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FEATURES OF COMPOSITIONAL AND COLLAGE CONSTRUCTION OF VIDEO SEQUENCES IN CONTEMPORARY DOCUMENTARY CINEMA

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Abstract

The methodology of the research. To study the specifics of the combination of shots according to the composition and collage structure in contemporary documentary cinema. To identify the patterns of influence of dramaturgical constructions on the viewer's emotional manifestations. To analyse and summarise the main aspects of building a collage documentary with a central narrative component. To identify possible means of sensory impact on the viewer through forms, textures, colours, and editing drama. To prove the importance of making the screen image imaginative and meaningful. To motivate young artists to deepen their knowledge in the context of studying the impact of poetic screen language on the viewer. **The research methodology.** The following scientific methods were used in the study, namely: theoretical – a comprehensive study of the structural structure of the collage film, based on a meticulous analysis of the works of prominent theorists and examples of world cinema, analysis of pictorial, figurative and sensual means of influencing the viewer, as well as psychological and physiological factors of human perception of an audiovisual work; comparative – establishing parallels between the construction of video sequences of different types of contemporary documentaries; practical – modeling. **Scientific novelty.** For the first time, the phenomenon of collage reflection in documentary cinema is analysed, highlighting the tools that influence the viewer through colour drama, collage composition of the video sequence, and image form. The author has studied in depth the meaningfulness of the use of montage constructions that affect the viewer's subconscious and emotional receptors of perception. **Conclusions.** The article examines the specifics of combining shots in accordance with the composition and collage structure in contemporary documentary cinema. The regularities of the influence of dramaturgical constructions on the viewer's emotional manifestations are revealed. The central aspects of the

documentary collage structure are generalised. The instrumental significance of the means of sensory influence on the viewer, in particular, editing, colour tone, shapes and textures, is established. The importance of an in-depth study of the figurative and meaningful screen image is proven. The nature of the viewer's perception of a screen work is analysed.

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Problem statement

The question of finding the proper form to express an idea on the screen has been of interest to many artists throughout the history of cinema. The emotional impact on the viewer, as well as the content and logic of the narrative, are aspects without which any film cannot exist. People perceive and interpret what they see based on their own point of view, experience and intellectual level. However, skilful directors can communicate with the masses through their films, embracing collective emotions, while also paying attention to each individual through narrative and figurative means.

The realisation of an author's idea into an audiovisual work depends directly on several aspects, including colour and editing. The task of any director who chooses the tools of film storytelling is to create an interesting combination of shots and episodes. A contemporary filmmaker can employ specific techniques to influence the viewer, enhancing drama by accentuating a light tone and adding an atmospheric mood to the image. It should be noted that under different lighting conditions, objects within the frame may exhibit varying shades, and the nature of the frame's perception will change accordingly.

Throughout the film, the authors must find a skilful way to capture the viewer's attention. In documentary films, it is

worthwhile to focus on building a meaningful narrative with the help of editing.

Recent research and publications analysis

Johann Wolfgang Goethe (1840) formulated several psychological states related to the perception of colour combinations and studied the influence of colour on the human soul's state.

J. Itten (1973) studied the properties of colours and established associative relationships between them.

P. Shyrman, S. Kotlyar, and A. Suprun-Zhyvodorova (2018) analysed in detail the specifics of the sign-semiotic figurative film language; accurately outlined the probabilities of collage constructions in different types of documentaries (Shyrman, 2019); explored and gave meaning to the concept of the director's solution to screen works (Shyrman and Syz, 2020).

The work 'Sergei Parajanov. Collage. Assemblage. Subject (2013) revealed the phenomenon of Parajanov's collage composition.

V. Skurativskyi and V. Hlushchenko (2023) studied the properties of combining musical and noise components in the dramatic context of an audiovisual work.

Z. Kracauer (1961) highlighted specific formative aspects of the impact of film images on sensory perception.

The issue of accurately using editing techniques was studied by the prominent editor W. Murch (1995).

B. Blok (2008) focused in detail on the selection of tools for the visual structures of the film.

In a comprehensive study of the editing context, S. Katz (1991) confirmed the inexhaustible importance of traditional techniques and methods.

K. Chorna (2020) analysed the transformation of artistic forms and components of Ukrainian docudrama.

O. Bezruchko and V. Bardyn, in a series of in-depth studies (2021, 2022a, 2022b) on the coverage of Boyko heritage on screen, highlighted the advantages and relevance of historical and ethnographic documentaries.

O. Kunderevych, K. Kyrilenko, and O. Beniuk (2021) considered a number of the latest artistic strategies in the immersive and anthropological context.

The purpose of the article. In order to study this issue, it is necessary to investigate the specifics of composition and collage construction in contemporary documentary cinema. The article will solve the following tasks: determine the interdependence of the structural components that form the collage reality; identify the patterns of the viewer's perception of a particular dramatic structure; analyze and summarize the leading aspects of building the pictorial and narrative component of a collage documentary; establish the role of means of influencing the viewer, such as shape, texture, colour, and editing. The importance of being able to give the screen image image-ry and meaning is proven.

Main research material

In the book Sergei Parajanov. Collage. Assemblage. Subject, the words of the

famous director are quoted: 'I was not allowed to make movies – I started making collages. A collage is a compressed film' (Klochko comp., 2013, p.20). Today, no one can forbid a contemporary artist from making an extended video collage and calling it a movie. Such screen works usually lack a fascinating story with amazing characters or much dramatic intertwining. However, each frame of such a film is endowed with a specific imagery inherent in the author. Ultimately, it is worth noting that collage films enable the director to communicate with the viewer subtly and profoundly, telling a story with a distinct vision. While watching such films, a person is left alone with their fantasies and experiences, and it may seem that they find specific meanings on their own.

When focusing on the collage construction of a work, it is essential to consider several crucial structural aspects. One of the main ones is editing.

The perception of documentary reality on the screen primarily depends on human nature and its psychological aspects (Havran and Popova, 2019). Even in everyday life, physiologically and unconsciously, the viewer can edit images around them. In his book *In the Blink of an Eye: A Look at Film Editing*, Hollywood film editor W. Murch (1995, p.67) compares the so-called cut points of a shot to the branches of a tree. He notes: '... one way to identify these branch growth points is to compare them to our blink patterns, which have emphasised the rhythm of our thoughts for tens of thousands, perhaps even millions of years of human history. It is exactly where you want to blink your eyes if you have really been listening closely and need to make a connection' (Murch, 1995, pp.67-68).

Murch (1995, pp.64-69) focuses in detail on aspects of the so-called 'monazoo

in everyday life' and analyses how a person, directing their focus of attention to an object, moves from one magnification to another. The director can employ the same techniques in non-fiction films, which are often based on the nature of human existence.

It should be noted that documentaries have more opportunities for collage plotting than fiction films. Nevertheless, according to the article by O. Bezruchko and V. Hryftsov (2025), 'Documentary Style in Fiction Film', both main types of audiovisual art (fiction – documentary) have mutual influence on each other. Within the framework of the author's idea, the director can logically combine shots, and this truth of life will be interpreted through the screen in a reasoned and justified way for the viewer.

Film theorist Z. Kracauer (1961, p.158) in his book *The Nature of Film. Rehabilitation of Physical Reality* notes: '...cinema reflects physical reality as it is. Under the impression of the striking reality of the film footage, the viewer involuntarily reacts to it in the same way as he would react in everyday life to the material phenomena that are reproduced on the screen'. Kracauer (1961, p.158) emphasises certain aspects of the impact of film images on sensory perception. He emphasises that, existing within the screen, the frames push the viewer to unconsciously perceive their specific structure. Let us examine how a director can influence the emotional perception of their work by employing an unconventional method of combining shots.

In the context of considering historical and ethnographic documentaries, O. Bezruchko and V. Bardyn (2020, p.193) note: 'The means of documentary filmmaking provide an opportunity to visit various ethnographic museums in a short time,

to get acquainted with historical information, to analyse eyewitness accounts, and to form one's own opinion'. To a certain extent, this interpretation can be seen in the projection of most screen works, in particular, photo art projects such as the creative work of the above-mentioned authors 'The Ethnic Language of the Sacred' (Bezruchko and Bardyn, 2021b), or the unique phenomenon of collage films.

Watching the 1969 documentary 'We' by Armenian director Artavazd Peleshian, the viewer has the opportunity to find themselves in quite specific places while watching poetic images: at a construction site, in a square among a large crowd of people, during a funeral, or somewhere in the mountain air. At the same time, the author does not edit the footage in a consistent storytelling way, but rather divides and arranges it throughout the film. Thus, it is the distant associative combination that helps to arouse emotions in the viewer, not the glueing together of two neighbouring images to create a new meaning.

However, not all documentary filmmakers and editors in the world of cinema like this collage reflection of reality. Some believe that the conventional way of stitching together shots on the screen is more effective for the viewer.

The editor S. Katz (1991, p.125) notes in his work 'Cinematography Frame by Frame: Visualisation from Concept to Screen': 'If the rules of comfortable editing do not correspond to the visual solution of the film, the director does not have to follow them'.

In today's world, filmmakers, according to the article by H. Chmil and K. Pshehnychna (2018), 'Film Editing: From Avant-garde Films to Modern Editing Practice', solve the problem of combining shots on the screen in different ways.

Documentary cinema requires authors to reflect everyday life truthfully. However, it is the director's solution to the work that helps to create extraordinary collage plot constructions and to edit in a way that is fascinating for the viewer.

The author of the monograph *The Director's Solution to a Screen Work*, R. Shirman (2019, p.125), discussing different types of documentaries, notes: 'In such films, one can often see a collage construction, when episodes filmed in completely different ways alternate'. The scholar suggests that opposites such as video surveillance, animation, staged episodes, old newsreel footage, archival video footage, on-camera interviews of characters, or expert testimony can be combined in a single work. The authors are not concerned that they seem to be losing the unity of the form. However, each author solves the problem of stylistic combination of different episodes in their own way (Shyrman, 2019, p.125).

In her in-depth study of the transformation of artistic forms of documentary cinema, K. Chorna (2020, p.150) shares a somewhat similar opinion, noting: 'An integral part of the editing of Ukrainian docudramas is the insertion of various photographs, maps, diagrams, tables and other types of infographics, as well as archival documentary video materials (operational footage, surveillance camera footage) into the video sequence – all of these tools are actively used to facilitate the viewer's perception of information, increase the drama and realism of the events being reproduced'.

When studying the introduction of new forms in documentary cinema, it is worth paying attention to the anthropocentric film context, as it is to some extent central to the contemporary screen space (Kotliar and Kuzmenko, 2023). The opin-

ion of O. Kunderevych, K. Kyrylenko and O. Beniuk (2021, p.174) seems to be apt, as they note: 'In the contemporary socio-cultural space, an anthropological reality is being formed that shapes the latest artistic strategies. They are a living and unique experience of creativity, openness, incompleteness, and at the same time responsible human participation in determining the future'.

Even in in-depth video observation of natural phenomena, where we are talking about a possible departure from anthropocentric theory, as stated in the article by H. Chmil and Y. Buriak (2022) 'Human and Nature in Documentary Films', the director is consciously or unconsciously able to give the image a specific humanised imagery. In this case, the film may consist of quite extraordinary shots, such as a snowstorm or, say, dust behind a wardrobe, but an attentive viewer will quickly find their own parallels to reality and will observe these objects as real protagonists. Finally, it is worth noting that observational documentaries with collage video sequences possess a certain ontological sacredness, as this reflection of reality allows the author to prompt the viewer to reflect on and comprehend their own existence more deeply.

The author of the book *In the Blink of an Eye: A Look at Film Editing*, W. Murch (1995, p.142-143), notes: 'The paradox of cinema is that it is most effective when it combines two contradictory elements-the general and the personal-into a kind of collective intimacy. The work itself is unchanged, aimed at an audience of millions, but when it works, it seems as if the film addresses each viewer in a very special way.'

Let us examine how authors can have a direct impact on the viewer's psychophysical state. After all, there are many

options for selecting visual components today (Havran and Botvyn, 2020). The most important thing is what the director wants to convey to his viewers. The image effectively conveys the atmosphere and a particular state of the characters within the frame in a harmonious compositional manner. The texture of a 'grainy' screen will enhance the intimacy of life or transport the viewer to a particular era. At the same time, the choice of a sharply contrasting image can create a heightened perception of the world reproduced on the screen. It is worth noting that the term 'film narrative' can refer not only to the visual aspect of the work, but also to its style and structure.

Thus, Z. Kracauer (1961, p.215), in his work *The Nature of Film. Rehabilitation of Physical Reality* states: – '...any content includes elements of form; any form is also content. Therefore, terms such as comedy, melodrama, and tragedy are legitimately vague; they can indicate both specific content and formal aspects of the named genres, or both. Moreover, the concepts of 'form' and 'content' are undoubtedly based on the properties of the work itself'.

Depending on the story that the director is telling, the content is invested in every shot, every montage, every episode. If the author has a structured story and a precise directorial idea, it will be absolutely accurate and justified in the chosen form. The opinion of R. Shirman and D. Syz (2020, p.79) from the article 'Specifics of the Implementation of the Director's Idea in a Screen Work' is meaningful: 'Original and unexpected editing is possible only when a deep director's intention is laid down in advance in the film.'

However, aspects of screen discourse, such as the nature of the image, the dynamics of objects, and the colour scheme, also play a significant role in in-

fluencing the viewer, as R. Shirman (2019, p.14) notes in his monograph *The Director's Solution to the Screen Work* – 'What director does not know that the screen is, first of all, movement. Both cinema and television require everything to be in motion at a rate of twenty-four or twenty-five frames per second. Trains arrive, steamers sink, police chase bandits. Images of video clips flickered. Even behind the news anchors, the backgrounds with some dynamic image were moving'.

By inertia, the viewer's gaze tends to focus on moving objects, and even in a clearly sustained static image, a person will notice slight breaths, slight fluctuations, and watch the screen action closely.

The visual components of the image should convey the life in the frame. The era or the circumstances in which our characters find themselves can reproduce reality in different ways. However, in every frame of the movie, movement should capture the viewer's attention and lead to suspense.

As B. Blok (2008, p.265) notes in his book *Visual Storytelling: Creating the Visual Structure of Film, TV, and Digital Media*, '...What colours? What type of lighting? What lines and shapes? What lenses will you use? Each shot will have every major visual component. How will you use them? The answer to this question is perspective. The choice of visual components is always based on what the filmmaker wants to evoke in the audience'.

In the context of the impact of documentary images on the viewer, it is worth considering the instrumental importance of colour tone. In his work *The Theory of Colour*, Johann Wolfgang Goethe (1840, p.17) noted that colour is an action of light that evokes emotions. Let us analyse how the viewer, upon seeing the light and shadow patterns of a film, experiences deep emo-

tional responses. Let us assume that the psychological effect of colour is determined by a person's emotional reaction, which is triggered both at the subconscious level and depending on the individual's visual experience. Thus, a person develops conditioned reflexes to a specific tone and associative thinking. When building a visual montage drama, the director should consider the emotional impact of colour, primarily when documenting real life on camera. The viewer will perceive the events in the frame differently depending on the tone and lighting.

Thus, Z. Kracauer (1961, p.137), in his book *The Nature of Film. Rehabilitation of Physical Reality* notes: '...although colour in its influence on the viewer's perception of the screen image largely coincides with music, it cannot replace it. Time has fully proved that colour films need the support of music no less than black-and-white films'.

It is worth noting that the colour of the frame and its compositional component are separate and independent tools of emotional impact, along with music and noise. The specifics of colour processing at the post-production stage, as well as the choice of tinting for individual episodes of the film, directly depend on the author's intention and the director's decision regarding the screen work. It is up to the director to decide whether, for example, he wants to soften the overly tragic events in the frame by using less contrast, light and warm colours. Contemporary documentary filmmakers have all the tools to create colour drama and tone processing to uniquely convey the feelings of the characters (Bezruchko and Manuliak, 2019). The synthesis of their own experience with the analysis of the works of prominent researchers of the nature of film language will help every young artist to master the science of colour.

However, not all researchers of the specifics of the screen language want to give meaning to individual colours and thus create an undeniable emotional and associative feeling in the viewer. To a certain extent, we can agree with B. Block, who noted in his book *Visual Storytelling: Creating the Visual Structure of Film, TV, and Digital Media* that any colour can acquire the meaning of danger, safety, good, evil, virtue, corruption, etc. Although stereotypes of perceiving the meaning of colours confirm the effectiveness of the impact of visual effects on the public, at the same time, this standard use of them is weak and the least interesting (2008, p. 4). Some filmmakers, based on this idea, create a new space of their own, one of their own colour, meaning that it contrasts with the shared associative vision.

The theorist J. Itten (1973, p.129) noted in his work 'The Art of Colour': 'The experiences caused by the perception of colour can penetrate deeply into the brain centres and determine emotional and spiritual perception. It is not by chance that Goethe spoke of the sensual and moral influence of colour'.

Let us analyse the emotional load of the grey colour. Itten (1973, p.21) described the grey middle tone as having calming properties. Additionally, most program interfaces feature a grey background, which makes it easier to view the material and reduces eye strain. Filmmakers, for example, can use this to recreate certain sensual and intensely emotional events in their documentaries more comfortably and delicately. By using black and white images and choosing medium-soft grey halftones during colour correction, authors can convey important, serious events on the screen without traumatising the viewer's psyche.

The theorist Z. Kracauer (1961, p.158) argued that different types of images evoke distinct reactions: some appeal directly to the mind, while others function as symbols. Through the language of montage, the director can evoke strong emotions in the audience. Depending on the idea, this can be enhanced by colour. It is worth noting that it can be not only a sign or symbol, but also a whole system of language. The choice of tone can be contrasting or harmoniously integrated into the plot. As for the processing of documentary footage, the authors can also convey specific meanings by applying a warm or cold tone to the image, or by removing all colours, and presenting reality on the screen in monochrome.

Ukrainian filmmaker R. Shyrman (2019, p.108) notes in his monograph *The Director's Solution to a Screen Work*: 'The director knows that a real documentary needs serious drama'. Sometimes the development of the plot, or the division of episodes by time and mood, is created with the help of colour. In documentaries, authors can convey extraordinary thoughts and lead viewers to emotional experiences by using separate tonal colours in montage phrases. Alternatively, they can outline each of the modal layers with a certain colour.

When embodying history in documentary films, fiction films, experimental films, and films that combine animation, authors strive to evoke the emotions of the audience. Forms and textures become apt tools that help to immerse the viewer in the world of the characters. In his book *Cinematography Frame by Frame: Visualisation from Concept to Screen*, the theorist and editor S. Katz (1991, p.127) urges: 'Create your portraits with the help of texture, lighting, and endlessly

try new variants of form. This does not mean that you should abandon traditional techniques. They are by no means exhausted and can be as rich, striking, and moving as the experimental ones'. Thus, the skill of influencing the viewer can be achieved in the embodiment of various visual structures, so you should feel free to broadcast your ideas.

Conclusions

The process from the birth of an idea to its realisation was important to the classical masters and remains relevant to every follower of the screen world. The courage to employ various collage constructions in documentary cinema depends on the author's determination to realise their idea and speak truthfully to the viewer through the screen. Depending on the idea, the material's variability, and the seriousness of the conversation, the author chooses the most appropriate and effective means of editing.

The specificity of the combination of forms and textures of the visual component of the work is critical in contemporary screen discourse. The randomness of life that a director can capture in a frame can have different effects and evoke particular emotions. Depending on the form in which life is captured, the perception, interpretation and imagery will have a different degree of emotional load.

Defects in the old film, additional manipulations with the camera lens, different work with lighting, colour tone, or even the angle of the person in the frame can significantly affect the perception of the most authentic documentary fragment. Therefore, an artist who chooses a particular form of image should consider all aspects of the impact on the viewer in the context of their reality. An analytical

and conscious approach will enable the author to implement the necessary tools most effectively.

Young artists should learn to control the logic and appropriateness of using a particular technique. In accordance with the correct interpretation and emo-

tional load, the viewer will be ready to take the movie seriously and frankly. Aspects of influence are still analysed and studied in many film schools around the world, and this topic is inexhaustible in its cognitive implications, as the viewer's perspective changes over time.

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**СПЕЦИФІКА КОМПОЗИЦІЙНО-КОЛАЖНОЇ ПОБУДОВИ
ВІДЕОРЕЯДУ В СУЧАСНОМУ ДОКУМЕНТАЛЬНОМУ КІНО****Світлана Котляр^{1а}, Андрій Дацюк^{2а}**

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Анотація

Мета статті – дослідити специфіку поєднання кадрів у композиційно-колажній структурі сучасного документального кіно; виявити закономірності впливу драматургічних конструкцій на емоційні прояви глядача; проаналізувати й узагальнити основні аспекти побудови документального фільму-колажу з провідним зображально-оповідальним складником; встановити можливі засоби чуттєвого впливу форм, фактур, кольору та монтажно-драматургії на глядача; довести важливість надання екранному зображенню образності та змістовності; мотивувати молодих митців до поглиблення знань у контексті дослідження впливовості поетичної екранної мови на глядача. **Методологія дослідження.** Використано такі наукові методи: теоретичний – полягає в комплексному вивченні структурності фільму-колажу на основі аналізу праць видатних теоретиків і прикладів світового кінематографа, дослідженні зображальних, образних і чуттєвих засобів впливу на глядача, а також психологічних і фізіологічних чинників людського сприйняття аудіовізуального твору; порівняльний – для встановлення паралелей між побудовами відеореяду різних типів сучасних документальних фільмів; практичний – для моделювання конкретних прикладів поєднання кадрів на екрані. **Наукова новизна.** Уперше проаналізовано феномен колажного відображення дійсності в документальному кіно, виокремлено інструменти впливу на глядача за допомогою колірної драматургії, колажно-композиційної побудови відеореяду та форми зображення. Поглиблено досліджено змістовність застосування монтажних конструкцій, що впливають на підсвідомість глядача та його емоційні реакції. **Висновки.** У статті досліджено специфіку поєднання кадрів у композиційно-колажній структурі сучасного документального кіно. Виявлено закономірності впливу драматургічних конструкцій на емоційні прояви глядача. Узагальнено ключові аспекти побудови документального фільму-колажу. Встановлено значущість засобів чуттєвого впливу на глядача, зокрема монтажу, колірної тональності, форм і фактур. Доведено важливість поглибленого опрацювання образного та змістовного компонентів екранного зображення. Проаналізовано особливості сприйняття глядачем екранного твору.

Ключові слова: форма; колаж; композиція; колір; драматургія; монтаж; кіно; кадр; режисер

