

The Total Filmmaker
thinking of screenwriting, directing and editing as one role
Professor Erik Knudsen

‘My movie is born first in my head, dies on paper; is resuscitated by the living persons and real objects I use, which are killed on film but, placed in a certain order and projected onto a screen, come to life again like a flower in water’. (Bresson 1977: 7)

Abstract

As screenwriting continues to establish itself as a discrete discipline in academia, either in alignment with creative writing departments or film and media practice departments, there is a danger that such developments may entrench a distancing of the craft from the cinematic form itself and that such a distancing may ultimately reinforce the screenplay's propensity for dramaturgy and the dramatic, rather than the sensory and experiential of the cinematic.

Closely related creative stages in telling cinematic stories include directing and editing and this article seeks to argue, with reference to personal screen practice, that screenwriting, directing and editing are, in fact, three variations of the same thing. The article proposes the notion of the Total Filmmaker who embraces all three aspects of the cinematic storyteller.

If the ultimate aim is to create a narrative that fully utilises the unique properties of the cinematic form in telling a story, rather than being dominated by the theatricality of dramatically driven classical narratives. How might one explore the relationship between screenwriting, directing and editing? Can an integrated approach to creating the cinematic blueprint change the way we think of pedagogy and screenwriting?

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