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**Language adviser:** *Lashchenko M.A., Teacher of the Department of Foreign Languages, Dmytro Motornyi Tavria State Agrotechnological University*

## THE ‘BREAKING THE FOURTH WALL’ TECHNIQUE IN FILMMAKING

**Zyuzin N.N.**, [zyuzin.kolya.4195@gmail.com](mailto:zyuzin.kolya.4195@gmail.com)  
*Dmytro Motornyi Tavria State Agrotechnological University*

The ‘breaking the fourth wall’ – this term migrated into filmmaking from theater. Spectators sitting in the hall see the scenery in front of them, consisting of three walls, among which all the action takes place. And the fourth one is addressed to the viewer. By the way, the term was coined in the 18th century by the French philosopher Denis Diderot. The fourth wall is present everywhere, from books and comics, to games and films, but it is presented there in different ways.

The purpose of this article is to research the principles and effects of the ‘breaking the fourth wall’ technique application. The essence of the fourth wall is to separate what is happening in a work of art from the real world. The heroes do not suspect that they are fictional, that the viewer is watching them, they do not notice the fourth wall and act as if it does not exist. Simply put, thanks to the fourth wall, the viewer or, for example, the reader, can more easily immerse themselves in the plot of the work. The purpose of breaking down this very wall is to blur this line between the story and the reality. The hero in the middle of the scene can look into the camera and begin to conduct a dialogue with the viewer, conveying any information to him. It doesn't matter what the subject will be, the contact itself is important. Sometimes just one glance is enough to convey the mood.

Let's look into the episode from the Soviet cinema production film where the character of Leonid Kuravliov urges (Figure 1) Soviet citizens to keep their money in a savings bank, if they have it, of course.

Another example is the scene from *Fight Club*, where the character of Edward Norton (Figure 2) talks through the screen about the past of the Brad Pitt's character.



Figure 1 *Ivan Vasilievich Changes Profession*, 1973, director L. Gaidai



Figure 2 *Fight Club*, 1999, director D.A.L. Fincher

The technique of breaking the fourth wall has taken on many forms. Moreover, the technique itself does not directly imply the wall destruction. Often characters like to «lean» on it rather than break it. This is often done as a joke or in order to deceive the audience by pretending that the wall is broken, although this is not the case. A simple example - the characters look at the camera and pretend that they are addressing us, the audience. Then the camera changes its angle and we see that it is the dialogue between the characters and their counterpart is represented. The wall remained intact. Another simple example is winking at the viewer. The actor winks at the camera or makes some kind of comical face as if complaining about the situation or the stupidity of other characters.

Another element of the mentioned above method is the 'a part (in French 'aside') technique'. This happens when all the characters seem to 'freeze' on the spot, the main character turns to the camera and says something clever or funny. Then he turns back and the rest of the actors seem to 'come to life' again.



Figure 3 *High Fidelity*, 2000, director S.A. Frears

But this technique is most often used precisely to create a comic effect when characters comment on certain actions looking at the camera. It also works well for establishing some kind of connection between the hero and the viewer. The character shares his thoughts, emotions with the viewer, which later arouses trust increases confidence in this character and enhances empathy.

An excellent example of the destruction of the fourth wall without stopping time was presented by the hero of John Cusack in the film *High Fidelity* (Figure 3). He is constantly in close contact with the fourth wall. For him, the viewer is the only one with whom he can share his thoughts and experiences.



Figure 4 *House of Cards*, 2013, director Beau Willimon

The last thing this technique is used for is the interpretation of the plot. A great example of this is the series *House of Cards*. The hero of Kevin Spacey [Figure 4] regularly addresses the viewer with explanations of certain events.

To summarize, the breaking the fourth wall technique is very captivating and versatile. In addition to the already listed methods of using this technique, authors, plot writers and directors can come up with more and more, its perception depends on human imagination. The main thing is that the technique does not get out of the general creative work style. The technique of breaking the fourth wall was, is and will be quite popular, since thanks to it viewers can quickly immerse themselves in what is happening on the screen at the moment and in general action sequence as well.

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**Language adviser:** *Zaitseva N. V., Senior Teacher of the Department of Foreign Languages, Dmytro Motorny Tavria State Agrotechnological University*