is: when the time comes – don't panic. It doesn't seem to help. I guess I should introduce myself properly. But then again – you'll meet me soon enough. Not before your time, of course. I make a promise to avoid the living."

The camera gets lower and lower, covers snowy fields, a forest and an old-fashioned train. Its passengers travel in costumes typical for the 1930s.

"Well... except sometimes – says the narrator – once in a very long time I can't help myself. I get interested. I don't know exactly what it was about Liesel Meminger, but she caught me. And I cared."

We realize that Death is the narrator. It (he?) draws our attention to Liesel and we follow the girl's life throughout the whole story. The time of action - World War II - is not the same as the time of narration. The action ends in 1945, when the Allies liberate West Germany, and Max finds Liesel. The time of narration is a moment that takes place several decades later, after the death of the aged heroine. Watching her beautifully furnished New York apartment, Death informs the viewers that Liesel died at the age of 90 as a fulfilled, happy woman.

A similar solution - although unique in its own way, because it is continued throughout the whole movie - is used by Jean-Pierre Jeunet, author of *Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain* (2001). This is a story about a young, sensitive and delicate girl who works in a cafe. By chance, she begins to consider making others happy her life's mission, but she doesn't want them to know who and how has helped them. Finally, she also finds love and happiness alongside a man as unique as she is.

From the first to the last frames of the film, the viewers are accompanied by a narrator who "knows everything". He (we hear a male voice) explains every detail and picture that would probably remain incomprehensible without a few words of explanation. He knows the innermost thoughts, fears, likes, dislikes and expectations of the characters. He knows what pleases them and what worries them. He can recall images from their distant and closer past at will. He becomes a kind of guide around the world of diegesis and a kind of encyclopaedia with all the information about the characters, their experiences and hopes. He also informs the viewer of every change in the time of action.

Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain is an interesting case because many times we deal here with situations when the time of action coincides with the time of narration, and such when both of these times are divergent. When we see the current actions of Amelia or people around her while hearing the narrator's comment about them - the time of action and time of narration are equal. When the narrator talks about the past, we hear his voice at the "now" level, but we see

events that took place in the past - then both times “diverge.” The narration time is the “now” level, while the action time is the “past” level.

Time relations in the film due to the order of the events

I have already mentioned above that when thinking about the story that we want to tell in the film, we must choose the events that make it up. We decide to show the viewers the facts and situations that are the most important (if we omit any of the elements considered necessary, the story ceases to be consistent and logical), and which have the greatest emotional and semantic load. An equally important decision as what events we show, is in what order we need to show them. Depending on the effect we want to achieve, we use four types of event ordering to choose from:

a) chronological order

The simplest and most commonly used way to organize film events is to preserve their chronology, i.e. put them in the order in which they really happened / would happen. We encounter this kind of narration, for example, in Roman Polański's *The Pianist* - from the first to the last stage, the events are arranged in chronological order. Each scene leads to the next one.

b) non-chronological order

In this kind of film narration, events are put in a different order than they really happened / would happen. However, the viewers are able to reconstruct the correct order of events and easily know which of them was earlier and which was later on the timeline. They can recognize a **retrospection** – going back in time; and **futurespection** (in other words: anticipation) - thus showing events later than it would appear from the logic of the story.

I have already mentioned retrospection and futurespection while discussing other issues related to film time. It would have been hard not to do that anyway - you probably have already noticed that various narrative solutions intertwine and can occur simultaneously. Let's try to return to this thread and analyse a few more examples.

We already know that the retrospection is a going back in time – recalling the events that took place at earlier stages of a story, most often belonging to the so-called “before-action”, i.e. the period before the events of which the film begins. Watching the movie, we “believe” that although we meet the characters in a specific place and time, they existed before the beginning of the story we watch. They lived their lives, gained experiences, built various relationships, achieved goals or coped with problems. So, they did not appear in a vacuum and their previous experiences made them what they are now. That’s why sometimes we have to go back to the past. This is necessary when the event that took place in the past is the key to understanding what is happening here and now. I hope you remember the beginning of the movie *Keeping the Faith* by Edward Norton - if Brian did not go back to the past and tell Paul about the friendship that began in his childhood, Paul - and thus viewers - would not understand the events that occurred when three children from photography grew up. Going back to the past must therefore have a function, must have a purpose and must provide information that otherwise could not be so effectively presented to the viewers.

However, when deciding to use such a solution, we must ensure that our viewers are aware of going back in time. The disturbance in the chronology of the story must be clearly marked, otherwise the viewers may get lost in the action and not to know what and why they are watching. Most often, a retrospection is a way to show memories - recalling a situation from the past, the effect of which is still felt today, and which affected the life of the character. Lack of knowledge on this topic would impede viewers to understand other events.

Several popular and understandable ways of introducing retrospections are usually used. The character recalls the past - thinks about it or tells another person about it. The memory is very often evoked by an object related to a specific event: a small thing, an amulet, jewellery, photography, a picture, a piece of furniture, clothes, a plant, a sound, an inscription, a view or thousands other things. The memory may also appear because of a song or melody. It can be brought by a word, sentence or password, the taste of food or a smell (not necessarily related to food and not necessarily pleasant). Finally, a conversation with another person, a question they ask or make may lead to the retrospection.

Sometimes, using this method, you can build a whole narration of a particular movie. This happens in *Man of Iron* (1981) by Andrzej Wajda. The film’s basic action takes place in August 1980, when the fate of workers striking at the Gdańsk Shipyard is being decided - and in fact the fate of the whole country. Journalist

Winkel made bold radio reports about the massacre on The Coast ten years earlier (the communist authorities opened fire to workers protesting against rising food prices, dozens of people were killed then), but now he is an alcoholic, blackmailed by the Security Police. He agrees to collect materials incriminating one of the striking workers - Maciek Tomczyk, son of a bricklayer, who was the main character of another film by Andrzej Wajda: *Man of Marble* (1976). Winkel reaches people who knew Tomczyk at various stages of his life and tries to learn as much as possible about him. Every time another person begins to tell him about their relationship with Tomczyk, a retrospection occurs.

A very common solution used to emphasize the moment of going back in time is to zoom on the character's face (who very often uses words like "it was when ...", "I remember that I was then ...") or an object that evokes memories (in *Keeping the Faith*, there is a close-up of the photograph over which drunk Brian cries). In one of the most famous melodramas in the history of cinema - *Casablanca* (1942) by Michael Curtiz - we meet with such a classic and still used today way of introducing a retrospective.

During World War II, Rick runs a pub in Casablanca. One day, a woman with whom he parted two years earlier in Paris, when the Nazis invaded France, enters his pub. Ilsa and Rick were supposed to leave together at the time, they were planning a future together, but Ilsa did not appear at the railway station and Rick decided to escape from occupied France alone (if he hadn't, he would have been arrested and probably would have been killed). However, he never forgot about Ilsa and did not stop loving her. Now he sees her at the side of another man - her husband. Not understanding what happened and not being able to deal with his emotions, after closing the place he sits and drinks whiskey listening to the melody that his friend Sam used to play in Paris for him and Ilsa. At 0:38:28, Rick's half-zoom begins, which turns into zoom a few seconds later. The viewer has time to notice the great tension on the face of the hero. The melody played by Sam transforms into a musical theme inspired by the *Marseilles* and by means of diffusion (a kind of soft editing) the image of Rick's face goes into the Arc de Triomphe shot.

The sequence that begins with this picture is the story of the happy days Ilsa and Rick spent in Paris. It ends at 0:47:53 with Rick's departure from the city. Diffusion again. We hear the same melody that Rick listened to at the beginning of the sequence. Again, we can see the interior of his place and Rick himself. He has already drunk almost the entire bottle. We know that the retrospection is over. Thanks to this passage, we understand that the love of the two was deep and

honest, and therefore something really dramatic must have happened, since Ilse did not leave with Rick at that time. An explanation of what was the reason for her decision will bring the next scene (no, I won't spoil it - it's a cinema classic and it's worth seeing this movie!).

It also happens that contemporary filmmakers use the change of tape colour – from coloured to black and white or sepia - to suggest the beginning of the retrospection. They use the colours characteristic of old photographs then. That also happens in the film *Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain* by Jean-Pierre Jeunet. Amelia finds a metal box with boy's treasures in her apartment. It was left there by a son of a family who once lived in the same apartment. The girl decides to find the owner – now a man around 60 - and give him these little things back. But because she is shy and does not have the courage to meet him face to face, she arranges a situation in which he finds a box tossed to him. At 0:30:29 a man opens it and the narrator informs the viewers that “all memories come back to him”. We can see it very clear on the man's face, who, with tears in his eyes, looks through the toys, photographs, colourful glass balls and other trinkets he once owned. At 0:30:48 there is a change from coloured tape to black and white and the viewers watch a sequence of several scenes from the childhood of the man. At 0:31:35 the tape regains its colour, and the old man enters the cafe where Amelia sits. Deeply moved, he confides in a strange girl, not knowing that she is the one who let him get his treasure back. Please note that together with changing the colour of the tape, we have a standard way of suggesting a retrospection here - an object appears in a close-up that evokes a memory; the character's face on which the emotions associated with that memory can be seen; and finally information given in words (“all memories come back to him”).

Since the cinema widely uses coloured tape, the use of black and white aesthetics has become a conscious choice of the film makers. It happens, however, that the directors decide to make a black and white film entirely or use coloured tape only in very small fragments. Steven Spielberg shot the famous *Schindler's List* (1993) in 99% as a black and white film - and that's how people talk about it. Few, however, pay attention to the coloured fragments beginning and ending the film. The first scene shows a traditional Sabbath blessing and prayer at which a Jewish family gathers. They are Eastern European Jews, and their clothes and the way of arranging the interior of the room suggest that action time takes place in the thirties. The candles are slowly burning up, people disappear and in 0:01:19 we have a transition to black and white tape. But here it doesn't mean a retrospection.

It is rather a reference to the aesthetics of films from the forties, when almost only black and white films were made. Spielberg tries to tell the true Holocaust story by giving it an almost documentary value. Black and white tape is here to emphasize the authenticity of the characters' fate. In the last scene of the film we return to the coloured tape. The Jews saved by Schindler walk in silence on a large, empty plain. Everyone is wearing very modest clothes. Everyone has the Star of David sewn together with the number on their clothes. At 3:05:04 a coloured tape appears, and the crowd of walking people changes – now we see the Holocaust Survivors and actors who played them in the film. It is here and now - Jerusalem 1993, the moment the film is being finished. On Schindler's tombstone, Survivors and actors lay stones as a sign of remembrance. The return to the present and the end of the film narration (last shot of the film is no longer a staging, but the recording of an authentic event, although arranged for the needs of the film) was marked by the transition to the coloured tape.

A very interesting case of contemporary black and white film is *The Artist* (2011) by Michel Hazanavicius. The film is set in the late 1920s in the United States and tells the story of a popular actor whose career breaks down when sound movies begin to be produced. The young actress, in love with the main character, helps him overcome the crisis. Since the action of the story takes place in the past and concerns the cinema that the contemporary viewers do not actually know anymore, the director decided to make his film in the convention of silent cinema - he uses subtitles almost until the end of the narration, and the sound is almost only illustrative. Silent films were black and white (although it happened several times that manually, frame by frame - yes! - some elements were coloured), and therefore the natural decision was to use black and white tape.

Let's move now to the futurespection, also called anticipation. It is looking ahead, showing later events as previous ones. This solution is used much less often than retrospection. Futurespection thus knocks the viewer out of rhythm and is more difficult to introduce, explain and understand. There is also something disturbing in this solution - we see the effect, but we do not know its cause. We must therefore wait until it is clarified, which is not always comfortable and often causes incorrect hypotheses. Sometimes we are not even aware that we are currently watching futurespection. It is only when the picture shown at the beginning appears again that we remember we have already seen it, although we did not understand its meaning at that time.

The White (1994) by Krzysztof Kieślowski opens with a shot of a large, old-fashioned trunk that is slowly moving on the tape to collect luggage at the airport. After a few seconds, we see a shot of male legs, and a moment later we see their owner. The man, with obvious tension and fear, goes to the court building, where his divorce hearing is to take place. Against his will, the marriage between him and the beautiful blonde is dissolved. The hero loses everything – a hairdresser's saloon, money, an apartment. He can't even leave France legally (the first part of the story takes place in France - the hero's ex-wife is French, he is Polish), because the ex-wife falsely accused him of an assault and the man knows that he will be stopped when crossing the border. The only thing he has is the old trunk in which he holds his hairdressing diplomas. Still, the first shot of the film remains unclear - after all, we already know that the hero cannot leave France, so the trunk is not his luggage. And in fact - he is the luggage himself. He gets to Poland in the belly hold of a plane. He was locked in a big trunk and given as luggage by a friend who decided to help him in this way. The meaning of the first shot is not explained until 0:24:00, when Karol (the main character) explains to Mikołaj his plan and asks him for help in its implementation. One of the shots that follows is the same as the first shot.

A much clearer way to introduce anticipation is the inscription indicating the order of events. *The Debt* (1999) by Krzysztof Krauze is a fact-based tale of a murder committed by two nice, ordinary men. Led to the last resort, they decide to commit a crime, although none of them is a bad man. The film is not only the story of their crime, but also a study of encirclement, showing point by point how easy it is to lose ground. It doesn't take much to believe that the only solution to the problem (of course only seemingly) is to kill another man.

The film begins with the scene of finding two headless male bodies in the river. Policemen are working on the shore collecting traces and trying to figure out who the murdered and murderers may be. When the scene ends, the frame darkens and the inscription "three months earlier" appears on a black background. So, we already know that the scenes and sequences we will see next, should explain what led to the crime and who has committed it. The event, which was actually one of the last on the film timeline, was shown first - we are therefore dealing with futuresspection.

c) Simultaneous narration – parallel editing

We talk about simultaneous narration when we follow events happening at the same time, but in at least two different places. Above, we have already discussed multiplication as a way to inform the viewer about simultaneously occurring events. More often, however, filmmakers use so-called parallel editing. It is a kind of hard editing (i.e. one in which we see the moments of cutting the tape), consisting of interlacing two series of shots. Parallel editing is often used to show dynamic chases, escapes and fights, or two clashing forces or factions. Therefore, frequent genres in which this type of editing appears are sensational and crime films, westerns and thrillers. There are then rapid and multiple changes of the place of action, but the viewers are sure that the events they follow are taking place at the same time. It is also ensured by the sound, which very often is an element connecting two places of action.

Sometimes the simultaneous narration is used to implement a last-minute salvation plot - someone dashes to help the endangered character, who is on the verge of tragedy. The viewers wait in suspense for the result of this action.

The protagonist of the aforementioned film, *The Artist*, overwhelmed by the calamities that meet him, fearing the loss of a girl who, unlike him, is successful in the sound film, decides to commit suicide. At 1:24:50 - 1:28:52 we observe Peppy, who realizes that something bad is probably happening to her beloved, and George, in whom the thought of suicide matures. The girl gets into the car and, although she is not a good driver, she rushes through the city to reach her partner as soon as possible. Meanwhile he pulls out a pistol, sits in an armchair, puts the barrel in his mouth ... and bang! Fortunately, the bang that we do not hear (remember that this is a film made in the poetics of silent cinema, so dialogues and soundtracks are given by means of subtitles), this is the result of Peppy's car crashed in a tree. Peppy runs into George's apartment and stops him from doing a terrible act. She assures him of her love and support.

Lola rennt (1998) by Tom Tykwer - the very dynamic film illustrated with techno-music - shows three versions of the same story. Lola must win 100,000 German Marks within 20 minutes to save the life of Manny, who has lost the money belonging to gangsters. The girl does not have such cash, but she loves her boyfriend, so she is able to do almost anything to save him.

The narrative begins with Manny's call. At 0:04:31 Lola answers the phone in her apartment. Manny calls from a phone booth. He tells Lola why he needs so

much money all of a sudden and begs for help. Up to 0:10:11, so until the end of the conversation, we are dealing with parallel editing. The callers are in different places, but they talk to each other at the same time. An interesting element in this passage is the use of numerous retrospections, presented with black and white tape, although Lola and Manny talk about events that took place on the same day. Tom Tykwer plays with film conventions here. He uses various types of film time (screening time is one hour 13 minutes, and action time is only 20 minutes - because that's how much Lola has in each version of the story to get money and save Manny), various film genres (including animated film), various types of editing. In addition to traditional solutions - such as parallel editing - we are also dealing with very innovative ideas. The result is one of the most interesting and best European films of the 1990s.

d) Achronological narration

This type of ordering of events in the film is definitely the least often. It is a kind of narrative in which events are not arranged chronologically, but the viewer is not able to reconstruct the correct order of events. There is no cause-effect relation, the logic of events is not preserved. Individual situations and scenes seem to exclude each other. In this situation, it is very difficult to answer the question "what is this movie about?". This type of narration is not so much about telling a story, but about conveying a certain mood, building an extraordinary atmosphere. Films with achronological narration give the impression that they were dreams transferred to the screen. Everyone who has dreamed knows that dreams are not logical. We, when we tell them to someone, give them order and logic, but dreams themselves are not a sequence of orderly images.

An example of such a film is *Last Year in Marienbad* (1961) by Alain Resnais. While in the examples I discussed earlier, there was no problem with a short sketch of the plot, here the problem is quite big. We see a meeting of a group of people in a beautiful French castle. We observe their illogical conversations and games that they indulge in. Some shots are repeated, some conversations also, but in a different scenery than before. The viewers remain impressed, as if they were watching a dream transferred to the screen, but they are not able to recount it.

Chapter III.

The Characters

In previous chapters we dealt with issues related to what and why we watch, as well as when the action of a film story takes place. Thus, we already know how to define and understand the first two pillars of a movie story: event and time. Now we will deal with the third of them: the character.

Try to think about how you perceive other people - especially those you see for the first time in your life. What are you paying attention to? What details catches your eye? What makes you recognize a person as trustworthy even though you know nothing about them? How fast is your assessment of other people? And finally - are you always able to rationally explain what your positive or negative reception of another person depends on?

Exactly. The decision to make (or not to make) a contact with other people is usually made very quickly and we rarely can fully justify it. We say, "this person seems okay" or "something is wrong with this person". We heavily rely on our intuition - something very indeterminate, what, however, usually works. Intuition is not the infamous sixth sense, some irrational, unique gift. It is rather a kind of intelligence accumulating our experiences, on the basis of which, we can accurately predict whether we want and can establish satisfactory contact with someone. One look is often enough, and we already know. Later events most often confirm our first impression. The appearance of a person, their behaviour and the way they speak, tone of their voice, facial expression - all these elements determine our first reaction to the person. Once we form an opinion on them, we change it rarely and very reluctantly.

A very similar mechanism occurs when we watch a feature film. From the first shots we usually know who the main character is - this person stands out from the background. They are in the centre of the frame; they are followed by a camera and they are the link between the scenes. Just like in real life, most often we quickly form an opinion about the character whose fate we will follow for the next hours. The director, however, must ensure that we get the proper signals so that we can place the character in right categories. I deliberately use the plural form - categories, not category - because people are very complex beings, and human personality is usually the result of a combination of many, sometimes diverse, and even mutually exclusive features. If to the personality traits we add features associated with social

status, occupation or other type of human activity - it turns out that to present a credible portrait of a film character, one really needs to think about their design very carefully. And above all, one needs to know what and how to show, so that the viewers would believe the characters, believe in them and be able to identify with them. If this is not possible because the character is clearly a bad person - the viewers should at least be able to understand their motivations.

At this point it is worth explaining the very important concept by Edgar Morin - a French philosopher, sociologist and political scientist, researcher of popular culture. It's about the **projection-identification mechanism**, which, to some extent, explains our fascination with cinema and the emotions that we experience during the screening. Probably each of you deeply enjoy when the character you like manages to overcome troubles and achieves success. And probably each of you is sad when the character is defeated, suffers or dies. We know that "it's just a movie", and yet we can't (and we don't want to - that's why we go to the cinema after all) to shut up on emotions.

The mechanism of projection-identification is that we identify with the film character - we share the same identity during the screening. We treat the characters' victories as if they were our own, just like their defeats - hence the emotions we feel. We also transfer our own desires, fears, expectations and imaginations to a fictional movie character - that is, we perceive the character through the prism of our own personality. However, for this to be possible, we must - as I said before - believe the characters and believe in them. The director's task is therefore to introduce the characters to us and provide necessary information about them. The information we consider necessary depends on the story. We never get the same set of information. Sometimes the information that is necessary in one story, is completely unnecessary in another. Do you remember the beginning of Edward Norton's *Keeping the Faith*, which we discussed in the previous chapter? Brian told Paul that he was a Catholic priest. At this point this information turned out to be necessary and most important one because we all know that priests cannot get into intimate relationships with other people. But Brian fell in love, and now he wants to tell Paul the story of his love. The viewer already knows that it will not be an ordinary love story (as if any love story was ordinary :)).

In the vast majority of feature films, the viewers learn who the main character is as soon as possible. The viewers should get information that allows them to feel safe and comfortable during the screening. The audience shouldn't feel confused - they must know when and where the action is taking place, and whom they will be

dealing with. So usually in the first minutes of the film the characters are introduced to the viewers, who get formal and informal information about them.

Formal information like personal data, age, occupation, nationality and citizenship, education, race and so on.

Informal information concerns personality traits, beliefs, expectations, plans, fears. We also learn about character's situation – the place they take in life. Informal information answers the following questions:

- What is the character like? Is this a good or bad person? What impression do they make? Do we want to have contact with them? What are our feelings about them? How would they behave if we met them in real life?
- Do we like them? Do we trust them? Why? Why not?
- What value system do the characters follow? What is important to them? What do they believe in? What would they be able to defend?
- What is their professional situation (we do not ask about the profession - this is formal information, but about whether they have a job, how do they cope with the others, what are their relations with their colleagues)? What is their social status? How are they seen by the others?
- What is their family situation? Who do they live with? What are their relations with their relatives?
- Have they experienced anything in the past that has influenced them very much and now affects the story we are watching? What do we know about their upbringing, growing up, traumas? What has shaped the main character of the movie?
- What are religious and / or political views of the characters? What ideologies are close to them?
- Do our characters have any special skills or talents? Do they have some extraordinary powers?

Of course, this set of information is never fully used to present the film protagonist. If that was the case, the viewers would not be able to absorb and remember all the information. So much data would also make the beginning of the movie very tiring. We have to make a very careful selection and choose only the data that we really need. The most popular and effective ways to present a character are:

- scenography
- character's outfit
- character's behaviour
- information that appears in the character's conversation with other people
- information about the character that appears in the conversation of other people - but the characters themselves are not present
- information that the characters themselves communicate to the viewers with monologue, off-monologue, a fragment of a letter or notes they write and so on
- information that the omniscient narrator provides the viewers (voice over)
- contrast between the character and other people
- the character's main personality trait, consistently emphasized until the end of the film
- the actor's image transferred from film to film (today it is definitely a less common solution than in classic movies)
- playing games with the viewer - giving the viewer false suggestions about the character before the real information is passed. Usually, we use this solution in criminal, sensational, or spy films - i.e. ones in which we deal with a puzzle or intrigue. Keeping the viewer uncertain is an intentional move here.

There are almost no movies that use only one of the methods mentioned above. Usually, in one scene we use several methods at the same time, and the information provided this way complements and confirms. If the character is a doctor, we expect them to be presented in a suit appropriate for their profession (smock, apron), place (hospital, operating room, office) and perform activities related to their work (admitting patients, performing operations).

Sometimes one of the ways to introduce the character comes to the fore, while the others perform auxiliary and confirmation functions. Let's try to show it on some examples.

The character's appearance and behaviour

Do you remember that in fairy tales good characters always appear in bright robes, and bad ones wear dark clothes and are shown in a dark and gloomy environment? The same principle applies to legends, myths, Bible parables, and even commercials. Film directors often use this well-known code - positive characters are often pretty and bright, while evil characters are ugly and dark. But even if the

evil character is beautiful, their beauty is usually disturbing and unnatural, they are also not associated with warmth and personal charm. We instinctively sense that it is better to stay away from those characters and that it is not worth trusting them. In a positive character - even if we see them in shabby or dirty clothes (of course, when it is justified by the action of the film - we do not positively perceive a man who is simply messy) - there is always something pure and fair. We sense it as we do in real life - because we can read facial expressions and understand the meaning of gestures. Nonverbal signals are more reliable for us than verbal signals. We don't believe the hero who assures his wife that he loves her very much, but at the same time cheats on her, as well as the thief who assures others of his integrity.

Watching movies and assessing film characters we pay attention to exactly the same features that determine how we perceive people in real life. We do not trust a character who is dirty and messy, nor one who is aggressive and treats others with contempt. We do not like a character whose behaviour and motivation we do not understand. We treat dark colours and ugliness as a warning - watch out, this is not a good man! The character is rarely shown in a static way - we usually see them in action, in some situation, interacting with other people. Watching them, we have time to answer questions about not only who they are, but above all what they are.

The film is a very complicated construction, composed of many, sometimes very small elements. None of them, however, can be - should not be - accidental. We assume that every word has a meaning, just like every gesture, every look, every face expression. A movie hero may be portrayed in many ways, but the first impression is always the most important - and it depends on the appearance and behaviour of the character.

The heroine of *Zookeeper's wife* (2017) by Niki Caro was an authentic figure - Aleksandra Żabińska, wife of the director of the Warsaw zoo. They were both Righteous Among the Nations - during World War II they hid a large group of Jews at the zoo and helped survive several hundred people. The film begins just before the outbreak of war in the summer of 1939. The camera focuses on the figure of Aleksandra, a young woman who with tenderness and delight looks at her sleeping son of several years. Two tiny lion cubs lie next to the boy. The woman - a bright, slender blonde, wearing a bright dressing gown - goes out onto the balcony, gladly welcoming the coming day. A moment later, in a light, colourful dress, she welcomes guests visiting the zoo, and then visits other animals herself. She treats people and animals with the same kindness and warmth - she gives everyone a smile and a kind word. Aleksandra treats rank-and-file zoo employees and elegantly dressed

guests with the same respect. She can talk to animals - and this is a very rare and valuable gift. On her way through the zoo, she is accompanied by a small camel that responds to every word she speaks and every gesture she makes. Finally, she reaches her husband, with whom she warmly greets, and then helps him at work.

Aleksandra creates a kind of magnetic field around her - she gives everyone around her cheerfulness, joy, calmness and kindness. She is natural and honest. She feels good in open space, among nature. She understands and respects its rights. She is a good wife and mother. Every element of her appearance and behaviour confirms that she is simply a good, decent woman. No wonder that it is she who decides to save other people, although it is punishable by death.

The Gods (2014) by Łukasz Palkowski is a biographical story about Zbigniew Religa - the first Polish cardiac surgeon who performed a successful heart transplant surgery. From the first shots we follow a tall, stooped man, who is wearing a doctor's coat. In the dissecting room he practices the process of removing a broken heart. When he receives a phone call (then we get to know his name - Religa introduces himself), he immediately runs to the ward and does everything to save the man. He is acting contrary to procedures - he must not make decisions on his own to start a complicated operation or to use an expensive heart valve without the consent of his supervisor. However, Religa knows that if he does not help the patient, the man will die. Therefore, he risks losing his job, because the only thing that is important to him at that moment is human life. The decision turns out to be right - the man survives, and Religa's boss agrees with him knowing that the doctor acted in a state of higher necessity.

The opening sequence of this film, however, is not a hymn for Religa. The doctor is not a gentle man and sometimes behaves aggressively. He also uses words widely recognized as unparliamentary. He doesn't care about authorities and stands against them. Terrorizes colleagues who are afraid to take action. His team - other doctors and nurses - however, trusts him because they know Religa is always guided by one, the most important thing: the patient's well-being. He's an excellent doctor and he knows it. However, knowledge is not always enough - sometimes you also need courage and the ability to take a risk. Religa, although rough and not always pleasant, knows how to achieve the goal. We may not like him, but we would have entrusted him with our health and life without hesitation.

The hero of *The Lives of others* (2006) by Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck is also an excellent at his profession, but I am sure that none of you would like to deal with him. The film is set in the 1980s in East Germany, and Gerd Wiesler is a

high-ranking officer of Stasi - the secret security service of the GDR. The opening sequence consists of two intertwining scenes. The first is the scene of interrogation led by Wiesler. The second is the lecture scene at the elite school of Stasi officers - the lecturer is Wiesler himself and tells students about the methods he uses during the interrogation. He doesn't allow the prisoner to sleep, rest, eat and drink. Keeps asking the same questions. Addresses a detainee using a number, not a name. Finally, bullies him in the worst possible way. The prisoner is a young man who probably helped someone to escape to the West. Interrogated for over 40 hours without interruption, does not reveal the name of the guide who helped his friend to cross the border illegally. He breaks down only when Wiesler threatens to take his children away and put them in an orphanage.

Wiesler completes his tasks perfectly - he obtains information thanks to which the totalitarian state can continue. The methods he uses are, however, unacceptable, let alone a criminal ideology, which he convincingly serves (but until...). His behaviour effectively characterizes this character, but no less important is his appearance. Wiesler looks like a robot - his face is perfectly still all the time. Wiesler shows no emotion. He is not impatient when the prisoner keeps saying the same things. He is not happy when he finally succeeds. It doesn't upset him when a student asks a silly - from Wiesler's point of view - question. He is an ideal slave and a perfect officer of the totalitarian system. In this case, the perfection of the hero cannot be evaluated positively - because his motivations and effects of his actions are bad.

The characters talk about themselves

The situation in which the characters talk about themselves is the simplest and one of the most understandable ways of presenting a protagonist. On the one hand, it's also the best way - after all, who knows us better than we do? If the protagonists talk about themselves, then we may also assume that no one knows more about them than they do. The characters should be the best possible source of information about themselves then. However, this is not as easy as it may seem.

The characters may lie in order to show themselves in a better light. They may hide some uncomfortable information. They may skip important facts. They may also simply not be able to tell about themselves honestly - due to illness, addiction, strong emotions, and inability to find the right words. So, usually, the information

provided by the characters is verified in a different way. However, if the director allows the characters to talk about themselves, they may do it in several ways:

- using voice over while showing the face of the character to whom the voice belongs;
- letting the character tell the other people about themselves;
- showing the character, looking straight at the camera, turning to the viewer, thus - destroying the film illusion (this is definitely the rarest solution).

The heroine of *The Piano* (1993) by Jane Campion talks about herself from the first shots of the film. She addresses directly to the viewers. We hear her voice over and we see her on the screen as she walks around the beautiful autumn park, looks at her daughter, plays the piano. She says:

"The voice you hear is not my speaking voice. It's my mind's voice. I have not spoken since I was six years old. Nobody knows why. Not even me. My father says this is a dark talent and the day I want to stop breathing will be my last. Today he married me to a man I have not yet met. Soon, my daughter and I shall join him in his country. My husband says my muteness doesn't bother him. He writes – listen to this: "God loves silent creatures, so do I." I hope he has God's patience... For silence affects everyone in the end. The strange thing is I don't think myself silent. That's because of the piano. I shall miss it on the journey."

The heroine stops "talking" when she starts playing. Music is the most important form of expression for her. She does not speak, because silence is the only way to remain independent in the world she lives in. Information about the heroine is, after all, transmitted not only through her own speech. We also see what a woman and her surroundings look like. If we only knew the information transmitted verbally, we would probably be surprised by the statement "my father married me to a man I have not yet met". These words become understandable when, thanks to the clothes of the characters and the decor of the old house, we realize that the film is set in the mid-nineteenth century. The woman comes from a wealthy family - she and her daughter wear expensive dresses, the girl has a pony, her mother has a piano, and the house is beautifully decorated and surrounded by a huge park. But she cannot decide her own fate, she must submit herself to a male guardian - father, brother or husband. In this world her value is

demonstrated by the position of the man she belongs to - like property or thing. Music is for her not only a form of entertainment, but the only available option to express her desires and emotions.

The Nanny Diaries (2007) by Robert Pulcini also begins with the main character's voice over. Throughout the introduction, we only hear her voice, but we don't know what she looks like. The girl provides her personal data: name, surname and age. She talks about her interests and experiences. She talks about the work of a nanny, which she took after graduation. Annie - that's her name - is an anthropologist, so she compares the environment in which she worked to a kind of tribe. She describes its habits and system of values. An illustration of her speech are paintings and sculptures stylized for an exhibition at the Museum of Natural History in New York. But instead of primitive tribes we see the wealthy inhabitants of Upper East Side. Busy with making money, entertaining and caring for their appearance, they do not pay attention to what should be the most important - their children.

"This film is not a description of a typical tribal ritual - says Annie - but rather an explanation of the nanny phenomenon. Actually, I am the nanny. And the bear is the theme of this diary. If any stereotypes or prejudices sneak in here, forgive me because I'm not a completely objective observer."

Although we haven't seen the heroine yet, and she doesn't really say much about herself, we already know a lot about her. She has a nice, warm but firm voice. She speaks correct English. She carefully pronounces words and knows scientific vocabulary. She is intelligent and has a sense of humour. She is calm, although she talks about matters that personally affected her. Still, she is afraid that she may not be completely objective. This declaration makes us believe her even more, because we know that she will do anything to keep her objectivity. When she talks about people she has closely observed for many months, she reveals her perspective - and this is the perspective of a wise, good and sensible girl.

Forrest Gump, the hero of Robert Zemeckis' movie of the same title (1994), is also the narrator of the story. Sitting on a bench and waiting for the right bus to come, he talks to the people who sit next to him. The first interlocutor is a nurse - Forrest introduces himself to her (and at the same moment to the viewers too). We know that he is the main character, since his name and surname coincide with the title of the film. Nurse's shoes become an excuse for Forrest's childhood memories - Forrest tells her about his first shoes that he remembers. But the real story is not

about the shoes. It's about a family home, mother, fight against prejudice and lack of acceptance. Forrest tells each subsequent interlocutor about a different stage of his life. We believe him. Forrest is slightly handicapped - he is not capable of lying, is very straightforward and trusting. At first glance we know he cannot manipulate other people. He does not use fancy vocabulary and speaks in a somewhat strange way, but he is credible and nice. It soon turns out that all the events that we see on the screen confirm his words.

The other characters of the movie talk about the main character

It often happens that we get information about the main character through conversations the other people have. A source of information about the characters may also be a memory or monologue of someone who knows / used to know them well. Usually these are people from the main character's environment - those who watch them every day and know a lot about them. They know their strengths and weaknesses - even those that the protagonist does not realize. Other characters may be in a professional, friendly or family relationship with the main character. Even if they are driven by emotions and their statements are not calm and balanced, we are still able to see the truth in their words. Usually, what we hear from the friends of the character, and what we see on the screen (appearance, behaviour, stage of life) largely coincides. People from the protagonist's environment have formed an opinion on them based on many common experiences and interactions. When they talk about them, they are not aware of our - viewers - presence, so they have no reason to lie to us.

Robert Wise, who made *The Sound of Music* (1965), decided to introduce his heroine using both her own statement about herself and the opinions of women with whom the girl has lived for many years. Verbal information is supplemented by a number of nonverbal information. The first scene of the movie shows Maria - a young, beautiful girl - how, forgetting about the whole world, she dances and sings in a meadow somewhere outside the city. Singing, she talks about her love of nature and her desire to be free. She is full of life and energy. She has a beautiful voice too.

We don't know yet who she is - she is very modestly dressed, which could indicate that she is poor (and this suggestion will be confirmed in a moment). Her outfit - a black dress, lace-up shoes, a grey apron - indicate that the action is not taking place today (this suggestion will also be confirmed in a moment -

the inscription will inform us that the film is set in the 1930s). Perhaps the girl is someone's maid who took her free moment away?

Maria panics when she hears the city clock and runs into the city as fast as possible. Along the way, she picks up a piece of white fabric abandoned on the grass and runs on, holding it in her hand. After a while, it turns out that Maria is a postulant in the convent. Nuns and postulants gather for the evening prayer - the bell was the sign the prayer was to start in a moment. Girls who have not yet made their perpetual vows, wear identical dresses as the one Maria had worn. They have white veils on their heads. The white fabric, for which the girl returned, is just such a veil. Maria took it off dancing in the meadow.

We now know that, though she is a postulant, Maria does not want to be a nun. Her behaviour clearly shows it and her words confirm it too. She wants to sing and dance, she loves open space and nature. She doesn't feel well in the abbey walls, she forgets about her prayers, she doesn't like wearing the veil on her head. When she does not come to church on time again, reverend mother decides to consult other nuns about her.

The Sound of music is a musical, so women sing about Maria. They say she is a good and kind human being, she loves animals and nature, but always gets in trouble. She talks too much, she laughs too loudly. She can't adapt to monastery rules. She is too independent, energetic and spontaneous to be a nun. Some women speak of Maria with indignation, others - with understanding and affection, but they all agree that the abbey is not a place for her. Maria is a girl who will never forget about her femininity, dreams and will always break the rules. At the end of the song, a breathless girl runs into the courtyard. She is sweaty, dishevelled, she still holds the veil in her hand. She eagerly drinks water from the well, then runs to the church and only after a moment realizes that is being watched. She also realizes that the prayer is over, and everyone knows about her late arrival. Maria doesn't even try to explain herself; everything is clear. "You can't hold the beam in your hand"- the nuns end their song, thinking of Mary.

The omniscient narrator talks about the film character

In this situation, a protagonist is told about by someone who is not one of the characters of a story. We don't see the voice owner and generally don't know who they are. There is rarely a situation that occurs in *The Book Thief* by Brian Percival (I mentioned this film in the previous chapter) that we know the identity of the

narrator, which in this case is Death. The omniscient narrator may accompany us throughout the whole story and may only appear at certain moments. However, it is always someone who knows everything about our hero. They know their innermost thoughts and desires. They know what our hero is afraid of and know what they are striving for. Omniscient narrator knows about events that we do not see on the screen. Their knowledge is not only about time of action - the omniscient narrator is also aware of what happened before the story began, and knows what will happen when the story ends.

The omniscient narrator is like a guide to the world of diegesis. They help us understand words and situations that would not be readable without their help. They draw our attention to matters that otherwise we would probably not have noticed or would consider unimportant. Sometimes they ask questions, make us think something over. The viewers treat the omniscient narrator as a reliable source of information - we perceive them as the creator of diegesis, someone who has full control over it. Reading novels we do not wonder who tells the story, we just believe in it. Watching the movie and hearing the voice of the omniscient narrator, we also do not wonder who they are, but we take the information they provide for granted. We believe they have no interest in lying to us. Events and situations that we see on the screen confirm the narrator's words, so we have no reason to doubt them.

The heroine of the movie *Adaline's Age* (2015) by Lee Toland Krieger is a beautiful young woman. We meet her when she buys a fake ID. We don't understand why she needs it. The girl does not look like a criminal or someone who has to run away from something or someone. She is delicate, subtle, and very well behaved. She gives the impression of an intelligent and well-educated person. She is very well dressed, moves beautifully, has a nice, warm, calm voice. She treats her dog with tenderness and care. There are a lot of books in her big, bright apartment. She is also bright (she is blonde, wears bright clothes), which we intuitively perceive as a positive signal.

Adeline - that is her real name - inspires trust. However, we still don't understand why she must pretend to be someone else. It is the omniscient narrator who reveals her secret. The girl was born at the beginning of the 20th century, but even though we have 2014, she looks like a thirty-year-old. As a result of a car accident and electric shock, a process occurred in her body, which - as the narrator claims - will not be clarified until 2035 (and therefore the omniscient narrator really knows everything). Adeline stopped aging. That is why she must pretend to be someone

else and regularly change her ID documents so that the dates they contain match her appearance, which has not changed for 80 years. Adeline does not want to be the subject of research or sensation; she tries to live a normal life. If the narrator did not tell us about her secret, we would not be able to fully understand her story.

A guide around the world of Amelia from the aforementioned Jean-Pierre Jeunet's film (*Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain*) is also the omniscient narrator. Thanks to him (he has a male voice), we know not only the innermost thoughts of the girl and people around her, but we know a whole lot of details that build the atmosphere of the film. We even know when Amelia was conceived, and which her father's sperm won the race to her mother's egg. The film is a comedy (although it must be admitted that it is quite sad at times), so the thousands of details the narrator informs the viewer about (we hear his voice in almost every scene) create a funny effect. Without the help of the narrator, however, we would not know how bad Amelia felt when she was not allowed to play with other children when she was very little. Where did the suspicion of a serious heart disease come from? What did she imagine sitting next to her neighbour's bed in a coma? Why did she decide to take revenge on the neighbour who lied to her?

Verbal information provided by the narrator is supplemented by images. We make an opinion about Amelia not only based on the narrator's words, but also on the basis of the girl's behaviour and the appearance of her surroundings. We see that this is a very sensitive and intelligent child who, deprived of family warmth, creates a friendly, alternative world in her imagination. The girl is also beautiful and bright (despite the dark hair - she has a very light complexion, she also wears light clothes), so we instinctively perceive her as a positive heroine. We see that she respects other people and animals, worries when someone is hurt. Despite her sensitivity, however, she is strong and usually knows how to cope with problems – she cleverly punishes a neighbour who behaved stupidly and cruelly towards her.

Contrast between the characters

It happens that the characters are presented in contrast - instead of focusing on one character, we focus on two, and the characteristics of each of them are emphasized by juxtaposing with the characteristics of the other person. So, we see not only what someone is like, but also what they are not like. The second character plays the role of a background on the one hand, and the role of an alternative on

the other. Thanks to them we can see what the main character could be. However, if they are not like that, that means that they have made / make other choices than the contrasting characters.

In the previous chapter I mentioned the film *Elizabeth* by Shekhar Kapoor. Before we meet the main heroine, we meet her sister, Maria - a fervent Catholic, as mentioned in the inscription at the beginning of the film. However, the first sequence does not present any of the women - it is a scene of torture and execution of three people, Protestants, who did not agree to convert to Catholicism. They are sentenced to death at the stake only because their views do not suit the queen. They die long and in suffering, and the viewers know that this is because Maria wants it. Before we see her, we know that she is not a good, kind and tolerant person, and the commandment of love of neighbour means nothing to her. Someone who condemns others to die at the stake must be a negative figure.

Therefore, we are not surprised by her appearance and behaviour when we finally meet her in the next scene. She is an ugly, awkward woman with a repulsive expression. She is wearing a dark dress and depicted in a dim room in a dark, gloomy castle. Despite the early hours, the windows in the chamber are covered. Candles are burning, the chamber looks like a crypt, not like a living room. People who gathered around the queen, like her are dressed in dark robes - we already know that the dark colour suggests evil, and therefore the queen herself must be a vicious person. She also surrounds herself with people like her. Nobody smiles, there is unnatural silence there. Nobody has the courage to behave freely, everyone plays a role. No one serves the queen because of conviction, loyalty and love for her. Even her own husband looks at her in disgust. Everyone is afraid of Maria, who is cruel and aggressive. The queen also behaves in a way that indicates emotional instability - she is unpredictable, she can suddenly explode with anger. Without batting an eye, she accepts death sentences for his political opponents. Power is most important to her - in order to keep it, she is able to falsely accuse her own sister and put her in prison.

The next scene presents Elizabeth, and the contrast between her and Maria is enormous. Elizabeth is a beautiful, young girl, very shapely. She has long, loose hair, very delicate skin, beautiful eyes and hands. She wears a beautiful green dress. Pearls are her jewellery - a symbol of purity and innocence. Elizabeth and her friends are dancing in the meadow - so she is shown in an open space surrounded by greenery. The girls who dance with her, like and respect her - we can see that they are staying with Elizabeth not because of compulsion, duty or

fear, but because they want and because it is an honour for them. Nobody pretends anything, people behave naturally. And finally - Elizabeth loves and is loved. The man who starts dancing with her looks at her with love and admiration. They both touch each other with tenderness, they laugh and enjoy being together. Someone who can give and receive love cannot be bad. So, we guess that, if Elizabeth ever ascended the throne, she would be a completely different ruler than Maria. Both sisters are like heaven and earth, like black and white. The features of each of them are clearer because we can compare them.

The opening sequence of *Dirty Dancing* (1988) by Emile Ardolino also presents the main character in contrast with her sister. The action takes place at the beginning of the sixties. A family of four: father, mother and two sisters, about 20 years old, go on vacation to a luxury resort. The main heroine, Baby, introduces us to the story with the help of voice over narration. She informs us about the time and place of the action (she talks about the events of long past, so we do not have the unity of action time and narration time here), as well as about her desires and expectations when she was the young girl we see on the screen. Both sisters are sitting in the back seat and the contrast between them is very clearly visible. Baby - the narrator - is very modest and natural. There is no makeup on her face, she is dressed in a simple, bright shirt and denim shorts, she wears sports shoes. She reads a book, hugs her father, whom she speaks about with great respect. In her speech we can see a reflection on the world - Baby is not focused on herself, issues important in her era are also important for her. She would like the world to be better and intend to devote her life to it.

Her sister is her opposite. Instead of a book, she holds a mirror and studies her beauty. She has very dark hair and makes a gloomy impression (Baby is fair-haired and fair-eyed, she smiles all the time). She has thoroughly made makeup and hairstyle, she is also very elegant, although her outfit does not suit the occasion - we usually wear comfortable clothes when traveling, her dress is not comfortable at all. However, appearance is the most important thing for her.

As soon as the family arrives, Baby begins to help the boy who pulls the suitcases out of the trunk - doing it of her own free will, considering it an obvious gesture. She is nice, natural and friendly. Her sister, on the other hand, is being rude, tells Baby to "shut up" when she makes an innocent joke. Baby's sister immediately pays attention to handsome waiters and begins to despair that she has not taken one more pair of shoes. Then her mother reminds her that she took eight other pairs...

Both girls are guided by different values, different matters are important to them. They do not understand each other, because each of them has a different life goal - Baby wants to help others, and her sister wants to get married well. One is dark, the other is light (we remember the meaning of this code); they also behave quite differently. Further scenes will show that each of them will make completely different choices. Although they are closely related and are of similar age, neither of them confide in the other and ask for help in a difficult situation. However, Baby gets what she cares about - her positive attitude is rewarded. And her selfish sister receives a bitter lesson of life.

Games with the viewer - hiding the character's identity

Sometimes, the director of the film delays informing the viewers about the character's identity and their personality traits. This is not a common situation and cannot last too long - the viewers, who are given false leads, after some time get tired and may give up watching the movie. We have already said that one of the conditions for immersion in the world of diegesis is to feel safe in it. To make this possible, we need to know where and when the action of the film takes place, as well as who the main character is. We are able to accept some false hints if it is justified and if it doesn't last too long. Games with the viewer are usually used in movies in which the secret is an important plot - and thus in action, spy or criminal movies. During the story, the secrets are revealed, the viewers gradually come to the truth. Their attention, however, is constantly tense - after all, we never know exactly what is true and what is a lie in such films, because both sides of the conflict are trying to mislead each other – and mislead us too.

In these kinds of stories, the director, especially at the beginning of the film, may give the viewer false clues about who the character is. In the classic film *Blow up* (1966) by Michelangelo Antonioni, for the first few minutes the viewers wonder who the main character is and try to understand his behaviour. For the first time we see him at 0:02:20 - a group of sad, silent, very modestly dressed men crosses the heavy, iron gate, and among them a man, clearly younger than the others, stands out. Still, he is just as neglected and silent as they are. As one of the few, young man holds a paper bag in his hand. What is this place? Who are these men? It's morning (light indicates that), so maybe they are tired workers after a night shift? But people who work together would talk to each other and going apart, would definitely say goodbye. However, nothing like that happens here, so these men

probably don't know each other. So, it's not a factory or a workplace, and these men are not workers.

The young man stops for a moment with a few other people. They exchange a few words, which, however, we do not hear. Then, looking carefully around, the boy walks very quickly (and after a while begins to run) in the direction of the car parked nearby. His behaviour clearly indicates that he does not want anyone to notice him. The car he gets into, is new, beautiful and shiny, and looks very expensive. The boy is dirty, ragged, unshaven, his pants are torn. He certainly doesn't look like someone who could afford such a car (actually, any car). So, we're starting to suspect he's a thief - maybe the place he left was a prison? But prisoners are not released in groups, so this hypothesis quickly falls. In any case, it is definitely not someone who inspires our trust.

In the next scene, we see the hero driving a car very confidently. Apparently, this is not the first time - he knows the car perfectly, he feels good in it. When some people stop him and ask for money, in the back seat we notice a paper bag that the young man previously had in his hands. The bag is open and there is a camera inside. Hmm, maybe the hero is a private investigator? Or a policeman who in disguise tried to get some information and evidence? This hypothesis seems to be confirmed by another shot - there is a radiotelephone in the car, and someone calls the hero. So, it must be his car (or not his, but he must have the right to drive it), the hero is not a criminal. But instead of arriving at the police station or detective's office, the hero stops in front of a house. He goes inside, gives orders to the people there. They all follow his orders without murmuring.

The place turns out to be a photo studio, and our hero - a photographer. A beautiful model is waiting for him in the studio - an authentic figure, Verushka, who was very well known at that time. She informs the photographer that she has been waiting for him for over an hour, but he does not seem to care. He doesn't even apologize to her. So, we guess that since a model like Verushka is waiting for a photographer, his talent must be worth it. And indeed, we watch photographer making a wonderful photo session.

But why does the game with the viewer appear here, since the hero is simply a photographer? *Blow-up* tells of the quest to discover the truth about the crime. A photographer during a walk in the park accidentally photographs a murder, which he discovers enlarging photos he took. He tries to stick fragments of information together, but the truth eludes him all the time. The beginning of the film, in which

the director gives false hints to the viewers, announces that the story we watch is not obvious and easy to read.

Sydney Pollack's *Three Days of the Condor* (1975) has the same features. Here, too, we do not immediately find out who the main character is. The images that appear at the beginning of the movie indicate that the action is taking place in a library or archive. This hypothesis, however, quickly turns out to be wrong - the books on the shelves are not to be borrowed, we also do not know the purpose of the strange devices located here. The other rooms in the building resemble offices, and two men and a woman sitting in one of the rooms talk about a crime, wondering who and how committed it. Maybe they are detectives or policemen? The flag of the United States is displayed in the corridor, so it must be a government institution. Its employees make a good impression, although it probably takes more time for them to talk than work. They are also not overly appreciated by their employers - the three of them nest in a tiny, messy room. Meanwhile, their colleague - the main character of the film - occupies a comfortable study. His room is tidy and nicely furnished - we can see that Turner spends a lot of time here and likes this place. His position is also definitely better than that of other employees - he is regularly late, and although it provokes negative comments, no one really blames him. When he finally gets to work, he solves the puzzle in a second, which his colleagues thought unsuccessfully for several minutes. So, it becomes clear, why Turner has a separate office and his three colleagues occupy one room.

However, we still don't know who Turner is and what this place is. The first floor, where the offices are located, resembles a government institution. The ground floor gives a completely different impression - it looks like an elegant nineteenth-century house. Beautiful wooden stairs, fluffy rugs, elegant lamps, antique furniture - this is definitely not a police station, archive or detective agency. A sign informing that there is a 'Historical and Literary Society' inside, is hanging in front of the entrance to the building. However, we are a bit surprised by a camera we notice outside - we should remember that there are seventies (then a film was made) and monitoring was very rare at that time. The secretary - an elegant old lady with pearls around her neck - only opens the door when she can see who is standing in front of it. When she opens the door with a button in the drawer, we can see that she also holds a gun there. There are more and more question marks - if it was actually an institution dealing with literature and history, no one would have to take such precautions. Therefore, we guess that these people and this place are something

different than what they seem at first glance (and also the second and third...). And indeed - it soon turns out that this is a spy agency and Turner is its best employee.

Among the examples discussed above, there is not one that would present the hero using only one way of giving information. It is even not possible to find such an example - film as audiovisual art always transmits many meanings simultaneously. One way of presenting the character may come to the fore, but others will always accompany it. It is worth remembering this when analysing the film - and maybe working on your own someday.

Chapter IV.

Space

In previous chapters we discussed issues related to events, time and characters. Now it's time to talk about the fourth element, without which, it is not possible to build a film narration - space. Each story takes place "somewhere" and watching the movie we can usually recognize and name this place. However, to make it possible, the authors of the film must give us hints so that we can find ourselves in the world of film diegesis.

When we talk about space in film, we should precisely determine whether we refer to the space of the frame or the space of diegesis. The **space of frame** is only those elements that we see on the screen - nothing more and nothing less. So, we see a fragment of the room, kitchen, street, lecture hall, reading room in the library, forest or beach. But at the same time, we believe that this fragment is part of a larger whole - that outside the frame there is the whole room, which is part of the apartment. The flat is located in a tenement house, a tenement house in a city, a city in the country ... This is the **space of diegesis** - we do not see it in its entirety, but we believe that it exists.

Based on our life experience, we can imagine what this space may look like - is the apartment large and nice? Is the city a metropolis or a small town? Seeing the interior that associates with the library - for example, bookshelves with books and characteristic tables with green lamps - we guess that in addition to this one room, in the same building there are many other rooms: reading rooms, catalogues, magazines with books, corridors, toilets and so on. Therefore, what we show in the space of the frame must have a significant semantic load, so that on this basis we would be able to imagine what we do not actually see. If the elements shown in the frame are correctly selected, then while watching the film we will believe that its action takes place in a hospital or school, and not in the decorations located in the film studio.

Orientation in film space depends on many factors and just as much affects the comfort of the viewer as orientation in time. Like film time, film space is a broad concept, and we can distinguish many aspects of it. Regardless of what kind of space we are dealing with and how this space was created, the viewers must be able to find themselves in it. They must be able to build a topography of the world in which history takes place. If it is necessary to understand the story, the viewers

must know whether at this point the action takes place in the hero's kitchen or in his mother's kitchen. Is the flat, in which the characters are staying, large or small, cosy or dirty and messy. The viewers must also be able to distinguish the hospital from the library, street from the corridor. They must know how far it is from the hero's apartment to his workplace (if it is necessary to understand the plot, of course). Finally – the viewers should be properly informed about the change of location and the reasons why it is changing.

How do we recognize the place of action? Here, there are two factors that we have already talked about - our life experience and knowledge of other films. For example, we know that a hospital bed looks completely different from the ones we have in our bedrooms - so if we see a hospital bed, drip stand and white walls, we usually guess that the action of the scene takes place in the hospital, even if we have never been there. None of us were also aboard a spaceship or in a saloon in the Wild West, and yet everyone can without hesitation mention a few elements characteristic of these places. We've seen at least a few science-fiction and western movies, so we know what iconography is typical of them.

The filmmakers use several proven methods to inform the viewer about the place of the action - both in geographical sense and in terms of the type of place (home, school, garden, park, library and so on). These ways are:

a) naming places

The name of the place of action may appear in the conversations of the characters. It can be given by means of an information board (although we already know from the example of *Three Days of a Condor* that it can be confusing), neon, signboard, sign or business card. It may also appear in the form of an inscription at the beginning of a scene.

b) a map showing the characters' whereabouts or the path they have travelled to get here

This is a popular method, often used in adventure movies (the whole series on Indiana Jones' expeditions!). The average viewers' knowledge of geography is usually not very good, so if story requires them to know exactly where the character is, it's most convenient to show this place on the map.

Sometimes, however, using the map has a deeper meaning than just information about the geographical location of the character. The already mentioned *Casablanca* by Michael Curtiz begins with a series of shots showing the route of refugees from occupied Europe to Casablanca, from where one could get to the United States. Refugees break through lands and seas for many weeks, in terrible conditions and with many means of transport, hoping to get to the free world. These shots are interrupted by boards with maps showing subsequent stages of this journey. Is it only about showing the route from point A to point B? No, of course not. *Casablanca* is a film made in the United States and addressed mainly to American viewers. Although at the time of making the film (1942), the US had already entered the war, still many American citizens were unaware of the realities of life in occupied Europe. Showing the entire route of refugees was intended to make the viewers aware that since the refugees leave everything behind and take so much risk and effort, the reasons of this decision must be very serious indeed. The Nazis turned Europe into hell, so if there is a shadow of hope to get out of this hell, it's worth a try. Even if the road you need to travel is thousands of kilometres.

c) showing commonly known buildings, places and monuments clearly associated with a specific place in the world

If the viewers see the Eiffel Tower, the Brandenburg Gate or the Empire State Building, and have elementary knowledge of the world, they will immediately realize that the action of the film (or only a specific scene) takes place in Paris, Berlin or New York. Often, however, the exact location to which we match the geographical name also has additional significance. After all, Paris is a city of love and lovers, so if the characters choose it as the place of their first meeting - as in *Loneliness on the Web* - they do it in the hope that their online relationship will turn into a real, deep feeling of love. So, it's not just the capital of France - a specific point on the world map - but a magical place where everything can happen.

The first shots of Andrzej Wajda's film *The Conductor* (1979) depicts the heroine - a young violinist from Poland - upon arrival in the United States. The girl received a prestigious scholarship in New York to improve her skills and develop her talent. We know about the fact that she will be doing it in New York almost from the first second of the film: there are (no longer existing) Twin Towers in the space of frame, so the image leaves no doubt as to the geographical location of the action. Then

we can also see the Empire State Building and the streets of New York, with lots of cars and yellow taxis, people of all races, shops, neon, skyscrapers and so on. The heroine looks with delight at a city that is completely different from those she knows from Poland. However, this is not just about her admiration for this particular location. New York becomes a symbol of all of America - a place that in the seventies (then the film takes place) - was treated as a dream come true for a better life in a free and democratic country. Poland was then a communist country. Poles lived on a very modest level, they rarely received passports and permission to travel abroad. The city she is looking at is for her a symbol of everything she has longed for so long and what other Poles can still only dream of. So, on the one hand, we are dealing here with the exact location of the action - New York, but on the other, this place is more than just a point on the map.

The frame space and the space of the presented world are subordinated to the film's action

The place where the movie takes place is usually subordinated to the story we want to tell. It must complement its meanings and create new ones. Sometimes the space loses its neutrality to the point of becoming almost a separate movie character. It influences the characters so much or reflects the changes in their lives and themselves that we simply stop seeing it as just the house, school or street, and we see something more. The place of action determines the action - it affects the direction in which the action moves and determines the possibilities that the characters have (or do not have). It also describes their situation.

The Saviour Square (2006) by Krzysztof Krauze is a film based on an authentic event. The young couple decided to buy an apartment on credit. Because they did not have large funds, they decided to take a loan for 100% of the value of the apartment and buy it from a developer who was just about to build it. However, it turned out that the developer went bankrupt and disappeared with the money. The marriage remained without a flat, without money, and with a huge loan they couldn't afford. The woman did not work, as she took care of home and children. The money her husband earned was not enough to support the family. They lived with the man's mother, who, not accepting her daughter-in-law, teased her and tormented her. The husband did not defend his wife, he cheated on her regularly too. The girl could not stand this situation - having no one to turn to for help, she tried to commit the so-called "extended suicide", that is, to kill herself and the

children. She was in such a bad mental state that it seemed to her the only way to solve the problems.

The director read about it in the newspaper and wrote a script inspired by this story. He placed the action of his film on Saviour's Square in Warsaw - a beautiful place, built-up with historic tenement houses. In these tenement houses there are high and large apartments, and this is where Bartek's mother lives. She allows him to stay at her place with his family for several months. However, when it turns out that the young have nowhere to move out - the developer, whom they have already paid for their own apartment, went bankrupt - the situation becomes increasingly tense. Although the apartment is very large - during the action we realize that there are at least three large rooms, a large bathroom and a large kitchen and a long corridor - the people living there are very cramped together. They do not like each other, do not respect and do not understand each other, so there are still tensions and quarrels. This narrowness and tension are reflected by the narrow composition of the frame - when we see the characters, they seem crowded, squeezed. Let's look at the scene starting at 0:06:23. Everything seems to be all right - three adults (mother-in-law and young couple) are talking in the kitchen, and two young boys running around the table in the living room. However, the staff is artificially "stripped down" increasing the impression of tightness and causing anxiety. On the left, a sideboard takes up about 1/3 of the frame, on the right - a wall, and the bottom of the frame covers the table edge. The people are almost invisible here - squeezed in the middle of the frame. If a film school student planned a frame in this way, they would probably have received a negative grade, because the composition of the space would be considered a mistake. Meanwhile, in this film, the frame space is subordinated to the plot - these people are cramped in this apartment, but not because it is small (because it is not), but because their relationships between them are very difficult. The method of filming emphasizes this.

An interesting example of subordinating the action to the space of the frame, and at the same time to the space of diegesis, is in the film by Andrzej Wajda *Innocent Sorcerers* (1960). Here, we must pay attention to an important thing - the space that we create by ourselves, in some way defines us. Looking at someone else's home, we can most likely say what the people who live there are. What lifestyle they lead, what they are interested in, what their temperaments are, what is important to them. It is just like that with the film space - looking at the space inhabited by the characters, we can say a lot about them. However, if there are any

changes in this space, it is most often an expression of the changes taking place in the character's life.

The main character of *Innocent Sorcerers* is a young doctor who is passionate about jazz and plays in a jazz band after work. He meets many girls, but he cannot establish a permanent relationship with any of them. His instability and disorder are well marked by the appearance of his tiny apartment - the very fact that he has it, is almost a miracle (in Warsaw after the war, the apartment was the most valuable asset and it was very difficult to get it), but he does not care about it. The room is cluttered and messy. It is very small and cramped, but because of the mess it seems to be even smaller. Newspapers, some utensils and food are lying next to each other on the table, clothes are hung anywhere, the bed is not made. The hero drinks tea, then throws a dirty spoon on the floor. A mess in his room also means a mess in his life - the hero lives chaotically, without a plan, without caring for others.

But one day he meets a girl who he is seriously interested in. However, he does not have the courage to admit it to her or to himself. When the girl disappears, the hero in panic seeks her around the city, but because he does not know her real name or address, he is convinced that he has lost her forever. Meanwhile, when he returns to the apartment, it turns out that the girl is waiting for him there (1:19:13). His apartment, however, looks completely different now - the girl cleaned it, arranged things, bought fresh flowers, uncovered windows, prepared tea and set the table. Order in the room symbolizes the beginning of new order in the hero's life - from now on there will be someone who will help him establish the right hierarchy of values, make his relationship with himself and with other people better. A change in the frame and diegesis space means a change in the hero's life.

Perfume. The story of a murderer (2006) by Tom Tykwer talks about an ingenious creator of fragrances whose dream was to create the most beautiful perfumes in the world. How do we show the smell in a movie? The cinema only refers to the sense of sight and hearing. Therefore, the author of the film decided to use images and colours that evoke very strong associations with smell and taste, and towards which the viewers cannot remain indifferent - they must clearly recognize them as pleasant or not, be able to imagine (or simply recall) the smell, what they are supposed to describe. The very beginning of the film showing the birthplace of Jean Baptiste Grenouille refers to our fragrance memory and causes a violent - very negative - reaction. The film is set in 18th-century France. The boy is born at a fish market - a dirty and terribly smelly place. The whole sequence is kept in dirty grey colours - customers and sellers wear dark clothes, stiff of dirt. Everyone wades in

the mud and rotting garbage. We see the guts of gutted fish and animals, dirty and hungry dogs fighting for leftovers, vomiting man. The boy is another child of his mother, a fishmonger. She also gave birth to the other children here - they were born dead or half-dead, and in the evening their bodies were thrown into the river with rubbish. Grenouille, however, having an extremely sensitive sense of smell from the first moment of his life, screams against the stench that surrounds him. Then the crying of the child is heard by people and they save it from death.

Again, therefore, the space of the frame and the space of diegesis are subordinated to the story. The main subject of the film is smell, and since it cannot be recorded on a film tape, we need to refer to suggestive images that create a similar impression as smell. The colours in this film are extremely intense and saturated, the visual layer of the film is so dense, that it gives the impression of being tangible. This applies to both hideous images, as described above, and beautiful ones - such as lavender fields or rose gardens.

The space in *Sophie Scholl. The final days* (2005) by Marc Rothemund, is shaped differently although we are also dealing here with an interesting way of subordinating the space to the film's action. The heroine of the film is an authentic figure - Sophie Scholl was a co-founder of the White Rose group, operating in Germany during World War II. A group of German students, realizing the German crimes and the totalitarian nature of national socialism, tried to shake the conscience of German society to force them to overthrow the Nazis. They operated only for a few months - in February 1943 the Scholl siblings and their friend Christoph Probst were arrested and sentenced to death. They died the same day.

The opening sequence of the film consists of three parts - the first takes place in the apartment of Sophie and her brother, the second in the street, and the third in the basement, where members of the White Rose duplicate anti-Nazi leaflets. Each of these three places of action has been presented differently. The space was planned in such a way that it captures the meanings associated to the situation in which the characters are in each of the places. Sophie and Hans's apartment is a safe space - so it is shown in warm, though subdued colours. It's a cosy, friendly place - very modest, but we can see that the characters feel good here and are happy to invite other people. An important element that appears in the frame is the table with cups and saucers. Sophie and her friend drank tea together a while ago, and they probably ate something sweet too. We do not see this moment, but we guess it happened.

The next place is the street - Sophie leaves the house because she has an appointment with her brother and friends. The contrast between these two spaces - the house and the street - is noteworthy. The house is a bright, nice space, while the street is a dark, unfriendly and threatening place. Lanterns are not switched on (for fear of Allied air raids), pedestrians sneak past as fast as possible, and every car (there are very few) causes fear. The street is the world of Nazi Germany - a world in which it is not safe and opposition views must be hidden. People are afraid of each other and afraid of the consequences of the war they caused.

Finally, the third place - the basement where young people print leaflets. This place itself is a kind of symbol. Going underground means after all illegal activity, and leaflets printed by members of the White Rose are just such illegal activity. And yet warm colours also appear here - because the characters tame this place, make it their own, fill it with their values and attitudes. Of course, this space is not as friendly as the apartment of Sophie and Hans. However, because young people bring their own order here and fight for important values, the basement space becomes something of an extraterritorial space. This place is still located in Nazi Germany, but it is something like an island where people can tell the truth and protest against evil.

Symbolic space

It sometimes happens that space is not only a location where the action takes place - the place of action is sometimes a symbolic space that carries additional meanings. This is not only information such as "the action takes place here and there", but a hint for the viewers and a suggestion that they look more closely at what is happening here. If the film's action moves to the space of a family home, a place that resembles a maze or a river that the character crosses, we are usually dealing with symbolic space. Let's try to show how this works.

Symbolic space - a family home

For each of you, your family home is a special and unique place. This is the first space we learn and remember, and what is happening there usually affects us the most. A family home is the beginning of everything - it is a place where we learn the value system and shape our personality. And even if we do not remember this space positively, because we were harmed, neglected and humiliated there, this

place still becomes a reference point in our adult life - only that it is a negative reference point.

In many movies, we deal with a situation when the character returns to the place where they were born and raised. This is usually a moment of crisis - the character returns to their beginnings to restart their private settings. They leave behind a world where they are not able to deal with problems and return to a place that can be a source of support and strength for them, and where they can look at things from a distance. Very often they meet people there who remember them as a child - hence a largely unformed, helpless and dependent being. Returning to the family home is a form of asking for help, or an attempt to find answers to important questions. It is not only a journey from point A to point B, but above all it is a journey inside themselves and at the same time - into the past.

Sometimes, solving the problem requires returning to the place where the character met only with violence and harm - then they return there as the adults to finally close the door behind them, accept the fact that the past cannot be changed, and to finally go on. This is not a common situation - in our society there is still a strong family myth as a source of love, warmth and support. Therefore, the cinema is more eager to show idyllic visions of family homes, reluctantly exposing the violence and abuse that occurs between family members. When the film by Magdalena Piekorz, *The stripes* (2004), was released a dozen or so years ago, it was pointed out that no one in Polish cinema had ever so clearly and bravely shown the effects of violence experienced in childhood.

The hero of the film is a thirty-year-old man who lives alone. He climbs the mountains, writes newspaper texts, but is terribly afraid of a relationship with a woman and fatherhood. His fear originated in childhood - his father had beaten him for many years. Wojciech is afraid that as a husband and father he will duplicate these behaviours and methods. Only returning home for his father's funeral and events that occur then, allow him to explicitly cut himself off from the past and make a decision to build his own life - but on a different basis than that his father tried to teach him.

The heroine of *Man of Marble* (1976) by Andrzej Wajda returns to her family home for strength and support. Agnieszka is a young girl who graduates from film school. She has to make a diploma film, but the topic she chooses turns out to be inconvenient for the communist authorities. Because the girl does not want to compromise and lie, the authorities take her film and crew away. Devastated girl decides to come to her father - a very wise and decent, though modest man.

Throughout the film Agnieszka behaved like a very strong and determined person. She always knew what to say and do, she always knew how to get the information she needed. She was very energetic and effective. Now - the sequence starts at 2:23:19 - she lies on the bed in the tiny apartment where she grew up and is unable to move. Then her father - an uneducated railwayman - asks her very important questions: was what you did honest? Was it interesting? Did you do your best during work? Agnieszka answers them affirmatively. Then her father urges her to find out, however, how the fate of her film hero was unfolded. He explains to her that even if her film is not made, it is important to get to the truth and finish the work she has started. The girl accepts this argument, and although she no longer has the tape, camera or crew, she decides to find the bricklayer she was making the film about.

Returning to the family home also helps James Bond, the character of *Skyfall* (2012) by Sam Mendes. This time the legendary hero fights cyberterrorism and tries to save his boss M. from death. It quickly turns out that in London M is not safe and Bond decides to take her to his family manor, which he has not visited since childhood (1:45:55). This place, although the hero lost his parents here, is still a source of strength for him. There is still an old, faithful servant, Bond's childhood guardian, who would do anything for him. Bond knows the house and the area around it perfectly, which gives him an advantage on Silva, who is after him. Despite the weak armament and lack of support from MI6, wherever it is possible to defeat the enemy, it is here. And so it happens.

The river as a symbolic space

Water is one of the most symbolic "objects" in our lives. The first and most important meaning we assign to it is life - we could not live without water; we also mostly consist of it. But the second meaning is much deeper and related to ritual, spiritual and religious issues – most of all water means purification. In many religions and cultures, people wash themselves before prayer or making an important decision. Surely you all know the Bible's gesture of Pilate - washing his hands is to symbolize the release of responsibility for Jesus's death.

The cinema also uses symbolic meanings related to water. The act of washing - taking a shower or bath, washing character's hands or face - may mean that the character is dirty after some effort, work or travel, so they just need to wash. But the same action may have a deeper meaning - it may be not only a physical cleansing

of the body, but also a symbolic cleansing of the soul and psyche. It may be a washing away sins, bad memories, harm, or an attempt to cleanse after contact with violence, evil and misfortune. The moment of bathing is something extremely intimate - we are naked, alone, defenceless. We believe that no one is watching us, and therefore we do not have to pretend anything. Water cleanses our bodies, but also allows us to reset our personal settings, catch our breath, be only with ourselves for a moment. If an attack then occurs, it is also an extremely symbolic moment, because it means destroying intimacy and invading a place where we feel safe (be sure to watch the murder scene in the shower in the movie *Psycho* (1960) by Alfred Hitchcock - it starts at 0:44 12).

In the film, the river crossing is very symbolic activity and loaded with many meanings. This is usually the moment when the character not only reaches some stage of the journey, but also crosses the border between the two stages of his life. Rivers are very often geographical borders - borders between countries, districts, areas belonging to other tribes or nations. The situation when a character crosses a river may of course mean crossing such a border, but more often - almost always - it means that the character on one bank leaves his old life, his old skin. On the other bank they will be someone else - new people, new challenges, new experiences and sometimes a new identity are waiting for them.

The protagonist of Agnieszka Holland's film *Europa Europa* (1990) was an authentic figure - a Jewish boy who, after the invasion of the Germans on the Soviet Union, decided to pretend to be a German and thus survived World War II. His family came from Germany, but as a result of Nazi persecution, just before the war they decided to come to Poland and live in Łódź. When it turned out that the Germans had invaded Poland, the parents decided to send two sons - Solomon and his brother Isaac - to the east, hoping that the boys would survive there. The border between Poland and the USSR was marked by the Bug river and the boys had to cross it to get to Russia. Unfortunately, they got lost during the crossing and Solomon reached the other side only by himself. There, the Russians took care of him. The boy was sent to an orphanage, where he became an exemplary young communist.

Here we are dealing with the classic use of the river as a symbolic space. When the whole sequence begins - at about 11th minute of the movie - Salek is a boy from a pious Jewish family, surrounded by the love of his parents, brother and uncle. He respects his parents and listens to them. He also has the feeling that, despite everything, there are some clear rules in the world, and one need to stick to

them. He respects Jewish tradition and has a deep sense of Jewish identity. During crossing the river, of course, he crosses the geographical border between two countries, but the border between two stages of his life is much more important. On the other bank, Salek is already an orphan, there is no one around him who can care for him and look after him. Because he is in a state where - officially - there is no anti-Semitism, he stops thinking about his origin. No religion is allowed in the orphanage where he is staying - the only God is Stalin and Salek begins to worship him. He doesn't remember the Jewish tradition; he doesn't follow the rules that he learned to respect at his family home. He adapts perfectly to the new reality - as if he has shed an old skin on one bank, and put on a new one, on the other.

An interesting example of using the river as a symbolic space is the final sequence of the film *Maidens of Wilko* (1979) by Andrzej Wajda. It is a story set in the 1920s, and the main character is Wiktor Ruben, a man about 40 years old. After losing a friend, deeply depressed, he decides to leave for some time to his relatives, who he hasn't seen for many years. Their house is located near the Wilko estate, where Wiktor spent his vacation 20 years earlier. Several sisters – young girls at the time - lived there. Returning to this place Wiktor probably wants to go back to the past, turn back time and find himself from his youth. This, of course, is not possible - the girls became women, got married, gave birth to children, have many difficult experiences behind them, deal with problems. One of them died. Wiktor realizes that he cannot escape life and turn back time. He decides to return to work, but to get to the school he works in, he has to cross the river by ferry.

The scene I'm talking about starts at 1:46:10. Wiktor goes to the marina where the ferry is to leave. One of the sisters is waiting for him on the shore, they say goodbye with sadness, they know that they will never see each other again. The ferry arrives, Wiktor gets on. During the crossing, he reaches into the water with his hand and drinks a few sips. He watches both banks - the one he has just left and the one where he is to get off. Both shores are very different. The shore that Wiktor has left, is bathed in the sun, green, full of warm, golden, intense colours. The female figure in a white dress resembles a young girl, not a mature woman. White buildings look beautiful in the afternoon sun.

The shore on which the man gets off is much darker. There is no greenery here anymore, trees lose leaves that rustle under the hero's feet. The colours are autumn and dim. Both banks symbolize other stages of the hero's life - the previous one is youth, hope, love, happiness. Current - is the middle age, awareness of disasters and missed opportunities. The gesture of drinking water from the river is also symbolic

(Andrzej Wajda was very fond of using symbols and referring to the knowledge of viewers). It is associated with Greek mythology and the water of Leta - the river of oblivion. Wiktor must forget about the past in order to find his place in the present.

Labyrinth as a symbolic space

The term "labyrinth" does not have to be used literally, so that we can talk about the labyrinth space in the film. Labyrinth space is a space that somehow threatens the character. There is some danger in it - most often the character's enemies. The character does not know from which direction danger can appear. As in a maze - we do not know in which direction individual corridor leads and what can be located around each corner. The labyrinth space is often the streets of a big city, corridors of a large building, underground passages, bunkers, forest, caves and similar places. Graphically, this space may resemble a labyrinth (and very often it does), but it does not have to. The most important determinant of labyrinth space is the fact that the character does not feel confident and safe, they often get lost in it, they have a problem finding a way out of it. Their attention is constantly tense, because a small mistake can cause disaster. Even if they do not see the danger or do not know what exactly it is, they somehow sense it. Most often, we deal with labyrinth space in action, sensation, crime and horror movies.

A very interesting example of the use of this kind of space is Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining* (1980). The film is about a man, about 40 years old. He is an unfulfilled writer, who takes the job of a winter watchman in a hotel high in the mountains. In winter, the hotel is cut off from the world, but it must be heated, so every year the owners hire someone who agrees to live there for several months and take care of the building until spring. Jack moves in there with his wife and a few-year-old son, who has an extraordinary ability - he can "shine", that is, communicate telepathically with other people who have the same gift. During the interview, the director of the hotel warns Jack that once there was a monstrous crime - a winter watchman murdered his wife and two daughters and committed suicide. However, Jack doesn't care about this information.

In the hotel garden there is a beautiful, real hedge maze - mother and son wander around in one of the first scenes, unaware that Jack, falling into insanity, imagines (?), observes (?) their tiny silhouettes, looking at the same time at the mock-up maze located in the hotel hall. But the hotel itself is also a labyrinth - little Danny traverses its long corridors on a three-wheeled bicycle, sensing that this is a

hostile and dangerous place. He guesses in which room a terrible crime took place years ago. He is afraid of repeating the situation, he is also afraid of ghosts that he meets on the premises of buildings. The hotel is therefore a classic labyrinth space, dangerous and impossible to tame. It is interesting to emphasize the “labyrinthity” of this space with the help of a real maze in which the final sequence takes place. Mother and son run away from the insane father, trying to hide from him first at the hotel. The pursuit moves outside and it is in the maze, where the last fight between Jack and his little son occurs (no, I won’t tell you who wins – you should see it yourselves!).

Usually, however, the cinema does not refer to the literal image of the maze, although it often resembles the graphic form of a labyrinth space. In the opening sequence of *Léon* (1994) by Luc Besson, we deal with just such space. Leon - a professional killer - is to “seriously talk” to a man who deals in drugs in someone else’s territory. The dealer appears once a week in a city to meet prostitutes. For this purpose, he rents an apartment in a hotel, guarded by several bodyguards armed to the teeth. Leon eliminates them one by one, finally gets inside the apartment to “talk” to the dealer. Of course, the conversation is successful, the dealer gives up doing business in New York. However, before both men reach an agreement, Leon must overcome the labyrinth of hotel corridors and defeat opponents. It is not easy because he is alone and there are several of them, so he must act by surprise. Each time there may be a threat that may prevent him from mission. Leon is here for the first time, which makes the task even more difficult. But this space is a labyrinth space not only for him, but also for the people he hunts. They are also afraid. They don’t know who is chasing them and why, they don’t know what skills they have and how determined they are. They don’t know if the killer works alone or if he has someone to help. So, we have here all the conditions that allow us to define the space of this sequence as labyrinth space.

Expressionist space

Expressionist space is a space that expresses the character’s mental state. We can use objective narration here - the camera covers both the characters and the space in which they are as well as subjective narration - the camera is placed in the eyes of the characters, so we see only what they see. Regardless of the type of narration we choose, the expressionist space is different from our everyday world at first glance. There is something disturbing, abnormal and strange in it, because

this is how our characters feel. They are not able to “normally” perceive reality because of psychoactive substances, illness, shock or other factors. Expressionist space can be created by means of deformation - this is what in the 20s of the century the cinema of German expressionism eagerly used and hence the name of this type of space. Deformations of objects, buildings, furniture, animals and plants are a warning signal for the viewers – watch out, viewers, there must be something wrong with this character! This is not someone we can expect ordinary behaviour from, we cannot perceive them in the same way we perceive other people.

In the expressionist space there are also strange objects of unknown destination, things have strange shapes. The colours are unnaturally bright or faded, it also happens that one colour clearly dominates. There are also things that surprise us - a glass thrown on the floor does not break, the walls approach the character, the plants grow unnaturally quickly. We know how the world works, so we understand that such situations are not possible. So, if our character sees the reality that surrounds them in this way, then some disturbing process must take place in their mind. Traditionally, let's try to show this issue with examples.

The heroine of *Repulsion* (1965) by Roman Polanski is Carol, a young girl who is terribly afraid of any relationship with a man. It is very possible that some trauma occurred in her childhood - photos from that time show a sad, withdrawn, resigned child. Perhaps the girl was molested, or maybe “only” in a Catholic school the teachers convinced her that human sexuality is dirty and bad (no, it is not). In any case, any gesture from the men interested in Carol causes her panic. The girl sinks deeper and deeper in the world of her own thoughts, and when she stays alone in a large apartment (her sister goes away for a few days with her partner), her disease intensifies. The girl stops thinking reasonably - she sees and feels things that are not there. Terrified, she looks at the walls that are approaching her, and then move away from her. It seems to her that the walls are cracking, but after a while they look intact. Male hands grow out of the walls, trying to touch her against her will. Trying to run away, the girl touches the wall, on which a clear imprint of her hand remains. An apartment she can't and doesn't want to leave - after all, men are waiting for her outside - becomes her prison. We know, however, that what we see does not really exist - it is Carol who sees the space around her so, in her crazy mind these images are born. If we were there with her, we would see a normal, large apartment and a strangely behaving girl inside - nothing more. Space tells us how sick and disturbed the heroine is.

Expressionist space is also found in Wojciech Jerzy Has's *The Loop* (1957). The hero of the film is Kuba, a middle-aged man who is an alcoholic. He really wants to quit his addiction - if he doesn't, he will lose his beloved woman. He has already lost health, work, human respect and a sense of security. Kuba realizes that this is the last chance to deal with the problem. However, he is deeply addicted, and it will not be easy, especially since this is not the first such attempt. An expression of the mental state of the hero is the appearance of the space in which he lives - both the space of his apartment and the town. The flat is at least weird - it's a huge room, but it doesn't have typical furniture. There are no shelves for books, beds, armchairs or chairs. There is also no kitchen or bathroom, and the door separating the apartment from the external corridor is made of glass - so it does not protect against anything, it's enough to touch it harder to break it. There are strange metal figures in the room that make a disturbing impression. The windows lack curtains. There is a big black phone that Kuba is afraid of because his friends call him every now and again and remind him how low he fell.

Kuba leaves the house so he doesn't have to answer the phone, but the town space is not friendly either. This is not a normal town, but some dangerous, strange space, like from a bad dream. Kuba cannot find himself in it, he does not feel safe there - so we can simultaneously talk about labyrinth and expressionist space in this case. Strange buildings, deserted, dark streets, mysterious passers-by - all this informs us how lost the hero is, how bad he feels in the world in which he lives. In fact, Kuba does not see a way out of the situation - he realizes that he cannot quit the addiction, but he cannot live as an alcoholic either. Finally, he decides to commit suicide and hangs himself on a telephone cord.

*

And with this optimistic touch ... :).

We are finishing (or maybe we are just starting? ...I hope so:)) our adventure with the feature film. The solutions described in this script are only an outline of the theory of building a film narration - due to the small number of pages, unfortunately, I could not tell you about all the ways to construct a story, not to mention their numerous variants. However, I hope that from now on you will watch movies more closely, seeing in them not only the story of human fate, but also a precise design in which every smallest element performs a function and has some meaning.

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