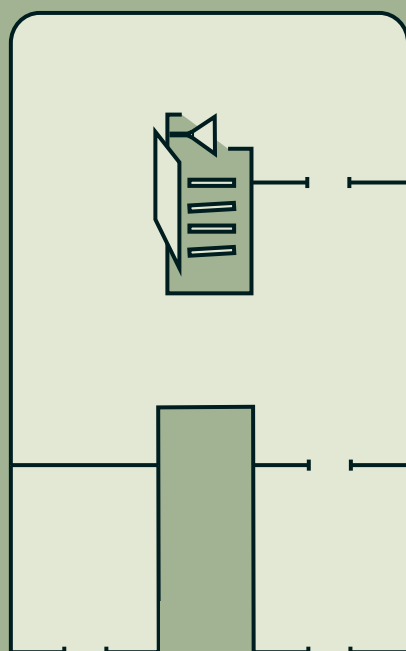
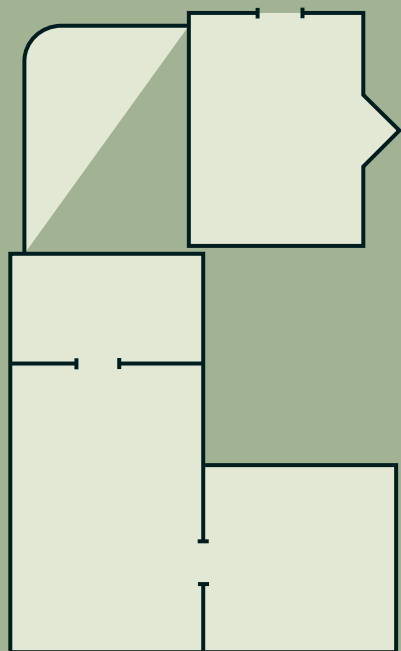


CINEMA E OUTRAS ARTES II

DIÁLOGOS E INQUIETUDES ARTÍSTICAS

ANABELA BRANCO DE OLIVEIRA
ANA CATARINA PEREIRA
LILIANA ROSA
MANUELA PENAFRIA
NELSON ARAÚJO
(Editores)



LABCOM.IFP
Comunicação, Filosofia e Humanidades
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AUTHORSHIP IN AUDIOVISUAL WORKS: A STUDY CASE OF THE TELEVISION SERIES GAME OF THRONES

Inês Rebanda Coelho

1. Cinema Authorship

The study that will be presented is inserted in a small segment of a PhD research, which is currently in progress. The question that arises and the one which is intended to answer in this fragment is: where does the filmic work authorship reside and how can it be verified?

The authorship idea and its conception are something that inside the artistic world has been altering and developing through the centuries in different ways inside of each artistic field, however, there is one particularity that has been maintained in all. The authorship is always obtained solo, while the other characteristics of the work have been adapting to the generational styles, beliefs, aesthetics and necessities. Nowadays, what is seen as plagiarism and intellectual property appropriation, during other times, such as classicism and the renaissance, was seen as a technic developing. An accurate technic was superior to the content creation and the copy of another person's work was a recognition and a tribute to the creative rigor of its author (Süssekind, 2008).

Today, often the concept is seen transcending the material artwork. The artworks that fit the conceptual art prism confirm this. Yet, if you talk about authorship,

you talk about the author, singular. The artistic intellectual productions that can only be materialized in a collective or joint effort, as in the case of cinematography, television, video-games and others, continue to have an instigation of a single authorship, a vision derived from the ancestral art forms and, many times, the authorship is only validated when there is the intervention of one of these arts. Look, for example, at cinema and television, in which authorship has a strong connection with scriptwriting, in other words, literature. Apparently, just the more recent arts have started to contradict that approach, despite that by many they still remain to not be seen as art and instead as pure entertainment, alike what cinema and television were seen as before:

[...] As, Aphra Kerr mentions, the concept of the *auteur* is difficult to apply to video games, because video game production is a collaborative process that undermines the concept of single authorship [...] I agree with Zimmerman that the potential of video games as a medium may not be realized if we continually look to traditional ideas of narrative and authorship. [...] Video game production is a collaborative process, but so is film production (Brookey, 2010: 55).

Whilst this alteration is occurring gradually, infiltrating in different joint creation arts and slowly changing mentalities, it's a perspective that in cinema still isn't completely consolidated in theory, in spite of having several supporters. Nevertheless, if you notice the main and most reputable so-called cinema theory, that has been ingrained in the minds and education of the diverse generations of filmmakers and that remits to the cinema authorship, not even this approach acquired sufficient solid basis and concepts to be really considered a theory. So, let's talk about the well-known *auteur* theory. Authorship and cinema can't be mentioned in the same sentence, without before approaching the biggest cinema "theory" of all times.

2. Cinema d'Auteur

The cinema d'*auteur* is an idea that appeared from a French magazine named *Cahiers du Cinéma*, which became known worldwide. This magazine was constituted by critic texts written by young French filmmakers, who had the ambition of being directors or who, at least, had already directed a film previously.

All of us at *Cahiers* thought of ourselves as future directors. Frequenting cine-clubs and the Cinematheque was already a way of thinking cinema and thinking about cinema. Writing was already a way of making films [...]. We were thinking cinema and at a certain moment we felt the need to extend that thought (Godard, 1986: 171).

They presented, many times, very different perspectives from each other in relation to some films, filmmakers, ideas and visions, but there was one thing about which all agreed. The authorship notion. The authorship was discussed initially by Jacques Rivette in a 1953 article about the film director Howard Hawks, but became an idea more consolidated with François Truffaut in *Une Certaine Tendence du Cinema Français* of 1954, a work seen as a start point for what the magazine represents nowadays. In it, Truffaut uses the *auteur* term, both to mention the director who writes his/her own script and, in a broader way, the creator whose his/her authentic personality was felt in the work. Promptly, these two meanings became one. Eric Rhode resumes his vision of the director as authority, as the only referee regarding the significance of the film (Rhode, 1976). Another of the defended ideas that helped the *Cahiers* to support the authorship conception was the term *camera-stylo*, implemented and coined by Alexandre Astruc in 1948, where he compares the director's camera to a writer's (accepted as author) pen (Astruc, 1968). The position adopted by Astruc is similar to the director-*auteur* view of Truffaut, that intended to merge the writing with film directing:

[...] The scriptwriter directs his own scripts; or rather, that the scriptwriter ceases to exist, for in this kind of film-making the distinction between author and director loses all meaning. Direction is no longer a means of illustrating or presenting a scene, but a true act of writing (Astruc, 1968: 24).

The *politique des auteurs* was born also from these fundamental ideas and started to represent the system, on which the majority of the critics at *Cahiers* agreed and based their writing on. It became the adaptation of the author notion, supported by Astruc and Truffaut, descendant of and broadly accepted by the individual arts applied to cinema, with the director's image as the solo author. This policy had aimed to differentiate between authors/directors and just directors, even if they were talented. It also valorizes the importance of discovering if the director is worthy of entering the select auteurs group, through the judgment of how well he handled the material. In other words, technique becomes the most important for the author definition, and this is later completed by the *mise-en-scène* concept. It favored the aesthetic, which by itself privileges the narrative. However, it raises the question of cinematographic work specificity, defending that it was in its form and not in its content (Hoveyda, 1960: 37). What problems did these concepts bring? First, each of these ideas isn't sufficiently substantiated theoretically.

[...] The criteria of the *politique des auteurs* are very difficult to formulate the whole thing becomes highly hazardous. It is significant that our finest writers on *Cahiers* have been practising it for three or four years now and have yet to produce the main corpus of its theory (Bazin, 1985: 257).

The *politique des auteurs* consists in choosing a personal factor in an artistic creation as a reference standard and then assumes that it continues and even progresses from a film to another. It's recognized by the *Cahiers* writers that there are certain important films that escape this test because a

film is automatically considered good for being fulfilled by an auteur and for that, the applied criterion is the director aesthetic portrait deduced from his previous work (Bazin, 1985). The director image that is created ends up transcending the work itself and its artistic quality. “[...] *auteurism* un-naturally elevates the director’s place within production and judges films based on their director rather than as an individual artistic work” (Gerstner & Staiger, 2002: 39). Eric Rohmer reached the point to defend that in art the auteurs are the ones who remain and not the works, while Truffaut liked to quote Jean Giraudoux on this subject: “there are no works, there are only auteurs” (Truffaut, Giraudoux and Rohmer in Hillier, 1985: 250). Nevertheless, the auteur theory was not implemented nor suggested by the *Cahiers* critics, but by Andrew Sarris, an American film critic, that popularizes the term with his article *Notes on the Auteur Theory* in 1962.

“Even the original writers of *auteurism* did not intend it as a theory of cinema; this was an interpretation perpetrated by Sarris” (Grant, 2008: 76). John Caughie points out that the “*auteurism* is more clearly a critical practice than a theory” (Caughie, 1981: 4). Despite Sarris defending that the *politique des auteurs* was vague and didn’t reach consolidation, there was no concrete method that defined a director as an *auteur*, there only existed notions that were added and mentioned in order to better fit that idea. The truth is that Sarris ended up doing the same thing, calling upon the necessity for the director to have certain technical skills and leaving the theoretical base equally incomplete. Yet, he started one of the biggest debates within the Film Studies which still resonates today.

The notion of the total auteur is a myth all the same, because the director’s craft requires specific capabilities which are not the same as those of a writer. It’s possible that one man could have both, but the fact that at the moment directors who have no apparent talent for scriptwriting, like Becker for example, are doing it and risking disaster, means

the degeneration of what is a major profession (Leenhardt, 1985: 38, from the text: *Six Characters in Search of auteurs: a Discussion about the French Cinema*).

The problem that the *auteur* notion created, both inside the *politique des auteurs* and the *auteur* theory was that the dimensions they took weren't caused by the ideas, beliefs or innovations. What these critics realized was nothing new or controversial. The way how they did it was what led this ideal to have disproportionate dimensions that wouldn't normally have.

If the *politique des auteurs* caused ripples, and more, in French film culture and beyond, it was not because of the idea itself but because the idea was used in *Cahiers* with polemical brio to upset established values and reputations. There was nothing new or scandalous in either France or Britain or the USA in discussing, say, Murnau, Buñuel, Dreyer, Eisenstein, Renoir, Cocteau or Bresson or, from the USA, Stroheim or Welles or Chaplin, as the auteurs of their films (Hillier, 1985: 7).

3. Cinema as a Joint Work

It can't be ignored the fact that a lot of the *Cahiers* directors/critics didn't comply with what they defended, using scriptwriters and great connoisseurs of photography direction in some of the most renowned films. For that, we have the example of *Les 400 coups* directed by François Truffaut, considered as one of the *auteurs*. All these ideas focus on an era, in wills and whims that certain social niches needed to cause a change, to evolve and in a certain way, to raise their ego. "Auteurism itself would not be worth bothering with if it hadn't been so influential, effectively stalling film history and criticism in a prolonged state of adolescent romanticism" (Schatz, 1988: 5).

Nowadays, there are several directors and even critics that defend a more realistic perspective, connected to any filmic industry operation. "In fact, critics now recognize motion pictures having plural authors rather than a

singular artistic force” (Carringer, 2001: 374). This current cinema vision, that will be presented, is simple in its exposition: “Collective film production creates collective authorship: the author is the entire group” (Bordwell & Thompson, 2008: 33). The authorship is found united to all the work execution processes. The exchange of one of the elements of any artistic department that constitutes a film production will lead to the work’s language alteration. “[...] film crew creates a collective intention when each individual joins the group with the same goal in mind [...]. This renders the director-centric theory of coherency hollow because the director’s contribution is only part of the whole we view” (Sellors, 2007: 268). Two works can never be the same, even if the director or the scriptwriter or both are.

We do not work alone. Directing is an interpretive rather than a creative art. Writers, painters, composers, sculptors, and architects are creative artists. Creative artists work alone. They work alone on a blank screen, blank piece of paper, canvas, clay, hillside . . . whatever. If they are composers, ultimately, they’ll need musicians to make the music happen. In the same way, playwrights and screenwriters need producers, directors, actors, and crews, who are the interpretive artists that make their productions come to life (Cury, 2007: 111).

Any individual inserted in the project will interfere and shape the creations and intentions of the people who he/she works with, as well as adapt their own for a common purpose. From the interaction they have during so many months, there are influencing thoughts and meanings. “Each interpretation is based on the life and experiences of whoever is doing the interpretation. It’s never the same experience for any two people” (Cury, 2007: 111). However, it’s up to the head of each department, together with the producer and the film director, to guide and include the team’s perspectives inside of their vision, without ever giving up on the common goal and instead complement it in the best way. Each film has its own interpretation given by the various members who built it. What is important is that the several intentions are well guided so that the purpose agreed upon by all is transmitted

in a clear way. With that, “each person is then free to agree, reject, or be awakened to his or her own feelings about the piece. We’re not out for consensus here. We’re out for communication” (Lumet, 1996: 16).

A work of art is defined by the industry, society, culture and production method that it adopts or in which it is inserted, as well as by the characteristics that define each one of its contributors, not just as workers but also as people. “One must suspend the idea of single authorship in order to properly analyse a production from a collaborative standpoint” (Carringer, 2001: 377). There are a lot of factors to take into account. If one piece of work with only one author entails a big complexity of analysis, a complete study of one work with 10, 20, 50, 100 or more people considered as authors working for the same purpose, becomes almost intangible.

For this study, it was proposed to examine one of the positions that could give more direct information, that is, of one of the department’s chiefs. At the same time, it was intended that this profession wouldn’t be seen as artistic by the majority of the people or that was unknown to the point of not even knowing if it could be artistic or not. For this reason, the cinema producer was elected, one of the professions hierarchically most influent, but that is less associated with the artistic side of a film work. The defined goal is to show how his/her tasks are linked to the film art (even when his/her work intervention is purely technical) and in what way influence the aesthetic and language, to the extent of being perceived equally as an author.

Notwithstanding, a meaning to the author term should be assigned. There are many definitions and perspectives, but the one considered of greatest interest is the most simple and direct (especially because of the legal approach to the Author’s Rights, associated with the continuation of this study, that will not be addressed in this article). Currently, the author is one of or the intellectual creator of the work, regardless of its qualitative appreciation and whether or not it is a work of the artistic forum. This is due to the technological evolution and the importance given to the multidis-

ciplinary that becomes increasingly more visible in the several means and areas. The only implication is that the contribution that the author gives comes from him/her, that is, her/his creation and not a plagiarism or appropriation (UNESCO, 2010; CDADC, 2017). In this case, as the authorship in cinema has been studied, it's of interest to know what kind of intellectual contribution was given, in other words, how to identify if the person allied to the profession in question is a technician or an artist. In cinema, being a technician doesn't mean that his/her creative contributions and influence are inexistent, although, they can be reduced and he/she may not perform any artistic task, nor have the power to take any kind of artistic decision. Relatively to each department director, they always have artistic duties, as well as some of the members within their section (for example, the artistic directors, prop master, etc.), even if reduced. Though, inside every function that an office entails, besides the technicians, a professional can be seen or carry out as a middle term, an executant. An executant is more connected to financial, bureaucracy and/or technical questions but at the same time his/her decisions and actions influence the general language of the work, including the artistic one.

This study defends that if there were some separation to make in cinema authorship it would be between technical-authors, executant-authors and artistic-authors. However, the creative cooperation exists always and the quality of a project shouldn't be measured by the contribution's quantity or its specialty. A creative technician can make all the difference in a production, however, as it will be seen, a method of complete separation of the participation of each person involved, only through the piece of work itself, without any kind of additional information of the production operation, hasn't been arranged by any researcher, yet. "While certainly a motion picture's personality can be linked to its major creators— director, producer, leading actors—all those who contribute play a part in its nuances that may go unnoticed by simple pattern analysis" (Grant, 2008: 80).

4. Case Study: The *Game of Thrones* Producers

“A producer’s job description combines art with craft, commerce with technology, and leadership with collaboration” (Kellison, 2013: 2). In order to create the perfect conditions of the producer’s craft appreciation, it was realized that there could be another format, other than the cinematographic, that would add other pertinent premises and construct the indicated scenario for what was intended to achieve. The fact that in cinema they alter the most part of their workers from one film to another, made it difficult to isolate certain producer’s activities, especially tasks that are carried out in partnership with members from other departments.

The chosen media was the television and the selected format was a modern continuing drama series. The television is known as a producer medium and in drama series, it’s frequently placed in the same authorship position as the cinema director, including relatively to the scriptwriting, that is, “[...] the writer-producer is the key creative force in television” (Kubey, 2004: 5). One of the strengths of this preference is the constant alteration of its directors (Tunstall, 1993: 105). Regarding to the chosen series, the director changes various times during one season, as well as the close crew with whom he/she works and selects directly (photography directors, editors and some director’s assistants), while the rest of the main team is preserved, at least during one season. The series chosen was *Game of Thrones*, which is very close to cinema, namely in terms of some production’s functioning (for example: the scenarios, a lot of external footages and special effects, several crafts and crew members coming from cinema, big budgets). The telefilm could have been analysed too or instead of the selected format, but it would lack some significant observation premises, which could not be easily complemented since they present conspicuous difficulties, similar to those of cinema.

As for the production team, which the majority of its members have always remained working on the series, the differentiation factors that allowed to name the episodes to be examined were its directors, for being the ones

who share more goals and tasks with the producers. It was intended to discover to what extent the exacerbation of the producer's image conceals the artistic influence of the director, as the opposite occurs in cinema. Four directors were selected, Tim Van Patten, Daniel Minahan, Alik Sakharov and Neil Marshall (thirteen episodes in total) by the characteristics exalted in their work. Tim Van Patten, elaborates the first and second episodes of the first season. He's presented on this list for being the director that gives the motto to the series and that defines the first line of direction to be followed. It's also in interest to compare the two episodes in which he participates: the first, that still contains information of the initially hired director, Thomas McCarthy and the second episode, which has only directing material from Tim Van Patten. Daniel Minahan collaborates in two different seasons, starts one season and integrates into some episodes of the first one, that serves as a comparison point with Tim Van Patten. Alik Sakharov in addition to be a director, was also a photography director, including in the two first episodes directed by Tim Van Patten. Sakharov was selected, in order to understand: what kind of input he gave to the series; what the differences are between his work as a photography director and as a director; what type of influence he obtained from the directors series with whom he cooperated and if it is perceptible in his own direction method. Last but not least, Neil Marshall, that directed only two episodes, the episode 9 of the second season and the episode 9 of the fourth season. His inclusion is due to his exclusively hiring for the construction and shooting of the series big battles, even in seasons following the ones investigated. Although the directors' work was specifically studied in the chosen episodes, the work from the production's department was examined during the first four seasons in which these episodes are included.

After these decisions were made, an analysis methodology for the producer had to be arranged, that would fulfil the intent of being able to detect visually his/her intervention in the workpiece, as it is possible to see that of any department chief of an audiovisual team. For that, it should be mentioned that the filmic industry tends to divide the producers in two fields:

the financial and the creative producer (Finney, 1996: 10). This division is still perceptible, and nowadays is easiest to identify in the American films, by the producer's mark, which appears during the credits in front of the producer's name (PGA, 2016). It refers to a producer's work methodology generalization, that is, if he/she performs all the duties to which he/she is entitled or a large part of them, valuing the artistic and creative side of his/her profession. In this case, the producer is considered to be creative. On the other hand, if the producer is concentrated on the more executive side of the production work, worrying almost exclusively with raising funds, the work's economic exploitation, bureaucracies and the likes, is therefore considered financial. It can be said this is the difference between an artist-author and an executant-author. In the television medium, this division also occurs, however, the creative side is much more noticeable in their main producers, the showrunners (Bennett, 2014: 7-8).

“Although episodic drama series and feature motion pictures share many production-related similarities, there are some distinctions that set them apart” (Valle, 2008: 18), something that is added into account and that provided with a lot of relevant information. As it is known, the series dimension and duration are different from feature films, they are bigger, which amplifies and reveals problems that aren't notorious in cinema. It was realized that the issues of the distinction between tasks are even bigger, particularly in production. The artistic and creative chores that correspond to those of a cinema creative producer are dispersed by numerous tasks of the production department. In *Game of Thrones*, the executive producer, the producer, the respective co-productions and the line producer, end up doing the artistic work equivalent to a cinematographic creative producer, but in different scales, in different phases and in different countries. This was further exalted when, for example, during one season, one of the line producers gave significant creative contributions, such as selecting shooting locations, and in the following season moved up to the co-producer position, leading to more decision-making power in the artistic field. The big difference be-

tween each one of these crafts was the power of decision-making and to whom they needed to answer, which is decided by the hierarchy, where the executive producer is on the top. A position that in cinema is held by the producer, nevertheless, a cinematographic executive producer is different from a television one and in television it depends on the genre, kind of program and production itself. In *Game of Thrones*, an executive producer is the same as a cinema producer.

For these reasons, it was decided to adapt the analysis made to the production's department, instead of nominating one of the sector constituents, doing a direct reference whenever any significant aspect was found. "The radically different types of drama production require differing production teams and differing rhythms of work; drama productions also vary so much as to require very different styles of producer" (Tunstall, 1993: 117). Other characteristics that distinguish a series from a feature film is that, while the cinema production phases are linear, in a series are all mixed up. Principally in this series, where there are two fixed units, Wolf and Dragon, shooting at the same time frequently in distinct countries, with different directors, as well as the respective teams that they selected (photography director, some assistants and sometimes, editors) (Goldman, 2012). This implies the existence of a big production team and that each crew member from the line producer to the executive producers covered phases, locations and/or specific departments, which ends up giving them more freedom in creative and artistic decisions, without ever escaping from the hierarchic structure and from the whole system set up to manage the series, having been perfected and developed throughout the diverse seasons.

Different producers have different strengths and weaknesses which influence their style of work and the teams they select. The producer obviously chooses a director to fit the requirements of the project in hand; some directors are studio specialists, while most prefer to film outside on location. All drama producers oversee a huge range of detail and separate individuals (Tunstall, 1993: 119).

The main work of a key producer is to understand the artistic and financial necessities of the project he/she has in hands and guarantee that they are answered in the best way, together with the production's department. The biggest responsibility of this sector is to assure that the major intention of the artwork is transmitted in a linear and coherent way. The following functions were the studied in the production department of the series, that influenced artistically the work language and style: raising of funds, materials, means and significant elements to the series; edition and supervision of the script; project supervision- guarantee that the language is linear and the series main goal is accomplished, they have to maintain the integrity of the work and of the adapted work, together with the director and scriptwriter (fantasia versus reality, avoid confusing the audience in terms of narrative and emotionally, as well as in terms of locations and/or characters, define and maintain the visual and aesthetic linearity, get rid of visual and sound excessive or lacking of stimuli); selection of the actors, locations, chiefs of departments and rest of the crew (this kind of work is made in partnership with other team members, like casting directors, location directors, and so on, sometimes the director is also involved, if there are new locations or actors), defining the distribution and application of the budget in certain scenes and departments; deciding if the shootings are on location or on set- it can be decided in association with all or some of the following members: director, photography director and/or production designer; shooting format – determined with the director and/or photography director [in *Game of Thrones* was settled with some of the photography directors of the first season (Goldman, 2012)]; final montage; monitorization of the sound designer work; supervision and approval of the special effects mechanical and digital; remaining faithful to the format (is what appears on screen in terms of adaptation viable for the television format?); problem solving (troubleshooting) and adjustment to adverse conditions quickly and effectively; selection and/or supervision of the music composing (soundtrack).

In order to help the examination of each of these characteristics, as well as some corresponding to the artistic work of the director, it was used a

qualitative analysis program, MAXQDA 12. There was also a bibliographic and a video-graphic study about the series, to complete the information acquired.

4. Conclusions

“Each project requires a unique result from its producer” (Kellison, 2013: xvii). All the points examined in the series regarding the production department were verified and positive results were achieved, despite the adversities, particularly during the first season. There were many production and narrative problems, especially in the pilot that almost led to the series cancellation, and while they couldn’t arrange a methodology that maintained the visual linearity of the footages of all the directors and directors of photography, they had distinct languages that weren’t at all compromised, by the contrary. They had a lot of creative freedom, just as they would have in a feature film (Thompson, 2016). They were able to recover and catch up in the same season and do what a producer does best, make these problems completely invisible to the audience, as well as part of his/her best work.

On the other hand, the fundamental participation of the director in a work involves emotional manipulation. This requires taking all the materials that are given to him/her and arranging them on screen in order to provoke different sensations and sentiments in the audience. Another of his/her key contributions is to consistently transmit and convey the style he/she defined directly with the cast and crew. In other words, this implies that even if the producer and the director share tasks, their intentions are distinct. Let’s take an example: both have to break down the script, however, although the task is the same, the way they do it and why, are different. While the producer and/or executive producer (in the television case) interprets the script in terms of budgeting, viability of the scenes, where to apply the money and assure that the visual linearity and the program or film initial concept is maintained, the director researches the best way that he/she has to provoke all the emotions present in the script, by surveying and exploring the narrative, the scenarios, actors, props, what will be shown and how

he/she will show it. The same occurs with other tasks, like selecting locations or casting actors.

With this study, it has been revealed that it becomes impossible, from the exclusive study of the workpiece and the bibliographic material, to know what each one did, unless each of all the team members specifies it. This shows that, the TV drama series are joint works and that films have potential to be seen as such too. Joint work is a terminology used in the Anglo-Saxon legislation (*Copyright*), to designate works prepared by two or more authors with the intention of having their contributions merged into inseparable or interdependent parts of a unitary whole (UNESCO, 2010). In this format, all the creativity and artistic contributions don't depend on the profession itself, but on the person that is behind it. That is verified with the rise of position in the drama continuing series, that in cinema is not possible to observe. It was also realized that in cinema and television, each production is unique and requires one's own organization system. Each work is one work and, it can be said, that the brush of the author is on the organization structure adopted by the team as a whole, which is required and defined by the project itself and the dimension that it needs or ends up taking. It's possible to detect the producer's direct visual influence in a work. We have the case of Chris Newman, that included the *Superman II* of 1980 team and during the fourth episode of the fourth season, of which he is a producer, it can be detected, among others, scenario and photography elements that show the influence of the *Fortress of Solitude*.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the director and the analysed producers are authors. They can be or artists or executants, and the way to confirm it is to examine individually the works in which each one participated and the respective material published about them. Then it will be perceived how he/she helped to shape the style and language of the final work.

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