

## MONTAGE AS THE UNIVERSAL CREATIVE DEVICE: INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

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**Abstract.** The aim of this paper is to prove the hypothesis: montage is the universal creative device which is present in nature, culture and art. The evolution of this device is considered in cinematography, methods of using montage in various kinds of art are generalized. Methods used in the study: general scientific (analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction), methods of theoretical research (from abstract to concrete), historical method. As a purely technical method, montage is used everywhere, starting with the unforgettable past. The goal of literary montage is to bring the reader closer to an understanding of completely different characters as it was before. Montage is inherent in works of painting; it is applied to photo and is also used in music. Music – a sound and dynamic art, painting and photography – visual and static, basing on a literary work, is theatre.

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### 1. Introduction

Information is the main weapon of modern civilization. People receive information about the surrounding world with the help of sight, hearing, smell and tactile interaction with objects of the earth's surface and the objective world. The desire for awareness is one of the features of a person who tries to comprehend the outside world in its entirety. The human brain receives verbal and nonverbal information from the outside. The right hemisphere is connected with our unconscious and is responsible for the visual perception of the world. The left hemisphere, responsible for linguistic perception, translates what has been seen in consciousness, that is, synthesizes visible images in the system of conscious (conceptual) generalization. But it is not enough for humanity to contemplate, reorganize, enjoy the benefits of nature or fight for its existence. People need to share their impressions and ideas about this world with others. Consequently, spaces and realities of the artistic world are born. So, the study of montage as a universal creative device is relevant, to my mind.

### 2. Montage in cinematography

Cinematography is known to be a synthetic art which combines the signs of spatial and temporal arts. There are different approaches and many discussions about this fact. Some scientists insist on plasticity as the main feature of cinema (M. Andronikova), others advocate the idea of its photographic nature (S. Krakower), many of the researchers see, first of all, the connection between cinema and literature (S. Freulich, V. Shklovsky and others), however, all scientists agree that the origins of cinema are visual (*Pokulevska, 2016: 46*).

Cinema was invented in the XIXth century and gained enormous popularity in the XXth century. The history of cinema is full of technical and artistic discoveries. The

appearance of sound, colour, numerous experiments with the film led cinema to its modern look. In addition to the complexity of the form the content became complicated, and the fact that was initially perceived as a forced necessity, found artistic substantiation. Montage is a good example of such a transformation.

Initially it was thought that the main role is played by the content of a fragment of art, but the fact in what way one fragment is connected to another did not matter. Therefore, the possibilities of cinema inside the frame were mainly studied in the majority of early films, for example, cinema expressionists and French film-impressionists (*Impressionism, 2003*). But there were also authors who drew attention to the ability of cinema to form content and tell stories by displaying a series of different images.

The term montage (from French means assembly and installation of machines, structures and whole enterprises for certain projects, plans and drawings) arose and was strengthened in cinema at the dawn of its existence. In screen art, like in any other form of creativity, we deal not with the assembly of machines or enterprises, but with the reproduction of the world around us in artistic images or with the transfer of documentary events in the form of image-sound compositions. The subjective image of the objective world that will be offered to the viewers depends on the profound author's knowledge and his/her firm moral ideals (*Gak, 2003: 705–706*).

Montage was the centre of Soviet directors' interest in the second half of the 1920s as well as French representatives of 'pure cinema'. The directors were looking for new visual features in montage. Gradually, knowledge was expanded and enriched, the functions of montage were determined, its new possibilities, its role as a whole was rethought. Subsequently, it was discovered that montage was present in all the areas of art and even human consciousness works on the montage principle of comparison and fragmentary perception of reality.

The use of montage in a screen product is closely related to the problem of thinking with the help of screen images and concepts. Cinema and television, no matter how real it is due to its documentary, photographic nature is also an aesthetically organized impression from reality – the result of creative efforts. With the expansion of the author's role in the screen art, his ability to analyse the world in an artistic way deepened (*Shergova, 2014*).

In the 1920s, the principles of montage expressiveness of silent cinema (modern researches about silent film see (*King, 1984; Cuff, 2016, 2018; Silva, 2018*)) created the basis for the discovery of the author's arguments and the creative interpretation of the world with the help of connecting frames that do not relate to plastic arts. Montage is alpha and omega of cinema, claimed V. Pudovkin. Using its expressive capabilities, one can outline the logical course of thinking on the screen and thereby manage the associations of viewers. Therefore, Pudovkin considered montage to be inseparable from the author's thought, an idea that analyses, synthesizes, integrates and generalises (*Pudovkin, 1955: 109*). Directors of that time theoretically interpreted the observation: when comparing two frames a new representation is born.

According to L. V. Kuleshov, a well-known filmmaker, a cinema frame is just a letter for montage, which is 'the main means of cinematic influence'; images in the film are of great importance not by themselves, but in their 'combination', 'the variability of one piece to another', the system of their alternation (*Zharinov, 2015*).

The idea of montage came to S. M. Eisenstein from the idea of analytical separation of the object on significant elements and their new synthesis for the transmission of a new semantic and figurative sound. At first it was used by new technical arts: photography and

cinema. In addition, montage in the works of surrealists and photomontage were able to give the most profound interpretation of reality than copies of life in non-montage works. For Eisenstein, the aim was to find the universal ‘unit and a new theory of imagery.’ Therefore, montage was presented as the universal method (not just a set of techniques) of art (*Kuzmina, 2012: 136*).

In the article “Montage – 1938” Eisenstein wrote: “Any two pieces installed side by side, inevitably are combined into a new representation, arising from this juxtaposition as a new quality” (*Eisenstein, 1964: 157*). The frame of a film is always a synthesis of objective properties of phenomena, which are shown, and subjective intentions of the director, his relation to the subject (*Zharinov, 2019*).

The definition of montage was also given by the famous filmmaker M. I. Romm: “The thought of the artist, his idea, his vision of the world, expressed in the selection and juxtaposition of pieces of screen action in the most expressive and most meaningful form” (*Romm, 1964: 106*).

The term ‘montage’ has two meanings: narrow and broad. In the narrow sense, montage is a method of organizing narratives in a film. In the broad sense it is a set of artistic techniques in other types of arts: creation or each image split into fragments that differ dramatically in texture or scale of the image.

Examples of such heterogeneity are photo collages; intentional discrete compositions in poetry or prose, which testify to the fragmentation of action or incoherence of individual perception; alternation in the literary work of short passages with essentially different stylistics; contrasting collision in the visual work of materials of different textures; visual or verbal image of processes occurring simultaneously in which synchronicity is demonstrated by alternating short fragments representing these actions; abrupt and frequent changes of perspectives within a single text or visual work (*Kukulin, 2015: 59–201*).

“The function of the eye and the ear,” wrote J. H. Lawson, “consists not only in the registration of the visible and audible, but also in the transmission of the immediate impression of the brain” (*Lawson, 1967: 256*). In fact, all figurative-expressive means of the screen – frame composition, plasticity, especially colour and lighting, sound – are involved in finding screen equivalents of the creator’s mental work. But in the process of audio-visual ‘description’ of what is happening and its comprehension especially important role is played by montage – interframe and inside the frame, which freely operates the space-time definiteness of the material.

Having played a decisive role in the process of developing of the screen art, montage was considered to be the expressive means that allowed directors to lead any story, create dramatically saturated scenes, analyse and generalize phenomena of reality, express concepts, create images. Eisenstein saw the power of montage in that fact that emotions and minds of the audience are included into the creative process. Montage joint always determines a certain interpretation of the world, turning it from the screen to auditorium (*Eisenstein, 1964: 171*).

Consequently, according to Eisenstein, the realistic value of montage is expressed in the construction of the image, which embodied the theme by combining separate ‘pieces’.

It is in designing the screen image that creative possibilities of the author-director are revealed, because the artistic image implies, besides the inextricable connection of the sensual and logical, a certain amount of imagination and fantasy. Hence, the aesthetic basis of the use of various types of metaphors takes place, associative comparisons, symbolic-allegorical constructions in the screen artwork.

Creativity of the director, as well as any other artist, is always conditioned by the well-known composition of mental activity, which is bound to be related to a particular world outlook because the creator always appreciates reality, reflecting it in his work according to certain aesthetic positions (as well as the possibilities of expressive means of this kind of art) (*Lissa, 1970: 93*). Montage study has proven that depending on how the actual material is selected and mounted, its meaning changes dramatically (*Lawson, 1967*).

### 3. Montage in culture and nature

Montage as a principle of culture is the main theme of many years of research by S. M. Eisenstein ('basic problem' of his work, to use his own terminology). Philosopher Vladimir Bibler said that montage should be understood as the organizing principle of the XXth century culture, but, at the same time, montage can be called the only one that exists in the culture of this century (*Kukulin, 2015*).

The modern era has become for the world of artistic culture a period of stormy style searches, experiments, breaking established traditions. Our civilization is increasingly turning into a civilization of a visual image, combining it with a word and even pushing the word to the background.

Considering the existence of montage in the construction of works of art in a diachronic approach, one can find the following pattern: modernist montage/collage gives the viewer a sense of equal value: one and the same thing appears simultaneously from different points of view. In the postmodern collage, on the contrary, various fragments collected on canvas, preserve their autonomy, do not transform into a single whole (*Ilyin, 1996: 222*).

The montage principle is an indispensable property of artistic consciousness, and the expressive possibilities of all arts are based on it. Montage as a fundamental act of narrative strategy search allows us to trace the process of creating new 'informative forms' (*Khrabrova, 2014*).

Montage covers almost all the branches of culture, because wherever it comes to the fundamental discreteness of parts within the whole, there is a category of montage (*Ivanov 1988: 137*). Born as a device in cinema, montage quickly spread to adjacent (and sometimes quite distant from cinema) fields of culture and helped to identify similar techniques that existed for a long time, or even were discovered by researchers earlier but were not fully understood as montage ones (*Kurskich, 2010: 50*).

Culturologist Ilya Kukulin showed how the discoveries in the field of montage had significant influence on the development of modernist art and world outlook (*Kukulin, 2015: 59–201*). And today, no doubt, montage retains the potential of the 'catalyst' of the renovation process in the logic of figurative thinking in modern culture (*Staruseva-Persheeva, 2017:7*). Montage covers almost all the branches of culture, where it comes to the fundamental discreteness of parts within the whole, there is a category of montage (*Ivanov, 1988: 137*). The concept of 'montage' born in constructivist poetry (especially in cinema), is increasingly used as the universal category (*Rappoport, 1988: 4–23*) as a way of actualizing culture in an information society.

Montage in modern culture should be considered as a transformation of cinematic device into a new phenomenon, which means the universal principle of constructing its texts under conditions of informatization. Montage mediators are works of fine art, constructed of elements with different spatial, temporal, iconographic and stylistic nature. The universal character of the montage method is proved by its presence in literary, musical works,

theatrical productions, and new forms of artistic practices, graphic design, mass media, etc. (*Kuzmina, 2012: 135*).

It is this method that 'Nature used', creating complex crystalline formations and no less complex organisms, in the course of evolution. In this connection, E. Gombrich considered the term 'geometric montage', under which he understood the natural organization of space in nature and art, based on the principle of hierarchical unity of small and large groups of geometric elements (*Gombrich, 1979: 263*).

J. Deleuze in his book "Cinema 1: Image-in-motion" speaks about montage as defining the whole by means of fit, cutting and new artificial fit (*Deleuze, 1983: 152*). Deleuze is convinced that montage has gone the way of transfer from technical means to the means of art. He also believes that 'great filmmakers are comparable not only with artists, architects and musicians, but also with thinkers'. Instead of concepts, they simply think with images-in-motion and images-in-time (*Deleuze, 1983: 145*). Montage, in his view, is an operation that is applied to images-in-movement in order to extract from them the whole idea. Image-in-motion Deleuze understands as the unity of physical reality in the outside world and the image as a mental reality in consciousness.

Montage, representing the arrangement of images-in-motion by way of forming a mediated image of time, embodies the essence of creativity (about creativity see, for example) which is determined by the complexly changing interaction of the real and virtual. As a concrete embodiment of individual creative intentions, montage self-regulates at the general artistic and philosophical level of creativity. (About the study of artistic creativity see, for example *Rothenberg, 1971*).

Montage, according to Deleuze, covers simultaneously the whole sphere of creativity and 'being' of what is being created and created works: from the emergence of film conception to its familiarization by critics and audiences. Montage precedes the shooting of a film, in the form of material selection of parts of matter, which are to interact, sometimes very far apart. Montage is also enclosed in the shooting itself, at intervals filled with an eye-camera, which follows, runs, enters, goes. Already after the shooting, in an editing room, where the part that enters the film is selected from all the material, montage is also carried out. Viewers also use it when they compare life in a film with life as it is (*Rothenberg, 1971: 147*).

Montage is a psychophysiological feature of human consciousness (*Pokulevska, 2016: 45–52*). Montage principle is an indispensable property of artistic consciousness, and expressive possibilities of all arts are based on it. Mounting as a fundamental act of narrative strategy search allows us to trace the process of creating new 'informative forms' (*Khrabrova, 2014: 49–52*). The characteristic features of montage are particularly distinct in the intellectual creative process. Only the mind is peculiar to a particular way of abstract mental montage, mental modelling of re-combinations and mental selection for the materialization of the best that arises (*Salganik, 1988*). See, for example the study of cinema from a multimodal (*Krysanova, 2017: 14–16; Makaruk, 2018: 39–42*), cognitive perspective (*Gordejuela, 2019*) and the specificity of the dialogue between the artistic text and the consciousness of the addressee (*Matsevko-Bekerska, 2019: 36–46*).

In modern science there is enough reason for the development of the idea of montage in literature (*Kurskich, 2010: 53*). The creation of cinema has brought new considerations as well as new techniques and approaches of the literary text. Films have been greatly influenced by literature (*Alqadi, 2015: 48*).

#### 4. Montage in a literary text

In his lectures M. I. Romm convinced future filmmakers, that studying cinema “we must study, first of all, in literature. Literature is a cinematic mother” (*Romm, 1982: 76*).

Throughout the development of literary creativity, writers are striving to create maximum expressiveness of the text, ensuring its impact on emotional and intellectual sphere of the reader. But if classical literature realized this task due to the detail description, imagery of the recreated picture of the world, completeness of the physical and moral portrait of characters, by the twentieth century, creative thought seeks to overcome the linear flow of time, traditional plot, moves away from the existing narrative structures to a form close to the stream of consciousness. Changing of the aesthetic principles (integrity and completeness) led to a change in the style in art in general. Art moves away from the traditional form since the mid-twentieth century and in the twenty-first century masters a new path (*Petrenko and Slepakova, 2012: 23*).

Starting from the mid-twentieth century, creative thought seeks to overcome linearity, to move from existing narrative structures to a new form of presentation of the text. Thus, it is possible to note the fact of rethinking of general pictorial principles. The search for visualization tools leads to the creation of a new type of text – visually active – and suggests a change in the relationship ‘author – reader’; requires the reader capable of capturing and decoding visual markers (*Petrenko et al., 2012: 6*).

An artistic text of the late XX – early XXI century is the product of mutual influence of literature and cinema. Analysis of literary creativity at the turn of the century undeniably testifies to the active penetration of cinema technology into literature, montage in particular. Literature ‘invented’ various methods of the story: serial, parallel, associative, etc. Cinema borrowed these techniques, and they became known as montage techniques. In the film, images themselves are not significant, but their ‘combination’, ‘removability of one piece by another’, ‘the system of their alternation’ (*Kuleshov, 1929: 16–18*).

Manifestations of cinematography in literature were studied by many researchers. Umberto Eco in his works on Italian literature, investigated the problem of cinematography in the compositional organization of the text. Cinematography in a literary text is defined as characterization with montage technique of composition, in which different, but above all compositionally syntactic means depict a dynamic situation of observation. Secondary signs of literary cinematography are words of the lexico-semantic group, film quotes, cinema perception frames, images and allusions of cinema, functioning in a text. The cinematic type of a text is underlined by the very nature of its punctuation-graphic design and division (*Martyanova, 2002*).

The interaction of cinema and literature consists in a kind of transcoding message by developing equivalents available to each of these types of creativity. Identifying of methods borrowed from each other seems to be quite complicated, since different kinds of art constantly used storytelling and showing techniques, modifying them in relation to a specific historical epoch, cultural priorities of society and technical capabilities. In this connection, it is not accidental that an active search for the visual in literature and the narrative in cinema is active (*Petrenko et al., 2012*).

Montage in art can be viewed from two sides: firstly, montage is already incorporated in the work of art because it is at the heart of the perception of a person of the world as a psycho-physiological feature and secondly, montage is used when structuring the work to achieve different emotional and artistic effects. It is the main means of ensuring the content

connectivity of the text, a tool for selecting and combining elements that are most valuable in terms of their informativeness (*Pokulevskaya, 2016: 45*).

Cinema and literature belong to art, and therefore recreate its characteristic features. Performing aesthetic function, literary texts and films are subject to the laws of convention, integrity of the components of an artistic work, as well as the laws of originality and generalization. These laws are manifested very diversely and, first of all, in an artistic image realized in the form of a character-image, an image-representation and an image-word of the author (*Pokulevskaya, 2016: 6*).

Currently, there are several approaches to the study of cinema and literature interaction. Supporters of the aesthetic approach (K. Magny and E. Fuzellier) consider emotional component to be one of the main criteria for the text and film impact. In order for the artistic text to surprise and fascinate, it is necessary to borrow a number of cinematographic techniques: a change of points of view, an objective narration, a show (*Magny, 1948*). Cinema is able to embody various literary genres and all shades of feelings so that real sounds of the film express everything that relates to the semantic field of hearing in the text. Details, brightness, colour descriptions should correspond to the method of shooting that can adequately express artistic power of the literary work impact (close-up, medium plan, montage) (*Fuzellier, 1964; Petrenko et al., 2012*).

Film theorist A. Bazan notes that a cinematographic work can be mainly identified on the basis of the narrative technique. The film always appears as a successive series of fragments of reality, captured in a planar image of a rectangular shape with exactly fixed proportions, moreover, its 'meaning' is determined by the order of frames and the duration of their visual perception (*Bazan, 1972: 267*).

The historical-cultural approach highlights the 'visual' presented at three levels: socio-cultural, thematic and technical (*Clerc, 1984*).

Socio-cultural level is expressed primarily in the change of ways to see the world formed in the twentieth century. The image of the world originated in this century broke the integrity of perception, so that gaps, voids, the destruction of usual forms appeared in literature. The technical approach compares cinematic methods with literary means of expression.

The rhetorical approach, which reduces the 'visual' to vividness and brightness of the description, is also highlighted. This kind of visibility is due to widespread use of hypotyposis, which is characteristic of literature throughout all periods of its development. The authors of the dictionary of literary critics compare the hypotyposis with the film on its ability to awaken emotions and create a visual image (*Gardes-Tamine, 2004; Petrenko et al., 2012*).

Representatives of the semiotic approach treat the visual as the creative search for equivalents in text and film spaces. Two trends can be traced clearly in semiotics of cinema. The first trend unites those researches who do not see essential differences between cinema and language. The famous Italian film director and film theorist P. P. Pasolini sticks to this point of view. In his work "Poetic cinema" cinematographic specificity is compared with literature and one of the possible approaches to screen creativity is indicated, allowing to distinguish between its 'linguistic' and 'aesthetic' (in Pasolini terminology) levels (*Pasolini, 1984: 45–66; Petrenko et al., 2012*).

Supporters of the second trend recognize not only similarities, but also differences between film and language. The founder of modern semiotics of cinema K. Metz draws attention to the need of studying cinema in a linguistic perspective. He believes that cinema

specificity consists in the ‘presence of a language, which wants to become art within art, which wants to become a language’ (Metz, 1975: 65). The divergence between cinema with language and at the same time its involvement in it indicates that it is rather ‘speech without language’. Cinema does not use linguistic units, but ‘big syntagmas’, which are verbal and narrative by their nature. According to Metz, ‘big syntagmatics’ of the image plays a major role in the analysis of a film and that it generates connotative meanings. Expressive means of cinema (colour, light, perspective) complement the ‘great syntagmatics’ as signs-indexes and speech design units (Petrenko et al., 2012: 3–4).

Being borrowed into literature, the term ‘montage’ changed its meaning somewhat and began to denote the method of constructing a literary work, in which image discontinuity, its fragmentation prevailed. The function of montage is understood as discontinuity in communication, statement of random connections which become meaningful, play with dissonances, intellectualization of the work. The word ‘montage’ expanded its meaning and began to fix those co-oppositions and oppositions that are not dictated by the logic of the depicted, but distinguish the author’s way of thinking and associations (Khalizev, 1999: 276).

About montage in theatre wrote Eisenstein, noting that mounting principle can be seen in the stage technique of the XVI-XVII centuries when ‘on the stage of school theatres’ separate scenes of action also just crashed into each other, representing at the same time: the desert and palace, the cave of the hermit and the throne of the king, the bed of the queen, the abandoned tomb and the unfolding of heavens! (Eisenstein, 1964: 208).

Mounting construction principle can be found in music. For example, Joseph Haydn’s famous Symphony No. 6 (94), created in 1791, is a vivid example of the ‘montage of attractions’ theory by Eisenstein. It combines completely opposite rhythms, like pieces of different melodies combined on the mounting table – the smooth flow of melody designed to calm down, to lull a listener in order then to shake it by a sudden powerful blow to the timpani (Lipkov, 1990: 17). Attractions precisely because of the ability to attract general attention and act as a kind of dramatic magnets, which polarize the lines of force of the plot, exposing ethical positions, detect conflicts of opposing forces, which leads them to collision” (Lipkov, 1990: 205). This Joseph Haydn’s musical composition, which combines various attractions for the strongest influence on the listener, is called “Symphony with a blow to the timpani”. Romm’s following statement promotes understanding of the use of mounting principle in this symphony: “Montage is a clash of frames or such a collision of episodes, such a collision of sound and image, when from the blow to them, as from a stroke of steel on a stone, something new is born, a share of fire is born which should ignite the thoughts and feelings of the viewer” (Romm, 1982: 14).

Cinema and painting are considered to be ‘framework’ kinds of art. Space and time are transmitted using colours, light, rhythm and sound in these arts. Both a picture or a motion picture give us an idea of space and time, not about themselves, because the author only fixes a particular moment of movement. This is the similarity of these arts.

## 5. Conclusion

As a purely technical method, montage is used everywhere and even human consciousness works on montage principle of comparison and fragmentary perception of reality. Montage is used in many kinds of art. Each time its purpose is to create an image in minds of viewers, readers or listeners. It is achieved with the help of specific montage techniques inherent in a certain kind of art. But cinematograph remains as the recognized

source of montage techniques, and when analysing montage in painting, music and other arts, it is necessary to focus on it.

The term 'montage' in cinema poetics has long been recognized as one of the main cinema-graphic expressive means. It appeared, established itself and acquired a 'cinematic' understanding with the development of cinema as a kind of art. This was due to the fruitful work of many directors in the initial period of cinema formation.

Montage can be understood in the narrow sense (as the screen image structure) and in the broad sense: as a collision of fragments inside a piece of artwork, pieces with different texture. Montage comprehended in this way, can be seen in various fields of art, for example, in painting, photography, poetry, prose, theatre art. It works as a tool for creating a new language, a new approach to the design of images, which is adequate to a rapidly changing reality. The task of montage is to convey a specific thought, the statement of the author to the viewer who becomes co-participant of the creative process.

The idea of montage as the fundamental principle of art organization became the main one in works of various artists. The uniqueness of montage lies in the fact that the creative process involves emotions and minds of the person. The emergence and development of montage thinking has become one of the characteristic trends in the 20th century culture, which continues to develop in this century. Thus, we can conclude that montage is the universal creative device.

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