

VISUALISATION AS A TOOL FOR CREATING A PICTURE OF THE WORLD: SOCIOLOGICAL ASPECT (BY THE CASE OF THE SERIES "SQUID GAME")

^aALONA STADNYK, ^bOKSANA STADNIK, ^cNATALIIA POLOVAIA, ^dBIRIUKOVA TETIANA, ^eRATUSHNA TAISHIA

^aMariupol State University, 129a, Budiivnykiv Ave., 87500, Mariupol, Ukraine

^bInstitute of Practical and Art-Management, National Academy of Culture and Arts Management, 9, Lavrska Str., 01015, Kyiv, Ukraine

^cNational Aviation University, 1, Liubomyra Huzara Ave., 03058, Kyiv, Ukraine

^{d,e}Zaporizhzhia National University, 66, Zhukovsky Str., 69600, Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine

email: ^aa.g.stadnyk@gmail.com, ^bpironkova721@gmail.com, ^csosonovitch.natalia@ukr.net, ^dtatyana.bir2062@gmail.com, ^et2020005@gmail.com

Abstract: This article is a theoretical analysis and generalisation of scholars' views on different approaches to understanding visualisation in modern society and determining its impact on public opinion. It is proved that the use of propaganda 2.0 in the series increases the manipulative impact on modern society. The article aims to analyse the impact of visualisation on creating a picture of the world (on the example of the series "Squid Game"). The methodological basis of our article are general scientific methods of cognition of social phenomena and processes (analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction, typology, modeling, extrapolation, operationalisation, interpretation, abstraction, generalisation, and synergy, as well as methods of logical-historical, systematic, comparative, networking and structural-functional analysis). With the help of the logical-historical method the evolution of the formation of the influence of virtual reality on public opinion in modern society is traced; method of comparative analysis – identified the characteristics of the modern generation and their preferences for the consumption of information through modern media; method of typological analysis – identified signs and approaches to the definition of propaganda and propaganda 2.0; method of systems analysis – visualisation is considered as a holistic tool for creating a picture of the world of modern society. It is shown that with the transition of modern society in the information space, our lives have been significantly transformed. Society no longer feels the systemic influence of information, which does not determine the possibility of protection from it. The article identifies and reveals the key ideas of the series "Squid Game".

Keywords: Modern society, Public opinion, Picture of the world, TV series, Virtual reality, Visualisation.

1 Introduction

In modern society, the virtual reality through which we obtain the visualisation of the picture of the world has a significant burden on the viewer who consumes it. Leisure in the form of TV series or films has the opportunity for the customer to construct a certain reality (social, political, etc.) at once for a certain part of society (consumers), precisely because it primarily carries an entertaining context, and only then a propaganda message. Therefore, based on the fact that such propaganda appeals to the audience have the most emotional colour, it can be argued that the criticality (rational understanding) of such messages is minimised, which determines the high level of influence on public opinion.

In particular, if we analyse the influence of modern mass media on public opinion (namely TV series), we can say that it is through TV series that both historical reality and ideas about the present can be adjusted. This is primarily because of the audience that watches various series – multimillion. Mass visualisation culture activates one or another version that the customer needs at this very time.

In this context, Western researchers single out terms such as "moral warfare" or "reputational warfare", which include an understanding of a type of aggression (relatively mild) that can be repelled by any irritating element. These are new terms for Ukrainian science, but if we talk about the soft informational impact on public opinion through the series, and the formation of a certain (correct, on the part of the customer) picture of the world, they accurately describe reality. Propaganda messages (including propaganda 2.0) are no longer so direct – they gradually mimic the appearance of the series, and use journalistic methods to deliver information messages to society.

However, we can single out the only difference between the presentation of such information through the series and journalistic methods. It is the series that hides its key message, in contrast to journalistic methods that show its intentions immediately.

The modern picture of the world performs interpretive functions. It is built in such a way as not to inform society as to interpret events that have already happened or are happening. Through war (informational, moral, reputational, etc.) new situations become clear that they fall into the forms given by propaganda. And all the senses are in a single space from one to the enemy. And the viewer should easily find a place in this space for a new character [12]. In particular, it can be argued that it is the series that visualise a reality that acts as mental propaganda messages that are aimed specifically at the virtual audience. The series, with its entertaining content, creates a certain post-truth that is consumed and accepted by the majority of society, due to its emotional colouring, which determines its high level of success in influencing society.

The series fits well into the role of if not informational, then mental shells, which are fired at virtual enemies, as it is done for the internal audience. Today the post-truth is stronger than ever. It has received powerful new tools in the form of social networks and series. And it turned out that the population does not particularly seek the truth when there is a post-truth that satisfies them. The truth is glamorous, but the truth is painful, so this choice of mass consciousness is quite understandable [12].

2 Materials and Methods

The methodological basis of our article lies in general scientific methods of cognition of social phenomena and processes (analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction, typology, modelling, extrapolation, operationalisation, interpretation, abstraction, generalisation and synergy, as well as methods of logical-historical, systematic and comparative measures, structural and functional analysis). With the help of the logical-historical method the evolution of the formation of the influence of virtual reality on public opinion in modern society is traced; method of comparative analysis – identified the characteristics of the modern generation and their preferences for the consumption of information through modern media; method of typological analysis – identified signs and approaches to the definition of propaganda and propaganda 2.0; method of systems analysis – visualisation is considered as a holistic tool for creating a picture of the world of modern society.

The theoretical basis of the study has been based on the fundamental scientific principles of general and branch sociology in the field of public opinion, the propagandistic influence of mass communication, which are reflected in the works of Blummer, Lippman, Noel-Neumann, Ortega y Gasset, Fraser, Zaller, and others, who revealed the nature of the emergence of public opinion, the process of its formation and functioning in society. Relevant issues were studied by Russian and Ukrainian scientists, namely: Afonin, Vyshnyak, Golovakha, Grushin, B. Dubin, Zoska, Korolko, Liseenko, Martyniuk, Melnyk, Ossovsky, Panina, Poltorak, Ruchka, Sudas, Surmin, N. Soboleva, Yadov, Yakuba, and others.

3 Results and Discussion

Today, virtual reality has a significant impact on the mass consciousness of the population, primarily because society is not ready for such virtual reality and its visualisation, because of its emotional impact on our lives (e.g. TV series). That is why we have a certain archaisation of mass consciousness. When the truth and lies are difficult to separate, one has to believe lies, because, say, a negative message can have negative consequences and one cannot help but react [13]. In virtual reality, visualisation has become predominant over verballity.

The first victory of visualisation dates back to ancient Rome, which is why we can agree with McLuhan, who saw clearly that each new technology causes a new war [3]. Harari also says that it is easier to unite people with lies than with the truth. For this reason, new visual opportunities for lying will also be a success. Hogg derives populism from the uncertainty that has begun to play a much larger role in our world [2].

With the advent of the information society, the impact of information has significantly transformed the course of our lives. It is possible to consider it both positive dynamics, and negative. However, it can be argued that humanity is losing its position on the possibility of influencing these processes. Society ceases to feel the systemic influence of information, and this does not determine the possibility of protection from it. First of all, because such informational influence is not perceived by society as a threat and therefore cannot be repulsed.

Visualisation in the form of series has given us technologies (we consider them informational, but most often they are manipulative) that have become familiar to us, and are not perceived as negative. The series has a large audience, for the first time in history. It can avoid all borders, from cultural and ideological to political, for example.

Today, the series has created a single viewer, who is characterised by certain similar reactions. Accordingly, we can assume that in the head of such a viewer is formed a single model of the world, and this is done using completely different types of content: from the fictional world of "Game of Thrones" to the real world of "Chernobyl". The reason for this is that most series have a single point of origin - several streaming structures that produce their products. The competition between them forces the use of the same set of techniques and themes. For example, the subject of the alternative world is very frequent (alternative history, anomalous zones, people with anomalous abilities). In fact, police detectives also have an anomalous picture of the world, because crimes, shootings are their norm, that is, a deviation is their rule [9]. Such a deviation from the norm can be considered a deviation that is dangerous for the whole society. That is why the series, creating virtual reality, manipulates the consciousness of the population, providing negative information that is valued more than positive. First of all, it is valuable in terms of survival.

All this makes it necessary to analyse the propaganda impact of the series on public opinion, which we consider appropriate to divide into general propaganda and 2.0 (i.e., soft) propaganda.

Propaganda is the oldest (in our opinion, and the most important, most effective) form of communication. English researcher J. J. Lilleker gave a very clear, so to speak, "primary" definition of propaganda, namely, "as a communication developed by one social group in order to influence the thoughts, attitudes and behaviour of others" [8, p. 228].

The sociological encyclopaedia states that propaganda can be considered as dissemination, the transmission of certain information, its interpretation and consideration of the impact of information on the formation of public opinion in general, as well as the views of certain classes, social groups and other social communities [16, p. 270]. In turn, the Ukrainian scientist G. Pocheptsov believes that propaganda should be understood as intensive communicative processes aimed at changing the behaviour of the audience to which they are set [4, p. 168]. In general, propaganda does not hide its purpose from the consumer, but this method is more appropriate to use in news stories than in movies or TV series.

Propaganda stands out in this regard, firstly, because it is the most intensive form of communication, technology; secondly, it clearly and unambiguously, without hiding it, sets itself tasks related to influencing public opinion and behaviour; thirdly, with the change of society and humanity, propaganda also changes, moving from the use of simple methods and technologies to much more complex ones. That is why, in the context of the series, we will dwell in more detail on the propaganda of 2.0.

To date, the essence of such "propaganda 2.0" is not fully defined, and this term is used infrequently. Thus, the Ukrainian specialist G. Pocheptsov, who uses this term, gives it, in our opinion, a very debatable and not quite adequate definition (although very interesting and, perhaps, one that has a future). "Propaganda 2.0," he notes, "is propaganda that is hidden within literature and art, film and television series. Propaganda 2.0 is characterised by the fact that its propaganda orientation is not disclosed" [15].

That is why we consider it appropriate to say that it is propaganda 2.0 (i.e. soft propaganda) that is used in the creation of series by the customer. Propaganda 2.0, does not reveal the real goals until they are achieved, acts by hiding the desired message in the background. For it, the aesthetic component becomes important, the high level of which is most easily achieved visually. Propaganda 2.0 aims to create a picture of the world, provided by aesthetically oriented methods, such as TV series or films because the main aesthetics there is visual. Due to constant influence, the viewer has long been unable to recognise such moments. Virtual types of information interventions provide great opportunities for creativity, but their most important component is aesthetics [5]. If we talk about the entertainment genre of the series and their impact on public opinion, propaganda 2.0 in this sense is quite easy to get into the minds of the public precisely because of good visualisation. TV series and films communicate with the viewer (consumer) through emotions, which is why they have such a successful impact. Such propaganda is filled with the soft power of influence through entertaining and emotional content.

Analysing this approach to soft and significantly "enhanced" by the art of propaganda, we can also consider the "approach to the division of propaganda into political and sociological" proposed by J. Elluel [14]. The first is the well-known vertical propaganda that goes from top to bottom, that is, from power to the citizen. The second is horizontal propaganda, i.e. the influence of what a person sees around them. It is such propaganda that chooses a horizontal path, where the presence of power is hidden, which causes less opposition to the information and instructions that are broadcast in the propaganda process. In any case, "propaganda 2.0" or sociological "horizontal" propaganda act as a kind of propaganda activity, which aims as the main requirement of the greatest concealment of influence on the person, mass consciousness, public opinion. It is clear that the search in this direction for both specialists and practitioners of propaganda, organisers of information wars will continue. Because of this, the maximum "concealment" of propaganda influence is the main guarantee of its effectiveness.

Therefore, it can be noted that TV series and films are generally a simplified form of presenting content because what is seen is more trusted among consumers than what is heard. And this is what causes the series to be used for a soft propaganda impact on public opinion.

Visualisation of the series has a limited supply of information, primarily because it contains entertainment content, and presents it in the background. And it is this background entertainment content in the form of TV series that carries a weapon in the fight for consumer attention. If, for example, we talk about the series "Squid Game" (which we will consider in more detail below), the attention of the viewer was attracted by its cruelty (on the negative side). This manifestation shows us that the norms we considered social and accepted have transformed. With the advent of the new generation (millennials and generation Z), preferences and interests in entertainment content have changed.

This is how viewers grew up who were not satisfied with the old films, but who fell in love with the new series. Their novelty was the inconsistency of reality. On the other hand, even socialist realism tried to build a virtual world, which often did not coincide with the real [9]. These generations live online, so the information impact in the form of a series has a significant and effective manipulative impact. The modern young generation is

not interested in news, so this led to the emergence of 2.0 propaganda and its broadcast through TV series and films.

Researchers have identified a phenomenon of visual bias that says that what we see, or rather what we are shown, often does not match reality. Scholars claim that: "Social recognition of the well-being of others is distorted by the fact that participation in consumer activity is more advanced than non-participation" [9]. Surrounding modern technologies, called information (visual), have become so common that it is difficult for us to imagine the time when they did not exist. Moreover, we do not notice some of the negatives that came with them, because they are absorbed only by the positives.

In particular, it can be said that people engaged in knowledge processing often read a huge number of texts at work, and they are not ready to open a novel in the evening when they come home from work. People are overwhelmed with information. The series is a short piece of great narrative that fits perfectly into the hour of free time that is between dinner and sleep for many people who work hard. In addition, the series is a convenient topic for conversation. People show solidarity, unite in groups based on a series. TV series are the most important cultural form of modernity, which offers patterns of behaviour, a set of emotional reactions, and therefore it is very interesting and important to study, because through the study of TV series one can understand how social relations are reproduced in our culture. No less important for modern cultural theory is the category of pleasure. We watch TV series simply because many of them are well done. We get pleasure from it [11].

Let's dwell in detail on the series "Squid Game" and its production of basic ideas and plans for public opinion in modern society. The author of the series wanted to write a story that would become an allegory or fable for modern capitalist society. Depicting competition in extreme form, extreme competition of life, but using the characters who we meet in real life.

South Korea's "Squid Game" has become an undisputed Netflix record holder: Hwang Don Heck's series of poor people involved in children's survival games have been watched by more than 110 million people in less than a month, and Netflix has grossed about \$1 billion.

The society portrayed in the series is shown in all its multifaceted social diversity - unemployed and migrant workers, refugees from North Korea and gangsters, businessmen and thieves, doctors and students. All of them have no chance "outside" because society is brutally cracking down on losers. That's why everyone who survived the first round continues to play. Because, as they say in one of the episodes of the film: "There are two hells. And the worst of them is reality" [6]. The main idea of the series "Squid Game" is not about survival games, but about capitalism and its most negative side. Capitalism is a destructive system in which people will eventually sell everything and betray it for money. It is possible to formulate it differently: capitalism turns everything into a matter of purchase and sale, and, therefore, money is the greatest value. If we look at the manifesto of the Communist Party of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, we find in it similar passages: there is nothing sacred, and the artist and scientist have essentially become victims of capitalism [7]. Let's look at all the main plot points of the series through the prism of the idea of capitalist protest, in order to better understand what the director wanted to show us in his work:

1. About the series as a whole. As the director said, his series shows us the dark side of capitalism, with its corrupt government. And its version from South Korea and the United States, because in these countries, almost everyone lives on credit. That is, the state puts people in the framework of the fact that a citizen always owes something to the state, and if he cannot give it away, then he still borrows and so on indefinitely. And it pushes people to extreme actions, such as robbing someone and even killing them in order to rob them.

2. Social inequality of the population. A society that is constantly transforming has led to the disappearance of the middle class. This is facilitated by the arrival of a new economy, new technologies (especially information technology).

It is worth noting the theory formulated by the German sociologist Andreas Rekwitz. He testifies that a new upper class is emerging - creative. It includes very well-educated people who are flexible in adapting to changes in technology and the economy. We can say that these are advanced technological fronts: the representatives of the new elite are engaged in computer science, design and other similar segments. At the same time, there is a new lower class and it is primarily impressed by its education [7].

3. Medical insurance. In the series, we were shown the expensive cost of medical care and the importance of health insurance.

4. Equality of the sexes. There is another main idea of the series, which is not so obvious, but we think that is why it made the series so popular. And it is very surprising that this series is a product from Netflix. After all, Netflix is now the largest pipeline of the most progressive and tolerant cinema, and "Squid Game" devalues modern norms and standards. Sometimes, it seems that the management of Netflix somehow did not see what they allowed to show on their service. After all, despite the fact that the West is now trying to promote gender equality in cinema, the series "Squid Game" shows us something else. In the series, we see that when everyone gets to really equal conditions (one can even say the original), where everyone's only goal is to survive. Then everything is decided only by brute force, and when the issue is valid, a woman cannot be equal to a man. After all, we remember that in the series more than once raised the question of what not to take on the women's team, because they are weaker. That is, the series shows us the harsh realities and the real lack of gender equality in the world.

5. Detention. The series also shows us the current trend and trend among the younger generation on the so-called deductions. After all, one of the participants in the series "Squid Games" in order to escape decides to trade her body and thus tries to persuade the strongest player. And the series showed that such a parasitic way of life will not come to anything good.

6. Migrant workers. Following the example of a migrant, the series showed us that in real life, all the tales about the equality of migrants and indigenous people work quite poorly. After all, the migrant in the series was an outcast, he was too trusting because of his completely different mentality. The cunning local population used it actively.

7. Older generation. We have already watched the series and know about the final plot and the secret of the oldest man. The example of this oldest man shows us how to treat the elderly really. After all, in the capitalist world, the elderly are a relatively disadvantaged part of the population. They do not work, i.e. do not bring income to the state, due to falling birth rates it turns out that every year the retirement population is growing more and more, and young people have to support them less and less. Because of this, the younger generation often gets angry at the older generation, because they have to work not only to support themselves and their families but also to pay taxes so that the state can maintain the pension category of the population.

8. Religion. We were told how a man, as a shepherd, mocked his family and then prayed for his sins. But this happens quite often in everyday life. After all, many church ministers take a lot of money for rites, and statistics that say that most paedophiles are church ministers are no longer a secret. That is, the series does not show that often people do horrible things and then go to church to atone for their sins. That is, on the one hand, the author of the series "Squid Game" devalued the institution of religion, showed it on the negative side, and on the other hand showed society a share of truth.

9. *The state*. The game is like a state, the leader is the president, but not the main leader. The game is actually run by oligarchs. A security service is a security unit (police) that allegedly serves the state, but is in fact the same hostage to the circumstances as the people in that state.

Virtual reality using visualisation methods plays a significant role in the life of society because it in some way shapes both the information space and the physical consequence. With the help of virtual mechanisms, specialists introduce propaganda information into the mass consciousness, which is beneficial to the social customer. Propaganda has the opportunity to build at its own discretion not only our present but also our past and future.

The film/series, holding us close to the screen, simulates a totalitarian situation when a virtual product holds all the levers of our control in our hands because we cannot break away from it. Of course, before we watch a film or TV series, we are programmed to travel/watch our promotional campaigns. This has the strongest effect on children who are waiting - will not wait for such a trip with friends or parents [9]. The series often reinforces what we already know what creates a new picture of the world. But its strength lies in the fact that it absorbs a huge mass of people around the planet. It has never been the case that millions are included in the same virtual product at the same time.

4 Conclusion

The results of theoretical analysis of the impact of visualisation on the creation of a picture of the world (by the case of the series "Squid Game"), to which was added practical experience of their use, allow us to draw the following conclusions:

1. The fact of using the method of propaganda 2.0 in the creation of series is revealed and confirmed, thanks to which they have such a significant informational impact (we consider them informational, but most often they are manipulative) on modern society.
2. It turned out that society ceases to feel the systemic influence of information, and this does not determine the possibility of protection from it. First of all, because such informational influence is not perceived by society as a threat and therefore cannot be repulsed.
3. The analysis showed that the visualisation of the series has a limited supply of information, primarily because it contains entertainment content, and presents it in the background. And it is this background entertainment content in the form of TV series that carries a weapon in the fight for consumer attention. If we talk about the series "Squid Game", it was its cruelty that attracted the viewer's attention. This manifestation shows us that the norms we considered social and accepted have been transformed. With the advent of the new generation (millennials and generation Z), preferences and interests in entertainment content have changed.
4. The article identifies and reveals the key ideas of the series "Squid Game", namely: the idea of capitalism (and its cruelty), social inequality, health insurance, gender equality, detention, migrant workers, the older generation, religion, the state and etc.

Literature:

1. Harari, Y.N. (2018). *21 lessons for the 21st century*. New York: Routledge.
2. Hogg, M.A. (2019). Radical change. *Scientific American*, 321(3), 85-87.
3. Kurenyy, V. (2021). *Not only "Playing Squid": why films and TV series about social inequality are popular*. Available at: <https://postnauka.ru/faq/156761>.
4. Lilleker, D. (2010). *Political communication. Key concepts: lane with English*. Kharkiv: Publishing House "Humanitarian Center. Politicheskaya kommunikaciya. Klyucheveye koncepty. Kharkiv: Gumanitarnyj centr Publishing House.

5. McLuhan, M. (1968). *War and peace in the global village*. New York: Routledge.
6. Pocheptsov, G. (2015). *Modern information wars*. Kyiv: Kyiv-Mohyla Academy Publishing House.
7. Pocheptsov, G. (2019). *From perestroika to TV series: visuality as a tool for creating and destroying the picture of the world*. Available at: <https://ms.detector.media/mediaanalitika/post/23426/2019-09-01-ot-perestrojky-do-teleseryalov-vyzualnost-kak-ynstrument-sozdanyya-y-razrushenyya-kartynymyra/>.
8. Pocheptsov, G. (2019). *"Chernobyl" and others: a TV series as a danger, as information and as entertainment*. Available at: <https://ms.detector.media/mediaanalitika/post/23074/2019-06-23-chernobyl-y-drugye-teleseryal-kak-opasnost-kak-ynformatsyya-y-kak-razvlechenye/>.
9. Pocheptsov, G. (2019). *Visual "players" defeat the verbal, like a TV series – a novel*. Available at: <https://ms.detector.media/mediaanalitika/post/23504/2019-09-15-vyzualnye-ygroky-pobezhdayut-verbalnykh-kak-teleseryal-roman/>.
10. Pocheptsov, G. (2019). *From the world of leisure come the mental transformations of our consciousness*. Available at: <https://ms.detector.media/mediaanalitika/post/23212/2019-07-21-yz-myra-dosuga-prykhodiyat-mentalnye-transformatsyy-nashego-soznannya/>.
11. Pocheptsov, G. (n.d.). *Why are Silicon Valley nannies forbidden to let children to the screens?* Available at: <https://psyfactor.org/lib/media-communication-29.htm>.
12. Pocheptsov, G.G. (n.d.). *Recognition of propaganda and hate speech*. Available at: http://osvita.mediasapiens.ua/trends/1411978127/raspoznavanie_propagandy_izyazka_nenavisti/.
13. *Sociological Encyclopedia*. (2008). Compiled by V.H. Horodyanenko. Series: Encyclopedia erudite. Kyiv: Akademvydav.
14. Pocheptsov, G. (2015). *Modern information wars. Suchasni informatsiini viiny*. Kyiv: Ed. of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy House, 497.
15. *Squid game: what is the secret of the world success of the series from Netflix*. (2021). Deutsche Welle (DW). Available at: <https://www.dw.com/en/igra-v-kalmara-v-chem-sekret-mirovogo-uspeha-seriala-ot-netflix/a-59504525>.
16. Voronko, O. (2020). *Propaganda 2.0*. Available at: <http://dspace.onu.edu.ua:8080/bitstream/123456789/28367/1/15-19.pdf>.

Primary Paper Section: A

Secondary Paper Section: AJ, AN, AO