

SUMMARY

The doctoral thesis *Independence Day. Constructing the Vision of Reality in Documentary Film* analyses and elaborates on the questions addressed in the documentary film *Celebration*, created as the practical part of the thesis. Following the education reform in Poland in 2017, the topic of patriotism has become a major component of the curriculum. The film investigates how patriotic education takes place in practice by observing preparations to Independence Day celebrations in a special vocational school for youth with intellectual disabilities. The protagonists of the film are members of a music band preparing for a performance, who divide their time between learning patriotic songs, solving romantic issues and planning their common future. This simple story of their preparations for Independence Day celebrations offers a pretext for depicting school as a place where attitudes and views take shape and are shaped, and for asking about the role of the individual – the student – in the education system.

The theoretical part of the thesis investigates the making the film *Celebration* in the spirit of the theory of science studies formulated by Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar in their book *Laboratory Life*. This section reflects on the manners of constructing and distributing “facts” by researching the fields of documentary film as a genre and the Polish school education system.

The first part of the thesis begins with a question about the political dimension and agency of film language with regard to documentary film and analyses the genre in the context of its persuasive potential. These considerations concern the possibility of depicting reality by means of the camera and the ethics of the image created in this way. The history of documentary film and its definitions, which changed along with the social and political situation, are confronted here with Jacques Rancière’s theory of aesthetics. Outlined in this section of the thesis, Bruno Latour’s actor-network theory situates documentary film and its makers in a network of dependencies and presents the genre as an active “educator” in the social world.

The second part of the thesis analyses the film *Celebration*. It elaborates on the considerations in the first part and attempts to investigate how real work on the film set, followed by constructing the narrative through film editing, is situated in the context of the previously described theoretical work. This study is conducted at three main levels: 1) the influence of the filmmaker and film crew on the filmed environment and protagonists; 2) the kind of film language used in the film; 3) constructing the narrative at the level of film editing. This analysis situates the film *Celebration* in the aesthetic sphere defined by Rafał Syska as neo-modernist cinema. According to the scholar, one of the characteristics of this genre is the anthropological turn, understood as an external, seemingly objective study and depiction of the life of the human being in his or her environment.

The transfer of the ethnographic approach to investigating and describing reality to research in science studies, as discussed in Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar’s book *Laboratory Life*, and Latour’s actor-network theory, offer the starting point for reflection on the topic of networks of influences and dependencies that shape the education system in Poland, discussed in the third part of the thesis. This section presents dominant philosophies of education and theories concerning the role of education in shaping the vision of the state and (re)defining local communities. Education is approached here as a field where the network of influences becomes extended and “the state takes root in the society”.