

GOD OR SCRIPTWRITER?

The character of fiction in the film *The Purple Rose of Cairo*

Deus ou Roteirista?

A personagem de ficção no filme *A Rosa Púrpura do Cairo*

Gott oder Drehbuchautor?

Die figur im film *The Purple Rose of Cairo*

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SUMMARY

A brief review of the blending of roles of the fictional character with actual people as presented in Woody Allen's film.

RESUMO

Uma rápida visão da fusão dos papéis da personagem de ficção e de pessoas reais conforme visão de Woody Allen em seu filme.

Real and imaginary on the screen mingle with real and imaginary in the audience in a meta-language of fiction in which the spectator goes into the dream and the fictional character comes out into the world of reality.

Woody Allen, in his cinematographic fable, presents a study on the character of fiction which repeats Henry James' question in his short story *The Real Thing*: what is real? what is fiction? which imitates which?

The incredible game of real versus imaginary in the film is reflected in another film inside it, in which the mingling of one and another embarrasses the protagonists and astonishes the spectators into demanding that fiction remains as such. The immortality of the character of fiction is threatened by its own attempt to become real and be part of this vibrating world in which man can choose his own destiny instead of repeating umpteen times the choice of a creator. And the next moment he realizes there is a higher creator — GOD? and wonders whether real life also boasts of a scriptwriter.

The film within the film reflects in "mise-en-abyme" the projection of the dreams of the spectators of the first film, over which our dreams are also projected. Each film is a microcosmic repetition of a bigger one, in which we see a reflection of our own anxieties.

Duplication is a constant recurrency, be it in the above mentioned mise-en-abyme of a film within the film, in the fantastic game of fiction versus reality or in the figure of the actor-character in face of his fear of losing himself. The actor is inside the film representing an imaginary reality and the character jumps out of the film into real life, in search of living emotions. The actor is looking for immortality in fiction and the fictional character, even becoming liable to mortality, looks for feelings that on the screen can only be represented. Each embodies some characteristic of the other, and they come to a final duel from which only one will be able to survive on the level of reality, and which reduces each of them to his own level. The equilibrium of each plane — both real and imaginary — is finally restored and the actress-spectator, who hovers between one and the other, starts again her round of dreaming. The scriptwriter has receded into his limited universe and given way to the higher one in the girl's life — God. But Woody Allen himself, through the lips of his creatures, states that in fiction people make much more sense and are much more coherent than in real life, a fact which makes the scriptwriter a creator a hundredfold more sensible and down-to-earth.

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