

THE SYNTAX OF THE FILM LANGUAGE BETWEEN THE SCREEN OF THE LUMIERE BROTHERS AND THE 3D VR GLASSES

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Abstract

Starting with “the device used to obtain and visualise cinephotographic evidence” (cinema), invented by the brothers Lumiere, the technique of filming and reproducing moving images has rhythmically evolve, shortening the distance between reality and the illustrious reality. Man’s perception of the moving images, of filmic time and space represents a psychic process, a product of the senses and of thought. The innovative filmmakers, creators of film art, exploited the illusional effects of the dynamic images and developed the grammatical rigours of the filmic language. The digital techniques facilitate the development of the filmic expression, but the syntax of the filmic language is managed by the same laws as in the case of the mechanical film, since they ensure emotional comfort and the overwhelming thinking that the individual wants.

Keywords: *film, image, montage, filmic language, frame, photography.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the transparent atmosphere of unrestricted communication, when personal opinions become messages that are perceived as immutable truths, image communication requires skills and aptitudes, both of an aesthetic and ethical order, accompanied by civic responsibility. The image represents the background element of the media language: cinematographic, televised, of educational and informative persuasion, of advertising, of the simple yet duplicate audio-visual products, complicated in their essence. It is the result of a symbiosis between the individual and the filming techniques. It is a product obtained automatically on a material support (chemical emulsion, electronic memory etc.) in the result of the operations made by the camera. However, the camera reproduces precisely not only a sequence of the reality that it presents on a material support as long the operator holds the camera connected,

but also the other part of reality which remains outside the optic angle and of the filmic time and that particular sequence is selected by the eye of the operator and is only fixed by the camera. The public later on sees it reproduced objectively, mechanical, but it is not the reality that it would have seen, if it had attended the event, but one which it is revealed to him and is dependent on the intellectual and aesthetic knowledge, on the abilities of executing the frame, on the artistic skills of the operator and on his subjective view. The public on his turn perceives the filmic image according to its specific properties, intellectual abilities and cultural and aesthetic background.

2. DON’T BELIEVE THE EYES

Film fascination is triggered by the dynamic images that, through their nature, conserve not only time and space, but also movement, atmosphere and the breath of the movement. The illusion that the spectator witnesses makes him live the miracle or it is the result of the relationships between the eyes and brain. The eye does not lie to the brain. It does not transmit the whole information about the illuminated object, projected on the retina, but it retains it for a few hundredths of a second. Therefore, the eye ensures the continuity of movement and it produces the sensitive pleasure of knowledge through sight. It is a process that nature has modelled for hundreds of years, teaching the individual to perceive the surrounding world, beautiful but also full of dangers, with the help of sight, so that he is able to survive in extreme conditions. Photographers Auguste and Louis Lumiere, native engineers and managers of a factory of photographic material from Lyon,

exploited the retinal persistence –the inertia of the eye. At the end of the 19th century, they invented a device similar to a camera, endowed a fast and continuous motion mechanism of the film that captured 15 photos in a second, discontinuous exposure and substitution time, ensuring at the same time the quality, luminosity and the contrast of the image on a nitrocellulose support with a length of around 16 metres. The Lumiere brothers patented their invention entitled “Device aimed at obtaining and viewing cinematographic evidences” in February 1895, later on changing its name into cinematograph. The official launching of cinematography in public life took place on December 28, 1895 in the “Grand cafe” restaurant in Paris. The first projection was formed from 10 films, each with a length of 50 seconds in an established order in order to make an impact on the audience and it lasted for 20 minutes. It started with “Exist from the “Lumiere” factories” and it ended with “The entrance of the train in the Ciotat railway station”, which aroused great agitation in the public. We can consider that, according to the compositional concept of the first projections and the fact material, the film from the beginnings presented chronicles of a reality in dynamic images (CĂLIMAN, 2017). Each subject was filmed in one single frame, meaning the camera started at the beginning and it stopped at the end of the filmic action, the filmic time presented exactly the lengths of the filmic action. The “Lumiere” operators used the principles of the photographic composition. They positioned the camera, fixing it in relationship to the object the same as they did with the photo camera, but this time the object moved in front of the photographic object (SADOUL, 1961). Later on, this filming method was to be called frame mounting. Shortly afterwards, other inventions of the operators were to appear, instructed by the Lumiere brothers, whom they equipped them with filming / projection devices and sent to various capitals of the world in order to disseminate the invention and to film the most captivating subjects. It was a well thought cinema promotion action as a business that met the industrial product and a new means of communication. Therefore, in May 1896, in Sankt Petersburg, a team led by the journalist and film operator Camiile Cerf arrived

and hired by the Lumiere brothers to promote the cinematograph. This is a collaboration attempt between the media and cinematography that was meant not only to open the perspective on developing businesses, but also to present the innovations from the journalistic and cinematographic creation. This was something from the field of fantastic taking into account the media technologies of those times. The business people Lumiere tried to value in cinematography only the experience accumulated by the war correspondents in photo reportages. Together with Camiile Cerf, Charles Maisson also went to Russia, the cinema mechanic, together with his assistant Fransis Doublier, who facilitated the projection of “Grand cafe”. On May 16, 1896, in the “Aquarium” public garden from Sankt Petersburg, they organised the first film demonstration in Russia and on May 26, 1886, in Moscow, Doublier and Maissons filmed the chronic “The coronation of Tsar Nicholas II” and later on, on May, 30, the bulge on the Hodynka Plain. In July 1896 Doublier filmed “The Napoleon Prince”. Every filming in Russia is significant due to a number of reasons. For “The coronation of Tsar Nicholas II” the “Lumiere” operators filmed the event with two cameras situated at a distance from one another. Fransis Doublier positioned himself near the building of the History Museum and Moissons near the Cathedral of the Annunciation, on an improvised platform, where he filmed how the emperor and the he empress, accompanied by the courtiers, descended on the Ivanovscaia Square up to the entrance to the Cathedral of the Assumption of the Virgin. During this time Fransis Doublier changed his position to film haw Nicholas II and Alexandra Fyodorovna left the Cathedral of the Holy Archangels and joined the solemn procession. Mossions, from another angle, filmed the passing of the nations’ representatives from the Russian Empire. All footage is external. Everything that took place during the four hours of the coronation in the Cathedral of the Assumption of the Virgin is described by various sources, but the impressions of Erst Ludviwg Karl Albert Wihelm, the brother of empress Alexandra Fyodorovna are exhaustive: “The May 26, 1896 coronation in Moscow was the most lavish ceremony from all that I have seen.

It was almost oriental and it took 10 days. In Moscow, the cathedral was full of images of saints painted on golden background and the priests were all wearing gold medals, decorated with embroidery and expensive stones. In all ceremonies there was a profound mystical sense and byzantine traditions. The anointing of the emperor and of the empress transformed them into God's anointed ones. The emperor in the altar communicates with God exactly like a priest. After he comes out of the altar, in front of the throne, he takes the crown off his head, kneels and utters a fiery prayer for his people. Then everybody prays to God for the emperor, while the emperor rises, he the only one standing up over everybody who was kneeling. The procession takes place on a podium placed higher at the level of the heads of those around, so that everyone could see it. Everyone was dressed in parade uniforms, everything was shining in gold and silver, the emperor and the empress in golden cloaks were standing under a huge canopy, all the high princesses were dressed in jewellery. Everything took place as in a magic dream, because everything was lit by a single strong sun" (CĂLIMAN, 2017).

Like the photograph journalists, the press reportage authors Doublier and Moissons used overall frames to render the atmosphere and to catch in frame as much space as possible. In the development of the reportage film "The Coronation of Tsar Nicholas II" Doublier explained for the first time the narrative montage, although Louis Lumiere a little bit earlier, perfecting the capabilities of the projection device, made a montage attempt an united four one minute films from the lives of the firemen. However, Doublier did not technically unite the films, but he united the frames, the time frames of different measures, that were filmed in different places, from the ground and from the podium, but from the same event, he communicated the facts as an authentic storyteller and he managed to play the atmosphere, thus making the first news report. The film "The Coronation of Tsar Nicholas II" was firstly presented in the editorial office of "Le Figaro" newspaper on June 24, 1896. The place was chosen starting from the fact that Serf Camille was an employee at "Le Figaro" newspaper and

he did not lack the political skill, because he was the personal secretary of Georges Clémenceau for a while. The new tsar attempted to fortify the position of the Russian Empire on the international arena and France was part of his preoccupations. Cinema columnists also brought from Russia impressions about things which were less known. Serf Camille's group also filmed the tragedy which took place at Hodynka during the manifestations that took place during Nicholas II's coronation. Hodynka was a training area with trenches, ditches and waves, pits for fortifications, but also a parade field, located on the outskirts of Moscow. The Ministry of the Imperial Court and the police from Moscow decided to make a surprise to the tsar and to organise an incredible celebration in one of the ten days of coronation, but a great tragedy took place: a cram for gifts for the tsar - bags which contained bread, sponge cake, sweets, 200g of salami and a porcelain cain, made in Austria, with the marks of the Russian monarchy took the lives of over 1300 people and injured more than 900. Doublier filmed the scenes of the tragedy from Hodynka, but the film was confiscated and destroyed. For a long time, it was considered that there was no trace left, but after more than one century a blog of photos and filmed images entitled "The last coronation" noted that "Serf Camille (*the orthography according to the original*) witnessed the tragedy in Hodynka and filmed a few seconds from it. The film proved that the accident was mainly caused by the unpaved trenches on the field used as military drilling ground. Probably this was the first catastrophe film in the world". Doublier was to meet the Russian guard department once again in July 1896, in Sankt Petersburg, following the projection of the film "The Coronation of Tsar Nicholas II". During those days he also filmed "Prince Napoleon". It is difficult to imagine what a devastating content this one-minute film had for the Russian Empire, but it was confiscated and destroyed. The atmosphere in Russia proved that the empire that self-proclaimed itself "The third Rome", beyond fast and misery, ascension and collapse, was dominated by a slave mentality, which led to its disappearance, in the same way as the Great Rome. The Lumiere operators brought from their trips some unknown realities

and new filming procedures. Alexandre Promio filmed, in the spring of 1896, "The great channel from Venice, view from a boat". He included the camera while the boat he was in was moving and therefore the objective moved. In front of him he saw a boat coming, then the camera passed over a gondola and the house from the shore. The new procedure was to be called travelling and it soon became very popular among operators. Travelling catches the time of the filmic action from the movement of the camera and enlarges the spatial perspective. The Lumiere brothers and their operators discovered the filmic time, the montage in frames and the narrative montage, the travelling and the return of time, the chronical journal, the documentary and the nonfictional film (SADOUL, 1961).

At one of the first projections from "Grand Cafe" the illusionist Georges Melies was also present. After the viewing Melies approached the parent of the inventors and the owner of the camera factory Antoine Lumiere, asking him to sell him a camera for an important sum of money for that period - 10 000 francs. Antoine turned him down, telling him that particular activity does not have any future. Son of a prosperous businessman from whom he inherited a fortune, Melies, being extremely drawn to picture and illusionism, purchased the "Robert Houdin" theatre, established by the famous scammer whose name he was wearing and which had become bankrupt. Melies purchased the device he wanted from London and started imitating the Lumiere brothers, filming scenes on a street and afterwards projecting them among the street numbers. There's nothing special about this until his camera got blocked during one of the filming. Melies fixed the problem and restarted filming. He was very surprised when he noticed that the omnibus present in the frame turned into a hearse. This process of trickery, which will later be called time substitution in the filmic action, aroused Melies's imagination. In October 1896 he demonstrates the first film trickery "The disappearance of a lady in the Robert Houdin theatre". The film lasted a bit more than one minute, a time which opened the path for the art film, where the direction dominates the action, combines the offers of the theatre with those of cinematography, the substitution of time from

the moving images and the change in space. Melies launches some innovative technologies in the cinematographic art: the accelerated and slow motion in the frame, the filming in frames, the double and multiple exposure, the travelling with a trick and others. However, he used neither the misanstage nor the stage, but scenic pictures, where each picture corresponds to some filmic plans, which ignore the perspective and section the frame similar to the small dolls hidden in the Russian toy "Matryoshka", seen in transversal sections, that the eyes cannot reach right away, but they discover them step by step. Unlike the montage of the Lumiere operators, where the frames were glued to each other and the image preserved the logical succession of the news reportage, Melies's montage presented situational changes, changes from one state to the other and this transfers the action in time. Through filming and montage, Melies made a name for himself and his movies represent authentic fairy-tales full of miracles, fantastic stories, some with characters and nature scrupulously manually coloured, frame by frame - all inspired by the works of well-known writers such as Charles Perrault, Jonathan Swift, Jules Verne, Herbert Ge. Welles. Therefore, Melies's cinema moved from the theatrical space to the world of literature and filled the field with filmic non-fiction. Melies rigorously introduced in the cinema the scenery, scenography, actors, costumes, make-up and he combined the theatrical performance with circus tricks, the picture with the photography, real characters with cartoon characters, therefore obtaining what he called "fairy plays". These are immortal fairy tales in pictures, where witches and fairies, mermaids and crows, flying bats and evil spirits, kites and whales, homunculus, princes and warriors, heated boilers, lonely castles, caves with skeletons, underwater caverns with aquatic monsters, defeated kings, ghostly courtships, cosmic projectiles piloted by terrestrial people meet (CALIMAN, 2017).

"I owe everything to him" - said the patriarch of the American cinematography, David Griffith about Melies. This statement contained more truth than its author could imagine. Griffith should have said more precisely: "I owe everything to Lumiere and to Melies", because the appearance of these two individuals triggered

a duel of antitheses to which Griffith, due to his genius, was to become one of the referees. Before getting into cinematography, Griffith had already gained a vast culture, as he was firstly a journalist, then also a firefighter, poet, novelist and metallurgist and he turned from being a stroller into a well-known stage director. At the beginning of the 20th century, American film stage directors occupied unimportant positions, but this was not the case of Griffith. He came to the stage already inspired by Melies's movies and the literary works of Lev Tolstoy, Jack London, Guig de Moapassant, the terror playwright Andre de Gorle, the poet and Parnasse school playwright, Francois Coppee. Cinema historians present Griffith as a god who pulled the film language out of nothingness. He discovered some authentic talents that he united in an important centre of the American film, the Hollywood, a name which refers to the ilex forest, an eternal green plant with red fruits, resembling the mistletoe, which the Romans used as crowns during the Saturnalia, when the Sun was born and the gods were crowned. From the letters and syllabi put into images by Lumiere and Melies, Griffith formed words, interjections, sentences and he made the images flow in cavalcades and time in order to steal away. He uses the directorial cut, discovers the montage, before that, the rhythmic montage, the parallel montage, so that the viewer can witness two events that occur at the same time, values the movements of the camera, large and medium plans, the American plan, long, expressive and emotional frames so that the viewer becomes captive to the film action, its accomplice. Griffith directs stunning mass scenes, builds models that reproduce the original and places them in the natural landscape – he rebuilds history as he sees it and how he wants the other people to understand it. The film "The birth of the nation" changed conceptions and crushed stereotypes. It is the first mute film which lasts for three hours and does not bore the audience. The musical score of the film was commissioned by composer Joseph Breil, who used passages from the works of great titans such as: Beethoven, Liszt, Rossini, Verdi, Caicovsky or Grieg, Wagner. The American president, Woodrow Wilson, ordered the film to be presented at The White House and state people as well as the members

of the diplomatic corps were invited together with their wives. After viewing the film, he noticed: "It is the same if history is created in the light of the lightnings ... It is regrettable that what we see represents a frightening truth" (SADOUL, 1961). The Lumiere brothers, Georges Melies and David Griffith laid the foundations of the modern cinema, created the grammatical structures of the film, established the first connections between the real and filmic time and between the viewer and the image. They represented the beginnings of the documentary and fiction cinema and of the fairy-tale, entertainment and historic film.

3. BEYOND THE MIRACLE OF FILMED IMAGE

The inventions in the field of radio-electronics and the competition between American film producers led to the appearance of the photophone which, at a bankrupt house called "Vitagraph", was presented by a well-known director Alan Cossland – "The jazz singer". It is a melodrama, the story of the life of a Jewish pub singer who ignored family traditions, trying to make a name for himself in the world of music with street songs and trendy areas. "The jazz singer" brought the producers a revenue 7 times higher than the expenses and it represented the triumphal beginning of the sound cinema. While the cinema halls were full of people, personalities of the mute art, such as Chaplin, King, Rene, Clair, Murnau, were sceptical about the future of sound film. Pudovchin, Eisensnstein and Alexandrov, great film masters from the Soviet Union launched a manifest entitled: "The sound future of films". It is a warning of the danger that the sound of cinema art might bring. They admit that mute art is coming to an end, that the use of sounds is desired, that the sound would help films get rid of subtitles and visualised replies, but they rightfully said that the added speech in a filmed scene, like in a theatre, would destroy the general direction of the film and they considered that "the only creative way of using the sound (speech, music, noise) in the development of the film would be to give up the synchronism with the "visual images". According

to Dziga Vertov's position, the appearance of the sound opened a new range of possibilities for the development of documentary film thinking. And in this context, the problem of coincidence or the image and sound mismatch is not important. In the sound revolution, Vertov sees an unlimited potential for the ostentatious use of the sound in everyday life. In his work "From the cinema eye to the radio eye", the artist opts for a single cinematographic audio-visual space. Image and sound have therefore become persuasive means of cinema expression. They did not only produce reverberations for that moment, but they made the flat space of the screen, the game of lights and shadows, accompanied by the adjusted sound, to reflect virtual reality in an audio and visual manner and the relationships between the filmic time and space in order to obtain new connotations, where the image represents the main element of human choice, which subtly opens the path that takes the human being to the fascinated world of the magic and helps him perceive it firstly with the eyes of the heart. The film aesthetician, Marcel Martin, in his work "The cinema language", presented relationships of the individual with the filmic image and time.

The filmic image represents an objective reality, or more precisely some signs of it, the first one being the movement. Psychologically, the human brain perceives the visual and auditive information almost simultaneously. The image is however destined to the sight, the sense which does not "deceive". The fact that the public perceives the filmic image as an objective expression of reality is due to the authenticity of the presented aspect and to trusting the fact that by seeing it the spectator becomes accomplice to a particular event. Therefore, the filmic image represents a suggestive reality and this quality is exploited in order to create the felling of suspense or surprise (SADOUL, 1961).

The actions presented by the filmic image are perceived by the public in real time, meaning the present, regardless of the historical moment in which they were immortalised. The brain assimilates the content of the dynamic images in the same way it perceives an event to which the individual takes part in at the moment of its development. Only afterwards, through judgement, does the brain determine the time

when the action took place on the screen: in the past or in the future. The time: past, present, future is perceived in the filmic image following the rational observations that we do after we decipher the expressions of the filmic language.

The filmic image presents the artistic reality, meaning a selective, formed reality, in other words, a reality aesthetically transformed and not one which precisely corresponds to the facsimile. The most eloquent proof is the composition of the frame. Each filmic image represents a small painted canvas. In structuring the frames, although they have their own specificity, the authors of the filmic image use the laws of painting.

The filmic image has a semantic loading. At its basis we have the significant characteristics of art: to jump over the time intervals which connect events and to omit the unessential ones. The image can therefore obtain, besides its clear and explicit perception, another connotation, an implicit one, which present a hidden, codified meaning that can raise it to the level of symbol.

The filmic image is, in essence, a unitary one. Through its technical nature, it presents to us clear and precise things, but in certain filmic contexts, the concrete image may obtain a symbolic meaning. A simple solitary individual, by uniting the frames, becomes a whole humanity. The filmic image can be compared to the ideogram of the hieroglyphical writing.

The filmic image has capacity, it is voluminous. This idea does not contradict the previous ones, which state that the filmic image is singular and unitary. Each image through its material presence is unique and through its expressive manner it is informative. The image can neither be ambiguous, nor duplicated. The symbol connotation that it possesses does not interfere with its initial purpose. Reality represents a component part of a text. Dialectically, there is a relationship between it and the natural and social environment that surrounds it. The filmic image represents a number of images which move in time and this determines its significance. Two united film images may lead to an associative, implicit message. The audience perceives the message according to the attention with which it has followed the images, to its aesthetic gestures, political convictions, moral norms and prejudices.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The film is an art of synthesis which feeds on literature, dramaturgy, music, architecture, painting and, at the same time, it is a standalone art with a specific language on which the dynamic image and montage are based. The cinema language is triggered by the persistence of the retina and it represents a narcotic for the brain. The brain looks for the illusion of fascination and it enjoys the images that the film offers it. Every individual has his own way of perceiving the filmic messages, but all together are drawn exactly the same to them, because the framing of the film does not only present signs of communication, but complete pictures, which are accessible to the brain without major effort and the spectator's brain full of laziness does nothing but have fun, enjoy the pleasure, enjoy and cry, live the moments of high suspense and regrettable defeats –either separate or together, in order to produce the adrenaline which invades the human body without removing it from the bedsheet.

The screen of the Lumiere brothers gathers people to see a reality in which they believed. However, among captivating paintings, moving faces and the eyes of the beholder, a certain distance was preserved, which also represented a sign for a brain full of emotions, that there, on the screen, is a world which comes over him or, on the contrary, which draws him inside it, and that he, together with his eyes, finds himself in another space than that on screen. The Edison kinetoscope, prior to Lumiere's filming/projection device, introduced every individual to the filmic

action. There were no distances between the projection from the screen of the kinetoscope and the eye of the beholder, the individual entered directly into the action, without any intermediary spaces. The illusional effects of the Edison kinetoscope remained unexplored, because the device was not finished from an engineering point of view. The digital technologies created the 3D VR glasses, a reminiscence of the Edison kinetoscope for virtual reality. Connected to a smartphone they enable the viewing of a virtual, spherical, three-dimensional image, filmed at 360 degrees, from all angles, and perceived as if the spectator was there, meaning that the viewer obtains the illusion of the image hidden behind the frame. This represents the individual's right to get caught in the illusional game, offered by the senses, in order to get the sensation that he is really there, in the filmic action, and his brain will cause more adrenaline, without great efforts. The 360 filming is based on the basic rendering principles of the filmic time and space, established by the classical cinema, because the other ones are accepted neither by the eye, nor by the human brain. The individual, in search of strong sensations, will live the moment and enjoy the illusion and this will take him far away from the real world, leading him into another world, that of the endless illusions.

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