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The hero's journey in contemporary audiovisual arts

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Statement of the scientific problem and relevance of the research

In recent decades, audiovisual technologies, various formats for the production and presentation of audiovisual content, as well as new storytelling techniques, have evolved rapidly all over the world. As a consequence, concepts previously considered universal need to be tested and possibly revised in the light of contemporary realities. One such concept is the monomyth model proposed by Joseph Campbell in 1949, also widely known as "the hero's journey". Campbell's monomyth describes the universal plot structure of myths, legends, and religious texts of different peoples[1]. Despite the extensive criticism of Campbell's work (Paglia, 1991; Toelken, 1996; Ellwood, 1999; Scupin, 2000; Bond, Christensen, 2021; Hambly, 2021), it has had a significant impact on world culture and dramaturgy.

It was the monomyth scheme that became the core of the plot of the Star Wars trilogy (1977; 1980; 1983) and then formed the basis of the detailed screenwriting manual written by Christopher Vogler (2007), which turned out to be a bestseller. Through this successful revision, Campbell's theory became popular among Hollywood producers and screenwriters and was used in the creation of the animated film The Lion King (1994) as well as other remarkable motion pictures. Vogler himself describes this process in detail in his research *Joseph Campbell goes to the movies: The influence of the hero's journey in film narrative* (2017). Many other studies show that cinema, especially the mainstream one, has been either largely following or literally reproducing Campbell's monomyth for decades (Palumbo, 2008; Batty, 2011; Palumbo, 2013; Palumbo, 2014; Weinstein, 2021).

Of particular interest, however, is how Campbell's scheme works in relation to those contemporary audiovisual arts that differ seriously in their form from full-length

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[1]According to Campbell, the universal hero's journey consists of three global phases ("Departure", "Initiation", and "Return") and seventeen stages within them: "The Call to Adventure", "Refusal of the Call", "Supernatural Aid", "The Crossing of the First Threshold", "The Belly of the Whale", "The Road of Trials", "The Meeting with the Goddess", "Woman as the Temptress", "The Atonement with the Father", "The Apotheosis", "The Ultimate Boon", "Refusal of the Return", "The Magic Flight", "Rescue from Without", "The Crossing of the Return Threshold", "Master of the Two Worlds", and "Freedom to Live" (Campbell, 1949, p. 23). In some of the articles in this study, the stages "The Meeting with the Goddess" and "Woman as the Temptress" are treated as one, since the latter is actually only a supplement or one of the variations of the former.

cinema. This leads to the central research question of the current study: how and why does the universal scheme of the hero's journey transform in contemporary audiovisual arts working with small screen forms, namely web series, short animation, and interactive cinema?

The monograph *Big Format: Screen Culture in the Age of Transmedia* in three parts (Salnikova et al., 2018; Saraskina et al., 2018; Zhurkova et al., 2018) is devoted to the study of the concepts of big and small screen forms as such. Although the authors do not clearly define small and large screen form, they categorize both ancient myths, on the analysis of which Campbell's work was based, and full-length cinema as large forms. The authors consider works characterized by shorter running time and the so-called "clipness", i.e. clip-specific montage techniques, to be small screen forms. For example, Ekaterina Salnikova, analyzing the third season of Twin Peaks, characterizes some of its scenes as "very close to the clip small screen form" (2018, p. 137), while Anna Novikova sees modern series and superhero universes as transforming "a set of small forms into large ones" (2018, p. 129).

While short animation is a small form by definition, a web series as a whole might be a rather long (big) story. Nevertheless, due to its "clipness" and division into small forms (episodes), the web series is usually perceived by both researchers and practitioners as a small form (see, for example, Baranovsky et al., 2018, p. 128; Healy, 2022, p. 100). Similarly, this study considers interactive cinema primarily as a collection of small forms. Thus, working with small forms is the specific feature that unites all three formats under consideration.

This same feature serves to prove the relevance of the research. In recent decades, the role of global networks and modern technology has been growing steadily, allowing viewers to freely consume content at any time and in any format, as well as to provide instant feedback. The mediatization of everyday practices has been taking place: both technological devices and everyday life itself have been transformed. Phenomena such as clip culture (Toffler, 1980) and participatory culture (Jenkins, 2006) have become increasingly important. As has been shown above, "clipness" is precisely a

characteristic of small screen forms. As for participativity, namely, the ability to influence what is happening in the story directly or indirectly (for example, through the commentary system), it is not usually characteristic of short-length animation, but plays an important role in web series and a crucial one in interactive cinema. All this indicates the relevance of the chosen objects and the research angle.

In addition, from 2010 to the present, three selected audiovisual arts have received an additional impetus to development due to the rise of the industry. During this time, web series have established themselves as an independent format in Russia, and international web series festivals have begun to take place all over the world. Pixar animation studio, as a leader in the niche of short-length animation, has changed an approach to its creation both conceptually, by working with more complex themes and technologies, and in terms of production volumes. The largest and most popular interactive projects have been released in Russia and abroad: "Late Shift" (2016), "Black Mirror: Bandersnatch" (2018), and "#WHO_ARE_U" (2020). There were also many products of active mixing and mutual penetration of these formats: animated web series ("Masha and the Bear" (2009–...), "The Fixies" (2010–2019), etc.) interactive web series ("Mosaic" (2018), "You vs. Wild" (2019), "It Is Nothing" (2021), etc.), interactive animated movies ("Puss in Book: Trapped in an Epic Tale" (2017), "Cat Burglar" (2022), etc.), and interactive animated web series ("Buddy Thunderstruck" (2017), "The Last Days of Thrash" (2020), etc.). Online games that combine features of all three audiovisual arts under consideration have also evolved rapidly. The active development of each of these formats in the 2010s and at the present time determines not only the chronological scope of this work but also its relevance. More details about the peculiarities of the development of each of the formats in this period are described in the articles that form the study.

Among other things, the relevance of the chosen scholarly approach lies in the fact that in recent years a number of researchers have turned to the concept of monomyth in order to rethink it in the context of current phenomena and theories, for example, feminism (Jacey, 2010), multiculturalism (Hambly, 2021) or queer studies

(Sadri, 2020; Thomas, 2021). In all of these examples, the authors pose a similar research question: how does the monomyth scheme transform in a different type of stories (for example, if the narrative is centered not on the hero but on the heroine)? It means that there is indeed a need to take a fresh look at Campbell's theory in the context of modernity, but the specific approaches of researchers differ.

The interdisciplinary scholarly approach used in this work implies a search for the connection between the specificity of the audiovisual arts and the transformation of the classical hero's journey scheme in the respective works of fiction. For this purpose, the specificity of each of the selected arts should be studied first of all in the context of storytelling. There are many definitions of this term in the academic field, but the key definition for this research is based on the analysis of the book *The Narrative Subject. Storytelling in the Age of the Internet* (Schachtner, 2020), which studies storytelling in the context of modern technological tools and formats. Storytelling is the process of configuring the available forms of information delivery that establish *how* a story can be presented in order to elicit a response from the audience (Schachtner, 2020).

Although storytelling is closely related to narrative, these concepts are not equivalent since narrative simultaneously works with both *how* the story is told and *what* is told, that is, it includes the content of the story itself (Schachtner, 2020, p. 30). In addition to the content, narrative is defined by a multitude of parameters: focalization (the point of view from which the narrative is told), characterization (the key features of the characters), coherence (the integrity of the story), and so on (Genette, 1980). This research focuses mostly on the story structure. By comparing the plot structure of specific works with the universal scheme (Campbell's monomyth), it is possible to establish how the hero's journey was transformed due to the specifics of the corresponding audiovisual art.

The current state of research on the scientific problem

Modern researchers often refer to the concept of monomyth when analyzing works of fiction: movies (Palumbo, 2008; Palumbo, 2013; Palumbo, 2014; Weinstein, 2021), TV series (Thomas, 2021), and comic books (Sadri, 2020). Campbell's scheme

has also been used extensively in the study of narratives outside of audiovisual arts and literature: for example, in the analysis of Steve Jobs' career and public image (Ganzin et al., 2014), student interviews about mastering the engineering profession (Cruz, Kellam, 2017), or medical histories of melanoma patients (Braithwaite et al., 2018). None of these works, however, question the relationship of the hero's journey with the specificity of the very format in which the object of analysis is presented.

This scholarly issue has also not yet been studied in relation to web series. There are few studies on the specifics of this format in the context of storytelling (Baranovsky et al., 2018; Batty et al., 2019; Taylor, 2021), but there are no works that examine the hero's journey in web series or explore the internal structure of their plot construction in detail.

Short-length animation has been studied even less: only one work is devoted to the specificity of short-length animation projects in the context of storytelling (Khalili, 2018). The closest related studies deal with the narrative structure of short films (Raskin, 2002; Cowgill, 2005; Cooper, Dancyger, 2012), but, as shown further, the specificity of animated films is such that they need to be considered separately, drawing on theories of conceptual and creative metaphors (Lakoff, Johnson, 1980; Lakoff, Turner, 1989; Goatly, 1997; Kövecses, 2002).

Interactive cinema has nevertheless been explored to a certain extent in the context of the topic in question. There are many works studying the specifics of interactive narrative and the problems of its development (Crawford, 2013; Caracciolo, 2015; Daryani et al., 2016), including specifically in interactive cinema (Clarke, Mitchell, 2001; Ben-Shaul, 2008; Utkin, Pokrovskaya, 2020). These studies are important for this research because they allow for a better understanding of the specifics of interactive cinema in the context of storytelling. However, they do not address the structure of the hero's journey.

There are also works that attempt to rethink the concept of monomyth within an interactive narrative and understand how interactivity as a specific feature of the format affects the structure of the hero's journey (Augeraud et al., 2007; Galanina,

Vetushinsky, 2019). However, firstly, the listed works focus on video games and not on interactive cinema. Secondly, these pieces of research either do not rely on case study analysis and, therefore, do not have a sufficient empirical basis, or focus more on the concepts of "hero" and "heroic" in an interactive format than directly on the structure of its plot.

Thus, despite the existence of studies about the specificity of each of the selected audiovisual arts in the context of storytelling on which this work further relies, the problem of the connection between the features of the format and the structure of the hero's journey is explored for the first time.

The object of the study is a number of works of fiction created in the 2010s–2020s and belonging to the sphere of modern audiovisual arts that use small screen forms: web series, short-length animation films, and interactive cinema.

The subject of the study is the transformation of the traditional hero's journey under the influence of the specifics of storytelling in web series, short-length animation films, and interactive cinema.

The aim of the study is to identify and explain the logic according to which the specificity of each of the chosen formats in the context of storytelling affects the hero's journey in the works of this format.

To achieve this aim, the following **objectives** must be accomplished consistently:

1) to identify and classify the most relevant objects for analysis in each of the selected formats;
2) to identify the specific features that distinguish each of the selected formats from the others, particularly from popular full-length cinema, where the original monomyth scheme is retained;
3) to establish by what means and according to what logic the specific features of the format can have a direct impact on the plot;
4) to determine the key features of the narrative transformation for the chosen format: in particular, to make schemes of the hero's journey for each of the

chosen objects of research, compare the obtained schemes with the original monomyth scheme, and identify discrepancies;

5) to establish a connection between the specific features of the format highlighted in the third step and the transformation of the monomyth scheme identified in the fourth step, if such a connection actually takes place.

The hypothesis of the study can be formulated as follows: the traditional structure of the hero's journey is transformed in a similar way in all of the selected formats, since this transformation is determined, first and foremost, by the general principles of storytelling characteristic of small screen forms, and only secondarily by the individual specifics of the formats.

Research structure and methodology

These objectives determine the logic and structure of the work, which is presented in five articles reflecting the research results. The structure of the study can be divided into three parts, each of which is devoted to a particular audiovisual art (web series, short-length animation, interactive cinema) and contains one or two articles, depending on how fully the specificity of this format has already been studied in the existing works.

The central **method** of this current research is a narrative analysis as a method of art studies, which has its origins in philological research. The work draws on Gérard Genette (1980) and Luz Aurora Pimentel (1990)[2], with a particular focus on plot structure in terms of Joseph Campbell's theory (1949).

The possibilities of this method are further extended by classification, comparative, and comparative-historical analysis. However, the specificity of empirical material is such that some of its attributes cannot be fully considered in isolation from

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[2] Both studies are fundamental in the field of narrative theory and based on an analysis of Marcel Proust's texts. Genette introduces and systematizes the basic principles of narrative construction, such as order, duration, frequency, mood, and voice (1980). Since the focus of this thesis is shifted toward the structure of the story, only a few provisions from Genette's work apply here: the term "focalization" that he introduced, as well as the established concepts of "characterization" and "coherence" that he used (1980). Pimentel's work illuminates metaphorical narrative and introduces the term "thematic isotopy" (1990, p. 55), which is synonymous with thematic coherence. This work complements the theoretical basis of the part of the current study that deals with short animation.

the industrial logic of its creation. For this reason, the study also uses participant observation as a method for analyzing the media industry. The choice of this method is based on the approach to industrial analysis suggested by Jane Stokes in her book on media and cultural industries research methods (2003). Describing the options for including industrial analysis in media and cultural industries research, she identifies several relevant methods: document analysis, interview, and participant observation (Stokes, 2003, p. 98–99). They can be applied either comprehensively or separately. In this study, in accordance with Stokes' logic (2003, p. 122), the author's personal work experience is used as the basis for participant observation[3]. In doing so, the observation only touches upon those stages and features of the production of web series, short-length animated films, and interactive cinema that influence their narrative. Thus, participant observation is applied solely as a supplement to the study of the content itself, without going beyond that, which is also consistent with Stokes' logic (2003, p. 96)[4].

1. In the *first* stage, all five tasks were solved based on the analysis of web series. Since the web series as a format has not been sufficiently studied, the first two tasks (selecting and classifying the objects of analysis, and identifying the universal specific features of the format) were dealt with in one article, and the remaining three tasks were solved in another article.

The article *Web series: the specifics and the key features of the format* (Prokhorov, 2019) became the starting point of the research since a number of foreign web series produced in the USA, Canada, Great Britain, and New Zealand had been already analyzed there. These series had been chosen due to the fact that the format originated in the West. They had been classified using the existing industry division (Landau, 2016, pp. 91–96) into serial narrative (where the plot develops sequentially from episode to episode), episodic narrative (where the plot develops independently in

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[3] The author's experience includes working as a script editor and screenwriter for the Star Media cinema production company from 2014 to 2019, and as an indie creator for the ValorMainStream YouTube channel from 2012 to the present.
[4] The discussion about the organization of project production and its impact on narrative can also potentially be extended to political economy, marketing, technology studies, and others. For the purposes of this study, it was decided to limit the discussion only to those aspects of production that have a direct impact on the structure of the narrative. The aspects mentioned above, however, may serve as directions for expanding the work in the future.

different episodes, but the characters are the same), mixed narrative (a combination of the previous two options), and anthology (where episodes are united only by a common theme, but the plot and characters in all episodes are different). On the basis of the industrial and narrative analysis of the examples of the different types, four key format-forming features of web series had been identified.

In this current study, the focus was shifted from foreign to Russian web series, since the active development of the format in Russia began later, only in the 2010s. While initially the focus was on series for large platforms that were similar in format to television series, a more detailed analysis of the history of the format's development and the specifics of the industry within a particular country allowed for refining the scope of the research and focus on "pure" web series. These are the series produced with money from its creators or sponsors for free online distribution. A comparative analysis was made of Russian and foreign web series and a number of key similarities and differences were found, so it became possible to determine how Russian authors mastered the new format based on the experience of their foreign colleagues: which methods and techniques of storytelling they borrowed and which they tried to invent independently from scratch. In addition, it became possible to formulate and study the specifics of the Russian web series industry: in particular, the specifics of Russian censorship restrictions, which increased in 2014, and their influence on the work of screenwriters. At the same time, the previously identified format-forming features were also found in all of the selected series, which confirmed the stability of the identified attributes regardless of the country and the time of production of the series. The results of the study are summarized below in the section "Main findings and results" and reflected in detail in the article: Prokhorov A. *"Russian web series: Mastering the new format" // Journal of Screenwriting*. 2021. Vol. 12. No. 1. P. 25–37.

Finally, the remaining research tasks were solved by examining nine "pure" web series with serial type of narrative, diverse in both genre (comedy, horror, mystery, musical, road movie, etc.) and country of production (Russia, Canada, India, Chile, Australia, etc.). A narrative analysis of the series based on Campbell's monomyth

scheme was performed, and key anomalies characteristic of the plot structure of these series as compared to the classical monomyth were identified. The anomalies found were unambiguously linked to the specific features of the web series as a format and, in particular, to the previously discovered format-forming features. The results of the study are summarized below in the section "Main findings and results" and reflected in detail in the article: Prokhorov A. *"Storytelling techniques and features of plot structure in web series" // Observatory of culture*. 2022. Vol. 19. № 5. P. 468–476.

2. In the *second* stage, all five tasks were solved on the basis of the analysis of short-length animation. Pixar studio was chosen exclusively for the study as it is the undisputed leader of the short-length animation niche. One article was devoted to the first two tasks, namely, selection and classification of the objects of analysis, as well as identification of the format's specific features, and another article covered the remaining three tasks.

To identify the specifics of the format, all short-length animated films of Pixar studio for the entire period of the company's history were analyzed, with a special emphasis on the cartoons produced in the 2010s. The study allowed for identifying both the key features of short animation of this particular studio in the periods of its establishment and further development, as well as the specificity of the format as a whole. The analysis showed that the first Pixar short-length animated films had an extremely simple structure and a relatively primitive plot that could be easily described mechanically using the theory of sequences (Gulino, 2004). Gradually, the studio began to create more complex characters, to reveal their serious internal conflicts and bring up adult themes. Modern Pixar short-length animation is well described precisely with the concept of monomyth since Campbell's work has a serious psychological basis: the Jungian theory of archetypes (Jung, 1959). In addition, a cursory analysis of the hero's journey in some short films allowed for outlining a key direction for the second part of the study: exploring the connection between the structure of the hero's journey and the active use of metaphors as one of the main specific features of short-length animation, which has its roots in the definition of animation as such (Husbands, Ruddell, 2019).

The specific role of the monomyth "Rescue from Without" stage in conjunction with metaphor in the structure of short-length animated films was discovered and became a starting point for subsequent analysis. The results of the study are summarized below in the section "Main findings and results" and reflected in detail in the article: Prokhorov A. *"Pixar animated short films' evolution" // Communications. Media. Design.* 2020. Vol. 5. No. 4. P. 54–68.

Next, a number of Pixar full-length and short-length animated films produced in the 2010s were studied separately. A narrative analysis of each of the selected examples based on Campbell's monomyth scheme was conducted. While no significant anomalies were found in the full-length animation, the anomalies found in the short-length animation were explained based on the theory of conceptual (Lakoff, Johnson, 1980) and creative (Lakoff, Turner, 1989; Goatly, 1997; Kövecses, 2002) metaphors, as well as on the concept of mega-metaphor (Werth, 1999). It has been found that a conceptual mega-metaphor operates in the plot of animated films at the level of narrative as a whole and generates a network of creative metaphors distributed throughout the structure of the narrative. In short-length animation, these metaphors have a direct influence on the plot and the scheme of the hero's journey, which was also identified and explained. Thus, it became possible to establish a clear connection between the main specific feature of the format (the use of metaphors as the basis of the animation and its plot structure) and the structure of the hero's journey. The results of the study are summarized below in the section "Main findings and results" and reflected in detail in the article: Prokhorov A. "*The Hero's Journey and Three Types of Metaphor in Pixar Animation" // Metaphor and Symbol.* 2021. Vol. 36. No. 4. P. 229–240.

3. In the *third* stage, all five tasks were solved on the basis of the analysis of interactive cinema. The first two tasks (selection and classification of the objects of analysis and identification of specific features of the format) were accomplished largely on the basis of already existing works on interactive cinema, so there was no need for a separate full-fledged study. As a consequence, all five objectives were achieved in one article. The basis for the analysis of the format was the division of interactivity in terms

of storytelling into interactivity with the illusion of choice, where the key plot points are firmly fixed and the viewer's choice has a very limited local influence in between, and interactivity with the possibility of real choice, where the plot is fully ramified (Ben-Shaul, 2008; Daryani et al. 2016; Utkin, Pokrovskaya, 2020). The empirical basis for the analysis was the Russian interactive film "#WHO_ARE_U" (2020) as an example of an interactivity mostly with the illusion of choice and the British interactive film "Black Mirror: Bandersnatch" (2018) as an example of an interactivity with real choice. A narrative analysis of both films was conducted based on Campbell's monomyth scheme and Jung and Vogler's archetype theories (Jung, 1959; Vogler, 2007). As a result, key anomalies specific to their narrative structure were identified.

It was found that it is possible to preserve the traditional monomyth structure with minor deviations in a film with the illusion of choice. In a film with real choice, the plot structure can branch out more drastically, and archetype systems by Jung and Vogler can be used as a framework for creating the plot scheme. The anomalies found proved to be unambiguously connected to the specifics of interactive cinema as a format: in addition to the attempt of balancing the need to tell a coherent story and the ludological interests of the audience, which is traditional for interactive cinema (Caracciolo, 2015), the budget factor also plays a fundamental role, and it is also considered in the development of the plot. The results of the study are summarized below in the section "Main findings and results" and reflected in detail in the article: Prokhorov A. *"The interactive monomyth: Exploring the hero's journey in forking-path film narratives" // Journal of Screenwriting*. (In print)

Main findings and results

1.1. The specificity of the web series as a format is largely determined by its four format-forming features relevant for both foreign and Russian web series: а) any number of episodes per season and any episodes' release frequency; б) varying episode length, which nevertheless remains less than television one, in the range of approximately one to twenty-five minutes; в) a young main character who usually fully

matches the archetype of a "lovable loser" according to Sedita (2006, p. 69) or has features of it; г) high dynamics and high density of events in the plot.

1.2. In the context of the specifics of the web series, the hero's journey transforms as follows: a) some stages of the hero's journey, especially in the Departure phase, are deleted to ensure a quick start and the maximum possible density of the story's events. The "Belly of the Whale" stage is often abandoned, which may also be due to budgetary constraints, since this stage requires moving to a new location; b) the functions and archetypes of the older characters that the hero must meet on their way are taken over by younger ones: in particular, the archetypal roles of mother ("The Meeting with the Goddess" stage) and father ("Atonement with the Father" stage) may be taken by friends of the hero, his or her lovers or colleagues. The hero's parents themselves are usually excluded from the story altogether: even if they are present, their role in the plot is minimal; c) the "Rescue from Without" stage in the plot of a web series often takes on a special role: at the climax, the hero does nothing or is unable to influence anything, but is saved by some external force. This may be due to the format's predilection for simple and comedic stories with an easy resolution, which to a certain extent is also characteristic of the small form in general.

2.1. A key feature of short-length animation in the context of storytelling is the active use of creative metaphors. This study identifies three types of creative metaphors: supportive, action-forming, and destructive. Supportive metaphors are more common for full-length animation and do not directly affect the plot but only help the authors to construct the world of the story. Action-forming and destructive metaphors are characteristic of short-length animation and define its specificity: the former fully describe the main and only action performed by the hero in the story, while the latter denote the external forces that save the hero at a crucial moment in the story. All three types of metaphor can be used individually or together within the same narrative.

2.2. Action-forming and destructive metaphors directly affect the hero's journey in short-length animation films. Their use can lead to the removal of a number of traditional stages of the monomyth in all three of its global phases. The action-forming

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metaphor only clearly sets the framework for the hero's possible actions, so it is less likely to disrupt the usual logic of the monomyth. The destructive metaphor has the greatest impact, because if it is used, the "Rescue from Without" stage comes to the forefront and replaces a number of others. As a rule, both types of metaphors are used to reveal or strengthen the author's message, i.e., the main idea of the plot.

3.1. The key feature of interactive cinema as a format is that it allows the viewer to influence the story. This feature comes into conflict with the coherence (integrity) of the narrative, as the story is constantly being broken up into separate branches and events, and with budgetary constraints, as the consequences of each choice made must be filmed and shown to the viewer. The outcome of that conflict is that authors have to choose between three options, each with a cost: interactivity with the illusion of choice where the story's coherence is best preserved, interactivity with the possibility of real choice where the ability to influence the story is best realized, and a combination of both.

3.2. The hero's journey transforms accordingly, depending on the decision of the authors. In an interactivity with the illusion of choice, the standard monomyth scheme might be maintained. The illusion of the viewer's influence on the plot can be sustained not only through false plot branching, but also through the implementation of choices with a delayed effect, the consequences of which are only noticeable closer to the finale, where the only real branching of the narrative occurs. This late branching leads to lower budgetary costs for the creators of the project.

In an interactivity with real choice, certain stages are removed or replaced depending on the viewer's choice. In this case, the Jungian and Vogler archetype systems may serve as the basis of an interactive plot scheme: each character's fulfillment of his or her key archetypal function creates a plot fork and provokes the hero (the viewer) to respond. If the hero (the viewer) succumbs too much to the influence of the archetype, it leads to a dead end. Otherwise, the story continues. This construction of the plot around the basic archetypes presented in "Black Mirror:

Bandersnatch" maintains the overall sense of the story's integrity (coherence), despite its actual fragmentation.

Regardless of the type of interactivity, the Departure phase remains almost untouched, and it is the final monomyth stages and phases (in particular, the Return phase) that are most subject to transformation.

3.3. Whereas in the interactivity with the illusion of choice the image of the hero is, on the whole, relatively stable, in the interactivity with real choice it is often quite blurred and does not correspond to any archetype, including the Vogler's archetype of the hero. This is due to the fact that the archetype is determined primarily by the character's function in the story. If there are many variants of such functions and their choice is delegated to the viewer, then the coherence of the image and its correspondence to the archetype may suffer even more than the coherence of the plot.

Each of the characters around the hero, in turn, may correspond to one or several Jungian and Vogler archetypes, depending on the set of plot branches the viewer chooses. The images of individual characters may vary enormously, to the point that in different versions of a story the same character might be a "closed" (having one clear function in the story) and an "open" (having several functions and a potential for disclosure outside the story) construct according to Chatman's classification (2000, p. 119).

4. Thus, contemporary audiovisual arts working with small screen forms have a number of specific features that distinguish them both from big forms (for example, from full-length films) and from each other. Working with small forms affects the logic of storytelling and the structure of the hero's journey in each of the three formats in a similar way, for example, by reducing the traditional monomyth scheme. Overall, however, this aspect is not decisive, since the structure of the story is influenced to a greater extent by the individual features of each of the formats. Accordingly, the monomyth scheme is also transformed differently in all three audiovisual arts, up to the option of its complete deconstruction in interactive cinema. Thus, the formulated hypothesis of the study was confirmed only partially.

Scientific novelty

The question of the connection between the specificity of the chosen audiovisual arts and the structure of the hero's journey has been insufficiently explored in existing scholarly research. This work has largely filled this gap. Despite the fact that the hypothesis of the study was not fully confirmed, a number of scientific results of significant value were obtained in the course of the work:

1) the format-forming features relevant for both foreign and Russian web series are introduced;

2) the influence of the format on the structure of the monomyth in web series is shown;

3) the theory of conceptual and creative metaphors is applied in the study of the plot structure of animated films, with three new types of creative metaphors introduced;

4) the influence of creative metaphors on the plot structure of short-length animation is explained;

5) the problems of storytelling in interactive cinema are conceptualized;

6) the scheme and logic of interactive narrative construction in terms of archetype theory are made visible;

7) the transformation of the image of the hero and archetypes of characters around them in interactive cinema is traced;

8) a new perspective on the concept of monomyth is presented, its transformation in all three audiovisual arts is shown and explained.

Theoretical and practical significance of the results

1. The study provides both the generalized and systematized results of previous works on the three selected formats and its own ideas on the specificity of each of them: the formats are considered not only from a narratological and visual point of view, but also in the context of the peculiarities of the industry. Thus, this work is an important

step towards a deep theoretical understanding of the specifics of these audiovisual arts. From the practical point of view, the work might be useful for directors, producers, and screenwriters who create projects in any of the studied formats.

2. The study makes an important discovery in the field of creative metaphor theory, as it identifies three new types of creative metaphors in the context of their interaction with the narrative. This classification may become a theoretical basis for a number of new studies on the relationship between metaphor and narrative.

3. Rethinking Campbell's standard scheme of the hero's journey in the context of contemporary audiovisual arts might be important for researchers who apply monomyth as a tool for analyzing various works of fiction. The number of such publications in international journals has been growing in recent years, and in general, the trend of using the monomyth scheme in various contexts is only gaining momentum. From a practical point of view, such research might also be useful for screenwriters and script editors who consider Campbell's concept as a guideline when constructing and analyzing specific plots.

Limitations and perspectives of the study

The results presented in this study should be interpreted within the constraints that primarily concern the limits of the empirical framework.

For instance, while the specificity of the web series as a format has been explored through various examples, its impact on the hero's journey has been studied exclusively in the case of serial narrative. Serial narrative web series (those with plot developing sequentially from episode to episode) were chosen because their structure is closer to the standard structure of a full-length film, that is the starting point of the study. Episodic narrative web series and anthologies have a slightly different structure: since in both cases the episodes are relatively autonomous stories of short length, it makes sense to examine the specifics of these types of web series in close connection with the specifics of short films, which may be the task of future research.

As for short-length animation, both the specificity of the format and its influence on the hero's journey have been studied using the examples of Pixar animation films. Although this choice is reasonable, and the conclusions drawn about the influence of creative metaphors on the hero's journey are obviously quite universal and go beyond the scope of the examples in question, it would make sense to study the animated films of indie studios and other production companies to reinforce or clarify the findings in the future.

Finally, the influence of the specifics of interactive cinema as a format on the hero's journey has so far been examined only on the example of the "#WHO_ARE_U" and "Black Mirror: Bandersnatch". Although both the examples of an interactivity with the illusion of choice and an interactivity with real choice have been studied, the results still show only two possible ways of constructing an interactive narrative, which may be not absolutely universal. Moreover, they could potentially be modified or combined (for example, by combining two types of interactivity), so it makes sense to explore other films in the future. Additionally, for more in-depth conclusions on the topic, video games should also be explored in future studies since the degree of player influence on what is happening is usually much higher there than in any type of interactive cinema.

Approbation of the study results

The results of this study were presented at several international scientific conferences in Russia and abroad:

- 28.05.2020–04.06.2020. Theories and Practices of Art and Design: Sociocultural, Economic and Political Contexts, Moscow, Russia. *Russian Web Series as an Alternative to TV Series.*
- 26.09.2020–27.09.2020. International Conference on Myths, Archetypes and Symbols: "Models and Alternatives", London, Great Britain. *The Monomyth Concept and Archetypes in Pixar Animation.*
- 19.05.2021–22.05.2021. International Conference on Narrative, USA. *The Hero's Journey in Interactive Cinema: the Archetypal Approach.*

- 06.04.2022–08.04.2022. Theories and Practices of Art and Design: Sociocultural, Economic and Political Contexts, Moscow, Russia. *Strategies of interactive storytelling in the projects of Lateral Summer studio.*
- 22.09.2022–24.09.2022. 14th Screenwriting Research Network International Conference "Globalizing Screenwriting", Vienna, Austria. *Propp and Campbell united: Russian and Western story structures together in Pixar animation.*

The materials of the study were also presented at the seminar "Intermediality of Literature" of the "Transmedial Studies of Literature" research group at HSE University on May 30, 2021.

In addition, the results are used in the academic course "Screenwriting for Cinema", which the author runs at the Faculty of Creative Industries of the HSE University, and in the web series project "Creatives. Fictional Stories" at the HSE Project Fair under the guidance of the author.

Also, in the course of studying at the HSE Art and Design School, the author of the work has developed a book project "The Hero's Journey. The Anatomy of Popular Narratives in Films and Literature", the exhibition project "The Broken Myth" and the online course project "The Dramaturgy of Web Series".

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Prokhorov A. Pixar animated short films' evolution // Communications. Media. Design. 2020. Vol. 5. No. 4. P. 54–68.

Prokhorov A. Russian web series: Mastering the new format // Journal of Screenwriting. 2021. Vol. 12. No. 1. P. 25–37.

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