

# Idea, Conception, and Writing

There are a hundred and a million out there who have good ideas. But, nevertheless, only a handful of them makes it to a successful screenplay. What is the reason?

The world does not, as Plato once thought, consist of ideas, of which we only perceive the shadows. Rather it is the outcome of ideas, conceptually as well as practically. The conceptual is both a manner to orientate in the world and the creative mental invention of new thoughts or devices. The practical side is reduced to 'copying'; the mental products onto reality. And exactly there lies the particular problem as shows the case of the benzene ring:

The discoverer of the benzene formula, F.A. Kekulé, had a dream about a ring of snakes one night. When he woke up, the ring was still present in his memory. Fortunately, Kekulé was a chemist and so realized that this scheme was the solution to a couple of theoretical problems he was occupied with. It followed a long line of conceptual work to formally prove the insight, which resulted in the hexagonal scheme of benzene known as benzene ring.

What happened was that Kekulé had seen a scientific problem that he could not explain with what he already knew, that is, deductively. Neither he was able to connect the observed phenomena with the rules usually applied in these situations to create further explanations of already known regularities, that is, an inductive manner of reasoning. He simply took together two things that had not been interconnected before, a ring of snakes and the benzene formula, which is called abduction.

In comparison with, for instance, Kepler, Kekulé was faced with only a few irregularities caused by his discovery. But still, he had to convince others according to the standard of reasoning everyone was used to, the applied mathematical logic. If he had not been able to express his creative idea in a way that was comprehensible to others, no one would have been able neither to adapt to his mental image nor to take the pragmatic consequences.

So, the screenwriter cannot project his images as Plato's shadows on a cave's wall either. He might have put together a bunch of things in a way that no one has ever done. Unfortunately, as far as he does not structure and, thereby, communicate his 'insights', it is very unlikely for him to be accepted within the film business.

As a conclusion, one can come to a three-step logic of screenwriting:

First, the idea is born abductively in a contemplating setting by creating new connections between already known things.

Second, the 'inventor' has to build, deductively, a logical bridge between his grand idea and the formal requirements of a script. That is, he applies one or another plot scheme to his idea and breaks it down to sequences and scenes.

Third, when it comes to the actual scriptwriting, one has to take into account, even more than in the prior steps, the perspectives of the audiences as well as the potential buyers of the script. This final step consists of inductively filling in the slots created in step two.

During the whole process the original idea changes fundamentally and becomes 'clearer', also for the writer himself. As science or carpentering, screenwriting is a craft that is based on methods, rules of communication, and styles. You first have to know the limits before you can break them. Authentic creativity is best seen from a perspective that is accessible to all of us. You might be really creative, but, what a shame, we cannot look into your head.