Short Films: Dispersive Effects of Clip Thinking

Evgeny Kamardin

Master's thesis in Digital Culture

Department of Art and Culture Studies

Faculty of Humanities

University of Jyväskylä, Finland

JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

Faculty: Faculty of Humanities	Department: Department of Art and Culture Studies
Author: Evgeny Kamardin	
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Abstract:

The New Media have a vast influence on human mind and its cognitive functions. Clip thinking is a state of perception, knowledge and, therefore, consciousness that is formed by the perceptual patterns based on deconstruction of narratives. Practically, the main symptoms of clip thinking are the following: the lack of concentration while dealing with narratives, the incline to multitask work and random access to the information as well as an urge for immediate answers and the frustration if such an answer is impossible to get. Clip thinking is based on the database logic as an opposite to narrative. The present thesis discusses the clip thinking in terms of New Media theory of Lev Manovich and as an attribute of a post-human being. Finally, the research investigates how the clip thinking patterns are expressed in short films by means of cinematic montage. The classic works of Pudovkin and Eisenstein together with contemporary studies by Bordwell and others researchers are employed for discussing the montage techniques. The selection of five award-winning short movies is analyzed according to three criteria: (1) the continuity of film narrative, (2) the continuity and clarity of film space, (3) the frequency of cuts and the temporal ellipses and (4) the graphic and semantic relations between adjacent shots.

Keywords: digital culture, cognition, montage, narrative

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Tiivistelmä:

Uusmedialla on suuri vaikutus ihmismieleen ja sen kognitiivisiin toimintoihin. Klippiajattelu on havainnon ja tiedon tila, ja siten, tietoisuus, joka muodostuu havaintokyvyn rakenteista, jotka perustuvat narratiivien dekonstruktiolle. Käytännössä, klippiajattelun tärkeimmät oireet ovat seuraavat: keskittymisongelmat narratiiveja käsiteltäessä, taipumus tehdä useita asioita yhtä aikaa ja hakea tietoa satunnaisesti, sekä tarve välittömille vastauksille ja turhautuminen tällaisten vastausten puuttuessa. Klippiajattelu perustuu narratiivien sijaan tietokantojen logiikkaan. Tämä tutkielma tarkastelee klippiajattelua Lev Manovichin uusmedian teorian avulla, ergodisena ilmiönä ja uudenlaisen inhimillisen olemassaolon ominaisuutena. Lopuksi, tutkielma tarkastelee miten klippiajattelun muotoja ilmaistaan lyhytelokuvissa montaaseilla. Pudovkinin ja Eisensteinin klassisia tekstejä ja Bordwellin ja muiden tutkijoiden nykyisiä tutkimuksia käytetään montaasitekniikoiden tarkasteluun. Viittä palkkittua lyhytelokuvaa analysoidaan kolmen kriteerin perusteella: (1) elokuvan narratiivin jatkuuvus, (2) elokuvan tilan jatkuvuus ja selkeys, (3) leikkausten esiintymistiheys ja ajalliset ellipsit ja (4) vierekkäisten otosten graafinen ja semanttinen suhde.

Asiasanat: digitaalinen kulttuuri, kertomus, kognitio, montaasi

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Chapter 1. Introduction.

1.1. Preface

On December 28, 1895 a glorious page of the history was written in the Parisian Grand Café: brothers Auguste and Louis Lumière have chosen this place for the first public movie screening ever. The screening program for that momentous evening consisted of ten films, including Lumiere's first film *La Sortie de l'Usine Lumière à Lyon* (Workers Leaving the Lumiere Factory). Some of the movies shown, su ch as *Repas de bébé* (Baby's Breakfast) or *Le Saut à la couverture* (Jumping Onto the Blanket), could probably earn a couple of millions watches on YouTube nowadays considering our present-day common sense notion of amateur video. However, on the day of screening the Lumiere brothers did a much harder job than just pressing an 'upload' button: each film was around 17 meters long even though the temporal length varied from 38 to 49 seconds.

The commercial importance and the very definition of a short film have been changing together with the technological advance of the cinema. Being dominant in 1920's, the short film form was defeated by feature films a decade later. At the same time the short film never ceased to be a cornerstone of the cinema art; none of the film directors avoided making short films during their early cinema experience. The short film is not only a convenient training ground for filmmakers, it is also a separate genre with its specific rules that are stricter than it may seem. For this reason the shorts are litmus papers for a film director: they test the filmmaker's ability to construct an inner volume in the artistic realm. It could be more difficult to express a finished idea if you have only a few minutes of the short movie at your disposal instead of two hours of the feature film.

What is the short film today? The American Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences defines it as "an original motion picture that has a running time of 40 minutes or less,

including all credits". Of course, this definition is a vague one and neither touches this genre's social and commercial significance nor classifies the vast amount of cinema types can be described as a 'short film'. On the other hand, the short film is a length-based category which cannot have a more specific definition; it is almost impossible to include all the sub-genres and sub-divisions in it and any detailed definition will become obsolete quickly since we live in a digital world with its fast pace of development. But what can be said with certainty is that the short film undergoes a commercial revival at the last three decades. Perhaps, it started with the rise of MTV and the contemporary style music video. The short video production became a multimillion industry. Later the Internet took up the initiative and short video moved from MTV (which became more reality-show oriented) to the stream-video web-sources such as YouTube, embodying the ideology of Web 2.0. Nowadays short film form is employed in amateur home video production, music, advertising industry and, certainly, as an art form which is promoted through festivals.

The international short film festivals are becoming more and more popular worldwide. For example, the largest world's festival of such kind, the Tropfest[1], started in 1993 as a short film screening for 200 people in the Tropicana cafe in Sydney, Australia, not unlike the Lumiere brothers event a century earlier. Tropfest 2011 Australia reached a national audience of approximately 1,000,000 people (not including the internet); needless to say that by today Tropfest has spread on many other countries gathering more and more international spectators.

The recently emerged short film festivals show an interesting tendency towards promotion of so-called 'short shorts'. The International Festival of Very Shorts, created in 1999, deals with "Films of less than 3 minutes, to let you discover the best and above all *the shortest* of the audiovisual trends from all over the world"[2], which is not completely true since Filminute festival, founded in 2005, promotes and awards even shorter movies, no longer than 1 minute. The newest festivals bring us back to the early Lumiere's length standards, or even exceed

1 http://tropfest.com/home/

2 http://www.trescourt.com/?page=en_home

them – there are the Irish 15 Second Film Festival which is "a touring roadshow of micro-short film masterpieces"[3] and various 3-second movie contests such as one provided by Surfrider Foundation[4].

Does it really mean that the cinema history makes a circle and we are back to the late XIX standards? Apparently, no. The most important thing about the short film revival is the crucial change in the way the shorts are produced. Editing, narration style, image framing – everything was modified for the purpose of adapting short films for the digital era. In comparison to early samples, the contemporary short films can be described as chaotically edited, employing non-linear narration and performing quick frame changing. Consequently, watching such kind of films require the spectators to use new *perceptive* strategies. These strategies imply an ability to switch attention swiftly and avoid concentrating on long narratives.

1.2. Hypothesis and research goals.

The theory is that the short film format together with other New Media forms has brought up a new system of thinking and sense-making. An ability to analyse facts and to find the connection between them is depressed; the world is generally perceived as a mosaic of discrete events and images. The human mind is getting used to rapid changes of the images and, unable to withstand the continuous narrative, demands for more and more new images. Finally, the mind has a tendency to losing an ability to gain systematic knowledge. Such a phenomenon can be defined as "clip thinking"; referring to the psychological term "fragmentary thinking" which describes a type of mental pathology. In present Master's thesis I am planning to conceptualize the term "clip thinking" and to find some evidence of its existence in the consciousness of contemporary audience by means of short films. Of course, this is still a hypothesis; consequently, the results of the research are not obvious and

3 http://www.15secondfilmfestival.com/about/

4 http://wwd.surfrider.org/photos/

predictable.

The problem of disciplinary framework of this work is rather acute. The short movie is a subject of film studies (as a sub-discipline of media studies) and the “clip thinking” as well as all other types of thinking lies in the field of psychology. Media studies are in some way cultural studies; and Mikko Lehtonen in his article “Spaces and Places of Cultural Studies” speculates on anti-disciplinary nature of cultural studies. “Anti-disciplinary” in this respect can mean “multidisciplinary”, since cultural studies try to envelop a lot of disciplines simultaneously. However, I always regarded media studies as a separate discipline. If we admit media studies to be a discipline, the subject matter of the present thesis requires a cross-disciplinary approach: I will try to investigate the psychological aspects in terms of media studies and digital culture.

1.3. Thesis outline

My research strategy involves dividing the main body of the thesis into five chapters. The current chapter offers the hypothesis, the research strategies and discusses the methodology together with potential problems related to the research. The second chapter is dedicated to the actual conceptualization of clip thinking phenomenon: it is necessary to describe the “symptoms” of it and to answer the question “what the clip thinking is?”. Then follows the analysis of clip thinking in terms of keystone digital culture works – as a language of New Media (Lev Manovich) and as a post-human attribute (N. Katherine Hayles). The chapter aims to integrate the potential phenomenon into the academic framework and is based on the interpretative analysis of the most prominent works related to the subject.

The third chapter is focused on conceptualizing the clip thinking phenomenon is terms of film studies; or, more precisely, montage studies. The classic works of Pudovkin and Eisenstein are employed for this task together with contemporary studies of Bordwell and other

theorists. We suppose that the short movies (clips) are subordinated to the same logic and philosophy as all the New Media and this logic may lead to the clip thinking patterns. In order to reveal this logic and understand how short movies can influence the spectator's perceptive strategies, the analysis of contemporary award-winning short movies is conducted. The fourth chapter includes the discussion of analysis' results on the ground of the theory provided in previous chapters. The aim is to reveal regularities in the montage strategy of the short films and demonstrate practically in what way it might contribute to clip thinking. The conclusion summarizes the knowledge elaborated through the present thesis and suggests the potential directions for the further research.

1.4. Methodology & potential problems

The study generally employs qualitative approach. It seems to be reasonable even though I am far from the ideology of qualitative purism. From the first sight, the mixed method research could be the most suitable solution: as it is stated by R. Burke Johnson and Anthony J. Onwuegbuzie, "mixed methods research should, [...], use a method and philosophy that attempt to fit together the insights provided by qualitative and quantitative research into a workable solution"[5]. The theoretical study is more reliable when it is supported with empirical observations on the phenomenon as well as the practical research experiments and the following quantitative analysis. However, the specifics of the theme makes us focusing on the qualitative solutions: making a proper quantitative research exceeds the limitations of the present thesis. The potential quantitative research might investigate if people nowadays perceive the clip video in an easier and more natural way than traditionally edited films. Investigating the perception strategies might involve focus-group experiments with detailed interviews. However, considering the limitation of the present thesis we concentrate on the qualitative study – leaving the space for further research on the topic.

5 Johnson, Burke R. ja Onwuegbuzie, Anthony J.,. Mixed Methods Research. A Research Paradigm Whose Time Has Come. Educational Researcher, 7:33, 2004., p.16

The data collection methods are traditional for a theoretical qualitative study: the research requires using the already existing materials, including books, academic articles and other studies in digital culture, film studies, psychology and cognitive linguistics together with pedagogical studies on 'digital natives'. Popular science magazine articles describing the influence of digital technologies on human mind are also useful; even though they cannot be used as a reliable source of analytical deductions, the popular articles are informative in terms of observations. Finally, one of the most important parts of the research data are the short films. In my study I am going to analyze the films-participants of the international festivals such as Future Shorts, Tropfest and Filminute. In my opinion, the award-wining short films must be given a priority since the award means that the film is appreciated by the audience and thus has a stronger affect on it.

The data analysis methodology involves grounded theory, discourse analysis and hermeneutic analysis. The grounded theory is a proper method since the aim of the study is to conceptualize the clip thinking phenomenon through exploring empirical and theoretical data on a topic. My understanding of the grounded theory method is closer to the Glaserian school's one, which:

> takes a more social scientific approach, emphasizing a unified "coding paradigm" developed by the researcher and applied systematically to the study of causal relationships. In addition, the Glaserian school embraces paradigm development using all data (ex., survey data and other quantitative data), not just qualitative data (ex., interviews).[6]

In fact, the grounded theory is a broad methodological body and needs to be specified in terms of the present study. Firstly, a discourse analysis of the literature will be performed; it is necessary to explore the discourse of clip thinking involving different frameworks: cognitive linguistics, digital culture, film studies, etc.

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6 Garson, G. David. Grounded Theory. Quantitative Research in Public Administration. USA: North Carolina State University, 2011. <http://faculty.chass.ncsu.edu/garson/PA765/grounded.htm>

Since the research deals with the perceptive strategies of human mind and the cognitive science in general, it could be a good idea to employ phenomenographical and hermeneutic methods. Phenomenography fits into the research because the clip thinking concept describes the different ways people experience the reality. However, even though phenomenographical approach seem to fit into the methodology, we must avoid the usage of it – for the same reason that we declined the quantitative methods. MaryKay Ogrill notes that "phenomenographers do not claim that their research results represent truth; however, they do claim that their results are useful"[7]. As we already mentioned, in order to gather enough personal interpretations for a statistically significant result, we need to exceed the limitations of the present thesis. Instead, we would rather interpret the existing theories in order to support our concepts and illustrate them with interpreting the short movies we analyze; it is the practical application of hermeneutic approach in the present thesis.

The analysis of the short films includes the study of the film's narratives but it is incorrect to name it the 'narrative analysis', since in conventional terms, narrative analysis has a purpose to identify the stories told about the researched phenomenon and the stories representing the phenomenon in culture and society. In the present thesis, the selection of five short movies rather undergoes a close reading. Roy Johnson points out several levels of close reading:

- **Linguistic** reading is largely *descriptive*. [...]
- **Semantic** reading is *cognitive*. [...]
- **Structural** reading is *analytic*. [...]
- **Cultural** reading is *interpretive*. [...][8]

In context of the clip thinking theme, we are mostly interested in linguistic and structural

7 Orgill, MaryKay. Phenomenography. USA: University of Nevada, 2009. <http://www.minds.may.ie/~dez/phenom.html>

8 Johnson, Roy. What is Close Reading? UK: Mantex, 2004. <http://www.mantex.co.uk/2009/09/14/what-is-close-reading-guidance-notes/>

reading. The plan of analysis is elaborated in the chapter about montage studies: the analysis itself is focused on the structure of montage in short movies and the expressive means of the film that influence the spectator's perception. In other words, we are also interested in cinematic language. The analysis is followed by the discussion section that interprets the results in terms of digital culture theories and montage studies.

Chapter 2. Conceptualizing the phenomenon.

The aim of this chapter is to provide a notion of clip thinking and conceptualize this phenomenon in details. As already mentioned, the accent will be made on cross-disciplinarity of this research; first of all, the most significant attributes of the clip thinking will be discovered. For this purpose the chapter will involve the field of cognitive science together with the notions of 'knowledge', 'cognition', 'narrative' and 'perception'. Then the phenomenon will be discussed from the point of view of theories of Digital Culture. For example, Lev Manovich's ideas on the nature of the language of New Media are also essential in this respect since clip thinking is possibly shaped through the interaction between human and media. Finally, Katherine N. Hayles' post-human concept can be considered as the central part of the digital culture framework for my research since the clip thinking can be regarded as one more characteristic of the posthuman being.

2.1. Description & observations on the clip thinking.

Since the subject matter of this research is a range of strategies which human mind employs to make sense of the world around, there are some concepts that should be discussed before we turn to the clip thinking itself. These concepts are “knowledge”, “perception” and “narrative” and they are often mentioned in tight connection to each other.

Perception is usually understood as a completely automatic process. If your sense organs are fully functional, the information around (sounds, odours, colors, shapes, etc.) is read without your conscious control. Rene Descartes noted: “I was conscious that the ideas were presented to me without my consent being required, so that I could not perceive any object, however desirous I might be, unless it were present to the organ of sense; and it was wholly out of my

power not to perceive it when it was thus present”[9]. Perhaps, it is a defensive mechanism developed through evolution: the human should perceive as much information as possible to avoid the threats of the environment. The perceived information is stored at the mind as *knowledge*.

What is much more interesting is the process of adopting the information before it becomes knowledge. The classic point of view does not ascribe any importance to this adoption – it is not seen as an active process at all. As British psychology researcher Richard L. Gregory states,

> Philosophy and science have traditionally separated intelligence from perception, vision being seen as a passive window on the world and intelligence as active problem-solving. It is a quite recent idea that perception, especially vision, requires intelligent problem-solving based on knowledge[10].

This observation is proved by Descartes who distinguishes between imagination and pure intellection (imaginatio et intellectio pura); according to his opinion, the former requires “a special effort of mind” whereas the latter occurs without any exertions. However, Gregory provides an interesting example of the face mask illusion. When a mask is rotated and shown to one's eyes with its hollow side it “cheats” the brain and still appears to be convex. This experiment proves that the mind does not just read the information by vision but also processes it with some specific algorithm. This process (even though subconscious and not actively controlled) exists and allows optical illusions. Gregory assumes that this illusion takes place because the mind got used to the fact that the face must be convex rather than hollow. So, the perception is closely tightened to the knowledge the person already has:

> In the account given here, perception depends very largely on

9 Descartes, Rene. Meditations on First Philosophy (Meditation VI), 1641. Trans. John Veitch, 1901. <http://filepedia.org/files/Descartes%27%20Meditations%20on%20First%20Philosophy.pdf>

10 Richard L Gregory, Knowledge in perception and illusion. UK: University of Bristol, 1997., p.1

> knowledge (specific 'top-down' and general 'sideways' rules), derived from past experience of the individual and from ancestral, sometimes even prehuman experience.[11]

Here we come to a point which is essential for the clip thinking concept: the human mind uses some patterns for perception; and these patterns emerge in the knowledge. Consequently, the perceptual models are not only innate – they could be learned and they are constantly shaped by the environment which is different for the contemporary human and the human a century ago.

There is one more term which should be taken into consideration in a discussion on perceptual models; the term is "narrative". In this respect it would be interesting to address the French theorist Jean-Francois Lyotard and his Pragmatics of Narrative Knowledge. Lyotard provides a broader basis under the notions of knowledge and narrative: "But what is meant by the term knowledge is not only a set of denotative statements, far from it. It also includes notions of "knowhow," "knowing how to live," "how to listen" [savoir-faire, savoir-vivre, savoir-ecouter]"[12] and later in the text: "Narration is the quintessential form of customary knowledge, in more ways than one"[13]. As it follows from Lyotard's concept, the knowledge is a universal tool for making denotative, prescriptive and evaluative utterances (in contrary to the notions of learning and science). In fact, the knowledge organizes the society. As for the narrative, it is a form of existence and transmission of the knowledge; the most ancient, innate and natural one. In primitive societies the narrative had a regulatory function, it allowed "the society in which they are told, on the one hand, to define its criteria of competence and, on the other, to evaluate according to those criteria what is performed or can be performed within it"[14].

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11 Richard L Gregory, Knowledge in perception and illusion. UK: University of Bristol, 1997., p.5

12 Lyotard, Jean-Francois; Post-Modern Condition: A Report on Knowledge. USA: University of Minnesota Press, 1984, p.18

13 Ibid., p.19

14 Ibid., p.20

The society was developing and obtaining more and more complicated structure. However, the form of narrative as the most convenient form of organization of knowledge remained. Perception through the narrative is ideal in terms of logic: it refers to the relation of cause and effect as well as structures the information through temporal and spatial framework. Narrative also provokes analytical thinking: mind is obliged to make the conclusions out of cause-effect relations and gains an ability to continue the narrative according to the rules learned from it. Moreover, organizing the information as a chain of units provides an integral picture of the described subject. Under certain conditions it is possible to claim that there is no discourse without the narrative. Here I understand discourse in a wider social science meaning – as a term describing a formal way of thinking that can be expressed through language, a social boundary that defines what can be said about a specific topic. On the other hand, if we investigate the Foucauldian definition of discourse – an entity of sequences, of signs, in that they are enouncements (*énoncés*) – the narrative stops being the necessary condition for the discourse since the signs and sequences may be connected in a non-narrative way. In the following chapters we will discuss some other forms of existence and transmission of knowledge.

It is necessary to have a well-composed definition of the narrative. I prefer a rather simple one provided by Todd Wilkens et al.: "We define narrative as a chain of events related by cause and effect occurring in time and space and involving some agency"[15]. This definition includes the most essential attributes of the narrative. However, for the needs of this research I would like to introduce a narrower term of *consecutive narrative* which is a chain of events *placed in a consecutive order* related by cause and effect occurring in time and space and involving some agency. This term-specification is needed to make a difference with the non-consequtive narratives that allow the more independent order of the events even though they are still bonded with the causal relations. Apparently, not all the stories usually go from the beginning to the logical end; sometimes new story lines inside the main narrative appear, or the main narrative line is inverted. Such types of narrative cannot be called consecutive.

15 Wilkens, Todd, et al. The Role of Narrative in Understanding Digital Video: An Exploratory Analysis. USA: Proceedings of the ASIST Annual Meeting 40: 323-329, 2003., p.2

Now, after we clarified the notions of knowledge, perception and narrative we can try to conceptualize the clip thinking itself. The term 'clip thinking' was coined by Russian postmodernist philosopher Fedor Girenok, and it seems to be suitable to introduce him in brief. His works are not much translated; probably, because his ideas are hardly integrated into habitual paradigms. He calls his paradigm 'archeoavangardism' rather than postmodernism and he is known for his claims for reforming the philosophy as a science because classic philosophic methods are obsolete nowadays. As for his notion of clip thinking, there is an ambiguity in terminology; avoiding the clear definition, he uses this term in two general meanings. As Girenok points out in his interview “I call it the space of everyday freedom”,

> European culture is built on an evidential system. Russian culture – since its roots are Byzantine – on a system of demonstration. And we brought up in ourselves (perhaps, after Damaskin) the understanding of the images. We formed not a conceptual thinking but rather a clip thinking.[16]

In my opinion, here Girenok mentions the concept that is usually called creative, or figurative, thinking; in psychology this type of thinking exists together with the conceptual thinking and can be dominant or subordinate depending on which cerebral hemisphere is more active. Creative or figurative thinking is not what we will imply under 'clip thinking' in the present thesis. However, in his article “Listen and Be Silent: How the Absurd Created the Human Being” Girenok states:

> Under high pace of the virtual life the psychics fails, the speech is confused, the language disorients and the consciousness becomes clipped. The number of the unmotivated actions increases. The

16 Гиренок, Федор. Я называю это пространством бытовой свободы. Интервью с Федором Румянцевым, Религия в России, январь 2002. <http://www.fedorgirenok.narod.ru/rr.htm> Translation from Russian is mine – Evgeny Kamardin.

> possibility of the thought's appearance becomes insufficient because the thought used to activate the images which were not connected to the perception of the existence. [...] The narrowing of the field of thought leaves the interstices which are filled with the images.[17]

Such an interpretation allows to transfer the notion of clip thinking from the ethnocultural field to the sphere of media studies. Considering the fact that I depart significantly from Girenok's original concept of thinking, I took the responsibility of replacing the term 'clip consciousness' from the citation above with 'clip thinking' because the consciousness seems to be a complicated and versatile entity which is not possible to describe in its deepness with the single word 'clip'. I would rather introduce the thinking as an attribute of the consciousness; and the 'clip thinking' is one of the possible models. So, it follows from the Girenok's conclusions that the high pace of virtual life leads to disorientation of thinking and replacing thoughts with the images. The vast amount of information circulates through multiple streams of the new media. As we proved earlier in the chapter, the human mind can not stop perceiving the information which flows to sense organs – it is against its primary purpose of having the complete picture of environment. Therefore, our mind has no other choice but to adopt his perceptual strategies to the broader stream of information.

Moreover, the new media including the hypertext and short videos have a tendency of introducing the information in a fragmented way whereas the human mind is able to record the perceptual patterns. What could be the symptoms of the new way of thinking? The American writer Nicholas Carr notices, that his

> mind would get caught up in the narrative or the turns of the argument, and I'd spend hours strolling through long stretches of prose. That's rarely the case anymore. Now my concentration often starts to drift after two or three pages. I get fidgety, lose the thread, begin looking for something else to do. [...] The deep reading that

17 Гиренок, Федор. Слушай и молчи. Как абсурд создал человека. НГ EX LIBRIS №38, октябрь 2007. <http://fedorgirenok.narod.ru/absurd4.htm>

> used to come naturally has become a struggle[18].

Carr connects this malfunction of his ability to concentrate with the fact that he started to search the Internet a lot. The writer also quotes the report of scholars from University College London who conducted the study of online research habits and discovered that

> users are not reading online in the traditional sense; indeed there are signs that new forms of "reading" are emerging as users "power browse" horizontally through titles, contents pages and abstracts going for quick wins.[19]

When reading like this, the ability to interpret the text in a rich way and making sophisticated interconnections is depressed. As it follows from Carr's article, one of the reasons for it could be a constant availability of any text you are looking for; merely speaking – why straining the mind and memory if I can access the information online at any time? But I assume the most significant reason is the fact that online hypertext provides the information through small portions separated by hyperlinks; one can not avoid traveling through hyperlinks while searching the internet. The information is clipped even if it is a text, not a video.

The concept of the clip thinking can also be illustrated with the studies on 'Digital natives', or 'N-Generation', who are the people born after 1980 and surrounded by digital technology environment since early childhood. Here it is useful to note that 1981 was the first year of MTV broadcast and the Internet Protocol Suite (TCP\IP) was standardized in 1982 giving birth to the World Wide Web concept. The passionate theorist of digital native studies Marc Prensky notices: "Today's students think and process information fundamentally differently from their predecessors […] we can say with certainty that their thinking patterns have changed"[20]. Standing aback from the acute discussions of whether the educational system

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18 Carr, Nicholas. Is Google Making Us Stupid? www.theatlantic.com. Atlantic Magazine. July-August 2008. <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2008/07/is-google-making-us-stupid/6868/>

19 Ibid.

20 Prensky, Marc. Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants, On the Horizon. MCB University Press, Vol. 9 No. 5,

should be reformed for digital natives or not, we will try to understand what is exactly meant by the brand new thinking patterns.

Firstly, the digital native theory critics Sue Bennett et al. referring to Sutherland-Smith's research of students' Internet searching strategies point out the 'symptoms' similar to these described by Nicholas Carr: “Sutherland-Smith (2002) reported that many [students] were easily frustrated when not instantly gratified in their search for immediate answers and appeared to adopt a ‘snatch and grab philosophy”[21]. However, I assume the most interesting 'symptoms' in case of digital natives are the inclination to multitask work and random access to the information:

> Digital Natives are used to receiving information really fast. They like to parallel process and multi-task. They prefer their graphics *before* their text rather than the opposite. They prefer random access (like hypertext). They function best when networked.[22]

As we can observe, these 'symptoms' do not help with the perception of consecutive narratives. The new perceptive strategies imply reading the narrative not as a consecutive chain of events but rather as an aggregate of the information units that could be connected unconditionally; such a strategy is a metaphor for the clip. The parts of narrative can be perceived simultaneously, in the random order, mixing different narratives or in any other possible way. The final body of information which is received by the mind could have a form of non-consecutive narrative or not a narrative at all. Certainly, this fact would have an influence on the knowledge which is formed with the information.

Trying to find a proper definition for the clip thinking, I faced a small confusion. Even

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October 2001., p.1

21 Bennett, Sue et al. The ‘digital natives’ debate: A critical review of the evidence. British Journal of Educational Technology 39(5) 2008: 775–786., p.781

22 Prensky, Marc. Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants, On the Horizon. MCB University Press, Vol. 9 No. 5, October 2001., p.2

though I think to be inadequate describing such a versatile entity as consciousness with the word 'clip', it is still necessary to highlight the influence of clip thinking on the consciousness. I decided to define the term through two layers of meaning. In a narrow sense, *clip thinking* is a perceptual pattern based on the deconstruction of narratives. In a wider sense, it is a state of perception, knowledge and, therefore, consciousness which is formed by this perceptual pattern.

It appears that the new perceptual pattern could have both positive and negative consequences. On the one hand, "multitasking may not be as beneficial as it appears, and can result in a loss of concentration and cognitive 'overload' as the brain shifts between competing stimuli"[23]. It would be the most obvious result of clip thinking: lack of concentration prevents the mind from understanding long consecutive narratives (the notion of 'what is long' varies) and the cognitive overload impedes construction of consistent knowledge.

On the other hand, Don Tapscott states:

> N-Geners assess and analyze facts-a formidable and ever-present challenge in a data galaxy of easily accessible information sources. But more important, they synthesize. They engage with information sources and other people on the Net and then build or construct higher level structures and mental images[24].

It seems to be a controversial question if the clip thinking constructs the 'higher level' or 'damaged' mental structures. Perhaps, it depends on the reference point – what kind of mental structure – classic or new one – is c or the adaptation in the digital era, it has a right to be regarded as progressive.

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23 Bennett, Sue et al. The 'digital natives' debate: A critical review of the evidence. British Journal of Educational Technology 39(5) 2008: 775–786., p.779

24 Tapscott, Don. Growing Up Digital: The Rise of the Net Generation. USA: McGraw-Hill, 1998. <http://www.ncsu.edu/meridian/jan98/feat_6/digital.html>

2.2. Languages of New Media

One of the claims of the present thesis is that the clip thinking was brought up together with the new media. Therefore, it would be a good idea to address Lev Manovich with his "Language of New Media" in order to point out why new media influence the perceptive patterns of the mind. Manovich, as well as many other new media theorists, builds a significant part of his ideas around cinema; in this section we will intentionally avoid focusing on this particular medium only to discuss it more thoroughly in chapter 3. In the current section we would rather try to gather the universal attributes of new media which allow the clip thinking to emerge.

First of all, we need to identify where exactly the old media ends and the new media starts. In the beginning of his book Manovich makes an attempt to distinguish between old and new media. He points out five principles new media must possess. These are (1) numerical representation – media being composed of digital code; (2) modularity – the fractal structure of new media; (3) automation – reproduction through algorithms; (4) variability – media can exist in potentially infinite versions; and (5) transcoding – transfer between cultural categories and concepts. Among these principles modularity and transcoding are applicable for understanding the clip thinking concept.

According to Manovich, modularity implies a splittable structure of the object on different scales:

> Media elements, be they images, sounds, shapes, or behaviors, are represented as collections of discrete samples (pixels, poligons, voxels, characters, scripts). These elements are assembled into larger-scale objects but continue to maintain their separate identities [25].

25 Manovich, Lev. The Language of New Media. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2001., p.30

A remark should be made: Manovich is not accurate in describing the media structure as 'fractal' since pixel is obviously not a reduced copy of the whole image. Nevertheless, the modularity is widely considered to be a characteristic which roughly separates digital media from analogous. Certainly, the idea of modular structure is not an invention of XX century and new media. The natural philosophy of atomism was developed in several ancient traditions; later, after Middle Ages the interest in atomism and corpuscularianism as scientific concepts was renewed. It is interesting that the atomic-molecular theory was officially approved on Karlsruhe Congress of chemists in 1860 – the epoch of such significant inventions as Babbage's analytical engine and early cinematic devices (Zoopraxiscope); the word 'photography' was also coined in 1839 by the English scientist and inventor John Herschel.

The more scientific progress was influencing the media, the more modularity was becoming a key media's principle. Even the cinema can be regarded as consisting of a number of samples – frames; however, the cinema was meant to be a sequence rather than a modular structure (at least, it was true for the early cinema until the particular period).

The modular structure of new media made possible the wide spreading of the new form of informational organization which Manovich called the 'database logic':

> Many new media objects do not tell stories; they do not have a beginning or end; in fact, they do not have any development, thematically, formally, or otherwise that would organize their elements into sequence. Instead, they are collections of individual items, with every item possessing the same significance as any other[26].

In previous section we discussed that clip thinking is incompatible with the consecutive

26 Manovich, Lev. The Language of New Media. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2001., p.218

narratives. However, the described perceptive patterns seem to fit perfectly with the database logic of storing information. As Manovich states later in the text,

> … the database represents the world as a list of items, and it refuses to order this list. In contrast, a narrative creates a cause-and-effect trajectory of seemingly unordered items (events). Therefore, database and narrative are natural enemies. […] each claims an exclusive right to make meaning out of the world[27].

Similarly, Katja Franko Aas writes: "The database is a medium for storing and organizing information. And as mentioned before, information has certain distinct qualities. Information is 'byte-like' (Lash, 2002). It is different from discourse of the narrative because it is produced in a much shorter time span and, therefore, leaves less time for reflection"[28].

Perhaps, the lack of reflection in database logic is not caused only by the shorter production time: the time span seems to be a very questionable reason for it. On the one hand, the information item in database takes less time to perceive than a piece of narrative since there is no need in analyzing the sequence in which this item is involved. On the other hand, there is no proof that narratives of the different length cause different levels of reflection. The more probable reason why database logic leads to the more superficial perception is an instant and random access to the information. We already mentioned the "snatch-and-grab" philosophy of Internet users; it appeared only because there is no need in reading the long narratives of original information sources when you can instantly request the needed piece of information. For example, if you would like to know what is "atom", you will check the definition in Wikipedia rather than read the works of Democritus searching the notion of atom.

The randomness of access became one of the central principles of new media. Even the

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27 Manovich, Lev. The Language of New Media. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2001., p.225

28 Aas, Katja Franko. From narrative to database: technological change and penal culture. Punishment & Society 6, 2004., p.384

cinema – the medium initially based on narrative – can be regarded as a sequence of frames; the simple media software allows a random access to each frame. Manovich claims that some of the old media already had this attribute: the Zootrope, the Zoopraxiscope, the Phenakisticope and other cinema devices of XIX century were all based on the same principle – a number of images were placed around the perimeter of the circle; each of them could be accessed separately and regarded as an individual image. However, Zootrope has a different logic in comparison to computer database or digital film. Zootrope's images are intentionally placed in order to build a narrative (a moving figure) whereas the database has the opposite intention; it deconstructs narrative and provides a random access.

The database logic also existed in forms of document catalogs, encyclopedias, various collections, but it took new media to develop the clip thinking out of it. This fact can be merely explained with the omnipresence of media in contemporary world. As we pointed out in the previous section, the human mind can adopt new perceptual patterns from the media. To unveil this process more thoroughly we will address several research works on cognitive linguistics. Philip Johnson-Laird, an author of notable books on the psychology of reasoning, provides the following model of cognition:

> When humans perceive the world, vision yields a mental model of what things are where in the scene in front of them. Likewise, when they understand a description of the world, they can construct a similar, albeit less rich, representation—a mental model of the world based on the meaning of the description and on their knowledge[29].

Since the human in contemporary computerized societies is surrounded by the media, his or her mental model of the world can not avoid including the database logic. One may argue that media are not *the whole world* yet and they could not be a decisive factor in shaping out perceptive patterns. However, the hypothesis is not as exaggerated as it may seem. New

29 Johnson-Laird, Philip. Mental models and human reasoning. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, Vol. 107, No. 43, October 2010. <http://www.pnas.org/content/107/43/18243.full.pdf+html >

media is our language in some sense: contemporary urbanized people communicate through it; media is employed to encode the information we send and receive. If so, the conclusions made by cognitive linguistics for the language perception could also be applied to media perception. There is a common belief that the structure of native language have a strong influence on or even determines the mentality of the speaker: this principle is known as Whorf-Sapir hypothesis. Moreover, as the linguists George Lakoff and Vittorio Gallese state, "a key aspect of human cognition is neural exploitation—the adaptation of sensory-motor brain mechanisms to serve new roles in reason and language, while retaining their original functions as well"[30]. Joseph Hilferty supports this idea: "The mind is believed to be structured, to be sure, but the basic assumption is that the relationship between language and other areas of cognition is often very intimate"[31]. In other words, talking about the processes inside our mind, there is no huge difference between seeing the objects in front of us – be they trees, houses, cars – and perceiving the information from the media. But the information stream provided by new media is denser than any other; so the new media most probably have a decisive influence on our perceptive patterns. It is probably what Marshall McLuhan implied saying "technical change alters not only habits of life, but patterns of thought and valuation"[32]. For justice' sake we shall note – the statement that the reality and the mediated reality are perceived similarly is rather questionable: the Manovich's theory is basically dedicated to the peculiarities of media language. However, it does not deny that the influence of media on the consciousness is considerably more dense and decisive.

The process of adopting the logic is both-way: it is not only the human mind which adopts some patterns from media, but the media which is constructed under human mind logic. In fact, the human perceptive strategies and the New Media logic are most probably interdependent: the human mind invented the New Media in response to the growing communication needs and then underwent some changes because of the new environment

30 Lakoff, George and Vittorio Gallese. The Brain's concepts: the role of the Sensorymotor system in conceptual knowledge, Cognitive Neuropsychology, 22:3-4, 2005., p.456

31 Hilferty, Joseph. Cognitive Linguistics: An Introductory Sketch. Barcelona: University of Barcelona, 2001., p.1

32 McLuhan, Marshall. Understanding Media: the Extensions of Man. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1994., p.63

created by the New Media. Manovich commented on Lakoff's ideas pointing out that the cognitive linguists do not even question the fact that their mental models are the metaphors to computer workstations. It does not mean though that Lakoff was wrong in these metaphors. Manovich calls this phenomenon the "externalized mind": "Mental processes of reflection, problem solving, recall, and association are externalized, equated with following the link, moving to a new page, or a new scene"[33]. We do not necessarily need to make many mental operations while interacting with new media; these operations are externalized and therefore automatized. Moreover, such an interaction forces us to identify ourselves with the mental structure of someone else, the one who programmed the media. Here we come to the weak side of clip thinking – automation of mental operations can decrease the ability of reasoning whereas the identification with external mental structure can be just inefficient. In a broader sense, the parallels between human mind and the computer workstation imply more similarities than actually exist. Manovich noticed that "if in 'meatspace' we have to work to remember, in cyberspace we have to work to forget"[34] . Thus it is difficult to expect that, for example, the database logic will suit the human mind perfectly.

In this chapter we applied the notion of 'database logic' to new media in general, whereas it could be much more precise to use talking about the computer only. However, in doing so, we proceeded from Manovich's first principle of new media – the numerical representation. The fact that all the new media share the same code and therefore could be manipulated with the computer makes the computer a key device for the new media. Consequently, it would not be a serious mistake to equal the new media logic to the computer logic.

One more key term for understanding the interconnections between human mind and the new media is the interface, or, in terms of Manovich, the HCI – human-computer interface. The interface plays the role of the universal filter:

As the window of a Web browser replaced cinema and television

33 Manovich, Lev. The Language of New Media. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2001., p.61

34 Ibid., p.63

> screen, the art gallery wall, library and book, all at once, the new situation manifested itself: all culture, past and present, came to be filtered through a computer, with its particular human-computer interface[35].

In this case, whatever cultural information we receive, it is re-coded by the computer and acquires the database logic and all the associated attributes. The clip thinking could be a direct consequence of this fact: the human mind gets used to understanding the culture according to the computer logic and carries the pattern to other cultural spheres, even the ones which are not directly connected with the digital technologies and new media.

The contemporary human-computer interface possesses a particular attribute which is very important in terms of clip thinking discussion. As we already mentioned, one of the clip thinking effects is a lack of concentration on the single object. A distinctive feature of HCI is the multitasking, or, better to say, the simultaneous presence of multiple viewpoints. Since the computer interface transformed from text-driven to graphic one, there appeared the possibility to have numerous windows for various tasks at the same time. As Manovich noticed,

> ...the possibility of simultaneously observing a few images that coexist within one screen can be compared with the phenomenon of zapping – the quick switching of TV channels that allows the viewer to follow more than program. In both instances, the viewer no longer concentrates on a single image[36].

Considering the deep immersion of the viewer into the interaction with the interface, this multitasking could lead to a more fragmented experience whereas the efficiency of work with the multiple applications could increase. It is noteworthy that Steven Johnson compares the transformation of command line interface to GUI with “the same route traveled by Western

35 Manovich, Lev. The Language of New Media. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2001., p.64

36 Ibid., p.97

philosophy: from the stable, unified truth of Kant and Descartes to the relativism and ambiguity of Nietzsche and Deleuze”[37]. So, the human thought, both in a broader sense of Western Philosophy and narrower sense of individual mind is synchronized with the language of new media. The clip thinking can be regarded as the upgrade of the human mind caused by the vast influence of the new media.

2.3. Is it posthuman?

In the first section of this chapter we elaborated the wider definition of the clip thinking as a state of perception, knowledge and, therefore, consciousness which is formed by a new perceptual pattern. Furthermore, we looked through several observations describing the clip thinking patterns in the information-seeking habits of 'digital natives'. Considering the risk of falling into sci-fi-like exaggerations, we are not going to claim that clip thinking alone can bring up a new human breed. However, clip thinking can possibly be regarded as one of the aspects of a post-human being.

The main problem with the concept of the posthuman is the fact that this term is used in a vast variety of contexts and does not have a sole strict definition. Therefore the 'posthuman being' is a reasonably wide concept and any new change in human body or consciousness might be ascribed to it. The change can even be hypothetical: the debates on whether we have already become posthuman or not, are still far from coming to the final stage; perhaps, we need a cyberpunk fiction to come true to elaborate the firm definition of posthuman. For example, for Nick Bostrom, posthuman is rather a superhuman that is able to break the limits of normal human capacities: “By a posthuman capacity, I mean a general central capacity greatly exceeding the maximum attainable by any current human being without recourse to new technological means”[38]. According to Bostrom, the general central capacity refers to

37 Johnson, Steven. Interface culture: how new technology transforms the way we create and communicate. San Francisco: HarperEdge, 1997., p.83

38 Bostrom, Nick. "Why I Want to be a Posthuman when I Grow Up." Medical Enhancement and

healthspan, cognition and emotion as the primary characteristics of human subject. This approach to posthuman is simple and rather a medical one. It does not specify the reasons of becoming posthuman, neither does it explain the posthuman nature. However, it involves the notion of cognition which we will come back to later since it is important in context of this thesis. Cary Wolfe inscribes the increased posthuman capacities into attributes of cyborg – the concept that is often used together, or even synonymously to posthuman:

> Arguably the bestknown inheritor of the "cyborg" strand of posthumanism is what is now being called "transhumanism"— a movement that is dedicated, as the journalist and writer Joel Garreau puts it, to "the enhancement of human intellectual, physical, and emotional capabilities, the elimination of disease and unnecessary suffering, and the dramatic extension of life span [39].

In this definition Wolfe notably ignores more 'natural' methods of improving human capacities, such as training, meditation, etc. and calls transhuman only those changes that turns the organism into cyborg. The term 'cyborg' was coined by Manfred Clynes and Nathan S. Kline who defined it as self-regulating human-machine systems; initially, it applied to the biological creature with technological augmentations (the first Clynes' and Kline's cyborg was a laboratory mouse implanted with an osmotic pump injecting chemicals). So, the interaction between the technologies and the human are put into the basis of transhumanism. Later in the text Wolfe also makes an interesting conclusion about the difference between transhumanism and posthumanism: these terms are opposite in some sense. Transhumanism is meant to be an intensification of humanism's desire to escape from its animal nature and, broadly, from the bonds of materiality and embodiment. Posthumanism is a next stage after humanism rather than its peak. However, "posthumanism names a historical moment in which the decentering of the human by its imbrication in technical, medical, informatic, and

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Posthumanity. Ed. Bert Gordijn and Ruth Chadwick. Volume 2 of The International Library of Ethics, Law and Technology. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2009: 107-136. p.1

39 Wolfe, Cary. What Is Posthumanism? USA: University of Minnesota Press, 2009., p.xiii

economic networks is increasingly impossible to ignore” [40].

Wolfe's posthuman is tightened to the social and cultural context; it is similar to the description of cyborg by Donna Haraway: “Cyborgs are not about The Machine and The Human, as if such things and subjects universally existed. Instead, cyborgs are about specific historical machines and people in interaction that often turns out to be counterintuitive for the analyst of technoscience”[41]. In this sense every proficient computer user nowadays can be regarded as a posthuman since he interacts with a machine efficiently and naturally.

As one can see, if understood broadly, cyborg and posthuman can be set equal to each other. To be consistent with the terms, in the present thesis we will understand cyborg in its original narrow meaning – as a self-regulating human-machine system; as for the notion of posthuman, it also involves the identification of self and the cognition patterns connected to new boundaries of the self. The most thorough concept was built by Katherine N. Hayles who points out a number of general assumptions on what posthuman might be. Firstly, the “posthuman view privileges informational pattern over material instantiation, so that embodiment in a biological substrate is seen as an accident of history”[42]. Therefore, posthuman thinks of its body as of a tool or prosthesis which should be learned how to manipulate. Secondly, the consciousness is regarded as an epiphenomenon which does not play the first role in [post]human subject. Finally, “the posthuman view configures human being so that it can be seamlessly articulated with intelligent machines”[43].

To put in a nutshell, the posthuman self can hardly be located since it is decentralized and its boundaries are not clearly demarcated. The consciousness thus is open to augmentation, integration into new subjects and reorganization by outer factors. The similar idea is

40 Wolfe, Cary. What Is Posthumanism? USA: University of Minnesota Press, 2009., p.xv

41 Haraway, Donna. Mice into Wormholes. Cyborgs & Citadels, ed. by Gary Lee Downey and Joseph Dumit. USA: School of American research, 1997: 209-244., p.211

42 Hayles, N. Katherine. How We Became Posthuman:Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature and Informatics. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999., p.2

43 Ibid., p.3

suggested by Robert Pepperell:

> If we accept that the mind and body cannot be absolutely distinguished and that the body and the environment cannot be absolutely distinguished, then we are left with an apparently absurd, yet logically consistent conclusion: that consciousness and the environment cannot be absolutely distinguished [44].

However, the problem of consciousness boundaries is a highly subjective matter. The discussions about it often have a halo of fascination with science fiction narratives and, as Hayles noted, people may become posthuman only when they think themselves to be posthuman. So, even if there was some quantitative research on this matter, any claims that nowadays people in general (or digital natives, or Internet users, etc) do not feel the clear boundaries of their 'selves', would be no more than assumptions. At the same time, it is rather obvious that the consciousness designs itself to act more efficiently in the current environment. Surrounded by digital technologies, the consciousness is likely to open itself for mutual integration.

The mutual integration of human consciousness and digital technologies influences the cognition. Bostrom understands the cognition as “the processes an organism uses to organize information. This includes acquiring information (perception), selecting (attention), representing (understanding) and retaining (memory) information, and using it to guide behavior”[45]. The clip thinking is a perceptual pattern; in fact, it is a component of the cognition. The adoption of 'database logic' from the human-computer interface and non-consecutive narratives from short movies could be a natural sequence of birth of the posthuman consciousness.

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44 Pepperell, Robert. Posthuman Condition: Consciousness Beyond the Brain. Bristol: Intellect Ltd., 2003., p.22

45 Bostrom, Nick. Cognitive Enhancement: Methods, Ethics, Regulatory Challenges. UK: Springer Science+Business Media B.V., 2009: 311-341., p.312

Edwin Hutchins builds a significant part of his theory on the idea that cognition is formed by culture: “However, failing to recognize the cultural nature of cognitive processes can lead to a misidentification of the boundaries of the system that produced the evidence of intelligence” [46]. So, if the boundaries of the consciousness have to be stated, it is crucially important to understand that even our cognitive skills are tightened to the culture. This statement may seem exaggerated; however, the way *how* we learn always depends on *what* we learn. Marshall McLuhan in his “Gutenberg galaxy ” provides an example of indigenous African tribe having the traditional 'audial' culture: tribesmen were heavily challenged by understanding the films shown by the researchers because the cognitive patterns of tribesmen were not culturally oriented for video.

Luckily both for tribesmen and us, the cognitive patterns are a subject to change; as we have already learned, they are formed by the environment. In this respect, it is highly important to study how exactly the posthuman consciousness collaborates with its “machine” part. Hayles suggests that the posthuman consciousness reorganizes itself into “the distributed cognitive system as a whole, in which “thinking” is done both by human and nonhuman actors”[47]. It seems appropriate to assume that human cognition delegates some of its functions to the intelligent machine, which is perceived as “less an external tool and more of a mediating 'exoself'”[48]. The functions of intelligent machine may vary; the most obvious one is the function of information storage. The progress of the digital technologies allowed us to have a relatively huge library, a personal notebook and an Internet access to any information needed in a pocket-size mobile device. Thus there is no need in storing everything in your biological memory as soon as you can rely on your electronic 'exoself'. Instead, “it is likely that the crucial form of memory demand on humans in the future will increasingly be the ability to

46 Hutchins, Edwin. Cognition in the Wild. London: The MIT Press, 1996., p.356

47 Hayles, N. Katherine. How We Became Posthuman:Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature and Informatics. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999., p.290

48 Bostrom, Nick. Cognitive Enhancement: Methods, Ethics, Regulatory Challenges. UK: Springer Science+Business Media B.V., 2009: 311-341., p.320

link information into usable concepts, associations, and skills”[49].

This is one of the ways the clip thinking can be explained: we avoid memorizing narratives, preferring to address the particular parts of them. Employing a popular computer metaphor, we use our own biological memory as RAM (Random Access Memory), taking the 'clips' of information for our cognitive process. In this terms, the posthuman consciousness is highly dependable on its machine part. This idea is perfectly illustrated in the animated short movie, the “part 57” of Mr.Freeman series[50]. The protagonist of the series is a digital creature, who is aware about its virtual nature and positions himself as an AI-prophet. The episodes of the series are the short parables in which Mr.Freeman criticizes the postindustrial globalist society and posthumans who have lost their identities. In the episode 57 you are suggested to imagine a situation in which you are thrown back in time for a thousand years. Occasionally you have a USB stick with the information about the scientific discoveries of your era. This device makes you the most powerful and knowledgeable person of that century. Your knowledge is able to overthrew the established views on the world and monarchs are ready to pay for this information. However, there is no workstation to read the information from the stick; in fact, you are totally helpless and your knowledge is trapped. The story claims the following: if the technological part of posthuman self fails, the rest of it is thrown back to Middle Ages standard of knowledge. In this sense Mr.Freeman denies the integrity of the posthuman, thinking of its technological part as of secondary and, perhaps, unnecessary one.

Apparently, memorizing is not the only cognitive function that can be delegated to the intelligent machine. Computers are widely used for various types of computations and data processing; however, the 'cognition' of the computer essentially differs from the human cognition. This difference is finely described by American philosopher John Searle in his famous thought experiment “Chinese room”. Searle starts with the following hypothetical premise: the Artificial Intellect research progressed significantly and managed to produce the

49 Bostrom, Nick. Cognitive Enhancement: Methods, Ethics, Regulatory Challenges. UK: Springer Science+Business Media B.V., 2009: 311-341., p.321

50 Mr.Freeman, part 57. Russia, 2010. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YpJTz3P-LLQ

computer program which is able to understand Chinese. The program can pass the Turing test and convince the native Chinese speaker that he is speaking with another Chinese speaker rather than with the computer. Searle claims that such a program has nothing to do with human-like intelligence. We are asked to imagine a room; Searle is locked inside. Chinese people come to the door and put their written questions (sequences of symbols, Chinese hieroglyphs) into the slot in the door. Searle has a rulebook that tells him which particular sequence of symbols he should write in answer to the particular sequence he received through the door slot. Searle himself does not understand any single word in Chinese but the people outside the door take his writing as meaningful answers. The overall system "Searle-rulebook-room" seems to speak Chinese even though neither of its elements do.

The experiment is meant to prove that the computer manipulates with the pure abstract symbols; this process does not employ the comprehension. The model of the human brain is not applicable here:

> The computer was not made in the image of the person. The computer was made in the image of the formal manipulations of abstract symbols. And the last 30 years of cognitive science can be seen as attempts to remake the person in the image of the computer[51].

Searle tried to disprove the cognitive science's metaphor of human brain as a computer. His arguments seem logical and strong: the computer imitation of human cognition is just an approximate model, not a precise copy. However, the metaphor paradoxically comes true if we regard the computer and human brain as a single posthuman system. Delegating the cognition to the computer we stop processing the computations by ourselves, preferring to operate with the computer-produced results. Consequently, the posthuman consciousness starts functioning according to new principles: "Instead of being represented as a (decontextualized) mind thinking, the [posthuman] achieve consciousness through recursive

51 Hutchins, Edwin. Cognition in the Wild. London: The MIT Press, 1996., p.363

feedback loops cycling between different levels of coding” [52].

Thus there is a temptation for the following conclusion: the computational capabilities of the posthuman are increased, but the actual comprehension of the data does not happen. It is rather close to the notion of postmodern simulacra since the comprehension is imitated and information is turned into empty signs. However, such a claim would be an exaggeration; the human mind is obviously still capable for comprehension whereas there is a clear desire for delegating the most complicated tasks to the machine. The posthuman consciousness is looking for a sign, not for its meaning and the way it was produced. This can be an illustration of the clip thinking mind's 'snatch and grab philosophy' and disinterestedness in following the narratives.

The clip thinking patterns perfectly fit into the posthuman condition discourse. However, the changes of human consciousness are not as radical as they may seem. 'Clip thinking'-minded people, as posthumans, do not form a completely new type of intelligent creatures. In this sense I tend to disagree with Robert Pepperell who claims that “it [posthuman condition] is not about the ‘End of Man’ but about the end of a ‘man-centred’ universe or, put less phallocentrically, a ‘human-centred’ universe”[53]. In my opinion, it is not only “not the end of Man”, but not even a significant major shift from the human as a center of the universe. As long as human has a monopoly on the *comprehension*, the only shift which is actually made is about the self-positioning of human. We are free to think that we are becoming posthuman and losing the boundaries of our selves; but as long as there are '*we'* to think so and understand it, our universe remains human-centered. Shifting the focus from human requires the presence of another 'center'. As it follows from Searle's ideas, the AI can never learn to comprehend; regardless if it is true or not, at the moment the AI is not a 'center' that could be an alternative to human.

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52 Hayles, N. Katherine. How We Became Posthuman:Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature and Informatics. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999., p.279

53 Pepperell, Robert. Posthuman Condition : Consciousness Beyond the Brain. Bristol: Intellect Ltd., 2003., p.171

In fact, the posthuman consciousness (and particularly the clip thinking) is an adaptation of human mind to usage of the new tools – the clever machines. Some of the cognitive functions are delegated to the computer; the human mind switched to supporting the computer and went to another cognitive level. The human did not become less human when started using windmills instead of milling the grain manually; neither it did when started using the computer instead of calculating on its own. I would agree with Judith Hallberstam and Ira Livingston who assumed that "the posthuman does not necessitate the obsolence of the human; it does not represent an evolution or devolution of human. Rather it participates in re-distributions of difference and identity"[54].

Finally, the posthuman perspective lets us take a position in the debates on whether the educational system should be reformed for "digital natives" or not. From the posthuman point of view being a digital native is natural whereas forcing the posthuman mind to use old tools is acceptable but pointless. If we understand the clip thinking and other aspects of posthuman consciousness as an adaptation to the digital environment, the only rational pedagogical strategy would involve the careful monitoring of digitalization's rate in order not to leave human mind "outdated" in the constantly changing environment.

54 Halberstam, Judith and Ira Livingston, Eds. *Posthuman Bodies.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995., p.10

Chapter 3. The montage of clip thinking.

The aim of this chapter is to conceptualize the clip thinking from another side using the works on film studies. Taking into consideration the fact that film studies framework is very broad and includes different methods (driven by approach – psychoanalytic, feminist, etc. or by the film aspect in question – cinematography, mise-en-scene, editing, soundtrack), it seems to be appropriate to focus on montage studies. This area closely deals with a film narrative and the way it is presented to the viewer. It is a shot sequence and peculiarities of a cutting techniques that are responsible for the shape in which film narrative will be perceived by the audience. In this framework we will be especially interested in the classic works on montage by Sergei Eisenstein and Vsevolod Pudovkin, whose interpretations of montage can not become obsolete and are still applicable for present-day cinema. Furthermore, Bordwell's classification of editing techniques and formal systems of the film can be significantly useful both for theoretical section of this chapter and for elaborating the plan for the analysis of short movies which is conducted in the second section. The main goals are to investigate how the editing influences the viewer's perception and is the montage capable of provoking the clip thinking patterns in the viewers' minds.

3.1. In terms of montage studies.

The articles of Sergei Eisenstein are rich for the unexpected and nontrivial metaphors for film montage. For example, he discusses the Japanese hieroglyphic writing and points out that the combination of two basic hieroglyphs is not a *sum* of meanings, but a *product of multiplication*. If the single basic hieroglyph is a sign for the object or a fact, the juxtaposition of them lead to the emergence of the concept. That is, “dog” * “mouth” = “to bark”; “baby” * “mouth” = “to cry”, “knife” * “heart” = “sorrow”. For Eisenstein, this logic illustrates the

essential principle of the cinematic montage: to show indescribable notion by means of describable objects. Another interesting metaphoric example is provided in Eisenstein's "Montage and Architecture": "it is hard to imagine a montage sequence for an architectural ensemble more subtly composed, shot by shot, than the one that our legs create by walking among the buildings of the Acropolis"[55]. Here we are facing the most narrative and consequent cinematic sequence: the one we create every day by our own legs and eyes.

Certainly, the parallel between "walking&watching" and a montage sequence is not as natural as it may seem. Nowadays a film camera rarely works as Dziga Vertov's kino-eye and the montage itself as a method of cutting and combining the shots opposes the "walking&watching" strategy. But firstly it is important to discover what the montage is and is it the right term at all, considering that the same or adjacent concept is often called editing or cutting?

Another influential Soviet filmmaker Vsevolod Pudovkin complained about the imperfection of the mentioned terms: both 'montage' (literally, 'assemblage') and 'cutting' refer only to the formal side of a process leaving the essence apart. In other words, using Eisenstein's metaphor of hieroglyphs, both terms employ the sum of meanings of each sign (shot) rather than the product of multiplication. Sometimes the term 'montage' is also used as a synonym of 'composition' which is a vague term in its turn. Pudovkin came up with another definition for montage, far less superficial: "I define montage as a comprehensive, multi-method disclosure and interpretation of the connections between real-life events in the cinematic art-pieces"[56]. Pudovkin's definition is profound; however, it broadens the concept of montage enormously. In this sense the film narrative (if the particular film implies a narrative) strongly depends on the director's experience and ability to observe the life deeply, to see the concealed interconnections between various facts and to feel freely in his own cultural

55 Eisenstein, Sergei. Montage and Architecture, 1938. Trans. Michael Glenny, USA: Assemblage, December, 1989: 111-131., p.113

56 Пудовкин, Всеволод. Монтаж, часть 1. Москва: Искусство, 1974: 167-180. <http://www.smartnow.ru/theory/cinema/290-vsevolod-pudovkin-on-editing-i.html> Translation from Russian is mine – Evgeny Kamardin.

framework. Such a definition is true only in a wider meaning: certainly, a banal narrative can be built by means of montage even without deep interpretations of the interconnections. Nevertheless, this definition explains the role of film sequence: shots are connected in the way revealing their deeper meaning, employing something more essential than just the graphic relations.

Eisenstein in one of his articles describes his debates with Pudovkin about the nature of montage:

> "An adept of Kuleshov's school, he [Pudovkin] zealously defended the notion of montage as a *chain* of pieces. A chain of bricks. The bricks that are put in a row to express the thought. I opposed him with my point of view: montage is a *clash*. The point in which the clash of two substances gives a birth to a thought. The chain then is just a particular case of the clash"[57].

The idea of a clash contributes to the concept of montage in a different and very specific way. The clash often leads to the warping and change of the shape of clashing bodies: two cars look broken up after the traffic accident and a baseball flattens for a second after a bat hits it. The same can be said about film shots during the montage: each shot acquires a new meaning and gets deformed by it when clashed with another shot. This process is perfectly illustrated with the famous experiment conducted by Pudovkin and an actor Ivan Mosjoukin. Pudovkin took a close-up photograph of Mosjoukin having absolutely dispassionate and neutral face expression. Then the director showed the photograph to the audience three times: each time projecting it right after another picture. On the first turn, it was a photo of a bowl with soup; on the second turn – a dead woman in her coffin; and finally, a child playing with a teddy-bear. The audience noted that each time Mosjoukin seemed to be looking at the object on the

57 Эйзенштейн, Сергей. Монтаж. Москва: ВГИК, 1998., p.36. Translation from Russian is mine – Evgeny Kamardin.

previous picture and his face had a different expression: a thoughtful and pensive look at the dish, sorrowful look at the dead woman and soft, even smiling look at the playing child. One and the same close-up photo of Mosjoukin looked differently clashing with different pictures; the meaning of the shot became deformed because of the clash. This is the effect montage has on our perception.

The appropriate definition of montage should potentially combine Pudovkin's and Eisenstein's approaches. At the same time, the formal side of montage process should not be repressed too much in order to express the inner meaning of montage, as it happens in Pudovkin's definition. Otherwise the notion of montage would become too broad and include the meaningful connections between events that are not really built by the montage. One may claim that any type of connections in the film is due to the montage techniques; however, I would insist that some connections exist outside of the film, in culture. For example, in the Soviet movies about the World War II the close-ups of national symbols of USSR and Nazi Germany (e.g. a flag with swastika\German eagle\Iron Cross and Red Star\Red flag\hammer and sickle) create the feeling of antagonism basically regardless to the position of the shots in the film[58]. The only difference montage really makes is if the feeling of antagonism is perceived locally (if shots with national symbols directly juxtaposed) or creates the antagonistic mood in the entire film (if these shots do not clash directly). The antagonism is not created by the director or editor, it exists in the cultural memory and can not be consciously controlled by the filmmaker. Turning back to the definition of montage, in this chapter we will understand montage as a set of techniques for juxtaposing and clashing meaningful units in the film leading to the creation of new meanings. This definition may seem rather narrow; however, leaving aside Pudovkin's and Eisenstein's fascination with montage and regarding it as one of the aspects of filmmaking process, I assume that montage does not need a broad definition in order not to lose its essence.

Pudovkin's experiment gives an evidence of montage having a significant influence on our perceptive strategies. As Eisenstein pointed out, “a mere juxtaposition of two or three

58 Perhaps, this example is true only for the former-USSR audience due to the strong cultural references.

material details leads to an absolutely complete conception of another dimension – the psychological one”[59]. Cinema as a medium transports the reality into our mind – by creating a new psychological reality. Of course, any medium does it; however, cinema seems to do it in the most organic way. Cinema pretends to show the reality naturally, as we perceive it every day; but in cinema we are not free in this perception. While watching film we are not merely observing the reality on the screen, we are told what to focus on, what to skip and what to explore in details. Walking on the street you may possibly not notice an open sewer manhole; in cinema you will be given a close-up of it if the director's plan stipulates it. In fact, watching a film means watching with the eyes of someone else and thinking with thoughts of someone else. Pudovkin in his work about montage develops this thought:

> If we define montage in a wider sense as a revelation of inner connections in reality, we actually put a sign of equality between montage and the thinking process in general. Don't smooth human speech and a process of thinking, which is identical to speech, appear to be the direct reproduction of real life events in their interconnection?[60]

The discussion on parallels between cinema and language are traditional for the film studies field. In fact, this parallel is valid only under certain conditions: for example, the spectator can not 'speak' this language but can successfully 'read' and understand is whereas the film director is the only fluent speaker of this language. On the other hand, the film possess a lot of distinctive characteristics of the language; as we already discussed, it can be divided into units of meaning. Metaphorically, the 'words' of a cinema are the pieces of exposed film; the sentences are the shots and the narratives are the shot sequences. Eisenstein even provides an

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59 Эйзенштейн, Сергей. Монтаж. Москва: ВГИК 1998., p.59. Translation from Russian is mine – Evgeny Kamardin.

60 Пудовкин, Всеволод. Монтаж, часть 1. Москва: Искусство, 1974: 167-180. <http://www.smartnow.ru/theory/cinema/290-vsevolod-pudovkin-on-editing-i.html> Translation from Russian is mine – Evgeny Kamardin.

interesting idea of a poetry as a cinematic sequence: a poetic metre draws the 'frames' in the poem.

However, for the purposes of clip thinking research we are more interested in the expressive tools of the cinematic language. In the previous chapter we mentioned the Whorf-Sapir hypothesis, which implies that the structure of native language have a strong influence on or even determines the mentality (and thus on the thinking strategies) of the speaker. Consequently, the cinematic language, as any other, also has a supposed influence on our mind. The expressive tools of the cinematic language are various: for example, the use of colors determines the stylistic tone of the film (like stylistically colored vocabulary in the literary text) and the "visual jolts […] slow the viewer's comprehension and make the medium more intrusive"[61]. But the most important cinematic method for the present research is the close-up shot. Eisenstein compared it with the exclamation mark in the literary text; however, it rather plays a more significant role. Pudovkin wrote:

> Everyone knows that the nearer we approach the regarded object, the less material appears simultaneously in our view-field; the more clearly our investigating glance examines the object, the more limited and sectional becomes our view[62].

The keyword in this passage is "sectional" or, better to say, segmental. While the spectator is shown only a single segment of the picture, his or her glance is placed outside of the context. Usually the main purpose of why the director uses the close-up is to point out the detail which is locally important for the story. But when the close-up is demonstrated, the spectator loses the wider grasp on the situation. Perhaps, for this reason the close-ups are rarely used successively and more often just interrupt the medium shots. The reasonable use of successive close-ups is shown, for example, in the duel scenes of *The Good, the Bad and the*

61 Hochberg, Julian and Virginia Brooks. Movies in the Mind's Eye. Post-theory. Reconstructing film studies. Ed. by David Bordwell & Noël Carroll. USA: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996: 368-387. p.369.

62 Pudovkin, V. I. Film Technique and Film Acting. USA: Vision Press Limited, 1968., p.90

Ugly and other westerns: the camera shows only the close-up views of cowboy's faces, feet and hands with pistols. The medium and long shots are not used until the duel comes to the culmination. In this case the successive close-ups assist in creating the atmosphere of tension and speeding up the action. A spectator does not lose the grasp on the current situation in the film reality: he or she is able to reconstruct the film space mentally and tell where the duel participants are and from which direction each of them comes. However, when the video is clipped, the close-ups might be overused. In such case the spectator might lose the orientation in the film space. For example, in Madonna's music clip for *Girl Gone Wild* [63] the close-ups constitute the greater part of the video. In fact, it is almost impossible to point out where exactly the events in the video take place. Through the medium shots we can conclude that there are several spaces: the white room (or several rooms – because the room size is never the same) and the dark smoke-filled area. At the same time we can see mainly the close-ups of Madonna's and male dancers' bodies and we can never say if they are shown in the same space and what the space looks like. This video is so segmented that watching it turns into solving the jigsaw puzzle in which half of parts are lost. The overuse of close-ups made impossible the reconstruction of the film space.

We cannot claim that *Girl Gone Wild* video deconstructs or distorts the narrative because this video is not organized as a narrative and would not become one even if a spectator could reconstruct the film space. However, this music video is the one which is able to provoke the clip thinking patterns since it brings us back to the Manovich's theory. The clip obviously has the modular structure which is a premise for the database logic. As far as we cannot grasp the entire film reality, we have to rely on the separate parts of it: this is exactly how the database logic works in contrast to narrative organization of the information. Thus, one of the distinctive attributes of the video that provokes clip thinking is the overuse of close-ups leading to the disorientation in the film space and the modular structure of the video itself.

Not only close-ups may lead to the lose of integrity of the film reality. Gilles Deleuze noted

63 Alas, Mert and Marcus Piggott. Madonna – Girl Gone Wild. US, 2012. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tYkwziTrv5o

that every film regardless to its montage strategy lacks the integrity under certain degree: “but there will always be breaks and ruptures, which show clearly enough that the whole is not here, even if the continuity is re-established afterwards”[64]. Ruptures and breaks are indeed inevitable due to the nature of montage: two shots that are put together would always have a particular border between them. Another question is how noticeable this border is? There is a number of techniques allowing to make the ruptures of cuts more or less obvious. For example, juxtaposing the shots with contrast color tones or with objects moving to the opposite directions contributes to making the 'ruptures' more obvious as well as the usage of jump cuts. On the other hand, juxtaposing tonally and graphically similar shots or usage of plan-sequences (or long takes, as they are also called) helps the spectator to ignore the cuts. Playing with the 'sense of whole' or the lack of it is an expressive method of the film language.

Gianfranco Bettetini wrote: “The plan-sequence tends to increase the moving image's credibility [...], and hence the indirect persuasiveness of its dialectic positioning between the author and the receiver of the message”[65]. Long takes are more credible because they do not destroy the continuity of a narrative. In fact, a cut is an evidence of the director hiding something from the spectator. We can never know for sure if a certain part of the film narrative was lost in the cut between two shots; at the same time, long cuts are fluent and reliable. There is a perfect example of the clip *This Too Shall Pass*[66] by the Chicago-based band OK Go. This music video is shot in a single 3 minutes 54 seconds long take. The idea of this film employs the domino effect: the participant of OK Go band impacts a domino die with a toy car starting the process of hundreds different object impacting each other until the end of the video. The narrative is fluent and continuous; the 'sense of the whole' which Deleuze was missing in cinema is present. The conclusion might follow: the fewer cuts are made, the more credible the film is.

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64 Deleuze, Gilles. Cinema 1. The Movement-Image. London: The Athlone Press, 1986., p.27

65 Bettetini, Gianfranco. The Language and Technique of the Film. Hague: Mouton, 1973., p.175

66 OK Go. This Too Shall Pass. US, 2009. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qybUFnY7Y8w&list=PL0FB9262CF878A34A&index=8&feature=plpp_video

Frequent cuts are also an attribute of the video provoking the clip thinking. There is a number of reasons for it. Firstly, as we have already mentioned, the frequent cuts interrupt the fluency of a narrative and thus make us perceiving it as separate parts instead of the continuity. Furthermore, the more frequent the cuts are, the more dispersed our attention is. In this respect, Hugo Münsterberg's concept of the attended impression is useful: “While the attended impression becomes more vivid, all the other impressions become less vivid, less clear, less distinct, less detailed. They fade away. [...]. They have no hold on our mind, they disappear”[67]. In other words, the human mind is most likely to concentrate on the single strongest impression and to lose focus on less important details. For example, if the frame shows a long or medium shot of the film protagonist secretly arming his gun, the spectator will most likely focus on protagonist's hand rather then see the whole image. This idea is close to Roland Barthes' notion of *punctum*, a detail or an aspect of the image which pierces the viewer and creates a personal-oriented meaning in the image. This meaning becomes the dominant one and tries to exclude other meanings from viewer's attention.

In fact, each shot in the film has a particular punctum or at least some detail that grabs our attention more than others. What happens if the cuts are frequent and the shots replace each other every two seconds, as it was in Madonna's music video we discussed above? The object of the attended impression changes all the time preventing the spectator from concentrating on anything in particular. Of course, the spectator is able to keep the previous impressions, events and their interconnections in memory; if the film events are not successive, our mind is able to find out that they take place at the same time or in a reverse order. However, one can hardly be conscious about every new impression or event perceived with a frequency of two seconds.

There is one more possible way to disperse the viewer's attention: distorting the inner logic of the montage. Under distorting the inner logic of the montage I understand the juxtaposition of

67 Münsterberg, Hugo. The Photoplay: A Psychological Study. New York : D. Appleton and company, 1916., p.24

shots that are barely connected and create the visible 'seam' in montage. In other words, the relations between adjacent shots is a defining factor for inner logic. I do not use the term 'narrative' intentionally – there are several other formal systems used in film-making that function under their own logic. David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson in their book "Film Art: an Introduction" point out four formal systems apart from the narrative one: categorical, rhetorical, abstract and associational. According to Bordwell and Thompson, these are the forms mostly typical for advertisements, documentaries, experimental movies and other genres other from typical fiction film. The *categorical* system implies dividing a presented subject into several categories; the *rhetorical* system speculates on arguments and evidences to promote a particular opinion on the problem; in *abstract* system, "the audience's attention is drawn to abstract visual and sonic qualities of the things depicted – shape, color, aural rhythm, and the like"[68]; *associational* formal system "juxtaposes loosely connected images to suggest an emotion or a concept to the spectator"[69]. In each form the typical montage techniques are different.

Discussing the distortion of inner montage logic in associational films is obviously pointless: the only observation we may come to is if the particular juxtaposition of the shots creates the needed emotion or not. Such a conclusion does not contribute to the understanding of clip thinking. However, we may assume that associational films are always clipped in some sense – because the cuts are usually clearly visible and eye-catching. It occurs since the fluency of the film itself is not important in the associational formal system and therefore the montage techniques may vary. The inner montage logic in abstract system is generally based on the graphic, rhythmic, sound and other formal relations between shots. This fact paradoxically tightens abstract and narrative systems: the only difference is that the fluency of a narrative film is additionally supported by the logic of the story. As for the abstract system, there is an evidential example of short movie *Words*[70]. It is frequently cut and not narrative. However,

68 Bordwell, David and Kristin Thompson. Film Art: an Introduction. 5th edition. USA: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997., p.129

69 Ibid., p.129

70 Everynone. Words. USA, 2010. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UzSh51WinOo&lr=1

the shots are perfectly connected and the continuity is fluent: one of the first shots shows two fencers in a fight; the next one shows two girls dancing rounds; then it turns to a man drawing rounds on a whiteboard. Graphic and rhythmical relations (1. two persons – 2. two persons\rounds – 3.rounds on a whiteboard) almost neutralize the effect of 'clipped' video.

In categorical and rhetorical systems the most important relations between shots are thematic rather than formal. Perhaps, for this reason these formal systems are typical for documentaries. The categorical short film *Money Talks*[71] can be divided into several parts (categories). The first part merely shows the characters, in the second one the characters are shown mumbling; in the third part they answer how would they spend five lats and finally they tell how they would spend a million lats. All the participants are filmed in different locations and the particular film space is not created. The shots are loosely connected graphically (apart from having talking heads in all of them). However, the characters are put into the similar situations and they are answering the same questions inside each category. So, the fluency of the film is supported by the topic uniting the juxtaposed shots.

As we pointed out in the current chapter, there are three basic attributes that determine if the video is 'clipped'. These are: the usage of close-ups (together with a possibility for a spectator to reconstruct the film space mentally), the frequency of cuts and the relations between adjacent shots. Of course, these attributes are not an absolute guarantee that the particular video is 'clipped' and provokes the clip thinking patterns in audience. Such a guarantee does not exist since the 'clippness' is rather a subjective value. However, taking into consideration this subjectivity and keeping in mind the fact that each attribute may be expressed stronger or weaker, we can use these attributes for the analysis of short movies in the following section.

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71 Riga Summer School. Money Talks. Latvia, 2011. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DkVtwnzkDWI

3.2. Analysis of short movies

The plan of the analysis is based on the conclusions of the previous section together with the theory on film form and film style presented in David Bordwell's and Kristin Thompson's book “Film Art: an Introduction”. Since the research subject of the present thesis is the clip thinking, the analysis of short movies is focused on the film continuity. The purpose is to study the fluency and consistence of the film body and point out if the particular short movie possesses the attributes that allow it to provoke the clip thinking patterns in audience's minds.

Bordwell and Thompson distinguish between two types of montage: continuity and discontinuity editing. The difference is important for film language studies; both types have their own means of expression and are able to produce specific artistic effects. However, in the present thesis we are not interested in studying the film language for its own sake; we rather research the effects the film has on the perceptive patterns of a human mind. Consequently, in this analysis we regard the continuity style editing as a norm, since it is related to narrative[72] as the most natural form of informational organization. The elements of discontinuity editing in some cases can be regarded as contributing to the clip thinking patterns.

The analysis includes three basic parts.

1. The analysis of a film space. In this part we analyze how the film space is reconstructed mentally by a spectator. The main question is the following: does the spectator have a clear notion of where the film events are taking place? To answer this question, we should analyze the usage of close-ups and the principles of spatial continuity. The spatial continuity is usually obtained with so called '180° system': the space of the scene is created along the 'axis of action'. For example, if two characters are talking, the axis of action passes through them; so, the camera can be positioned

72 We are still aware of the fact that continuity editing is also used for non-narrative films.

only from one side of the axis (fig. 1). Breaking this rule will lead to the 'cheat' of a spectator: the left and the right will switch places and the film space will be distorted.

2. The frequency of cuts. The main questions are the following: how long the shots are, how frequent the cuts are and thus does this frequency distort the fluency of the film? To analyze the usage of cuts, we should focus on the temporal continuity of the film and the rhythmic relations between shots. For the analysis of the temporal continuity we should check if any shots are repeated and also detect if the temporal ellipses[73] and temporal expansions[74] are flaring. The rhythm of cuts is also important for this part of the analysis. For example, when the shots become successively shorter, an effect of fastening the action is created. If they are successively longer, the action slows down.

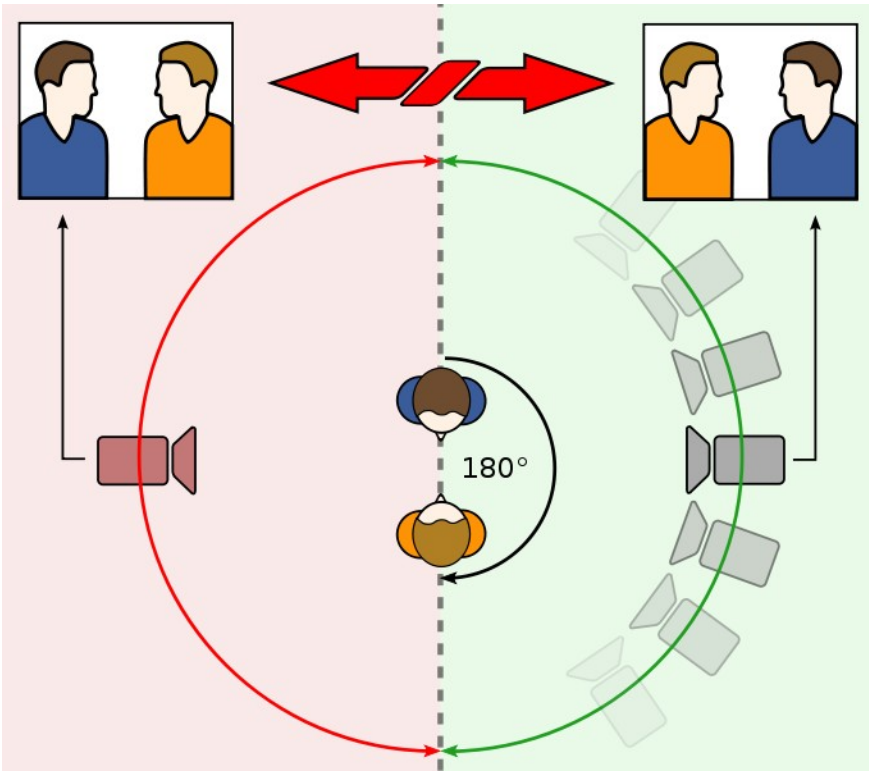

Fig. 1. 180° system. The camera can be positioned on the green arc. When cutting from the green arc to the red arc, the characters switch places on the screen.

73 A time lapse: omission of some events to make the story time to coincide with the screen time.

74 Opposite to ellipsis: prolonging the action with shot overlaps.

3. Relations between adjacent shots. The subjects of the analysis here are "patterns of light and dark, line and shape, volumes and depths, movements and stasis – independent of the shot's relation to the time and space of the story"[75] (273). In other words, we should inspect if the shots 'fit' each other by means of the images depicted on them. However, the shots can be connected in other way: for example, using the cause-effect relation. If the character looks somewhere outside the frame – the next logically suitable frame would show the object he looks at. The shots can potentially be connected with a sound; for instance, if the same sound is made by different objects that are shown in adjacent shots.

If the film in question is a narrative one, the narrative itself must be studied. Under the narrative film we understand the film including a number of characters that are involved in a story with its conflict and stages of the plot: introduction, plot development, culmination and dénouement. Categorical and rhetorical films may also fall under this primitive definition; however, in the narrative films the story is *told* whereas in categorical/rhetorical ones the story is *described*. The additional analysis of the narrative films includes the following.

4. In this part of the analysis the plot and story should be determined. The story includes events that may not be shown on the screen but are implied or referred by the characters. The plot consists of the events presented on screen, both those that are a part of the story and those that do not belong to the story reality (nondiegetic elements). For example, the film's credits or the off-screen narrator's voice are not seen or heard by the characters and thus are nondiegetic. However, they are included in the plot. The off-screen narrator also has an influence on the story fluency and his presence must be documented in analysis.

   The causality of the plot is also essential. Analysis would show what events play the causal role in the narrative and what are the consequences. The main questions are if

75 Bordwell, David and Kristin Thompson. Film Art: an Introduction. 5th edition. USA: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997., p.273.

the causal relations are concealed or stated clearly and if the causal relations are clear enough to constitute the narrative. Finally, the temporal order of the events is important as well. The reverse order alone does not make a clip out of the film and can still be fluent. However, the narrative stops being consecutive and breaks itself into a number of parts.

As we mentioned in the previous section of the thesis, the analysis of associational films is pointless for the clip thinking research. For this reason, we avoided associational movies in our selection. The selection includes five short movies that have recently won the top awards of popular film festivals and therefore are proved to be appreciated and understood by wide audience. The current analysis aims to illustrate the clip thinking patterns in short movies rather than present the genealogy and evolution of short movies. Thus the selection is limited to five films only; however, the chosen short films differ by genre (fiction, documentary, music video) and length (less than 1 minute; 4-10 minutes; up to 30 minutes) and represent the basic categories of contemporary short movies.

3.2.1. Lemonade Stand

Lemonade Stand[76] by Alethea Jones is the winner film of Tropfest in 2012. It is a 7 minutes narrative story of Benny and his grandfather running the lemonade stand. The composition is typical for a narrative story; there is the exposition (author introduces the characters and their prehistory), the story development through the conflict (the council clerk Kevin threatens to close the lemonade business), the culmination (Kevin dies) and the dénouement (we learn that Kevin only pretended to be a council clerk; his corpse 'helps' Benny and granddad to run the stand). The composition is linear; however, there are a few flashbacks interrupting the chronological order of the events (the introduction of Kevin and the grandfather preparing the 'special' lemonade). The former flashback is meant to describe the important character right after this character appears in the plot; the latter explains the twist of the story. Both

76 Jones, Alethea. Lemonade Stand. Australia, 2012. http://tropfest.com/au/2012-winner/

flashbacks do not really affect the fluency of narrative. Moreover, the entire story is told as Benny's memory; for this reason, Benny himself plays two roles at the same time: the protagonist and the off-screen narrator. The presence of the off-screen narrator is felt all the time and adds more fluency to the narration: the scenes of the exposition are united generally because of Benny telling the story. The plot of this film includes the entire story, since all the referred events are shown in exposition or flashbacks. The elements that do not belong to the story world are the off-screen narrator's voice and the music – the characters can not hear it. The effect of 'leafing the page' in some cuts also belongs to nondiegetic materials.

The film space is easily comprehensible and the spectator can always understand where the action takes place. The film is generally constructed of medium shots whereas close-ups are extremely rare. The close-ups are used only in the dramatic moments to emphasize the particular turning points of the story; for example, the close-up of Kevin's face after the torn postcard (1:07 – 1:11) or a number of successive close-ups (5:00 – 5:11) while Benny is throwing the lemon. The film space is already defined before the close-up is shown. Camera sticks to the 180° system and does not try to cheat the spectator. For example, during the scene of dialogue at the lemonade stand (1:53 – 3:47) Kevin is always on the frame's right and Benny with his grandfather are on the left. This disposition is quite understandable even when the frame shows only one participant of the dialogue at a time (fig.2.1).

Fig. 2.1. The 180° system in a dialogue scene in *Lemonade Stand.*

The shots are mostly short. The average length of the shot is around 5 seconds. The shots in exposition part, flashbacks and the dialogue scenes usually vary from 2 to 5 seconds. The shots become longer only for a particular reason. For example, the very first shot introduces the grandfather by moving the camera downwards (0:09 – 0:22); or a shot of Benny sitting on the river bank (4:03 – 4:14) is made longer for creating the pensive atmosphere. As for the temporal continuity, the temporal ellipsis is used in the exposition part to introduce the characters in a short time period. The usage of temporal ellipsis in a short movie leads to the notable rhythmic editing. For example, the scene of Benny and grandfather winning the Best Lemonade Stand award (1:02 – 1:07) is 5 seconds long and involves 3 cuts. The scene of Benny throwing the lemon (4:59) employs a temporal discontinuity which is not obvious: firstly, we can see Benny throwing the lemon, the lemon flying, the characters watching this flight (in slow motion for a stronger tension), and then – the entire move repeats again very quickly and we can see Benny dramatically throwing the lemon towards Kevin.

The adjacent shots are connected to each other in a number of ways. The most notable way is the relation through the off-screen narration. Even though the shots of Benny and grandfather eating ice-cream, sleeping and laughing at jokes are not connected neither temporally nor spatially, they illustrate the same sentence in the narrator's speech: "... do everything together: eat together, sleep together and even laugh at all the same jokes". It is even more notable since the color gamma of the adjacent shots n this sequence is different: it changes from yellowish to white tone every time (fig. 2.2).

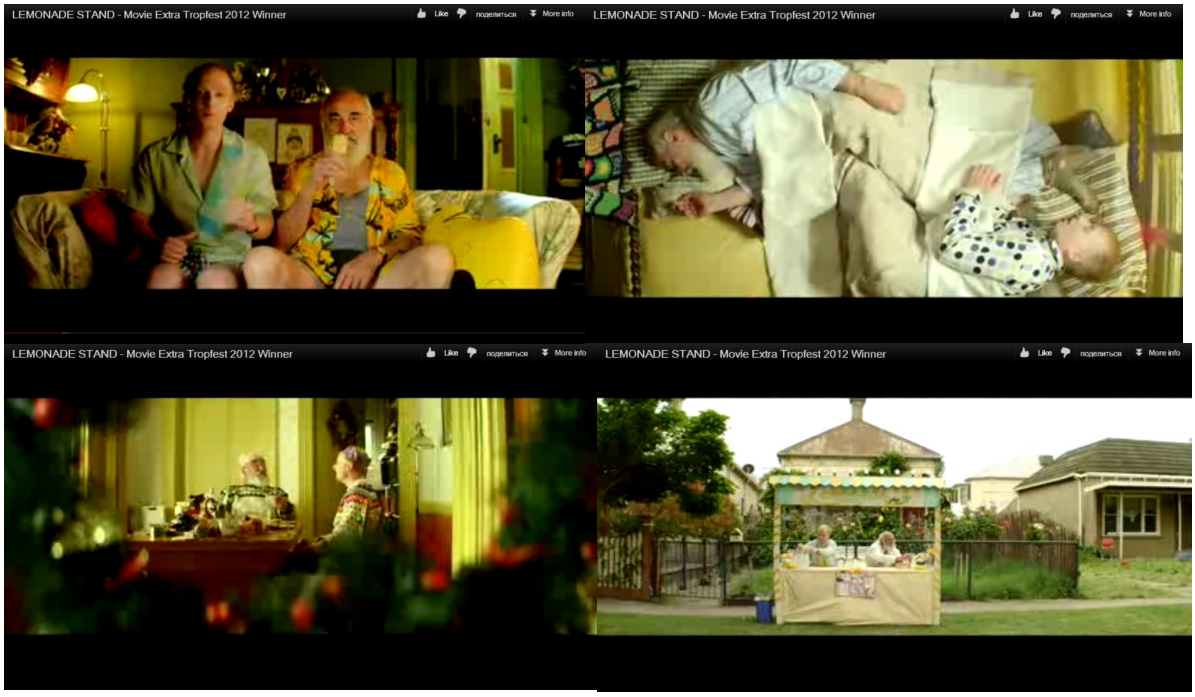

Fig. 2.2. The tonal variation. The first and the third frames have a prevailing yellow tone. The second and the fourth ones are dominantly white-toned.

The tonal difference emphasizes the cut between shots; however, the narrator's voice does not allow the fluency of narration to disappear. The same process occurs with the effect of 'leafing the pages ': the cut is eye-catching and the temporal ellipsis obviously takes place. For example, when Benny runs from the river bank to the lemonade stand, the whole action of running is replaced with the 'leafing'-effect. However, we do not really lose the 'sense of the whole' because we perceive the story as a fairy tale in a paper book. In other cases the adjacent shots are connected in a classic continuity editing style: if grandfather looks at somebody outside the frame – in the next shot we see Kevin; if Benny throws a lemon – in the next shot we see the lemon flying. The only exception is at 3:57 – Kevin killing the animated ants with a magnifying glass is not graphically, spatially or narratively connected to Benny walking in the wood. It is rather an associational connection.

To sum up, the short film Lemonade Stand is a fluent narrative story with a clearly defined film space, quite frequent cuts, a number of temporal ellipses and several expressive methods emphasizing the cut 'seams'. The overall impression of the continuity is not broken.

3.2.2. Firework.

Firework[77] is Dave Meyers' official video for Katy Perry's song. This is the video of the year 2011 at MTV Video Music Awards. The formal system of this movie is narrative, but this is a narrative of a different type than in Lemonade Stand. There are six short story-lines that are united with a single theme – young people who are overcoming their insecurities and fears. A young boy pushes apart his fighting parents because they are upsetting his little sister; an overweight girl overcomes herself and puts off her clothes at the swimming pool party; a girl having cancer therapy steps out of the hospital and shows herself to public despite her loss of hair; a gay teenager approaches his friend on the party and kisses him; a street performer shows his magic tricks to a street gang that tried to rob him. Katy Perry sings initially on her balcony and later on the street; the firework breaking away from her heart encourages the people to fight their fears. All the stories are represented as parallels and all of them presumably flow together in end of the video – an impressive dance of youth of the whole city.

Every story is divided into three basic parts: exposition (the protagonist in a challenging situation) – culmination (the protagonist consolidates his willpower and makes a decision) - dénouement (the protagonist acts and succeeds). Such a composition takes different number of shots for each story. The narrative lines are mixed up: if we take a random moment of the film, some stories will only start their development and others will be in the culmination or already have finished. Since Firework is the music video, the accent is made on the emotions awaken in the spectator rather than on the factual aspect of the narrative. Thus it is difficult to determine the mutual borders of the story and the plot. Each story-line is a quite finished episode from the protagonist's life; however, we can imagine the prehistory of each event: constant fights between parents in siblings' family; the fat girl being bullied all the time; the gay teenager being afraid to reveal his feelings to his friend, etc. The plot makes no sense without these events beyond. Katy Perry with her song plays a role of a narrator; however,

77 Meyer, David. Katy Perry – Firework. USA - Hungary, 2011. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QGJuMBdaqIw

this type of narrator is not the same as Benny in Lemonade Stand. Perry's song does not literally describe the events on the screen, it rather catches the mood of the characters and interacts with their thoughts and emotions. Thus the song unites the narratives but only indirectly. In contrast to the Lemonade Stand off-screen narrator, the Firework song is not a nondiegetic element, it is the part of the story. Perhaps, the characters do not hear it and see the firework only; however, Katy Perry is present in the same city and takes part in the final dance.

The film space is defined rather clearly. The film employs all types of shots – close-ups, middle, long and even extremely long ones. The usual technique for this film is to show the scene space in a medium shot and then leave some details in the close-up as a proof that character is still at the same place. For example, at 0:30 we can see the swimming pool party with lots of people dancing and the long shot of the overweight girl sitting in the middle. At 0:35 there is a close-up of the girl's face; however, we can see the naked dancing people around and conclude that the girl is still on the same party. As for the 180° system, the usage of it limited. The situation where two characters interact and the axis of action can be drawn are quite few. Katy Perry is mostly shown from her front (0:13) or her right side (0:17) but when we see her shooting fireworks from below the building (0:56) the camera is placed from the left. It does not matter though, since she is standing alone and the axis of action is not present. In the situations when the characters confront each other, the 180° system is usually kept. For example, in the action axis 'gay teenager – his friend' the camera is always from the gay teenager's right (2:17). There is one hardly visible exception though: when a boy runs to the kitchen to push his parents apart, there is a short moment when he is shown from another side of the axis (1:15). The close-up is very short though and does not really affect the whole impression (fig 3.1).

Fig. 3.1. Camera is placed on the left hand of father (dark figure on the second frame). The 180° rule is broken.

The majority of shots are no more than 2 seconds long, so the cuts are extremely frequent. The only temporal ellipsis which is present is the following: we cannot see Katy Perry going downstairs – she sings on the balcony and then comes out of the door to the street. All other story-lines do not include any temporal ellipses: if you put each story-line's fragments together, they will constitute very fluent and consecutive stories. For the same reason, the absence of temporal ellipses does not matter: the fragments of story-lines are mixed up so heavily, that the spectator would not notice an ellipsis even if there was one. The rhythm of editing is stably fast: there is no acceleration or slowdown of the action tempo; this rhythm of

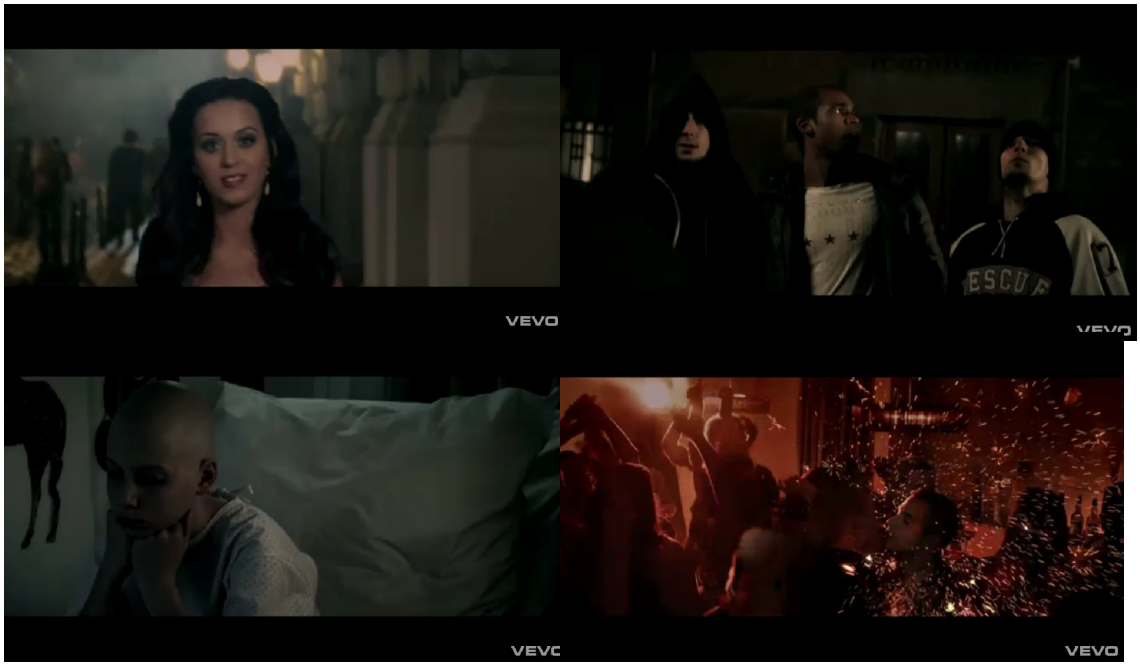

Fig. 3.2. Tonal gamma in *Firework*.

editing is conditional on the rhythm of music.

The graphic, spatial or cause-and-effect relations between adjacent shots are present only inside each particular story-line. As we already mentioned, all the story-lines are heavily mixed up, so separate segments of different stories are disconnected in terms of graphics, space or cause-and-effect. There are only two uniting factors: the song which is continuously sounds through the whole video and the tonal gamma which is generally constant. The only story-line that has warmer colors is the party where the teenager kisses his friend (fig 3.2). As we can see the uniting factors are weaker than the separating ones; the 'seams' of the cuts are very obvious.

All in all, Firework is a proper example of music video: the cuts are frequent, the narrative is torn and mixed up, the rhythm of editing is highly dependable on the rhythm of the music. Even the clearly defined film space and absence of temporal ellipses do not prevent the film from being 'clipped'.

3.2.3. The Shore.

The Shore[78] by Terry and Oorlagh Georges is the 2012 Oscar Academy Award winner of Short Film (Live Action) category. It is a half an hour long narrative film telling the story of Joe and Paddy, two friends from Northern Ireland and their reunion after twenty five years of separation. Joe feels guilty for some events of his past: he moved to San-Francisco leaving his bride Mary and his best friend Paddy who has just lost his arm. Later he married another woman and intentionally lost contact with both Mary and Paddy. The narrative is constructed in a classic way: the exposition (we observe the life of Paddy), inception (Joe and his daughter come to Ireland), the development of conflict (an inner conflict of Joe, feeling guilt for his past; his daughter Pat suggests to find Mary and Paddy), the culmination (the reunion) and the dénouement (the family party of old friends). The events are presented

78 George, Terry and Oorlagh George. The Shore. USA – UK, 2011.

chronologically, even the flashbacks are not used. However, the story does not equal the plot: the past events that are crucial for the plot are not shown. We learn about protagonists' past from the dialogues. Thus the story time started 25 years before the plot time starts. There is no off-screen narrator or other nondiegetic elements; even the music is always on-screen – it is played by the film characters. The absence of nondiegetic elements makes the film more realistic: the film medium becomes more transparent and the narrative is perceived in a more natural way.

The cinematography technique is interesting and notable. It often switches between typical Hollywood feature film style with its strict abidance to 180° rule and stable still frames and the documentary style with moving and shaking frame and rather free treatment with film space. For example, the scene of dialogue between Joe and Pat in which Joe tells the story of his past (10:27), employs steady camera and sticks to 180° rule (fig 4.1). In contrast, the camera following Joe and Pat in the airport (4:10) corridor shakes and later allows Joe to appear from the right and from the left of the woman hugging him (fig. 4.2).

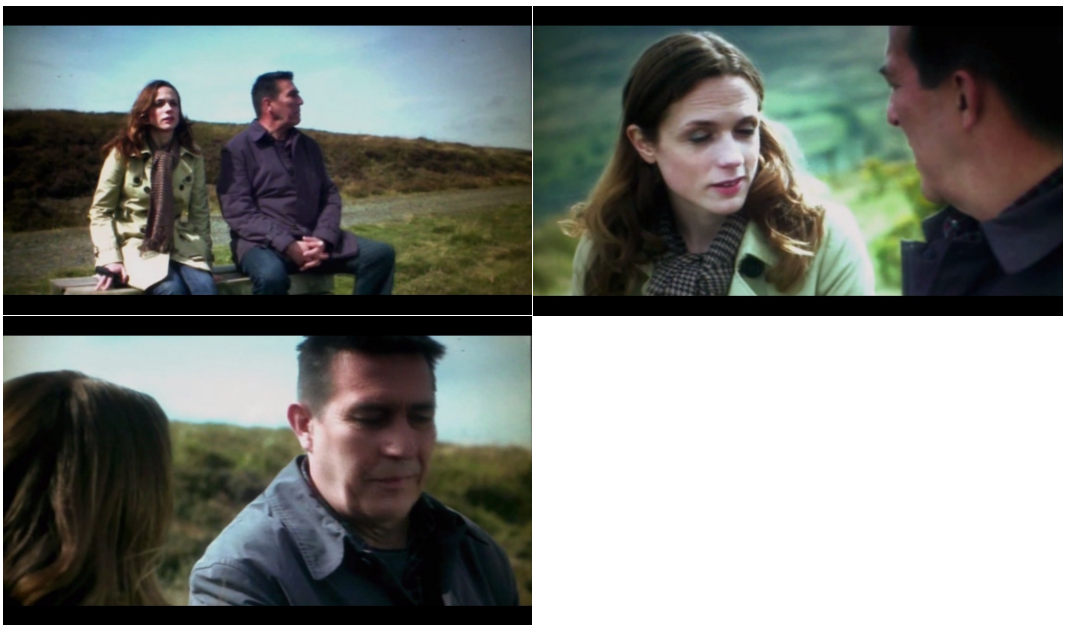

Fig. 4.1. The dialogue in *The Shore*. Steady camera and 180° rule in use.

Nevertheless, the ignoring of 180° rule does not ruin the film space. Perhaps, it can be

Fig. 4.2. “Documentary”-style camera in *The Shore*.

explained by the fact that the cuts are not frequent, the film spaces is defined in medium shots and we have enough time to understand where the action takes place. The difficulties in understanding the film space occur only in one scene: the welcome party in an Irish pub (6:56). In the beginning of the scene the spectator is introduced to the pub space in a long shot; however, we can see only one side of the pub. Later in the scene the medium and close shots do not allow to understand where exactly is the bar stand, where is a scene and where is the door we have seen in the very beginning.

The cuts are less frequent than in Lemonade Stand or Firework. The shots are usually 8-11 seconds long; the shorter shots – 2-3 seconds are used only for a particular expressive effect. For example, the first scene of Paddy and his friends gathering oysters during the ebb mostly employs 7-8 seconds shots. The rhythm of action is rather slow. However, when one of Paddy's friends jokingly puts a crab into another friend's pants (1:23), a few shorter (3 seconds) shots are used. The joke episode is rhythmically faster because of short shots and vivid action. During the dialogues some shots can be 40 seconds long. In other words, the rhythmic editing is in use: the length of the shot depends on the mood that must be expressed in the particular episode. Since the film's mood is generally calm, pensive and nostalgic, there

is no need for cuts to be really frequent. The temporal ellipses are present through the entire film. Some scenes are temporally connected: Joe and Pat in the airport – Joe and Pat in the car – Joe and Pat in the Irish pub; or Paddy and his friends in the bay – Paddy and his friends go home – Mary welcomes Paddy at home. Other scenes are not temporally connected: Joe and Pat in the Irish pub – Joe and Pat sitting on the hill – Joe and Pat driving in search for Paddy. In fact, we do not know what is the plot time; the described events could happen in a couple of days or in a month after Joe came back to Ireland.

The cut 'seams' between shots are almost masked. The color gamma is sustained and as we already mentioned, the graphic and spatial relations are logical. The accent in this film is made on the clarity of the story-line; thus the narrative is made as fluent as possible. Even the cuts between different scenes with different characters are not eye-catching. The film is far from the usual notion of clip video. Perhaps, it is stipulated by the genre conditions: by its organization the 30 minutes short film is closer to feature films rather than to the 4-7 minutes movies of Tropfest or music videos.

3.2.4. Saving Face.

Saving Face [79]by Daniel Junge and Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy is the 2012 Oscar Academy Award winner of Documentary Short category and is also the first Pakistani film ever winning the Oscar Award. It is a documentary about the women - victims of acid attacks. The film follows Britain-based Pakistani plastic surgeon Dr. Mohammad Jawad in his journey to Pakistan; there are also the stories of two women, Rukhsana and Zakia, who were attacked with acid by their husbands. Describing this film from the point of view of Bordwell-Thompson's formal systems is rather difficult: Saving Face is somewhere between narrative and rhetoric systems. On the one hand, the film starts with Dr. Jawad coming to Pakistan, shows several plastic surgery operations on Zakia'a face and ends with Dr. Jawad returning to London. However, the classic composition is not present: the documentary describes the

79 Junge, Daniel and Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy. Saving Face. USA – Pakistan, 2012.

situations and portrays the people rather than narrates the story. Portraits and describing the violence work as arguments to prove the existence of such a problem as acid violence in Pakistan. Thus the documentary is closer to the rhetorical formal system. Nevertheless, the story time and the plot time can be determined. The plot includes the interviews and other documentary footage; on the other hand, there are lots of references to events outside the plot – mainly the acid violence crimes committed. It would be wrong to discuss the nondiegetic elements of the film because the plot reality is split up: the characters themselves act as off-screen narrators while they are shown on the screen.

The film space is rarely continuous. In most of cases the environment is shown in details only for illustration of character's story (the room where Rukhsana was burned – 10:40) or for in-cut scenes between meaningful segments (mosques at 12:27 or the city at 23:28). The film space is constructed without a regard to its continuity because it plays a secondary role to the speech or actions of the characters. For example, the operating theater is shown from different points of view without obvious connection between these viewpoints (fig. 5.1). In contrast to this scene, the first Rukhsana's appointment at Dr. Jawad is reconstructed in absolute compliance with 180° rule (fig 5.2). Jawad's office is easy to reconstruct mentally whereas we can hardly imagine the real size and shape of the operating theater. In fact, the

Fig. 5.1. The operating theater in *Saving Face.*

camera position is defined mainly by common sense of the camera operator: it is placed where the actions of the character are the most visible or where the size of the room allows to place it.

Sometimes the spatial continuity is broken in a different way: when Dr. Jawad takes photographs of his mutilated patients (8:14), the background of each frame let us conclude that the photographs are made in different rooms (fig 5.3). So, the spatial continuity is expressly neglected. The close-ups are used to emphasize the particular details: the emotions expressed on characters' faces or the damage to the face made by acid. The interviews are often performed in “talking heads” style: we can barely see anything apart from the face of the interviewee. There is a very notable episode of Rukhsana's husband telling that he is innocent: the close-up of his 'sincere' face is sometimes interrupted with the close-up of his hand damaged by drops of acid (11:16). Even if he was not asked about his hand in the end of the interview, the spectator would recognize the lies. All the close-ups are meaningful even if they prevent the spectator from understanding the film space.

Fig.5.2. Dr. Jawad's office in *Saving Face*.

The frequency of cuts is also subordinated to the documentary goals. When Rukhsana's husband is interviewed or when Rukhsana shows the room where she was burned, the shots are 13-20 seconds long. Such long takes do not occur often. During the dialogues the cut sometimes happens in the middle of the sentence to show the interlocutor's reaction. The shot is as long as the character's speech is only in situations when it is necessary to concentrate on the face expression. For example , the 13 seconds shot of Rukhsana telling a part of her story is that long because the director wants us to focus on Rukhsana's crying mutilated face. In the episode of Dr. Jawad taking photographs of his patients the shots are 2 seconds long – in order to create the faster rhythm of action. Discussing the temporal ellipses is pointless since the film is not absolutely narrative.

Fig. 5.3. Photographs of patients in *Saving Face.*

The 'seams' between shots are rather obvious. The camera may take totally different angles during the same scene, so graphic relations do not contribute much to the fluency of the film. The cuts between scenes are sometimes emphasized by in-cuts of city views or the black screen with text explaining the character's actions ("Dr. Jawad is replacing Zakia's scar tissue with an innovative new artificial tissue"). Saving Face film makes an impression of 'clippness' mainly because of its rhetorical organization: the narrative is not a primary technique; the film space is rarely defined clearly; the cuts are visible and mostly frequent even though in a different way than in music videos.

3.2.5. Oblivion.

Oblivion[80] by Shariff Nasr is short film awarded with 'Grand Prix 2012' at the Snapfilm Festival Krakow, 'People's Choice Award 2011' and 2nd place jury commendation at Filminute Festival. Regardless to the common regulations of Filminute Festival, Oblivion is two minutes long. It is a narrative film about a man with Alzheimer who wakes up in a hospital room with his hand fastened to the bed. The composition is also clear: the exposition (the man in pajama wakes up) – the action development (he calls for his wife, tries to stand up and free himself from the hand belt) – the culmination (he falls down breaking the bed, night table and the glass) – the dénouement (he wakes up on the bed again with both of his hands fastened). The chronological order of events is not reversed and no flashbacks are involved. In fact, the plot time equals the story time: the film is so short that any necessary references to the character's past are not given. We are not told who is Emma the man calling all the time, we can only presume if she is his wife or daughter. The Alzheimer diagnosis is also for the spectator to guess; we can suspect it because waking up for the second time the man does not seem to recognize the room. There are no nondiegetic elements in the film; every single detail in the film space is directly connected to the situation described. Such a minimalistic narrative is naturally more continuous – there are no details to distract spectator's attention.

The film space is clearly defined. The small hospital room is shown from different angles around the protagonist with a respect to the 180° rule: one of the walls remains invisible but the spectator has a notion of where the bed, the window, the door and the table are placed (fig. 6.1). It is unlike the discontinuity of space of operation theater in Saving Face. The close-ups are widely used to focus the spectator's attention on the protagonist's appearance and movements; background details in the close-up frame are blurred. Nevertheless, the medium shots are able to reconstruct the film space perfectly.

80 Nasr, Shariff. Oblivion. Netherlands, 2011. http://vimeo.com/28380751

Fig 6.1. Hospital room in *Oblivion*.

The rhythmic editing is used: the shots are 7 to 11 seconds long in the inception of the film, and this is a considerably high length for 2-minutes movie. Later, when the protagonist stands up and tries to free himself, the action speeds up and the cut occurs every 1-2 seconds. There are two temporal ellipses: we can see neither the nurse coming in nor the patient transported to the bed again. In this film the ellipses play an artistic role; the parts of reality are cut off in order to represent the Alzheimer patient's view. The spectator 'forgets' some episodes of the story together with the protagonist. The temporal ellipses are not obtrusive though and do not visually affect the relations between shots. The color gamma is the same through the whole movie, mainly because there is only one scene. On the other hand, the cuts are very visible since the jumps from medium shot to close-up are abrupt as well as switches between different angles of view. In fact, the visible and sometimes frequent cuts is the only factor that draws Oblivion closer to the clip video. Other aspects of the video contribute to fluent and continuous narrative.

Chapter 4. Discussion.

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the analysis conducted in the previous chapter, to make some observations on it, to reveal the regularities in short film editing as well as to summarize the knowledge gained through the present thesis. The discussion is held on the ground of works on montage studies cited in the previous chapter and has an intention to demonstrate practically in what way the editing style might contribute to clip thinking.

In the second chapter we defined clip thinking as a perceptual pattern based on the deconstruction of narratives. Later, we speculated on the concept of clip thinking as an embodiment of database logic. This discussion might logically lead to the following conclusion: the more 'clipped' a video is, the more it resembles database and the more it opposes the narrative logic. Certainly, the conducted analysis does not allow us to determine which video makes a stronger dispersive effect on the spectator's perceptual strategies; the further research is needed for this purpose. However, it is possible to make a chart in which the analyzed short films are placed from the most “clipped” to the less “clipped” ones according to the formal attributes. The results of the analysis can be briefly represented in Table 1. As we can see, the music video Firework is leading in the majority of charts and can be considered as the video representing the notion of 'clip'. The Shore with its fluent narrative, perfect connection between shots and relatively infrequent cuts looks like a full-length feature film which is regarded as a short film only formally.

Furthermore, some interesting observations can be made. For example, the frequency of cuts decreases if the film is longer: 2 and 4 minutes long Firework and Oblivion head the chart, 7 minutes long Lemonade Stand follows and the Oscar winners The Shore and Saving Face (more than 30 min) have the least frequent cuts. The 'fast editing' tends to become the main technique for short movies and makes them more capable of provoking the clip thinking

patterns. The 'seams' between shots are generally a matter of the director's style; however, the most 'clipped' Firework took the first position and the least 'clipped' The Shore took the last one. The narrative is mostly disordered also in Firework whereas Saving Face is not counted in this chart at all – as a rhetorically organized film.

Position	**Narrative.** *The most disorderly → the least disorderly*	**Film Space.** *The least clearly defined → the most clearly defined*	**Frequency of cuts.** *The most frequent → the least frequent*	**'Seams' between shots.** *The most visible → the least visible*
1	Firework	Saving Face	Firework	Firework
2	Lemonade Stand	Firework	Oblivion	Oblivion
3	Oblivion	The Shore	Lemonade Stand	Saving Face
4	The Shore	Lemonade Stand	The Shore	Lemonade Stand
5		Oblivion	Saving Face	The Shore
	Saving Face (rhetorical organization)			

Tab.1. Results of the analysis - the chart of “clippness”

Considering the definition of clip thinking, narrative is one of the most important factors in the analysis. The relations between narrative and database logic in short films might seem paradoxical from the first sight: there is no direct dependence between the formal organization of the film and its 'clippness'. On the one hand, the rhetorical or any other formal organization different from narrative makes the film more 'clipped' by definition – the informational units do not have to be connected by cause-and-effect relations. The narrative, even a distorted one, might play a uniting role for the elements of the film. On the other hand, some narrative films can resemble the clip in a more dramatic way than films of other formal types. Consider the narrative (or, better to say, multi-narrative) *Firework* and mostly

rhetorically organized *Saving Face*. These films have much in common; both of them involve several stories inside the single film body. The Firework video does not involve many temporal ellipses and even has the song that unites all the stories together. The film space is also always clearly defined. On the opposite, the most important part of the story (the crimes that were committed) in Saving Face takes place outside of the film plot. The temporal ellipses are present: mainly because the events are not even supposed to follow each other directly. The shots of the film are connected only with the characters and with the theme of the movie.

Nevertheless, I would claim that the Firework video is more 'clipped' exactly because of its narrative nature. The high pace of action enhanced with the editing style makes this film inappropriate for the rhetorical organization. It is practically impossible to shoot Saving Face in 4 minutes employing all the techniques used in Firework. If we try to do so, the rhetorical nature of the film will probably be gone, leaving the space for nonconsecutive emotional narrative. Our attention is not strongly dispersed with Saving Face film because we do not expect a consecutive narrative from rhetorical documentary. It is likely that the 'clip video' is not the one that denies narrative as a formal system but rather the one that employs narrative in a distorted or mixed way. The narrative that *resembles a database* might make a stronger dispersive effect than an original database. The human perception is cheated in some way: dealing with a database the mind is aware (at least consciously) of the fact that this knowledge is not stored and transferred as a narrative. Thus the mind does not consciously look for the cause-and-effect relations, while probably doing it subconsciously. On the contrary, dealing with the distorted narratives, the human mind consciously searches for logic tights between informational units as it is typical for a narrative. Since these tights are distorted and mixed up, the attention might be dispersed and mind might become cognitively confused. Metaphorically, the difference between a clip video and a video with non-narrative formal organization resembles the difference between reading the articles in Wikipedia and in a conventional encyclopedia. Both are databases; the encyclopedia's articles are usually accessed separately – as random access feature of a database allows. However, the reader

usually creates a 'narrative' making a path through Wikipedia's hyperlinks. So, the Wikipedia imitates the narrative still employing the database logic. The clip video does the same. As we discussed in chapter 2, narrative is the most natural form of existence and transmission of the knowledge for the human mind. So, both database and distorted narrative contribute to clip thinking because the theory is that the human mind subconsciously tries to perceive everything as narrative. However, as we discussed above, the distorted narrative cheats human cognition in a more significant way.

A lot of parallels might be drawn between database and short film. For example, discussing the Manovich's theory in chapter 2, we pointed out the multitasking as an attribute of new media. Multitasking implies multiple viewpoints available at the same time. While watching a film the spectator changes the viewpoints together with the camera. In case of a clip video with its 2-3 seconds cuts, there is no big difference between successive and simultaneous points of view. Consider the episode of the man getting up from his bed in Oblivion: in 12 or 15 seconds we can see him from various angles – his face, his feet, his hand; form the right of the room, from the left of the room, from behind and from above. It is hardly possible to remember the order of the shots after you have watched the film. The effect is the same as if we were observing the man from all the angles simultaneously. In contrast, we can not observe the same effect in The Shore; in every single scene the succession of the shots is clear and can be remembered. Consider the scene of Joe, Pat and Mary waving their hands to draw Paddy's attention (20:20). Joe, Pat and Mary are near the house and Paddy is half-mile away at the shore – so, their viewpoints are extremely different. We can successively see Joe's impatience, Paddy's confusion and the ridiculous misunderstanding growing when Paddy's friends decide Joe is a policeman who came to arrest them. These events are in no way simultaneous – they make sense only in succession and thus do not disperse our attention. Using the terms of Roland Barthes, the spectator is able to catch the punctum only in temporarily longer shots as in The Shore whereas in Oblivion the spectator's does not always have time to concentrate on a catchy detail: we are rather trying to form an overall impression of the object.

One of the attributes of the database is the absence of the 'whole'. The random access to the database units makes it unnecessary to sense the entire database. It is not unlike to what Gilles Deleuze pointed out about the lack of integrity in any montage strategy, as we mentioned earlier in the chapter. Each shot is a separate database unit and two adjacent shots may potentially involve a temporal ellipsis. In case of clip video the 'seams' between shots are expressly visible; this visibility makes the understanding of the film as a database even more accentuated. In Firework many adjacent shots belong to different story-lines; such a technique emphasizes the isolation of the each shot and make the video visibly segmental. It is also an illustration of Eisenstein's notion of clash in montage: Firework music video is not a sum of six stories but a product of their multiplication. The parts of different storylines clash with each other giving birth to the concept of the song. In fact, even though the characters of the different storylines do not communicate to each other, they share the same idea of “youngsters overcoming their problems” and thus constitute the larger over-narrative. The montage clash provides the opposite effects at the same time: it fuses the stories together on a mental level and highlights their isolation on a formal level.

The database's absence of the whole is also applicable to the continuity of cinematic space. The close-ups also play a role of isolated informational units that prevent the spectator from seeing the whole film space. In these terms, the film space has a modular structure: it is constructed of a number of shots – be they close-ups, medium or long shots. All the shots are meant to be assembled together mentally by the spectator in order to understand the film space in its integrity; however, it does not necessarily happen. In most of the analyzed films the space is rather continuous. However, as we pointed out during the analysis, some scenes in Saving Face are discontinuous or show the space in a very limited way. In extremal cases, as in Madonna's Girl Gone Wild, the space is totally not defined due to the close-ups over-usage. In fact, the modular structure does not necessarily imply that the parts together can constitute the whole. A temporal or a spatial whole is a nonsense term for the database logic and for the clip video.

The clip video is also a perfect illustration for the “snatch and grab philosophy” of digital natives that we discussed in chapter 2. Snatch and grab philosophy is characterized with an urge for immediate answers, lack of concentration on the single matter and frustration if the immediate answer cannot be received. For example, the Firework video does not let us concentrate on any single story-line: scene of the boy's parents quarreling is interrupted with Katy Perry singing and then the scene of an overweight girl at the swimming pool party follows. As we can see, if the culmination of the story does not happen in 5 seconds, the scene is switched. In contrast, The Shore's story pace is rather slow; the scenes are long enough for the spectator to focus on the details. Perhaps, it even allows for Roland Barthes' tmesis to appear: the attention of impatient spectator might be distracted during some long dialogues. The clip video has no possibilities for tmesis: the frequently switching story-lines, points of view and montage cuts do not leave time for getting bored of the narrative.

In our analysis of Oblivion we noticed that the temporal ellipsis is used with the artistic purpose – the spectator takes the position of Alzheimer patient and does not see those events that are not seen by the protagonist. We also see the nurse with patient's eyes – the blurred vision enhances the effect of association between the spectator and the protagonist. Apparently, there are only two expressive tools – the ellipsis and the first person vision – that puts us in the protagonist's body; these tools take a very little amount of the screen time: the shot of nurse's face is approximately 1 second long and ellipsis does not take time by definition. However, the effect is strong: there is a feeling of watching the film simultaneously from two positions: of an invisible observer and of the Alzheimer patient. We try to twitch the hand belts and to reach the door handle together with the protagonist. Such an effect may contribute to clip thinking in a very unconventional way. Our attention is concentrated on the plot but the perception of this plot is dualized. Oblivion can not be described as having parallel narratives, but the only narrative is read in parallels and it makes the film significantly dispersing our attention.

An important question arises then – how is it possible to split the spectator's perception without splitting the screen (as with Dziga Vertov's experiments in Man with a Movie Camera) or at least without consequent and continuous changing of viewpoints as in the scene in The Shore we discussed above? We assume the answer lies in the sphere of discussions of genre. Apparently, any movie that involves human characters or just character possessing some human qualities can potentially make a spectator associating himself or herself with some of these characters, especially the protagonist. It is a native aspiration of cinema, regardless to genre or film length: for example, the male audience appreciates James Bond movies because of different reasons including the chance to become a handsome and lucky MI6 agent for a short time. However, in feature films you can not always perceive the whole plot from the protagonist's viewpoint for a number of reasons: there are plenty of other characters, there are secondary storylines and not all of the scenes involve the protagonist. In other words, it is more difficult to see the events with the main character's eyes if the film is long and full of events and bright personalities. The short movie can use the effect of association more efficiently since usually there are very few characters involved. The empathy to the Alzheimer patient in Oblivion is so strong because there is no one else to concentrate on. Certainly, this observation cannot be applied to all the short movies since, obviously, not all the short movies are so limited in film space and number of characters as Oblivion.

Still there is an interconnection between the length of the movie and its 'clippness'. This interconnection is not very straight-forward – otherwise all of the columns in the chart would look the same. I would claim that the tendency can be established – generally and under a number of conditions (including the formal organization, personal style of the director and the expressive needs of a particular script) – the shorter the movie is, the more clipped it is. The short movie usually has the faster narrative pace than a feature film and thus requires a different montage strategy. For example, a comparatively short Firework includes more storylines than “almost feature films” Saving Face and The Shore; these storylines have to be compressed in order to be presented in few minutes. The compression is achieved by a wide

usage of the expressive tools we discussed in the analysis: the temporal ellipses that place some story events outside the screen time; the indefinite film space that helps to save screen time by not showing unnecessary medium and long shots; the visible seams between shots that are unavoidable when frequently switching from one storyline to another.

It might become a proper definition if the techniques used for clipped video editing are called the compressive montage. As the high frequency of cuts is one of the most significant attributes of the clipped video, an interesting observation can be made. The length of a shot in a contemporary short movie is often proportional to the length of the whole movie. For example, an average shot in Firework is 2 seconds long which is five times shorter than an average shot in The Shore. If we compare the overall lengths of these two movies (4 and 29 minutes respectively), we can see that The Shore is seven times longer – it almost makes a right proportion. The Lemonade Stand with its overall length of 7 minutes (almost twice longer than Firework) has an average shot length of 5 seconds (also almost twice longer than in Firework). This regularity is not a strict one; however, in the 'frequency of cuts' column of the chart the analyzed movies happened to be placed in order from the shortest one to the longest one, as the overall length increases together with the length of shots. Oblivion is the exception from this regularity; it can be explained with the particular expressive needs of the script.

In narrative feature films the compressive montage is also used, but only for particular scenes that require a higher narrative pace (action scenes or showing a pre-history with a handful of key shots). The compressive montage can hardly ever spread for the whole narrative feature movie because it may disorganize the plot too severely, so the movie will stop making sense long before the end. The music videos usually illustrate the compressive montage much better than any other genre of short films. As Manovich pointed out, “just as music videos often incorporate narratives within them but are not linear narratives from start to finish, they rely on film (or video) images but change them beyond the norms of traditional cinematic realism”[81]. It is exactly what we see in Firework where the compressive montage techniques

81 Manovich, Lev. The Language of New Media. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2001., p.310

are used for re-shaping the narratives under the music video conventions. These conventions are not the same for non-music short films, since the music plays a plot-organizing role only in music videos. In fact, in Firework the narratives are distorted by the compressive montage in order to subordinate the narratives to the rhythm and the plot of the song whereas in Lemonade Stand or Oblivion the narratives are compressed for the temporal format of short movie.

These observations take us back to the discussions on genre of a short movie. As we mentioned in the introductory chapter, the short movie is a length-based category that is impossible to define more precisely than "an original motion picture that has a running time of 40 minutes or less, including all credits" (according to The American Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences). Even though the longer movies we analyzed – The Shore and Saving Face – do not really apply the same montage strategies as the shorter movies, but rather resemble the feature films, we should not exclude them from the short movie category. In fact, there is no reason why the short movie category should be based on something else but the length and there is no need to redefine the short movie. We could presume that the smaller length-based categories might exist inside the short movie genre; however, there is no clear demarcation line between the 'compressed' short movies like Firework or Lemonade Stand and 'feature' short movies like The Shore. It is impossible to detect starting from which length the compressive montage can not be used because the notion of it is rather relative. As for the sub-genres of the short movie that are not length-based (traditionally, comedy, essay, documentary, blockbuster), they are pointless to discuss in terms of clip thinking. The montage strategy mostly depends on the formal organization of the movie and the expressive needs of the particular script rather than on the contents of it. Obviously, both situation comedy and film essay could possibly have a high pace of narrative and thus compressive montage. Instead of splitting the short movie genre into smaller categories (which produce new boundaries and allows for severe classification mistakes), it is important to keep in mind the fact that the short movies are different and each particular case can be analyzed. Some of short films can hardly be associated with the clip thinking. In contrast, others employ the

compressive montage and become clips irrespectively to the fact if it is a music video or not. Such movies are a subject for further studies on clip thinking.

Chapter 5. Conclusion

The era of Lumière brothers cinema has passed long time ago. During a single century cinema evolved enormously – due to the technological progress a contemporary digital film differs from *The Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat Station* even more dramatically than an advertising poster differs from an ancient rock painting. However, the history tends to curl in a spiral. Emerging as an intriguing activity for enthusiasts, cinema quickly turned into the professional sphere. Nowadays film-making is open for the amateur enthusiasts again; nevertheless, the cinema will never become the same as it was a century ago. And the main reason for it is not the technological advances but the people. The people who think differently.

As we stated in the beginning of the research, the purpose of the present thesis was to conceptualize the clip thinking phenomenon in terms of digital culture theories and investigate how the clip thinking patterns are represented in short films. The conceptualizing part included four chapters. In the first one we speculated on the notions of knowledge, perception and narrative in order to make a definition of clip thinking. The perception is an automatic process that we can not control consciously and it also significantly depends on the knowledge we already have. The narrative is the most ancient and therefore habitual and convenient form of the knowledge organization and transmission. The narrative contributes to the analytical thinking since it requires understanding and analyzing the cause-and-effect relations. The clip thinking is a term re-appropriated from Fedor Girenok and re-defined for further precision: in a wider sense, it is a state of perception, knowledge and, therefore, consciousness which is formed by the perceptual patterns based on deconstruction of narratives. Practically, the main symptoms of clip thinking are the following: the lack of

concentration while dealing with narratives, the inclination to multitask work and random access to the information as well as 'snatch and grab philosophy'. The latter is a characteristic given by Sutherland-Smith to digital natives: an urge for immediate answers and the frustration if such an answer is impossible to get.

The hypothesis of the research implied that clip thinking is brought up by vast influence of New Media; however, it might be that New Media are the response to the needs of postmodern condition and therefore clip thinking. Most probably, the New Media and the clip thinking are interdependent; I believe though that the cognitive patterns can not emerge without an impact from outside. The human invented the New Media that started to change the social environment; then the new environment started to change human mind. In postmodernity a human mind and New Media formed a self-sufficient system and keep influencing each other.

According to Manovich, one of the key principles of New Media is modularity – a complex structure of media consisting of separate and meaningfully equal units. The modular structure leads to a new form of informational organization – the database logic. The database logic is naturally antagonistic to narrative: it allows random access to the information, multitasking while working with information and does not require cause-and-effect relations between informational units. The database logic contributes to clip thinking formation; however, a distorted narrative (a narrative that resembles a database) contribute to it even more significantly. When human mind faces the knowledge presented not as a database but as the fragmented narrative with mixed up logic tights, the cognition might be confused. It might happen because dealing with a database the mind does not consciously expect the informational units to be narratively connected. In case with distorted narrative the mind is looking for a cause-and-effect relations and may fail at it if the attention is dispersed.

Media perception is similar to language perception: we communicate through media and use media to encode the information we send and receive. According to Whorf-Sapir hypothesis,

the structure of native language influences or even determines the mentality and cognitive strategies of the person. If the same is true for New Media, we start thinking and keeping knowledge in database logic rather than in habitual narrative. We program media according to database logic principles and are programmed by media ourselves; so the process of adopting the database logic is both-way.

Another hypothesis of this research implied that clip thinking is an attribute of the post-human being. The key aspect of post-human is the decentralized 'self'. The tools used by the post-human are perceived as 'exoself' which is an integral part of the being. Therefore the human mind delegates some of its cognitive functions to the computer-exoself. In the most common case, it is the function of memorizing: the post-human being starts using the human mind only as a RAM of the computer. Instead of storing the knowledge, the human mind addresses the electronic database (PC, Internet, etc.), retrieves the needed data, processes it and basically forgets it after. There is no need of memorizing anything since the electronic database is always at a hand. The function of computation is also often delegated to the computer; however, it manipulates with the pure abstract symbols only – the comprehension of the data does not happen. The cognitive capabilities of a post-human being increase but the process of the cognition turns into simulacrum. In this sense the clip thinking as a part of post-human consciousness is an adaptation of human mind to usage of the new tools – the digital computers.

Investigating how film editing (montage) influences the spectator's perception, we defined montage as a set of techniques for juxtaposing and clashing meaningful units in the film leading to the creation of new meanings. The notion of montage as a clash plays a self-contradicting role – the editing technique that puts together the parts of different stories (as it often happens in music videos) may both mentally unite the stories and formally disorganize the film. There is a number of montage techniques that may turn a film into a clip allowing it to provoke the clip thinking patterns in the spectator's mind. The notion of the clip is not absolute: the short film can be more or less clipped. In fact, the 'clippness' is the opposite

value to the continuity of the film body. At some point the continuous narrative of the film acquires the attributes of a database.

The most notable outcome of the research are the criteria that allow to analyze the grade of 'clippness' of the particular film. The criteria are the following: (1) the continuity of film narrative, (2) the continuity and clarity of film space, (3) the frequency of cuts and the temporal ellipses and (4) the graphic and semantic relations between adjacent shots. As we pointed out, the definition 'clip' applies generally to narrative film since there is an opportunity to distort the narrative. If the formal system of the film is different from narrative, the spectator does not expect a continuity of a film body. Therefore the narrative that resembles a database might make a stronger dispersive effect than an original database.

The multitasking feature of database is represented in cinema with a succession of extremely short shots that are perceived as simultaneous. The database logic also leads to the loss of the 'whole' since a database has neither beginning nor the end; the montage cuts may potentially include a temporal ellipsis or a spatial discontinuity. The inconsistent narrative also allows the 'snatch and grab philosophy' gratifying the urge for immediate answers and preventing the spectator from concentrating on the story-line. We discovered that there is a potential interconnection between the length of the film and its 'clippness': under several conditions, the shorter the movie is, the more clipped it is. The montage technique of the clipped videos aspires to compress the story in order to fit it into the format of short film; the mentioned techniques can be called the compressive montage. To sum up, a particular type of short films possesses all the needed attributes to provoke the clip thinking patterns in the spectator's mind.

In the present thesis we conceptualized the phenomenon of clip thinking. However, a lot of questions remain unanswered leaving the space for further research. How are the clip thinking patterns present in other media? Where else the 'narrative-to-database' change can be revealed in mass culture? When exactly the clip thinking started to be noticeable in mass

consciousness? And, finally, the present research is too limited to investigate how much expressed and how much wide-spread is clip thinking in the mass consciousness. There is a need in a broader quantitative research based more on cognitive science than on digital culture theory. Perhaps, the understanding of clip thinking would become a ground for defining a new human subject for a new social discourse.

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