

POSTMODERNIST INSTRUMENTS IN CINEMA

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The difference between modernism and postmodernism lies in time. First one is oriented towards progress, the vector is directed to the future and new forms. The second, by reproducing the already existing, seeks to base itself on a concept in which both form and content derive not independently but from the meaning.

In cinema, postmodernism is mainly manifested in the repetition of past appearances or styles. However, “everything is said” seems to be an eye-popping justification that hypocritically masks the complex art of combining and re-combining the past. For example, film researcher **Susan Hayward** says, you have a past hypermarket for cinema where inspiration or direct ready-made material is arranged on shelves.¹ The magic begins with the selection and processing of ingredients, when, in this case, the director begins to make a film, we can say, creating a layered structure of the movie. At this time the artist has to use several tools.

In cinema, postmodernism can be found in different ways. In addition to going back in time, it also manifests itself in the practice of mixing genres and styles, which is more common than, per say, quoting.

The main visible mechanisms of postmodernism is still revealed in the quotation, which can be of two types – parody and pastiche (imitation, as well as falsification). However, it can also be intellectual – intellectual – when the author expresses love to another author, style or era. Take for example Jean-Paul Siveriac’s film “My Provincials” (*Mes provinciales*, 2018), where Gia Kancheli’s music is used. Eldar Shengelaia’s “Sherekilebi” (1973).

The controversy debates over the concept of postmodernism is still ongoing in the scientific and artistic circles, although some think that classical postmodernism is over and we are now in “high postmodernism” or “postmodernism” stage. After the Trump election, more and more theorists expressed the view that postmodernism was over and humanity had entered the era of post-truth.

One way or another, postmodernism is such a vague and broad category that even Homer’s “Odyssey” can be placed under its umbrella (Umberto Eco notes half-jokingly). Thus, the post-truth era, referred to by some as the post-media era, poses new challenges.² But the content of our times has not changed drastically yet, so the mechanisms of creating artistic reality in art also remain, for the most part, the same.

In fact, the term “postmodernism” was first defined by the English historian **Arnold Toynbee** (1889-1946) in the fourth volume of his famous “History Study” – “The Collapse of Civilizations” (*The Breakdowns of Civilizations*, 1939).³ Toynbee thinks that modernism ends with World War I, in 1918, followed by the process of establishing postmodernism. This period, according to the historian, lasts until World War II.

The postmodern as an aesthetic category was first mentioned by the Spanish literary critic **Federico de Onís** (1885-1966) in his book *An “Anthology of Spanish and Latin American Poetry”*.⁴

Postmodernism as an aesthetic category will once again resonate in literary criticism. Now with the American scholar **Dudley Fitts** (1903-1968), who in 1942 defined

1 Hayward, *Cinema Studies*, 2001, p. 303.

2 Post-Media – The term was established by the French philosopher **Félix Guattari**. During a lecture in Tokyo in 1985, he criticized postmodernism and predicted a “post-media revolution.” Indeed, soon after, the traditional mass media emerged as a whole new kind of competitors – non-corporate players, whose origins were linked to the digital revolution, or the development of the digital world. By the early 2000’s, a new type of medium had emerged that had its own rules and aesthetics of the game. Post-Truth uses such alternative resources to disseminate its own simulated content. See. Félich G., *L’Impasse Post-Modern*, *L’Equine Litt é Raire*, 1-15 Fébrück, 1986, pp. 20–21.

3 Postmodern was first used by John Whitkins Chapman in 1870. see Hassan I., *The Postmodern Turn, Essays in Postmodern Theory and Culture*, Athens: Ohio University Press, 1987, p. 12.

See Hassan I., *The Postmodern Turn, Essays in Postmodern Theory and Culture*, Athens: Ohio University Press, 1987, p. 12.

4 Onís, *Antología de la poesía española e hispanoamericana*, 1934.

the term to refer to Latin American poetry like Onís, in particular to Mexican **Enrique Gonzalez Martinez**.⁵

Since the 1960's, "postmodernism" has been widely used in both literary criticism and philosophical texts. A great contribution to the popularization of the term was made by one of the first scholars of postmodernism, **Ihab Hassan** and **Leslie Fiedler**.

Postmodernism has its critics as well. Basically, this part is made up of left-wing, critical theory thinkers. For them, as **Jürgen Habermas** points out, postmodernism has a total perspective, missing out on the phenomena and practices that shape modern society.⁶ Habermas believes that postmodernism differentiates the world, which, by adhering to all the principles of consumerism, the same neo-conservatism, prevents the social modernization of the world and the development of art.

The most important critic of postmodernism is the American Marxist philosopher **Frederick Jameson**, who calls postmodernism the "logic of late capitalism." In his view, after modernism came a new stage, which was based on new social relations driven by economic transformation.

In Jameson's essay "Postmodernism, or the Logic of Late Capitalism," which was later published as a book, the logic of postmodernism is intermediate with the nature of the mass production of capitalism. In his view, art is increasingly merging with capitalism, a work of art resembling a productive commodity, losing its "depth" and losing its ability to do the sublime.⁷

Jameson also adapts this formula to cinema. The researcher believes that postmodern cinema is not a stage of internal development in the history of cinema, but a "logic of capitalism." In this sense, he calls Brian de Pal-

ma's "Blow Out," (1981) *Simulacrum*.⁸

Cristina Degli-Esposti talks about cinema and postmodernism and notes that the term "postmodernism" after literature, was first used.⁹ in connection with cinema by Ridley Scott's "Blade Runner" 1982). (Rachel's appearance is modeled on one of the iconic film noir actors, Heidi Lamar, and Eldon Tyrell's protagonist, based on Stanley Kubrick's "Shining" bartender Joe).

It's hard to name the first postmodernist film, even though the French "New Wave", for example, is largely based on postmodern concepts. In terms of genre, one of the first postmodernist films is Sergio Leone's "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly" (1966), which is a reminiscence (a reminder, an influence) of John Ford's classic Western.

We have already mentioned reminiscence, which is one of the most widespread methods in postmodernism, but it is better to use the "tool" because the latter responds more to the mass and convey nature of postmodernism. In itself, reminiscence and other instruments come together under one phenomenon, which is called intertextuality (postmodernists, if anything, can be thought of as the text of the universe).

In fact, the term "intertext" belongs to the Bulgarian poststructuralist Julia Kristeva, who is working in France. She combined the concepts of dialogue¹⁰ of **Mikhail Bakhtin** (Михаил Бахтин, 1898-1975) and concepts of sign¹¹ of **Ferdinand de Saussure** (1857-1913) in a new approach, according to which each text and the words in the text contain a "heteroglossian"¹² meaning. Which exist side by side but do not appear on the surface.

Of these values, one usually has the advantage, while the others are pursued from the surface (which is

5 Fitts, *Anthology of Contemporary Latin-American Poetry*, 1942.

6 Habermas, Ben-Habib, *Modernity versus Postmodernity*, 1981, p. 7.

7 Jameson, *Postmodernism*, 1984, p. 58.

8 Jameson, *Postmodernism*, 1992, pp. 6, 37.

9 Degli-Esposti, *Postmodernism in the Cinema*, 1998, p. 4.

10 Dialogue involves the definition of dialogue between the author and the audience. The author creates text that contains words. Words are part of the linguistic system. Thus, each word has different additional meanings as well. The reader, the audience, and later science, interpret the author's text, or the probable meanings of the words spoken. See Бахтин М., Проблема текста в лингвистике, филологии и других гуманитарных науках, Москва: Искусство, 1986, Ст. 297-325.

11 In semiotics, "sign" is defined as anything that has meaning. A sign can be a word, an appearance or a phenomenon. According to Saussure, a sign consists of a signifier and a signified. The denominator is the material side of the mark, it is also called the denotation. This is related to the content of the mark. See Saussure F., *Course in General Linguistics* (Wade Baskin Trans.), New York: Columbia University Press, 2011, P 65-102.

12 "Heteroglossia" is a term defined by Mikhail Bakhtin (Russian: разноречие), which implies the coexistence of different languages in one event (language). According to Bakhtin, the novel contains three types of narration: the characters, the narrator and the author. The idea of the novel is based on the conflict and coexistence of these three types of narrative. See Бахтин М., Слово в романе, Санкт-Петербург: Пальмира, 2017.

very similar to **Sergei Eisenstein's** theory of Overtonal Montage).

Intertextuality means the relationship between the author and the audience through codes, at which time this or that meaning is conveyed to the recipient not directly but through other texts.¹³ Also, the French post-structuralist **Roland Barthes** (1915–1980) notes that the meaning of the text does not take root in the text itself and it must be sought outside it, in the reader and in the environment.

Exactly to this is connected the birth of the concept of “author’s death”,¹⁴ which, by the way, contradicts the essence of postmodernist cinema, which was born with the concept of *Cinéma d’auteur*.¹⁵

The concept of auteur theory was totally established in the French “New Wave”, which, unlike all other film schools, actively applied the practice of hypertext. You can hardly find a film in this period in which the director does not express love towards the cult director of the past, the actor, the film or the style, as well as the genre.

The New Waves have blurred the demarcation lines between “high” and “low” art. For example, Jean-Luc Godard dedicated his debut feature film “The Last Breath” (*À bout de souffle*, 1960) to an American B-category film company. He deliberately selected the Monogram Pictures which in the film industry was far from the center, as a “critical application for setting new film goals and boundaries”.¹⁶

The dedication made by Godard is also a kind of hypertext. In general, this notion refers to the inclusion and connection of different texts within one system. Be it an encyclopedia, a web space or something else. It is mainly distributed in the digital world, which forms the democratic basis of texts and information. In such a system it is almost impossible to separate the central text to which other contents are subject on a vertical principle.

In semiotics, hypertextualism means the existence of a text that is based on or directly related to another, pre-existing text. The original text is called “Hypotext”, and the derivative is called “Pipertext”. Hypertext can be presented in a different way in the case of pastiSis (imitation) of the first source, or change the attitude towards it during a parody.

The French theorist Gérard Genette (1930–2018) calls the original text “A” and the text directly related to it “B”. The presence of B is due to A, although direct references may not be found in the text. Such is, for example, James Joyce’s “Ulysses”, which is based on Homer’s “Odyssey”. Hypertextualism from a broader perspective means universal democratization when it is almost impossible to establish a central text. In a global network, hypertextualism creates endless horizontal space by making endless links – where “high” and “low” no longer exist. Therefore, the tools of postmodernist citation, of making connections, are aimed at establishing democracy in art.

Perhaps the clearest example to illustrate hypertextualism is Joseph Mankevich’s *All About Eve* (1950) and Pedro Almodovar’s “All About My Mother” (*Todo Sobre mi Medra*, 1999). Hence, the first text is A and the last is text B.

The hypotext-hypertext pair can be found more broadly, for example, in terms of genre: text A – Jacques Demy *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* (*Les Parapluies de Cherbourg*, 1964) and Text B – Damien Chazelle’s “La La Land” (2016). Examples of even more vague hypertextualism are Charlie Chaplin’s *Gold Digger* (1924) and Quentin Tarantino’s *The Hateful Eight* (2015).

Notable is Stanley Kubrick’s “2001: Space Odessa” (1968), a deconstruction of the science fiction genre that is also a postmodernist approach. This film itself will become the hypothesis for Christopher Nolan’s “*Interstellar*” (2014). The same example can be said of Nolan filming which is a Simulacrum of Kubrick’s film. In the words of Michel Foucault, Simulacrum is a false resemblance, imitation.¹⁷

Simulacrum can also be considered as one of the postmodernist tools. The most common are: citation, allusionism, reminiscence and parody.

A quote is the clearest manifestation of hypertextualism, when a detail, scene or action, or formalistic decision is taken directly or similarly from another film. As for the allusion, the allusion in the text implies the existence of a phrase, quote or hint, a play on words, which will be familiar and easy to understand. Allusion assumes all kinds of so-called wink. For example, in Godard’s *The Last Breath* (*À bout de souffle*, 1960), **Jean-Paul Belmondo** repeats the gestures of the protagonist of gangster movie **Humphrey Bogart**.

13 Kristeva, *Desire in language*, 1980, p. 66.

14 Barthes, *Image-Music-Text*, 1977, pp. 142–149.

15 Truffaut, *Une Certaine Tendance du Cinéma Français*, 1954.

16 Rosenbaum, *Breathless as Film Criticism*, 2020.

17 Foucault, *Aesthetics, Method, And Epistemology*, 1994, p. 271.

Reminiscence refers to the repetition of an already known structure or individual details. Basically, it is found in the form of a motive, which distinguishes it from an allusion a message of which should be understood by everyone.

As for the pastiche - you mean to repeat something, to imitate. We are dealing with an explanation of love for the past. We can recall Todd Haynes's "Far From Heaven," (2002), which is considered to be the pastiche of Douglas Circus "All That Heaven Allows" (1955).

Unlike pastiche, there is a second way of imitation

and repetition - a parody, which laughs at the original version of something. It is impossible not to recall Ken Russell's "Listomania" (1975), which makes a parody of Lucino Visconti's film "Death in Venice" (Morte de Venezia, 1971).

The list goes on and on. Postmodernism abolished the vector of progress, the concept of time. However, with hypertextualism, the process of the act of thinking has shifted within the medium, making it sometimes even impossible to break out of postmodernism. Thus, the ambitious assumption that this era will never end, and that its tools will last forever — should not be a meaningless statement.

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