

Storytelling for Virtual Reality Film: Structure, Genre, Immersive and Interactive Narrative

Dr. Chan Ka Lok Sobel

Senior Lecturer, Academy of Film
Hong Kong Baptist University
sobelc@hkbu.edu.hk

Abstract

Storytelling has one of the longest histories of human art and culture. Artists, painters, writers all tell their unique story by the means of different art forms and medium. Nowadays, people explore the form of virtual reality film in the fields of education, experimental cinema, porn, property sale, etc. However, what kind of story is the most suitably told by this immersive, 360-degree art form? This question is seldom discussed and studied before. [1][2] In aesthetic understanding, we know that creative content and aesthetic form cannot be separated. Immersion and interactivity, and vision and body movement following the direction of Dolby surround sound are the necessary conditions of what VR films have. We need to explore the unlimited possibility of what stories can be told by it perfectly and it may challenge our conventional concept and form of what a story should be like. To answer this essential question, I undertook extensive research, viewing lots of archive, updating information, conducting interviews, researching case studies with both pioneers, innovators and VR filmmakers in many locations, including the Virtual Reality Village at Bucheon International Fantastic Film Festival, the Australia Centre of the Moving Image (ACMI) in Federation Square, Melbourne, and Hong Kong Baptist University. I tried to compare, digest and combine the pros and cons of Virtual Reality film from East and West cultures and the moving image aesthetics and form of Virtual Reality. In this research, the possible bridge between the emerging world of VR technology

and the traditional art form of classical storytelling will be examined from the angle of structure, generic convention, the transformative function of story told in virtual immersive, and the interactive spaces of the medium. I will try to elucidate a paradigmatic concept and framework of what Virtual Reality Story may be for future implication and application. It may be quite different from the canonized traditional story from our long-rooted cinema history.

References

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2. Jason Jerald. *The VR-Book: Human Centered Design for Virtual Reality* (The Association for Computing Machinery and Morgan & Claypool Publisher, 2016).

Biography

Chan Ka Lok Sobel is a senior lecturer and script thesis supervisor of Master of Fine Arts in Film, Television and Digital Media at the Academy of Film, Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU). He is also the university honorary scholar of SCE, HKBU and Senior Fellow, Higher Education Academy, UK (in the nomination by HKBU). He received his Ph.D. in Cinema Studies from HKBU. His teaching and research interests primarily include Chinese-language films (Mainland, Taiwan, Macau and Hong Kong), screenplay, film directing, cinema therapy, He is the

author of the books including: *How to Write a Film Comment*; *Scriptwriting Handbook*; *Studies on Hong Kong Film, TV, and New Media*; *Politics on Hong Kong Films*; *The 97 Handover and Identity in Hong Kong Films*, and *Hong Kong Cinema: Nostalgia and Ideology*, etc.