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Reality Style on Televizion: Reflection of the Public's Transformation

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The stylistics of reality television has demonstrated a changing attitude of television towards an ordinary person. On screen, a professional (expert, politician, artist) started to be replaced by the everyman who was telling his own life story; the approach of different layers of the public was declared. The viewer became a co-author of TV programs, the public was involved in programs that tackled crucial issues, and television started to imitate functions of governmental or public institutions. Hybrid reality genres offered fact-based stories with the participation of real characters. The boundary between documentary and entertainment genres began to vanish. At the end of the past century, there emerged a new variety of reality shows (close space, total imitation, try-out, survival) which revealed cardinal changes of the public's attitude towards privacy. Through playing its roles of a psychologist, conciliator or that of the last instance, television tries to compensate the lack of relationship among members of the public and to re-establish a broken dialogue between individuals and groups. The stylistics of reality in the present paper is analysed in the light of three aspects: change of dialogue genres, informal institutionalism, and reflection of the public's changes in new formats of reality shows.

Key words: *mass media, audio-visual media, television, development of TV programs, style of reality television.*

Development of television in Europe may be divided into two stages and called *paleo* and *neo* television (1). The first stage comprises a monopoly of public and national channels (till the mid-eighties of the past century), and the second is a competitive model that has generated plenty of new shows.

Formal institutionalism, i.e. compliance

with certain obligations, prescribed by law, was typical of monopolistic national (East and Central Europe) and public (West Europe) broadcasters that had formed the so-called *vertical* top-down link between the broadcaster and the audience and the broadcaster's *messianic* attitude towards the audience. Television then communicated a one way monologue in a bureaucratic language and was considered to be a social and cultural institution of the public's development and build-up.

The *paleo television* formed the so-called success standard since the selection criteria would be professionalism, portliness and personal deserts to the country and the public. There was a strict division between documentary genres and entertainment.

The term *reality television* emerged in the beginning of the eighties of the past century. The new genre demonstrated the changing attitude of television towards simple people who gradually replaced experts, politicians or artists on the TV screen and started telling their own real-life stories. The everyman of the neo-television ousted the shining star of the paleo-television, meanwhile professional hedonism was replaced by melancholy of the trivial round.

Reality television has declared depolarisation among different layers of the public by trying to satisfy the desire for egalitarianism, so typical of the contemporary public (Ehrenberg, 1996). Television strove to make all people equal, to show both winners and losers, professionals and amateurs. The audience was invited to become a co-author of TV shows, TV screens were flooded with everyday scenes capturing home life routine or provocative situations recorded by a hidden camera. The public started to be involved in open discussions (talk shows) or incited to profess its faith and beliefs (psychological shows), television was sought for help or advise (search of missing people, theatricalized court proceedings, documentary dramas). Television began to imitate or even duplicate functions of national or public institutions.

Intensification of the reality style in television became a direct opposition to the stagnancy of the paleo-television. A top-down monologue was replaced by interactive dialogues and the former official, political, ideological and cultural stature of television got transformed into informal institutionalism becoming part of the neo-television style. The reality style has demonstrated a cardinal change of approach towards reality. Contrary to the paleo-television that preferred to beautify life, the neo-television featured social hardships, adversities and misfortunes. New reality genres offered stories based on true facts with participation of real characters. In reality shows the boundary between documentary and entertainment genres started to dwindle away since each show contained elements of reality (facts), fiction (artifice, performance) and virtuality (simulation of reality).

At the very end of the past century, there emerged a new variety of reality shows (close space, total watch, try-out, survival shows). A drastic demonstration of intimacy on TV evoked a wave of protests among some part of the audience; however, a rather open refusal of privacy reveals extreme changes and serious problems within the

public that official institutions fail to deal with. Television turned into the an *intimate media* directing a reality show with participation of ordinary people (Mehl, 1998) as if trying to compensate for the lack of social dialogue and to promote the public's desire to communicate on very intimate issues. According to D. Mehl, the contemporary TV programming records radical changes in the public's values and norms (Mehl, 2003). By undertaking roles of a psychologist, conciliator or that of the last instance, television aims at starting a broken dialogue between individuals and groups thus making outcasts of the public to feel its worthy members.

The reality television continuously stresses a gap between the bureaucratic and the daily spoken language, questions professional expertise, and gives prominence to the ordinary citizens' opinion. Formal and academic posture contrast with a daily life experience and television becomes a mediator between ordinary people and the elite, between consumers and producers, between politicians and ordinary citizens. The wall that separates a private life from the public life is being destroyed, and the paradox of the process lies in that the public space is being privatised meanwhile the private one – nationalised. The essence of mass media is changing because its channels broadcast personal messages and deal with individual problems.

While dealing with the phenomenon of the reality style in television, note should be taken of the following: a change of the dialogue genres, a tendency of informal institutionalism and reflection of social changes in contemporary reality show formats.

Alternation of a Dialogue

Television has been making radical changes of the public dialogue. This process was initiated by radio which looked for the ways to counterbalance the lack of dialogue between the transmitter and the receiver. By simulating an informal daily communication, the radio tried to create a feeling of home atmosphere as if it spoke to a next-door family (Barton 1922), and thus nurtured an individually relayed sense of universality that enabled each separate individual to feel part of a huge audience. It was the time when the paradoxical stylistic dualism of mass communication, i.e. addressing oneself intimately to the audience, started to develop, which W. Adorno believed to be structurally hollow (Adorno, 1982).

The new radio dialogue originated an intimate atmosphere, and a radio presenter became a personified mediator between the media and the audience. By establishing a dialogue between the state and the public, the radio impacted the process of democratisation and formed new rules of the political code of behaviour. Within the mass media context, politicians were made to adjust themselves to the manner of speaking to a specific audience. Thus simplicity, sincerity and comprehensibility of the language appeared to be significant elements of a successful political career.

Television has speeded up the depolarisation process of social dimensions (political, civil and private) by playing the roles of a mediator, arbitrator and enforcer of social justice. Social dimensions within the contemporary television come closer and even exchange roles.

Depolarisation of political and civil (public) dimensions. The stress is laid on the role of the public's representative or a man on the outside, electors' opinions are presented seeking to implement the idea that everyone has the right to express his or her own opinion.

Depolarisation of political and private dimensions. The sacredness is started to be removed from the political process, and the familiarity and simplicity of politicians are being underlined by revealing some details of their personal life. Openness or a voluntary refusal of privacy, becomes a very important elements of political life, meanwhile communication abilities and characteristics (eloquence, appearance, and a good posture in front of TV cameras) are considered to be obligatory.

The classic debate programme would aim at finding answers to set up problems, and attention would be concentrated on directing the wording of the debate. Solidity of the debate largely depended on participants' expertise, ability to moderate the debate as well as ascetic decoration of a studio and a reserved manner of visual presentation.

Spectacular talk shows began to replace paleo-television debates that lacked dialoguing with the public. In new shows the stress is laid on the wording and picture dynamics, setting up effects, and the moderator's personality. In talk shows the form is more important than the essence of the dispute whereas *a spectacle of the conflict* is instigated in all possible ways. The role of an ordinary individual in these shows is influential enough as he or she may play the role of an expert, witness, represent some social group or act as an ordinary citizen (2).

Some other reality show formats, such as restoration of events or life story narratives, also tend to use the form of a talk show. Characters of these reality shows become passive prototypes of the narrative who have confided their life drama to television (3). Dialogue genres on television have undergone great changes of form and theme. Ordinary people's lives and problems have ousted social, political, cultural or moral topics. Debates would seek to learn the truth, to come to some agreement, to find a way out, meanwhile in talk shows the main concern is about outward effects. Talk show elements comprising reality shows pursue to provoke emotions and to reveal the life tragedy or heroism of an ordinary individual (Charaudeau, Ghiglione, 1997).

Dramaturgy of a talk show usually develops on its own accord with slight corrections of direction, presenting and setting-up. D. Dayan compares the dramaturgy of contemporary talk shows to a cue bill (Dayan, 2003), which when touched, causes a chain of uncontrolled actions and reactions. However, the behaviour of participants of talk shows and reality shows can be forecasted, and they become players of certain social roles. According to P. Virilio, planning of a debate programme is a manifestation of telecracy since television exercises its specific power endowed on it by means of broadcasting (Virilio, 1994). By declaring the freedom of speech, public interest and its concern about the fate of an ordinary man, television equilibrates between magnetism and plausibility, and thus there remains a constant dilemma of whether it is more important to find out the truth and to

help people and the public or to rally the audience as numerous as possible.

When discussing the role of the mass media in the process of democratisation, analysts bring forward the problem of the mythologizing freedom of speech (Charaudeau, Ghiglione, 1997). Reality television creates an illusion of being a single place where everyone shall be listened to and where all problems will be settled. However, *teledemocracy* is implemented by specific means. In order to stir the audience's interest, television does not seek unity or understanding but escalates confrontation and conflict. The form takes over the content, and a democratic dialogue affected by theatricalization tendency becomes boring and unconvincing.

A talk show participant must accept rules of the game and take part in a directed show in which speech effects prevail over expertise. Television is in particular attracted by radical or marginal cases and therefore gets accustomed to extreme views and behaviour. Television's ability to keep up a dialogue among different layers of the public as well as a wide range of topics under discussion and a great variety of directing a talk show make us speak of new forms of exchange of views. Television introduces a new performance democracy, in which dry facts are replaced by emotions, reflection – by actions, and ideas – by fascinating personalities. In this context, a politician's personality becomes especially important since television repackages him and he is made to adapt to expectations of the audience.

Relation between the television rating and the election results promotes changes of a political discourse (voting is compared to purchase of goods and services (Schumpeter 2008). A politician is made to *mediatise (to adapt to the media rules of the game),* and thus the *rating verdict* makes to replace individuality and subjectivity by anonymous collectivism (Champagne, 1998). It looks as if television is speaking on behalf of the public, but in reality the public's role is that of the mass in determining ratings (Jacka, 2003). On the grounds of this sketchy verdict of the audience television chooses types of programmes, programme components and participants. Thus, politicians' and television's main concern is largely not about the content but about ratings.

By choosing a politician to a TV programme (as usual, influential, scandalous and communicative politicians are invited) television shapes his image and stereotypes of behaviour. Television usually selects a small group of politicians able to communicate easily, who choose *the tactics of scandal* deliberately because they want to be noticed. They arrange actions, make statements, and participate in disreputable events just for the sake of being noticed. Politicians that do not fall within the media's range of vision as if vanish from social life. According to P. Bourdieu, television and intellection do not match, therefore, fast-thinkers offering fast consumables predominate on TV screens (Bourdieu, 1996).

Normal political activity is not attractive to television and, in search of ratings improving topics, it forces politicians to accept rules of a scandalous game. Thus policy is reduced to a show, politicians to a comedian, meanwhile real political activity remains co-

vered with a veil of secrecy. Television creates an image of a politician who in reality has nothing to do with politics. However, in spite of television's efforts to turn politics into a show, the publics interest in politics and politicians is reducing and the gap between different social groups is widening (Miege, 1995).

Informal institutionalism

Global therapy

A life experience-sharing individual has become a most distinct figure of the reality television that concentrates its attention, in particular, on those who found themselves in the most critical situations. Investigation of quarrels, search of the missing, assistance in finding a partner, mediation in settling conflicts has become customary on television.

Psyshows, which started at the beginning of the eighties of the past century, should be attributed to one of the earliest waves of reality shows. Instead of advising to apply to a specialist, television proposed dealing with intimate problems publicly, turning a consultant's room into a mediatized social dialogue (4). The public and specialists in the field hold a different view as far as confidential (at the specialist's) and public (on TV) therapy is concerned. Some agree to participate in psyshows, meanwhile others attack television's invasion into individual's private problems and abnormalities because they think that television should not openly show everything and that not everything should be available to the audience. They are of the opinion that mass therapy cannot replace the specialist's individual consultations.

In spite of television's efforts to perform the role of a psychologist or mediator in the family or social conflicts, it is obvious that the metamorphosis of television genres reflects changes of the public's development as well as its attitude towards traditional norms and values. In accordance to D. Mehl, the public itself felt a desire to discuss intimate issues, therefore television offered it confession genres (Mehl, 1998), a scheme of action within which an individual himself defines limits of openness (Sennet, 1995). Since pathology is predestined not only by an individual problem but also by social ones, television started rendering service which D. Mehl calls *global therapy* (Mehl, 2003a). It is supposed that separate individuals seek mass psychological therapy for fear of being forgotten or unacknowledged, and public expanse becomes a self-representation and self-research space (Bonnet, 2003; Roman, 2003). Public confessions create the so-called cathodic double phenomenon when the viewer gets interested in the story of kindred and in the ways of dealing with the problem.

An intimate or familiar style in television reveals social problems, restores broken connections of members of society and raises acknowledgement hopes of society outcasts. The prevailing tendencies of social development are revealed through specific cases, and social norms and values are being formed. In spite of its commercial aspect, television fills social hollows of the industrial society and consolidates its isolated segments. J. Pradel refers to this function as social hygiene or new humanitarianism (Pradel, 2003). A. Ehrenberg also

views the intimate television as a phenomenon resulting from social problems. According to him, if the lack of a civilised political dialogue causes extremism, then bankruptcy of social aid services creates the reality show phenomenon which seems to be a symbol of immorality to some part of the audience (Ehrenberg, 1996).

Entertainment justice

Programmes dealing with legal issues also tend to apply the documentary style. In some countries (US, Scotland) court proceedings are directly broadcast on television, and documentary dramas with participation of witnesses become especially popular. Television and law enforcement institutions establish a joint investigation or search of missing people services (5). In addition to presenting information about criminal occurrences or dealing with casuistic legal issues, television tends to identify itself as a legal institution encouraging people to apply to it as such. Open analysis of legal issues or proceedings creates the image of transparency or control over legal enforcement institutions and, like in case of a global teletherapy, the image of a global instance of justice is being created (Leblanc, 1995). By simulating legal procedures, television creates a false external resemblance, however, in case of television, implementation of justice is only a form of dramaturgy, and television usually chooses cases that best of all answer competitive demands of mass communication.

Television transforms legal procedures beyond recognition since it limits itself to exposition of separate fragments or subjective attestations laying a special emphasis on emotions and sufferings of the victim. Thus television becomes *media of sympathy* (Mehl, 2003), meanwhile implementation of justice turns into an emotional consolatory show (Brucner, 1995). While declaring its resolution to assist justice, in reality, television downplays justice because, being free of procedural requirements, it embodies the representative but not institutional justice. Independent investigation carried out by television is based on the laws of *entertainment justice* (Pascal-Mousselard, 2003). The media-realised justice disregards legal procedures, meanwhile those who adhere to those procedures are accused of delaying. In spite of all that, the media's verdict is usually presented as final and unquestionable. Neither the public nor the media can be part of a legal process. Not specific cases but only the principles of functioning of the legal system can openly be discussed. Periodicity, rhythm, expression methods and aims are not in accord with the peculiarities of a legal process; therefore, the competence conflict becomes unavoidable: the aim of legal institutions is a triumph of justice, meanwhile television tends frightening with legal fatalism and impunity (Salas, 2001). Legal institutions, differently from the media, understand the limits of democracy visualisation. Transparency, so much celebrated by the public, according to R.V. Ericson, demonstrates a naļve understanding of democracy (Ericson 1991) envisaging that everything is permitted. Such an attitude and efforts to realise it create new populism, promote liberal ideology and the

upward harmonisation of interests by invoking public opinion. However, A. Garapon reminds of the ancient Greek sentence which says "the bigger the crowd, the blinder it is" (Garapon, 2001).

The media-implemented justice eliminates limits between strict investigation procedures and dramatic imitations jumbling together justice and hedonism. By criticising law enforcement or imitating actions of legal institutions, or attacking real justice measures, television can actually be a menace to democracy.

The phenomenon of new reality shows

Paradox of democratic totalitarianism

A new stage in the development of the new television involves a reality show of closed zones, which simulates models of a watchout and tracing of individuals. New show formats have expanded reality show bounds and raised controversial reactions of the public. Such a situation makes to look for the reasons that have caused the reality show phenomenon and find an answer to the question why and how it changes the traditional concept of intimacy and publicity.

One of the first in the new generation of reality shows under the title "The Big Brother" (created by the "Endemol" in 1999) traded on the idea about control of the public by means of communication taken from the novel "1984" by G. Orwell. The image has become the hinge of a television format. Individuals isolated from the public are watched by videocameras, and a scheme of

total watchout is realised by modern means of communication such as television, radio or Internet broadcasting. Here we get encountered with simulation of a voluntary imprisonment of an individual, which is paradoxical totalitarianism. In reality television, a watchout is not concealed but emphatically demonstrated, and a game of tracing an individual is enacted, which Froissart names *communicative totalitarianism* (Froissart 2003). However, simulation of a total watchout did not raise the expected reaction of the public, therefore the format was later modified by laying more stress on interrelations, competitiveness and creativity of individuals than on their isolation from the public. In the era of advanced technologies, a total watchout has become a means of security. Placing of videocameras in public places establishes the public of *unlimited communication* (Vattimo, 1989) and control by means of audio-visual communication, which has nothing to hide and nobody to hide from. The so-called *indifferent watchout* (Jost, 2002) becomes part of the contemporary urban life style.

An experiment carried in the USA, during which individuals under the experiment were closed within a glass cupola for the whole year, is especially often mentioned amongst other close space models which are said to have originated the reality show idea (Kerviel, 2003). One more parallel of the total watchout prison architecture model is J. Bentham's waxwork. Within a waxwork space, an individual never is aware whether he or she is watched, therefore the authority's power starts functioning automatically. Waxwork equipment installed in any place

(video cameras in children's rooms, schools or offices) will imminently change an individual's behaviour. The reality television takes advantage of the waxwork idea as an experience acquiring, behaviour modifying and individual drilling system. A closed reality show's space functions similarly to the waxwork authority laboratory, i.e. watchout mechanisms are used to penetrate into an individual's behaviour (Foucault 1998).

This concept, which turns life *in vivo* into life *in vitro*, is especially criticised. However, according to F. Jost, advanced technologies that spread waxwork within the public, in principle, change the idea of a total watchout (Jost, 2002). The changing attitude of the public towards communication technology predetermines these changes (6). A webcam which has impersonated the real time era, has become a significant factor in the change of communicative relations. Hybridisation of the video camera and the Internet prompted a new expression of intimacy that has connected exhibitionism of the watched and the voyeurism of the viewer. New technologies and new habits, in principle, have changed the communicative configuration. A vertical communication, typical of a totalitarian system, has transformed into a horizontal one consisting of automatic spaces of the stream (Castells, 1996). When the Internet started broadcasting personal life episodes, the concept of privacy has changed. The voluntary publicising of private life has become a challenge in regard to the public; however, it has also demonstrated a new tendency in social development, which is an individual's indifference to the surroundings (7).

The reality television has transformed and commercialised the waxwork idea. Like in case of waxwork, digital technologies break the unity of *to see and to be seen* (Foucault 1998) and generate a continuous watchout stress. However, within the waxwork of modern communications, the relationship between the viewer and the watched shifts. Threads of the classical waxwork relationship flow from the periphery to the centre, meanwhile within the virtual waxwork (Internet) observance or watchout is possible from any horizontal network. Thus, any peripheral point may become the system's centre. Within the waxwork one watches all, meanwhile within a virtual prison several individuals are watched by huge audiences.

The broadcasting method changes the relationship between the participant and the viewer. TV cameras, automatically or controlled by cameramen, implement the *management* (power) idea which means that the focus is on the watched, and the viewers turn into peripheral points of the communication system. Viewers that watch a reality show broadcast by the Internet are dependent on the watched. According to F. Jost, such a broadcast model is an upside-down waxwork since the watched (a virtual prisoner) begins to control the audience himself, i.e. the prisoner puts his gaolers into prison (Jost, 2002).

Different formats of reality shows implement different concepts in regard to relationship with reality (8). Exotic challenge features, as if taking into account criticism as to affectation of close space shows, are presented like a documentary or reports about formation of an isolated group under extreme circumstances. Stars'

build-up formats advocate the concept of professional work and co-operation between generations.

Telereality and self-expression of the individual

Reality show genres expand the boundaries of intimacy, offer new possibilities of self-expression and forms of co-operation between different groups and sex. The new intimacy eliminates the individual's wish to reveal its physical or spiritual life and direct or indirect promotion from the outside to do it (Abraham, Torok, 1992). Television managed to find adequate audio-visual forms of expression for a newly emerged tendency of the publicity of privacy and the privatisation of publicity. According to S. Tisseron, advanced communication technologies and changes of the ways of life resulted in transformation of intimacy into *extimacy,* which means the public's desire to learn more about itself through communication with others and making public some part of one's private life (Tisseron, 2001).

Communication technologies develop new communicative skills, methods of self-expression and behaviour. The cellular phone has become a multifunctional device eliminating a boundary between privacy and publicity. A mobile link has changed the concept of loneliness since starting contacts has become possible not necessarily with the presence of physical contacts. While using a mobile phone, an individual is not even aware that he or she is spreading around intimate information. Communication via Internet changes spelling and speaking skills and develops the so-called a pair communication society. Similarly to a direct conversation, communication and formulation of ideas is taking place simultaneously, but there are fewer limitations, new spelling rules appear (signs, logograms, and punctuation). The same happens in case of SMS. New communication forms enable a simultaneous link, help to start a dialogue and to better know oneself. A similar self-expression form is implemented in reality shows as well.

The phenomenon of reality style on television should be attributed to a change of the attitude towards image. With emergency of the mirror, an individual could estimate oneself and be free of external estimation. A hand mirror makes an individual's identity to be linked with self-display, and a false sincerity or simplicity token is taken for true sincerity or simplicity (Tisseron, 2000). With the development of advanced image recording technologies, a flow of visual information has increased and feelings such as fear or sadness started to be recorded alongside festive events (8), which even more reopened the curtain covering private life. However, it appeared that intimacy and self-expression should not be linked with visual presentation since it does not reveal the entire complexity of the individual.

The reality television meets the public's desire to communicate on very intimate issues. The public's dimension merges with the self-presentation dimension with presence of dialogues between the personal and the collective, the public and the private and the secret and the open (Kaufmann, 2001). A social discussion and evaluation of the group behaviour are presented in the form of an

intimate play followed by specially kindled rows. Here, things that only close people are trusted with are openly shown and therefore customary communication norms are distorted. Personal tyranny (Sennet, 1995) may present threat to the public life norms, however, everyone has the right to set the individual and subjective limits of publicity.

Reality show participants, wishing to safe individuality, are made to play daily routine, and their play is based on the so-called principle of *game corruption* (Caillois, 1985), when a participant forgets that he or she is playing and starts acting his or her own life (Sibony, 2001).

The success of reality shows could be also attributed to a new attitude towards family relationship. Participants or reality shows constantly feel the so-called *half-open door effect* (Tisseron, 2001) which is a desire for mother's evaluation, usually formed in the childhood (psychologically, they feel as children left alone for a while). Therefore a reality show is not, as it is often believed, a classic exhibitionism of the participants and a voyeurism of the viewers. Television treats participants of reality shows similarly to parents who continuously keep the door of their children's room half-open.

A special emphasis is laid on family integration. According to S. Tisseron, the reality show demonstrates transformation of the generation gap society into a society of cooperation in which parents and children want to stay together as long as possible (Tisseron, 2008). The younger part of the audience is attracted by soap-opera dialogues from which they learn about social relations (Pasquier, 2000). Thus, reality shows exhibit a new form of competition – an entertaining competition with no losers. The new generation accepts this form of competing as an ordinary pragmatic act that gives them a chance to enter the show business (Mace, 2003).

Although reality shows are more attractive to teenagers (a familiar vocabulary, attitude towards life, soap-opera style), they are meant for the whole family. One of the reasons of their popularity lies in a great variety of individuals and situations – heteroglasya – a multilingual world of problems, views and dialects. Some researchers tend to take a hypnotising watchout of daily banalities for a new form of communication.

Some analysts notice that the reality television turns into a field for research of social relations subtly observing and recording the difference between representatives of different sex (Mosse, 1999). Within the context of new reality shows, a single social, family or professional model should not be applied either to a female or a male. The conduct of the reality show participants is very often evaluated in accordance with customary stereotypes, however, in reality, it points to a transformation of the sex myth and changing of the concept about males and females complementing each other into a concept of males and females competing with each other. The female more and more often demonstrate independence and take decisions, meanwhile the male do the dishes, cook, do not conceal their emotions and are much concerned about personal hygiene. Reality shows lay a great emphasis on the youth cult promoting to stay young as long as possible, meanwhile maturity and obsolescence do not interest television.

Telereality and self-adaptation of universal models

The dramaturgical scheme of reality shows reminds of fairy-tale plots. There is a similar happy-end principle (a decisive decision or triumph of justice in a fairy-tale and crowning of the winner in a reality show). Just like in fairy-tales, insignificant environmental aspects are eliminated; attention is more concentrated on a group phenomenon or problems of communication. In that way, a fabulous world of *unreal reality* is being created (Bettelheim, 1999). According to F. Jost, characters of reality shows overtake their counterparts of fairy-tales in terms of primitivism (in a fairy-tale the one who is deemed a knucklehead is actually the smartest one) (Jost, 2002).

Reality television has been adapting a changing concept of a character. In the sixties of the past century, a superman simultaneously embodied both the modest white-collar and the character of a western (Eco, 1999), while in television *platitudinous heroism* ousted the heroism of exceptional strengths (Muxel, 1999). A TV character is nothing else but a communicated image created by the heroisation process (Tisseron, 2008). One of the most important components of this process deals with multiplication of means of dispersion. For daily characters of reality shows, it is enough to be themselves, while the heroisation process is realised through a multiple circulation of image components. The image is circulated by the means of different technologies and a variety of genres (television, radio programs, Internet broadcasting, computer games, press, compact discs, souvenirs).

It is possible to envisage a reflection of universal values in the concept of reality show. The theme of sin, awakening of conscience or contrition is employed in different aspects, and the idea of intimacy, which was emphasised in early years of television, is realised in a new way (9). The spread of different formats of reality television and their adaptation-related peculiarities have been determined by religion, culture realities. The Swedish TV-show *Expedition Robinson* is close to Protestantism: ascetic, full of constraints life and everyday activity is devoted to satisfy minimal needs. Such a format, dedicated to try out human powers, was popular in Northern Europe and the US. In Catholic countries, efforts were made to make softer a battle tense in the reality show by developing a sentimental narration and replacing elimination (voting against) by forming a pair of contestants (voting for).

In reality shows, there could be envisaged some parallels with principles of commercial desire satisfaction industry (erotica, pornography): partners are replaced (eliminated) by other contestants, passion is aroused without any promise to satisfy it, the game is played by formal contrasts: classical and everyday life beauty, immodesty versus modesty (Frau-Meigs, 1996).

Reality television applies different genres and forms of broadcasting. This is a reality television where an actual reality and artifice intertwine, the viewer is given an opportunity to cognise the world (actual reality), take part in pre-planned events (contrived) or watch the life of real people (scripted reality). It is namely live broadcast which intertwine contradictory expectations of the

audience and previous communicative experience, excites the viewers' fantasy. It is as if the real life category takes one back to the origins of television–simultaneity of a live report or the sense of natural flow of time. It is a paradox; however, the sense of reality is created by making use of the means typical of histrionic genres – setting-up, anticipation and provocation of actions. Even the very descriptions – *real life soap, docu-soap* – betray the speculative nature of the term.

The reality television world may seem more real than the actual life itself because failures or disobedience of social norms are emphasised through means of setting-up. Things that one may wish to disguise in one's real life become a norm on the screen. Demonstration of the sides of life that are concealed in actual reality gives young people a significant cause for being interested in images created by television. Reality shows remind them of the world of the outcasts (Goffman, 1973) or the state experienced by children abandoned by their parents.

Reality television circulates stereotypes of other components of the program: details of TV series stenography, dialogues of situation comedies or those of the so-called college series. The spare-time of TV show participants reminds the viewer of TV quiz shows or improvisation games. There is another paradox of reality shows: the game is presented as a natural form of spare-time spending. The everyday life is commercialised since advertising turns to become the binding link between reality and the show world.

Reality shows arouse yet never seen controversies, polarity of the public's attitude.

D. Mehl explains the popularity of this genre by stating that everyone has his own reasons for watching reality shows even if he hates them. Some part of the audience identify themselves with the show participants, while another part try to decipher codes of reality mystification or to grasp the mechanisms of manipulation (Mehl, 2003). F. Jost called *sadism of audience* as one of the forms of the interplay between the viewers and the spectacle (Jost, 2003). Based on this concept, the viewers perceive information egocentrically and compare it constantly with their own experience. Sadism of the audience is actualised through the position of force demonstration realised by the channel switching or elimination of participants of the game. Thus, the viewer becomes a scriptwriter who controls the course of the action and carries on the intrigue. Through intuitive sensation of dramaturgy laws, the viewer himself gets involved in the creation of the conflict.

Genres of reality television are aimed at rallying the mixed audience as numerous as possible. This is achieved through making a synthesis of three modes of reality reflection: *authenticity* (talk shows and tradition of early reality shows), *fiction* (situation comedies, soap operas, youth serials), and *entertainment* (games, histrionic and music genres). Different stylistics of similar format programs is created: *banality of the everyday life* (a concept of closed space), *try-outs* (the concept of a desert island), *professional work* (the concept of making a star).

Adaptation of reality show formats all around the world reveals the new forms of the globalisation process. Unified regula-

tions do not prevent one from having a vessel of format full of unique substance (1l) and through this to encompass the model of national unity reflecting the strive for recognition of social and cultural groups and individual self-expression (Lochard, Soulez, 2003). Varieties of the genre of reality shows are both the local and global phenomenon simultaneously, while television acts in the capacity of the establisher of social norms and values (Jacquinot-Delauny, 2003). The practice of the world-wide spread genre under new technological media confirms the idea that globalisation is an opposite process providing an opportunity to reveal the differences rather than the homogenisation of culture (Couldry, 2004).

Notes:

1. This term is attributed to U. Eco (Y. Patte. La culture: est-elle en périle? 50 and debats sur les moyens de diffusion: www.acrimed.org.3 article.php3?id_article=538 ; www. Answers.com/topic/reality-television.

2. Most common roles played by a participant in a talk show*: adaptability –* telling of how he/she managed to survive when placed on extreme conditions; dissociation – a critical assessment of oneself and others, *concretisation* – looking for ways out, *individualisation* – acting on behalf of the unappreciated and outcast members of the public; *social identity* – acting on behalf of a certain group; *social uniqueness* – motivation of one's desire to distinguish oneself from others.

3. Television employs different modes which are aimed at inspiring people to open: *humbug* – by trading on persons' ignorance of law, preserves of citizens are poached on; *inspiring* – genres of reality television (talk and reality shows, documentary dramas) form an opinion that opening of a private zone is a life norm; *payola* – luring by money, making promises of therapy (we will help you) or sociability (it will help someone else), *speculation in transparency* – by applying the principle of transparency, television interferes into the personal life of politicians; television sometimes misuses this principle, however; *volunteerism* – politicians, public actors are interested in being talked about on mass media channels, ordinary people want to participate in TV programs.

4. Psyshow format programs are typical of the following four types of telling:
   • *personal*: efforts to overcome isolation, ignorance of the family and surrounding;
   • *cathartic:* communication with the family in public, during which ways for solving the problem are presented, the viewers are encouraged to speak up their problems in public;
   • *identical:* represents an exceptional way of living and a particular nature of relations with people around;
   • *collective:* a group portrait (anonymous dipsomaniacs, the infected) (See: D. Mehl. Confession sur petit écran // Sciences humaines. 2003, no. 107, p. 64–66).

5. Regulation of court proceedings and pre-trial investigation determines the nature of programs dealing with legal issues. Inasmuch as broadcasting of court proceedings has been authorised in many areas of the US, a special channel, *Court TV,* has been set up in the US to offer such coverage. It has become popular in the US to provide narration of court proceedings in morning and primetime programs, as well as *tabloid* (of pulp nature) programs featuring sensational sundry. Documentary dramas showing police officers on duty and talk shows covering court proceedings in Europe were adapted from programs in the US. In the mid-1990s, theatrical court imitations (*série tribunal*) ousted American soap operas broadcast in daytimes.

The British media must restrain from making any comments that may affect court proceedings; however, it was already back in the 1970s that there emerged TV programs featuring a dramatised documentary investigation and reconstruction of cases.

There are manifestations of various relation to law instances in French television, such as critique of court mistakes or co-operation. (See: La justice saisie par la télévision // Dossiers de l'audiovisuel. 2003, no. 107).

In Lithuania, the television program dealing with legal issues *The Man. The Public. The Law* has been popular long since. Video films featuring resonance court proceedings have also been produced. New genres of reality stylistics (documentary dramas showing the police on duty, reality shows imitating court proceedings) existed in Lithuania for a short period only.

6. Communication technologies in works of science fiction of the late 19th and early 20th century were often described as unpredictable or those posing threat. With electronics becoming part of everyday life, works of science popularisation are felt to have tamed modern technologies.

7. J. Ringley from the US, one of the first to launch world-wide private visual broadcasting on the Internet, declared that she had turned a video camera on at home not because of the desire to be observed but because she had not felt embarrassed about it at all.

8. A variety of reality shows:
• *entertainment* (hidden camera, home videos); *documentary drama* (material of special services, police officers on duty, imitation of court proceedings).
New reality shows:
• *Total watch* (The Big Brother, the Diet, The Bus, The Bar); *Survival* (The Survivor, the Expedition Robinson); *Chance* (Star Academy, Operation Triumph, The Bachelor, the Boss); *Trying-out* (Fear Factor); *Temptation* (Temptation Island, The Amazones).

9. Our ancestors would take their pictures in dressy clothes, our parents would not wish to have their pictures

taken while eating or washing. Contemporary generations take their own pictures and agree to be filmed while put on different situations and do not shy to expose these images.

10. A TV set was compared to a confessional, whereas the very monologue reminded the first TV analysts of the confession. Confession or an assessment of self- or someone else's behaviour turns to become one of the most important components of reality shows.

11. Reality shows in Brazil imitated the genre of tellenovella popular throughout the country. The Greeks propagated traditional values, the Japanese emphasised theatricality, while the Chinese put stress on role playing.

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REALYBĖS STILISTIKA TELEVIZIJOJE: VISUOMENĖS TRANSFORMACIJŲ ATSPINDYS

Žygintas Pečiulis

S a n t r a u k a

Realybės televizijos stilistika demonstravo kintantį televizijos požiūrį į eilinį pilietį. Profesionalą (ekspertą, politiką, menininką) ekrane ėmė keisti paprastas žmogus, liudijantis savo gyvenimo istoriją, buvo deklaruojamas įvairių visuomenės sluoksnių suartėjimas. Žiūrovas tapo televizijos programos bendraautoriumi, visuomenė buvo įtraukiama į aktualių problemų svarstymą, televizija ėmė imituoti valstybės ar visuomeninių institucijų funkcijas. Hibridiniai realybės žanrai pasiūlė faktais pagrįstas istorijas dalyvaujant tikriems herojams. Ėmė nykti ribos tarp dokumentinių ir vaidybinių žanrų. Praėjusio amžiaus pabaigoje paplito naujosios realybės šou žanro variacijos (uždarų erdvių, totalaus sekimo, išmėginimų, išlikimo), atskleidusios kardinalius visuomenės požiūrio į privatumą pokyčius. Atlikdama psichologės, taikytojos, paskutinės instancijos vaidmenis, televizija mėgina kompensuoti ryšio tarp visuomenės narių stoką, megzti nutrūkusį dialogą tarp individų ir grupių. Realybės stilistika šiame straipsnyje nagrinėjama trimis aspektais: dialoginių žanrų kaitos, neformaliojo instituciškumo ir visuomenės pokyčių atspindžio naujuosiuose realybės šou formatuose.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: žiniasklaida, audiovizualinė žiniasklaida, televizija, televizijos programų raida, realybės televizijos stilius.