

## *Original Paper*

# Hypermodern Documentary Context: A Kernel of Authentic Choices

Jarmo Valkola

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### **1. Cognitive and Phenomenological Challenges**

In hypermodern documentary, the rhythms, and intonations of images, sounds and speech of everyday life are usually inhabited and pervaded by immersive and reflective traces of the past, which influences the present and points out to the future. The mental functioning of thinking and reasoning are mechanisms participating in this atonement of social, psychological, and cultural framework. They are felt as social functions of our history and as paraphrased fragments and sources of material perception and withdrawn consciousness. The constitutive contingency of the hypermodern stance of documentary discourse is concerned with the philosophical domains about the paradigmatic state and status of documentary in our times.

Nowadays it is not always easy to differentiate personal experience from the mediating technologies that have reconstituted and irradiated both personal and collective experiences. In this regard, media technologies of communication correspond to our somatic channels. Obviously, in the case of sight, the medium is visual and in the case of hearing, the medium is sound. These are the two sensory channels thought to be the most consequential for thinking. In thinking about language, the matter is different, because there is no single sensory channel corresponding to and possibly inspired by it. Language can be spoken in which case it is heard or written in which case it is seen. So, language is not so much a medium of perception but of representation, and a medium in which we often speak of the visual arts as different media like painting, drawing, and sculpting. Whether or not language is not merely an inventory of the various items of experience which seem relevant to the individual, it is also a self-contained, creative symbolic organisation. And this organisation not only refers to experience largely acquired without its help but defines the experience for us through reason of its formal completeness, and because of our unconscious projection of expectations in the field of experience (Sapir, 1931, p. 74). (Note 1) Later, this idea was developed into the Whorfian hypothesis that language moulds sthinking. Of course, it might be necessary to point out that thinking is susceptible by language, which itself adapts to thought and action.

The embedded connotation of an interior world comes close to these perceptive embodiments, which exist in time. (Note 2) Impression or “*trait saillant*”, as Henri Thulié recognised, to understand a physiognomy well, one must render the *impression* that one has when one sees it. There are always conspicuous features in a face or a costume that are immediately striking. (Note 3) Following the same instruction, impressive, significant audiovisual details form the kernel of documentary discourse. This similar ideation provides the needed links between early fragmentations of impressionist, figurative instalments of painterly dimensions, and they go along with attributes of hypermodern theorisation, and are linked to a fulfilment of highly complex exchange of the acknowledged matter that implies the complicity of reading modes and interpretative strategies behind hypermodern illustration. Therefore, the further combined use of the cinematic, the pictorial, and the architectural unites all these different approaches to favour the durational quality of the works. On the pictorial framing level, the contemplative, slowly appearing modifications hold the images in duration, between the photographic parameter of stillness, and the cinematic prediction of the movements of the performers, and the movements of the camera. We do not perceive time in the images as such, but mostly in unique flashes and changes of proceedings. The viewer’s increasingly delicate consciousness moves along this continual stream of time inside the narrative rhetoric, and the illustrated stillness of individual images can morph into an eloquently mannered artistic concoction of filmic qualities.

The audiovisual flow in the films of Alan Berliner, Chris Marker and Pirjo Honkasalo solicits deep attention, involving concentration on a single image, partly ignoring outside stimuli, and preferring the frothing tributary of images and sounds. This sort of ‘synthetic’ approach needs the viewer’s capability to be concentrated and indivisible on this hypersensitive flux of events. We are not leaping from one object to another in a state of hyperattentive surfing, as we are ensuring an incisive level of situation and a foreboding of future views and professed expectations related to each other. This happens with the joy of encapsulating the time at hand. Moreover, we are favouring a hypothetical sense-intuition of indelible phenomenology as an integral scientific explanation that is based on the viewer’s active proficiency and precision for observation to be present during these instances. On many occasions this concentration creates a fantastic, stylised world, in which reality and imagination merge, but which is still essentially real and true. Often in cases like these, the art of cinema is revealed through the realism of what happens in front of the camera; “performance” is anathema to cinematic truth (Isaacs, 201, p. 162). Many phenomenal functions are dependent on mental representations: we must identify targets through the generic and other information stored in our memory. Recognition of this might vary from amazingly simple cases into complex ones.

In art, one example would be the recognition of a Rembrandt painting. This sort of identification is always determined by the past: to recognise something we must notice the structural similarities between the actual information, and the information of some earlier moments. For example, the alleged cathartic effect of the past on cognitive processes is an overly complicated issue, which cannot be construed just through information storage. For instance, in Marker’s films, this means different levels

of outlooks that coexist in his films, providing a spatial and temporal outlining which offers relations between contemporary and past circumstances. In general learning, there is a close addition and dialogic interaction between experience and earlier understanding. The recognition of single objects depends on the perception of specific characteristics and textures. In everyday experience, all these three forms and systems of perception will function smoothly together. All this calls for thinking about the pictorial qualities of the image and its perception, all the different theories and scientific research approaches, and what possibilities they have opened in creating future skylines in this field. A broader view of pictorial perception can see these different approaches complementing each other, helping us to have a better understanding of the whole process. There is a defined multiplicity of questions to be answered. For example, Gestalt psychology connotes that perception goes out immediately towards comprehensively abstract patterns, the so-called Gestalt. In this kind of thinking, concrete perception comes before the awareness of generalised abstract Gestalt. (Ehrenzweig, 1993, p. 18)

The perceptual laws and other Gestalt psychological principles can help and guide us on how to organise perceptions into unified schemes and objects. The perceptual laws describe the effects of explicitly innate and exceedingly early learned schemes on the organisation of perception. Gestalt psychologists thought that these organising principles had a physiological basis, so they would be innate ways of organising perception. (Note 4) As a consequential criticism of these views, we can connote that we are alleged to set in and define the condition of these conceptualizations more exactly, pointing out to the thoughts around these issues, notifying the unused potentials of narratological hybridity, new models and other structural devices that are essential ingredients of our approach.

If we think that there are innate and learned strategies, we can see the unification of many perceptions, although our experiences and interpretations of them might be quite different in tone, but still in the background there is common information which has been picked. from the same targets. Accordingly, we have perceptual and conceptual hypotheses of the world; they are different and might work on different timescales. The innate psychological schemes occasionally seem flexible. In the studies concerned with complex image transcriptions, there is a perspective in which the primary organisation of perception might happen in several ways. So, the innate schemes are not always stiff but can produce fluctuations of different shapes on the same material basis. Different perceptions are consequences of different schemes that will change during a lifetime, and in the perception of art it seems by comparison that the same work of art will look different when viewed during transitional periods of life. Perception functions remarkably quickly because unexpected events do happen. Thus, reality is made by private hypotheses of perception, and shared hypotheses of conception. Visual and pictorial models, descriptions, and representations are partly learned because they are based on earlier experiences. All learned schemes are not modes or representations because they can deal with the ways and principles of perception. The different visual models, mindfully detailed delineations, and conceptual representations are linked easily with the basic system of perception. Circumstantial phenomena may be invested here through an expectant flash of glances in relation to the overall schematic and cognitive mapping that is

open to associations while also recording subjective professions.

Film/body/architecture: a haptic dynamics, a phantasmatic structure of lived space and lived narrative; a narrativised space that is intersubjective, for it is a complex of socio-sexual mobilities. Giuliana Bruno (2002, p. 65)

Films from *Sweetgrass* (Ilisa Barbash Lucien Castaig-Taylor, 2009) with its intense sights and sounds of sheep amid the high Plains of the Rocky Mountains; *Être et avoir* (To Be and to Have, Nicolas Philibert, 2002), with its patient immersion in the day-to-day life of a rural schoolteacher and his pupils; and one of the most inspiring works of this kind, *Koyaanisqatsi* (Godfrey Reggio, 1982), itself a radical revision of the city symphony films of the 1930s., all attest to the ability of the documentary to speak about the world poetically and movingly, as well as politically and motivationally. Bill Nichols (2016, p. 86)

These glimpses of perceptual variance insist on engaging the eye of the viewer to transcribe documentary like expression, passages of momentary *ocularcentrism*, concentrated eyesights, in which the camera notices the small gestures and their piecemeal appropriation to filmic ends. The dominant accents of social contexture, as well as poetics of cinematic representation are at stake here along with performative and audiovisual powers of documentary to address elementary perspectives of our lives. The films addressed here come up with essential aspects of emotional charge and other evident engagements, or disengagements, and techniques of persuasion to convey their messages in an orderly and comprehensible way. These figural modes of documentary are modernist practices and fusions within the capacity to create discrete rhetorical attempts in depicting the ramifications of documentary.

## 2. The Ethos of Documentary

In documentary, narrative structures can reshape the spaces they depict, and create historical discourses by providing images and sounds that make historical and cultural domains openly visible in accounting for the everyday experiences of people. The memory questions are usually related to these frames of mind, offering rare seconds of delight in depicting the peculiar features of the world. It is in these specific terms and attested preconditions that various documentary forms can be exemplified. In some cases, documentaries are dealing with “image architecture” that consists of an attempt to give “form” to the images. Documentary modes allow these modulations and viewpoints to exist and affect the audience. It is a way to give space to images and sounds that have an original form. The temporal nature of the narrative becomes essential, since in many documentary films the seconds of waiting and patient observation are crucial and constructive.

Aside from a general contextualisation of scholarly investigation on cinema, the discussion here points toward a deepened account of the promises and settled positions of filmic interpretation and understanding from the idea of cognitive and, more specifically, phenomenological intentions to reconsider and deepen some standpoints of controversy that may increase and process our comprehension of filmic narration and its response among the audience. For instance, in art, images are

focal points of persuasive communication and mediation, and they combine all media forms. Thinking about the image and its perception, while also considering different approaches and theories, both transcriptional and scientific, will help us view new horizons in the field. Cognitive and phenomenological relations and viewpoints become essential. Through this kind of initial and partly clandestine explanation, we can describe our target points from inner and outer angles. We can also dialogically relate our viewpoints with modern traditions of thought and philosophically and scientifically relevant themes. (Note 5) Modern documentary doctrine employs a wide variety of methods and methodologies. To guarantee a methodologically logical and consistent analysis of hypermodern audiovisual culture, it is needed to comprehend and conceptualise the historical and cultural appropriation of cinema. The purely scientific method of documentary doctrine relies, however, on the large-scale testing of hypotheses and using experimentation. For instance, the scientifically factual study of memory has a long history, starting in the year 1885 when German psychologist Hermann Ebbinghaus started his tests. This early, laudable work has since then demonstrated the flexibility of memory issues, and what can be accomplished when a researcher is totally dedicated to the work. Nowadays, we can see more clearly the different functions of memory and our willingness to fill in memory gaps and our recollection of past events. This will also help researchers to appropriate and develop better theories around these subjects. Our audiovisual perception becomes a partly concrete and partly virtual perspective through which we can look at films from our current viewpoint that is part of our timely existence. We are arranging a historically lighted tableau. Our relation to history becomes a meditative practice that gives observational possibilities to comprehend and re-interpret views and visions from this angle. (Note 6)

The objective is to conceptualise these matters, and, in an abundance of ways, this is an archaeological map, which in consonant with these and other precisions will help us to demarcate more intensively what documentary theory, philosophy and aesthetics truly means, and to understand the challenging nature of this phenomenon. It will also help us to situate cognitivism in a historically specific resonance, and in relation to other similar phenomena in media history laced with a specific concentration on challenges concerning media and art edification. This is both a theoretical and practical challenge since we are dealing with an interest in mapping transnational networks of different influences in terms of the narrative rhetoric and audiovisual stylisation that has existed but also transformed through time. This shaping of the persistence of forms and traditions is affecting our global mediascape constantly, creating various challenges through an increased circulation of images and sounds. This evolution can be depicted from several media educational frames and viewpoints offering new insights to the questions raised. In this context, our media pedagogical stance would serve to demystify these viewpoints and create perennial criticism toward these questions. This is no simple representation of these matters, but mostly a wide and complex discourse to reveal the historical, aesthetic, and other values concerned here. The ethos of our initial target is to identify more precisely these traditions and more contemporary strategies that have emerged at the end of the twentieth century, the new modes,

and envisages of thinking that have formed and modulated original typologies inside the whole media circle. In the late-twentieth-century documentary, hypermodern features are already present in the form of various accents, gaining further prominence and significance. After 2000, the hypermodern phraseology appropriates a more representational, figurative, and tangible presence on the level of documentary discourse, featuring also perceptive, more far-reaching, and even scientific intentions and repercussions of representation, as some films set out to describe and recite the transitional points and climaxes of history, and its epic contours of momentariness. In this pictorial mode of storytelling, documentaries focus on the sketched representation of the tentative dispositions embodied in the phenomenal attention between the figural landscape and the personified existence of social actors.

The historicist analysis is useful in relation to media edification challenges that evolved around concepts of visible evidence of the alleged authenticity of images in the age of digital media communication where truthfulness accordingly acquires new forms. These discourses are also related to the certainty and appropriateness of moral and ethical questions concerning the encounters between film and media apparatuses. The needed agenda allegedly sets up a tension of a subsequent idea of metaphysical perspective on ethics. In the documentary, it is centred on the question of objectivity, precisely addressing whether ethical predicates represent real properties of an external reality or merely apparent properties that owe their existence to the perception, emotion or thought of those who describe them. Regardless of approach to these matters, the documentary frame generally highlights valid argumentation, and conclusions of judgments that have an intrinsic value and are conundrums explicable as complexes of ostensibly empirical properties. Investigations into the nature of psychological phenomena are essential to documentary ethics. For a cinematic enactment of the documentary discourse with all its subtexts, the discussion is inherent in further, suggestive presence of documentary forms and their developmental unfolding.

Usually, these matters are explicable through reasoning. There is a need to create and establish a directive and argumentative logic that borders between objective and subjective approaches challenging dominant discourses inside the collective mediascape of different phenomena. Our interdisciplinary and comparative approach exists in a variety of epistemological and other debates around these issues. General questions of the formal modes of art and their overlapping dimensions will clear further inferences and ameliorate the continuities between several different embodiments of art, largely the intertwined attachments and linkages between different media forms of our hypermodern spectacle. (Note 7) These larger issues may be tackled more productively if viewed within the broad parameters of cultural dimensions rewritten and constructed as essential connections with audiovisual aesthetics. The programmed outcome can also suggest a substitution in succession when thinking about the mode, form, and style of documentary in accordance with its accent on general theoretical viewpoints, symmetries of bodies, and subjects of social setting.

Audiovisual Ethnography: Chris Marker's Hypermodern Setting of Sunless (*Sans soleil*, 1982)

The filmic experience of memory is alternately reconfigured, partly socially constituted and adjusted by

a will and a meditative consciousness as an integral source for the cinema's silent evocation and melancholic account of states of acquired existence. The many-faceted experience of memory (public and psychic) brings in traces that might have been partly lost in the continuity and discontinuity between memory and history. The experience of the past can resort to a shifting field of relations and invoke a sense of the range of technical possibilities of polyphonic montage. Or maybe we can situate ourselves in the middle of the phenomena and mediate in the same way as the French visionary and far-sighted filmmaker Chris Marker (1921-2012) did through his films, rejecting the idea of history as a 'mirror' of the course of events. Marker implied instead that the epistemology of writing and the compositional semantics of rewriting history does not simply record or reproduce events as they were but gives form to, and perpetually transmogrifier, those events. (Note 8) Marker's work is intricately connected to the integral question of montage in cinema and, simultaneously, it is preoccupied with the very logic of historical continuity.

Through his dialectical, prefilmic montage of images and sounds, he develops variable logics, which occasionally, may be at work within even a single scene or image. It generates a high degree of semantic instability, with the result that is an apparent assertion of single images and sequences become contrapuntal and acquiring multiple significance and distinct resonances on different planes of explanation as the narrative achieves further meanings. In Marker's world, the spatial resonance and complicated strategy of figuration of acousmatic world of sound creates the pictorial depth and evocative completion of the image. The spatial representations are arguments of the internal and external codes of cinematic landscaping in order to control the overall fashioning and refashioning of the facilities. The perception can be mobile and organised according to some specific adjustments what follow Marker's premises and offer more or less treated parallels between the cinematic, architectural language of the film.

Many of these edits are structured around the embodied interplay of motion and stillness, the basic rhythms of cinema, bringing in the intention of temporal passing. Time relates to virtual perception and to the experience of the images. Photographic stillness and cinematic movements are steps into a hypermodern setting of affairs since they activate the phenomenology of perception and articulate and imitate the apparent desire to produce pictorial portrayals of the depicted events. In this regard, Marker's work can be situated between still photography and cinema because of the application of meaningful images and montage-juxtapositions, and the usage of time as a discrete and manoeuvrable phenomenon. *Sunless* contains the hypermodern variability of textures, being an example of 'classified realism'. Marker explores changing social range of oppositions between different countries and continents, while, for instance, Berliner's and Guzmán's works are investigations into more personal and more geographically restricted surroundings, and Marker's way of utilising transcultural experiences brings forth a sort of levelling affect, a collateral kind of experience of the pictorially illuminated everyday reality in the territory of audiovisual culture. (Note 9)

In considering Marker's pictorially charged universe, the spectator is shuttled back and forth between

different postures of the pre-industrialised landscape of Africa and the post-industrialised economy of Japan. Through the rhythmic counterpointing, she becomes aware not only of the disparities between the two, but also of the persistence of frameworks of thinking and cultural appropriation that link these permeated places and spaces together. These patterns of thinking are ultimately utilised in the film as a way of critiquing and challenging Western ideologies, in particular the metaphysics of “presence” in Western thought, concerned with its privileging of what is spoken over what is left unsaid. Pictorially, many images speak for themselves needing no further comment and, especially in this regard, Marker’s film comes close to pictorial understanding, including long sequences of sounds and images that mirror the cineaste’s comprehension of specific still/movement aesthetics to emphasise seemingly contradictory views and perspectives. (Note 10) These references establish counterpoints complicated by the anecdotal representation of the proceeding narration.

Recognising the “truth” of an event always exceeds the documented fact. Marker’s attempt to locate the contributory subjects of intimation and association, whether these subsume personal, social, ideological, emotional, philosophical, moral, ethical, cultural, or ethnographical dimensions, is worked out through a metaphorical play of direct disparities and oppositions that include the spectator in the very definition of the conferred meaning itself. Marker’s “*associative hypermodern frame*” offers a nuanced, pictorially multivalent spatial and temporal structure through editing and gives an audiovisually palpitating experience and a conceptual description of matters. The French cineaste produces an event resulting from the intersection of the everyday and the modern, and a convergence of various and integral filmic forms (stillness, animation, movement, frame-based aesthetics of prefilmic montage and hypermodern framing) that takes place across the suavity of the lines marked by the simultaneity of reflection and a sense of rhetoricity of history and memory, manifested in resonations on the advance of digital technology.

However, one of the most schematically offered propositions from Marker’s angle emerges from the investigation of film’s valence to work as an audiovisual ethnography concerned with the depiction of an arc of a privileged universe of places and spaces in the narrative. acknowledges its funnelled biases and constructiveness as a systematic and open-ended analysis, especially in Lipovetsky’s underlining of the ‘social and historic basis’ of the camera-based audiovisual process. In some cases, documentary discourse can be underlined by an incentive of a quest, probing, and testing concerns over social and historic realms of representation, which is usually explained as a filmic figuration and a context that foresees an explication of the central placement of predominant themes and leitmotifs. These appear as constant references and points of reflection between past, present, and future – a context in which narrative figuration is highly appreciated. (Noe 11)

The narrative connotation of the represented images depends a lot on the commentary. While appropriating the medial representations of the inescapable influence of the enunciator’s delineation of these situations, there lies an echo of the idea according to which Marker’s hypermodern echoes can be understood on two levels: on the one hand, regarding narration, which is constructed by means of the



constant interplay between fictional strategies and documentary contexts; on the other, regarding and funnelling the conferred historical meaning of the representation, which works more as connoted than revealed by the narrator's imagistic field of perception. This includes footage of the wing of a contemporary jet flying high above Africa, and dogs trailing across the waterline of a sandy beach. In diametrical turn and following this, there is an appearance of a striking overhead shot of desert dunes; the surface of which is caressed as a far more contingent emblem, resembling the illuminative patterns of the waves in the previous shot. In the closing moment of the sequence, there is another overhead shot, which contains the raised and intent gaze of an African woman linking her powerful, close-up steering to the perspective of the spectator. The pictorial freeze-framing of her face both recalls and links to other overlapping sequences in which Marker focuses on the reciprocal interchange of gazes between subject (cameraman) and object (those whom he films) and brings the convoluted interplay of images of stillness and motion to a temporary halt.

The camera is often a visible catalyst and a phenomenal presence of the dissecting gaze that one might imagine. The camera does not need to be turned on or even in place for the inspecting gaze to exist; merely its potential to exist might have this effect. (Note 12) Expressing the same concern as a metacinematic work, Marker's documentary echoes the aesthetic and moral 'truth' of hypermodern prescription concerning the role of present-day technology and its aspirations, by and large the way they affect our perception of the past. The "reality" domain has moved to a collateral level, and a peculiar tone of reality is everywhere, overlaid on top of the representation. For Marker, the mythology of the image represents his phenomenological and metaphysical intertextuality of solving artistic dilemmas. Some of his views might be a bit uncomfortably limited in their overall ramifications, recording mainly an artistic voyage, in which parts are construed to produce a whole that is something more meaningful than its parts. (Note 13) The option is specific in connection with the overall contingency of Marker's oeuvre.

### 3. Narrative Connotations: Metaphors of the Real

Marker's editing-scheme in the Tokyo-cityscape sequence of *Sunless*, its creation of temporally abrupt and constantly shifting quantities of views from street level to rooftop, confers a slight sense of compelling vocalization between stillness and movement, and by animating reconstructions of the images in the film's sequence at the Tokyo-subway, camerawork re-creates an effect of evanescent glances scanning the city for its signalized signs. The ramifications of cinematography immediately create a kind of moving camera poetry or stilling of the image. These images shuttle back and forth in a rapid swap of succession, some immediately decipherable, some less so, with little in the way of guidance for the viewer. It is how Marker pictorially takes hold of both the feel of exhilaration and seductive allure that the predictable rendezvous with the city provides, and the genuine and strangely manifested sense of fragmentation, illegibility, repudiation, and disunification. Tracking images of crowds and assortments of people descending the stairs of the subway, the explicit commentary

connotes that the city should be deciphered like a complicated proscenium of a moody “musical score”, one in which “one could get lost in the great orchestral masses and the accumulation of detail”. The city’s pictorial form is always therefore on the brink of formlessness and actual alternation. Marker indelicately draws out the sense-instinct of disarticulation by way of allowing assertive juxtapositions and the significance of something that is displayed. In general, matters of architecture and audiovisual design have shaped the history of cinema. In cinematic narration, things are framed for viewing, and assembled as a part of the spectacle. This has to do with the atmospheric presence and change of cinematic architecture, moving between interior and exterior spaces. The items on display are ordered, partly symmetrically arranged as sequences through spatial structures, and finally assembled as parts of the narrative chain. The history of cinema shows how stories were developed in shaping various views through the processes of montage for imaginatively fascinated spectatorship. In a hypermodern style, cinema’s ever-ended capacity to transcend the compact limitations of temporal and spatial dimensions is at play in enriching metaphorical picture-changes, and compositional reframing, as well as concretely moving from one part of the city to the next, he classifies and catalogs the clash of developmental references and quotations of the architecture and public works adorning the streets of Tokyo. Occasionally awkward outlooks testify to a structural affinity between the hypermodern code of narrative and the way it is used as the creation of atmosphere feeding the overall mood. In one of the most revealing of these poignant indicators, and one which creates an extended impression of historical comprehension, density and high-concept perseverance, Marker films the statue of a Buddha in a cemetery overlooking the network of train lines that form the city’s nerve centre. Marker seems to think that we need a new role for the imagination in everyday life. The atmospheric charge of this expression is wider than imagined.

The inclusion of attributes of association is typical for Marker’s cinematic logic, which is alleged to dissolve and further develop its aligned mimesis. This recurrent reproach for new combinations of thinking and a wealth of narrative solutions replicates and establishes a hypermodern range and classification of accomplished ideas. A means of theoretical intention and sufficient explanation is provided as well when the cineaste consequently transcribes and manifests the audiovisual world in front of him. It forms an iconic modeling of narration, and a hypermodern ascribing of our existence and history in order to discuss and comprehend the valuable merits and limitations of more contemporary artistic and cinematic theories. The film’s strangeness in its own time comes straight from its unlikeness to familiar filmmaking. Marker invokes the queues of cinematic concepts characterising his ‘drama’ to be unfolded in several acts. The grand cultural and historical movement stands beside his aspirations, offering a second variant of the spectacle. This all forms a phenomenon of defining attributes, thereby creating a distinctive position of narrative rhetoric, moving continually back and forth between various landmarks. It is a celebration of 20<sup>th</sup> century magnifications and answers that are exposed in continuing enactments. In Marker’s hypermodern kingdom of filmic magic, the elementary scale of matters is overwhelmingly assertive, and besides *Sunless*, it is expressed in films

like *Koumiko Mystery* (Le Mystère Koumiko, 1965), *If I had Four Camels* (Si j'avais quatre dromadaires, 1966), *The Train Rolls On* (Le Train en marche, 1971), *The Loneliness of a Long-Distance Singer* (La Solitude du chanteur de fond, 1974), *A Grin Without a Cat* (Le fond de l'air est rouge, 1977), *The Last Bolshevik* (Le Tombeau d'Alexandre, 1992), just to name a few.

### 3. Phenomenological Realism

In a hypermodern documentary or, in Marker's case, an audiovisual poem and a filmic "Gobelin of visual parameters", the narrative may undertake a sensitively formalised approach and heightened quality concerning other levels of representation, with a more downright use of narrator's field of perception, which repeatedly questions and refers the idea of temporal switches of our time and minutely records the aspirations and smallest visual details of action in these points in time of assuring presence. This sort of accurate documentation is a very typical feature of Marker's oeuvre, promoting his exceptional accuracy of clinging into scanning momentums and experiences that echo the worldview of a traveler who turns his memoirs into a literary invocation of notions and anecdotes, and further into an audiovisual form of spectacle that uses all the possible links related to our perceptive undercurrents. It features a phenomenological form of realism and address that is quite difficult, almost impossible to determine in all its ramifications and discursive spheres. The traveler embodies and engraves a decisive difference, and through the process of narrating also meditates it. This all features an established mode of communication involving several links and inescapable inciting influences concerning and concentrating on modeling of our hypermodern times.

To grasp this new role, we need to abstract and elevate the map of hypercultural images in accordance with mechanically produced ones, to revive the idea of the imagined community, and the French idea of the "imaginary", as a constructed landscape of social and political form of tactical collective impacts and aspirations. In this regard, *Sunless* presents a composite of hybrid interrelations between various systems of persuasive communication inside the metropolis and places filmic practices within the infrastructure. Marker's objective axiom is not only to measure the gulf and difference between various political cultures, but also to reflect and retrace the subtle ties and chains that bind the present to the past, to virtually show how the burden of the politics of the 1960s continues to determine the present. At stake is a constitutive cognizance between the globalisation of different cultures, the rising of new forms and doctrines of hyperculture and hypermodernity, as well as the mass migrations and dispersions that mark the present scanning moment of time as being distinct from the past. (Note 14) Following Marker's polysemic signature and its expressive, almost psychopathological inscriptions by referring explicitly to the image-echo of the city, Tokyo is exposed as a delirious and socially distressed "reality of divergent appearances", a dystopian 20th century equivalent of the ancient, primordial floating world of the Edo period. Marker insists on this specific complexity, engaging to fill the narrative, engraving, and morphing into metaphors, which find their substantially concrete and tangible embodiments in the shots of the many advertising signboards and placards of young Japanese

supermodels suspended in mid-air over the city, hanging from invisible wires and cables above the streetscape and railway lines which run through the city. The pictorially mustered, enthusiastic union of advertising and the mass media communication invades public space and private thought alike. Here the fine line between indifference and attentiveness is tested, as well as the temporality of perception: the omnipresence and iconicity of video and television screens rule the 'city-image' and decorate the department store walls, and the computer-generated images and huge advertising billboards and murals taken from the comic strip books hail to and prevail upon the passers-by, dwarfing them with their monumental scale. There is more than a suggestion in such narrative imagery of the way in which hypermodern city life acquires the character of a space of absorbing surveillance.

The narrative can be seen as promoted of acting in similarly opening terms and theorems of perception, integrating, unifying, and assembling continuities and discontinuities through which the spectator's gaze, its thoughtful and addressed attention is guided into processes and verifications that confirm and contest the shifting quantities of immersion and redesign from one stimulus to another. As a result, the enormous, elegant, and exquisite images are adorning the city's billboards featuring a figurative, symmetrical style and formula of looking out of the posters, casting the eyes across the cityscape, "voyeurising the voyeurs", as the film's narrator confirms. These are sequences of psychological rhetoric, layers of visual action that are piled up and addressed to the audience. Faces are full of potential expression, as if waiting for possible solutions and outcomes that seem enigmatic and tuned with different structural and other details. In a similar, hypermodern vein, and as a part of decorative and contingent planning, Marker is pointing out to the general markings of erotically charged images of young women and comic-strip heroines, appearing on a marked scale, played upon, and inflated out of all proportions. They seem to desolately counterpoint the impersonality, constraint and strenuous conformity that reign over the street-life below. The artistically controlled vision reflects as though all these could be the newly acquired projections of repressed genealogy of inner desires.

Marker addresses the contemporaneity and ingenuity of hypermodern perception and a theorem of attention, in the middle of which earlier precisely employed and recited continuums may have become significantly unbalanced. Marker orchestrates his generous professions around the order of representing an audiovisual, heterotopic scheme of the city. and in one of the most striking envisages, the reflections that are visibly composed of a wide array of moving figures in the subway are almost entirely absorbed within the giant billboard image of a fashion model. As to imply that these superimpositions create a strong intuition and doctrine of overlaid hypermodern technologies in the heart of Marker's long-standing aspirations. Their partly discomposing balance of physical and social presence sharpens the edge of encounters. The shadowy figure over another image-formation seems to infuse and embody the forwardness of the other image just for a few seconds, which in this case seems by comparison to be enough to arouse the spectatorial, immediate psychic relevance. Attempts to control it, by creating dramatic looks and silently open gestures and faces that emphasise the stages of contemplation and reverie slowly but surely.

In the hypermodern megalopolis, filmic existence, reality, and dreams are inextricable from each other, as representation becomes a way of determining the quintessence of reality. Following the sequence in which the cameraman (Hungarian fictive poet Sandor Krasna) scans Japanese late-night television with its accent on plethora of images of desire, horror and violence, the scene shifts to the subterranean tunnels that lead from the department store malls to the train stations. In this sequence, Marker resorts to the longstanding and important trope of the train, both as a metaphor for the cinematic apparatus and as a symbol of industrial progress. One can see an echo and an additional reference to Russian Kino-trains, invoked in the thirties by Alexander Medvedkin (1900-1989), the elusive filmmaker behind Marker's films *Le Train en marche* (1971) and *Le Tombeau d'Alexandre* (The Last Bolshevik 1992). Marker's prophetic references to Medvedkin are being discovered and confirmed at these instants by the changing roles of the image in these narratives. Yet, Marker's attributed invocation of the metaphor of the train reinvents its nuances. Whilst, for the Soviet monteurs, the metaphor of the train was initially bound up with the image of the progression of history, for Marker, placed in the context of Tokyo's cityscape, it becomes a metaphor for a society given over to fashions of pictorially conferred spectacle. According to an axiom by Nicholas Mirzoeff, visual culture is a provisional and constantly shifting view, not defined by a medium so much as by the interaction between viewers and viewed (1999, p. 13).

Within the diegetic world of fictional plot, Krasna's utterly fragmented voyage tackles many questions, referring to the historical layers of meanings. As the enunciator of *Sunless* continues: "More and more, my dreams find their settings in the department stores of Tokyo, the subterranean tunnels that extend beyond them and run parallel to the city. A face appears, disappears, a trace is found, is lost, all the folklore of dreams is so much in its place that the next day, when I am awake, I realise that I continue to seek in the basement labyrinth the presence concealed the night before. I begin to wonder if those dreams are really mine, or if they are part of a totality, of a gigantic collective dream of which the entirety of the city may be the projection. It might suffice to pick up any one of the telephones that are lying around to hear a familiar voice or the beating of a heart—Sei Shōnagon's for example. All the galleries lead to stations, the same companies own the stores and the railroads that bear their name, Keio, Odakyu, all those names of ports. The train inhabited by sleeping people with all the fragments of dreams, makes a single film of them, the ultimate film. The tickets from that automatic dispenser grant admission to the show."

The pictorially laden images accompanying the categorical commentary show people buying tickets for the subway, boarding train compartments, and once seated, drifting into sleep, a segment which self-reflexively recalls and brings full circle the journey into the city in the film's opening moments. The dreamy architectural ambience continues as the sequence progresses, images of the passengers' sleeping faces are allusively and dialectically intercut with images of the late-night television sequences replayed from the night before, connoting the way in which these images of desire and violence become imprinted and inscribed onto their subconscious thoughts and dreams. It is a

metaphorical way to describe the symbolic interaction between the media and the audience. The subway sequence is an evocative treatment of sleeping, dreaming, and waking as they relate to the experience of the spectator (Walsh, 1998, p. 13). It meticulously “pictorializes” the momentums when media affect us, are part of our dreams, and influence our thinking. It happens especially in seconds when faces are deliberated to illuminate and reflect the passing moments of continuous alternation rather than only a straight reaction to views ahead or inside the passengers’ minds. The expedition offers us not only an extraordinarily apt example of the film’s intricate use of montage to slip nimbly between the realms of desire and the everyday, dream and wakefulness, subjective and collective memory, but also an image of a world whose experience of the real is constantly and imperceptibly shifting between these categories. In a sublime way, and in the spirit of Gilles Lipovetsky’s theoretical forebodings, Chris Marker foresees the inward and external addresses of the physical and psychological shifts of emotional and affective self at curious seconds of time.

Marker’s quest for the true, precise image is an on-going task, as such images are not often found, and when they are, they often come by surprise. Through this display, Marker’s hand-held camera seems to respond directly to the diegetic world (Branigan, 1992, p. 216). This could be even more developed in a swift-changing montage, Marker’s images are highly structured, and the atmospheric echo and logic of the narrative rhetoric is exclusively controlled. There are passages, such as the Tokyo subway sequence, that critically examine the subtleties and modifications of the structural cognizance of representational media to material reality, explicitly questioning the way in which our perception of the world is saturated by different forms of representational media. Convoluting this dictum still further, it echoes the precarious state of documentary filmmaking in a world that also seems mostly drenched with images and sounds, in which the function and kudos of each image and sound are not always so irrefutable.

These similar questions had already been raised in the 1960s when Marker was producing his early films. Secondly, it has to do with his working methods and particularly the historical approach to filmmaking. The specific significance of his earlier films becomes clearer when we realise that a history of images and sounds, conceived of as the product of filmmaking practices, is rooted in sociohistorical and psycho-physiological intricacies, problematics, and contingencies of “classical modernity” (Lipovetsky). In this regard, *Sunless* constantly shifts its views between different levels of representation and different levels of impending reality, analysing the mediating role of representational media communication in our collective histories and personal memories. Throughout the film, the filmmaker gives examples of how the historical meaning of the inquiries into cityscape has changed over time. Likewise, Marker uses clever framing and editing figures to depict Krasna’s voyages around the globe. In Tokyo-images we see the spirit of the place where old and new customs and rituals are appearing as symmetrically closed entities. These practices can be distinctively classified into three different groups: the first is performed through short remarks to the enunciator’s own memory places, the second is the documentary coverage of the cityscape, and the third refers to the more global view

and further floundering of his ruminations.

#### 4. Stylized Entities

In this sense, it is a hypermodern working method and theorem, allowing the employment of different motifs in connection to the expressed and prosaic recording of various phenomena. Every once in a while, the narrative seems to be asking about the point and value of editing in the middle of things and matters that reflect to themselves. This self-reflexivity is typical for the cineaste, presenting a mode of cinema that is open for new developments and constructive operations which start from the essence of the medium. It may be partly spontaneous. Partly mediated action of reaching the dissolved goals of affection. (Note 15) Marker's method is never simple or one-sided but more like a painterly sketch, seized on open possibilities to work out a genuine and confident film structure based on artistically influenced impressions and their possible outcomes as a combination of looks, gestures, movements, and other similar views and effects. The enunciator's imagistic field of perception works as a gaze at the world, capturing the manifestly ordered sense of time at that specific scanning moment of historical precariousness that may be read as an audiovisual metacommentary of matters. (Note 16) The camera with its painterly flavour influences the form of sensitive realism lined up with purist aesthetic and stylised features. Yet, if at times Marker presents a picture of the city as overcrowded, megalomaniac, and inhuman, he qualifies this by drawing explicit attention to other subtler sides of the city, to the austere beauty of the diffused, photographic light in January, and especially to the particularity of the scattering of faces, subjective moods and the lives of the twelve million or so inhabitants of the city, "as different and precise as groups of instruments", or to the ways in which the patterns of everyday existence restructure and reclaim the cityscape: the way, for example, that, after dark, the impersonality of the city by day gives way to the transformation of the city into a series of villages. Marker is also sensitive to the atmospheric, marginal life of the city, to all that disrupts its rational functioning. At the commencement of the film, a homeless alcoholic in a run-down quarter of the Tokyo suburbs assumes the role of a policeman directing the traffic from the middle of a busy junction. In an added sequence, the poorest of the Tokyo poor park themselves in front of television screens in chic department stores to watch the Sumo contests.

As precisely defined by Marker, *Sunlessl* derives its title from a six-part song cycle by Russian composer Modest Mussorgsky (1839-1881). Marker's provisional technique of expression features similarities with Mussorgsky's emphasis. The last of the songs in this cycle is entitled *Sur le fleuve*, and it is heard in the film. Marker's thematic leitmotif tended to follow the song cycle for dramatic effects and in attention with his narrative progression. In a similar equation, Marker establishes a virtual dialogism between the film and the song cycle, expressing through this method and doctrine of design his "hypermodern connection" (Lipovetsky) between the two. This all is done with utmost sensuality and poetic expressiveness that controls the movements and acts of *Sunlessl*. The hypermodern imagination is at its best in Marker's oeuvre, controlling most aspects of narration and working in

conjunction with the overall conception and stylistic framework of narration, and other main trends of direction with its sublime and melancholic but nevertheless demanding critical undertones.

The hypermodern form of *Sunless*, its provisional continuity and polyphonic montage combine hand-held images shot in various places around the world. It contains a rapid, patchwork montage of privileged places, positions, and alleged settings. Some images are accompanied by commentary, sounds and music, and Chris Marker alternately reinforces and gradually intensifies the focal points of audiovisual montage in representing the communication technology through mediatic implements and transcriptions. The perpetually enhanced humanity of Marker is contained in the intertextual metaphoric dialogue and debate between images and sounds, therefore creating an echo and needed reflection of the constructed affinity of hypermodern thinking. The fragmentary nature of narration contributes to this perspective, and the main settings of the documentary support this reading of matters with some crucial implications. The elusive, and sometimes quaint patterns of montage are related to the overall philosophy of the work, and the audience perceives this bit by bit. Through Marker's monumental practice, the spectators are continually aware of the proceedings at the level of the productive process. The integral and poignant prefilmic montage of *Sunless* consists of composite sources meticulously underpinning and recalling the journeys depicted in the film. The wholeness is a hypermodern metacommentary of immersive and partly acousmatic resounding lessons on the plight of human beings and their situation in the world filled with the tangible manifestations of industrial and cerebral currents.

## 5. The Forms of Hypermodern Journey

The reconnection of images and principally their interdependence creates minutes of spatial and temporal modifications that grow in significance in the light of the tightly coded and hierarchically ordered Japanese society. The circulation of tropes and concepts between these sketched representations by Marker does not, however, infer causally interactive relationships between the distinctive cultural realm of contingency. More or less, the narrative interacts and functions with the photographic and pictorial continuums and complements, and the spectator is assailed by a multiplicity of techniques that interrupt and disconnect time and give space and causality an unstable existence. These are necessary but not sufficient conditions for our perceptual and reticent consciousness to be present in these sections when Marker attacks our comprehension of images and sounds and their tightly embodied infiltrations. From the very commencement, the narrative consistently emphasises that the moving images and sounds on the screen can have a specific affectionate as elaborate regimes of simulation of the depicted "reality". The hypermodern meditative lexicon upon the metropolis of Tokyo becomes continually interwoven with a series of commentaries that are related to questions on the economic position of Japan, its politically charged and, at some passing moments, naive landscape, and its difficult relations to other continents. One of the reasons why Marker obsessively and compulsively returns to Japan is that the country has arguably become the leading manufacturer of the



new technologies that are transforming our experience of the world. And the ingenuity of the experience, concerned with the past and the present, is increasingly dissolved and complex.

The present is absorbing the attributes of the past and maybe even the future. In other words, the fascination of Japan is the way the impact of new audiovisual technologies and digital culture has not simply eclipsed previous long-standing cultural customs but increased the mediated interaction and mutual exchange between the pre-existent cultural forms, thereby imbuing a peculiar, elevating, and synthetic cognizance between modernisation and the perpetuation of various traditional forms. In this conceptualization, modernity, wherever it appears, does not occur without a shattering of belief, or without a discovery of the lack of reality—an epiphanic rediscovery linked to other realities. (Note 17) Marker's shots are pictorially-decorated entities, laced with a specific, almost unfettered phenomenological sensation of the ontology of time's dimensions. For Marker it is typical to continually return to various sacred rituals that perpetuate the practices and historical dimensions of the past. But in addition to a number of such representations, Marker points out the rapid substitutions that have taken place in recent Japanese history, and he investigates the cultural mediation and forms of modern Japan to see the scattered vibrations, concrete observations, and the symptomatic patterns of the eradicated past. (Note 18)

Post- and hypermodern discourse of Japanese culture signifies an era in which pictoriality and the visualising of things that are not necessarily visual have accelerated so dramatically that the global circulation of images has become an end, a dictum of itself, specifically through the Internet and other digital formations. Marker's description in *Lettre à de Sibérie* (Letter from Siberia) of Siberia as a land of contradictions situated between the Middle Ages and the 21st century might endow a fitting epigraph for the analysis of his portrayal of Japan in *Sunless*. These observations about Japan lead on to a probing examination of the question of the indispensable acknowledgement between the “developing Third World” and the West. In Marker's hands Japanese visual culture is a fractal network, permeated with signs and emblems from all over the globe. Such a glowing network has key points of interface and interaction that have more than ordinary complexity and importance. With Marker the potentiality to be intentionally polemical to visualise a culture or society almost becomes synonymous with understanding it. Paying attention to the coexistence of vastly different experiences of modernity within the global economy therefore allows us to glimpse and comprehend the structural affinity of allegedly genuine, authentic manifestations, apparitions, symmetries, and invocations of the narrative in this respect. In the alternation and rapid inter- and crosscutting of images of the highly technological and affluent society of contemporary Japan with images of the rural poor of Africa, an elaborated disparity is drawn between the processes of modernisation in Japan and a way of life that involves a daily struggle for survival.

## 6. Hypermodern Sensibility

As we make observations, these diametrical disparities are not only registered as economic divisions,

but also imply a different experience of the temporal and nature. Marker is keen to undercut any sentimentalisation of the rural existence of the “Third World” – a professed vision which is obliquely referenced during the film by way of a succession of images of monuments to Rousseau, his chateau, and its grounds. Instead, he pictorializes its hardships and local struggles as a form of existence almost forgotten by the West. Marker is concerned, however, to show not only the separation of the “first” and “third worlds”, but also the delicate ties that bind such disparate places together. For, in the post-modern logic, few borders remain intact. This insistent theme unfolds during the narrative, initially through images of displacement. Images of “exoticism”, indicative of a prior wave of colonialism, are transferred to Europe (i.e., the narrator even comments on two occasions about the emus that live in Ile-de-France, and footage of them recurs on a few occasions). Similarly, elements of European Kitsch and remnants of European culture are shown to pervade Asia and Africa. Aphoristically, the permeability of the boundaries is made more explicit in a sequence in which the cameraman comments on a shortwave radio announcement projected to Tokyo that is picked up on Cape Verde Island.

As a hypermodern documentary and explicitly open axiom, *Sunless* is a key work among Chris Marker’s cinematic essays. It comprises a hypermodern replication and an extent to which it portrays itself as a strange planet among other documentaries. It looks like an elusive phenomenon that combines classic knowledge, formal beauty and a more ingenious, albeit stylistic conceits and modulations of poetry. It touches the embedded human soul and its flow in a specific way, and it is a rare work since its global reach and efficacy is so genuine, as well as its intuitively demarcated ambience. In establishing a specific relation between memory and history, the film simultaneously postulates that memory is constantly rewritten in the same way as history. It is a cognitive attribution of existence that intermittently reflects the hypermodern lexicon very eloquently, allowing a phenomenological substance that is particularly prominent in advocating an alleged set of interlocking similitudes that function as verified conditions of representation in Marker’s oeuvre. This could be even more known and pronounced when a hypermodern parable might be embedded in a mass of various theoretical and practical contexts related to filmmaking processes, the discursive and figural elements of it can be surprisingly fluid and absorptive. Furthermore, a similar account of the traces of hypermodern, redolent sensibility can create and enrich narrative modes that are supplemented by fictional strategies and narrative patterns, playing a constitutive contingency in the gradual emergence and formulation of the canon of hypermodern documentary discourse. Within it, the modes of representation can be read as an allocated invocation and embodiment of various outcomes that are metaphysical and far-reaching as themselves. The variations of this mode can be unexpected in their dimensions, emphasising the figurative pluralities of identity, constitutive of hypermodern theorisation and the adequately poetic realism of intense filmic medialect. As understood, this highly complex exchange of influences implies a complicity of readings and strategies of display.

“Time passes, and the present is in some sense unique.”

Robin Le Poidevin (Note 19)

Our understanding of the past is therefore only the sum of representations that can be made of it at any one moment perpetually in time. Yet, the problem is significantly deeper than in a self-conscious documentary of the limits of historical recuperation. The same strategy can be observed from various points of view.

As Maureen Turin maintained already in 1989:

Filmic treatment of temporality and memory might inspire scientific inquiry or it might simply run parallel to it; in few cases historically can film artists be said to be *directly* schooled in their filmic research by scholarly writings – though, as we saw, the twenties avant-garde is one moment where some evidence of intellectual cross-fertilization is evident. (1989, p. 206)

In a similar continuation and exploration of other findings, we can see how the conundrum of historical interpretation is also scientifically essential and consequential, and bound up with the experience and rearticulation of temporality and its ramifications. Memory and time are in intimate connection with each other. This dialogic interplay and implied theory of nearness mean that, for instance, history can be caught in a double bind; if what the present understands about the past is never simply and straightforwardly the past as it was, it is equally true that our understanding of the present is always refracted through our imperfect recollection of the past. This sounds like a metacinematic commentary, in which a further implication is that past and present are ultimately inseparable, for the present perennially and discreetly inhabits our perception of the past and the past our perception of the present. These entangled explanatory forces can be therefore ascribed as elementary aspects of a partial codification of our existence. According to this planned envision, we are ultimately unable to disentangle what we project back onto the past from the past itself, for we are incapable of detaching ourselves fully from the present. Our inability to stand ‘outside of history’ means that we are daringly ill-equipped to judge whether there is an underlying order to the apparent sense of randomness and chaos of historical events, because the order of history - if, indeed, it is conceivable - must exist beyond the limits of our perception, and thus beyond the reach of our understanding. This prevalent transcription affirms that the enunciated problems of history thus become enmeshed in a series of conundrums of perspective. The fact that the observation of history is made from a vantage point within history relates the knowledge that it seeks to come up with the world, and thus undermines its claims to objective neutrality or more secure foundations on which it is based.

But these films can contradict the suspicion that the convergence of experimental aesthetics and nonfiction cinema threaten the referential quality of documentary filmmaking. They show, instead, that this subjective approach to nonfictional presentation involves dialogue with the historical world, a productive exchange between the filmmakers and their subject matter.

Louise Spence and Vinicius Navarro (Note 20)

In Marker’s work, there is a straight link to the form of so-called essay film. The label ‘Cinematic Essay’ is encountered with an increasing frequency in scholarly act of writings on the cinema, owing to

the recent proliferation of personal, epistemic, reflexive, and subjective documentaries and short films. It comprises a highly stylised mode of audio-visual production that can be called cinematic or audiovisual essay, and this form has existed and in recent years and reappropriated within the disciplines of film and fine art. It has also been called as *filmed philosophy*, and these essayistic connections include a wide variety of approaches, starting from a filmic genre which originates in the 1920s, and has increasingly come to be conceded as a distinguishable and independent branch of international cinema. It has a recognisable authorial presence and an impressive voice that has been notified as “overtly personal, in-depth, thought-provoking reflection” (Rascaroli, 2009, p. 33). We can see the cinematic essay form as a facilitator of a filmic hybrid that mixes diverse documentary and fiction material substrates to produce something unique and intellectually satisfying, an intermediate space in harnessing the cognitive instinct of the word. The filmmakers who use this approach, arrange all kinds of audiovisual tools according to their own conceptions that cross usual discursive boundaries and create a subjectivity of form and content. (Note 21) The narrative trajectory that they follow can consist of individual and collective accounts, personal memories and historical sources of affection and further reflection. Producers of audio-visual essays include not only feature filmmakers, documentarists, and avant-garde filmmakers, but also artists who produce installations for gallery and museum display.

It may suffice to point out that filmic essay has its roots in the literary essay that goes back to the times of Michel de Montaigne, the French writer who produced his *Essais* in 1580 and this etymology is significant since it points to the experimental nature of the semantics of essay-writing, involving already than a nuanced and deliberate attempt to try something totally new. This forms an operation of intellectual cognition, meaning productive thinking that is characterised by the interplay between the free interaction of forces within the field and the solidified entities that persist as invariants in changing contexts (Arnheim, 1969, p. 235). At best, this sort of information producing can actively enhance palimpsest knowledge in a passing situation where the audiovisual world of happenings is dispersed in infinite complexity, a flux of constantly enhanced intentions which must be organised by our minds, and this organisation and vocalisation of the audiovisual world happens also in the phenomenological and labyrinthine structure of perception itself. In this sense, intellectual cognition can achieve something that, for instance, dreams and paintings do not, since it can combine different and separate levels of abstraction in one sensory occasion, it can connect specific levels of thought without an apprehension of letting them blur each other. This is related to the way how the human mind operates whether intuitively or cerebrally coordinating the products of ambiguously interacting forces and dismantling the simultaneity of the strategy of spatial structures. This all stresses the way how the documentary filmmaker selects the significant properties of the product in question and modifies the dynamic components of the work to arouse the perceptual evocation among the audience.

All media of representation can rely on isomorphic and on non-isomorphic references...in the visual arts or in music, for example, strictly non-isomorphic references are exceedingly rare...a continuous gamut of shapes leads from the least to the most isomorphic media; it includes such intermediate features as

onomatopoetic speech sounds, ideographs, allegories and other conventional symbols.

Rudolf Arnheim (1969, p. 251).

With an expressly reliable assertion, Rascaroli is actually following these lines with her declaration that exposes the essay film as ‘a cinema in the first person, a cinema of thought, of investigation, of intellectual searching, of self-reflection (2009: digital age, the blend of individual and collective aspirations, and the emphasis on self-documentation. Audiovisual essays complicate the elements of representation. The more general shift away from literacy toward visual and audiovisual culture in the late 20th century 185). The subjectivity of cinematic essay affects both form and content and is also affected by the has also spurred on production within this scope of medium. Modes of sketched representation are in line with these thoughts forming an intersection of personal accounts and subjective and socio-historical thematic, relying on cerebral currents and conscious artistic innovation. By examining and evaluating previous and currently existing definitions of essay form, we can approach and develop a vivid theory of the essay film. Several scholarly contributions to this field do exist and they promote the intention that the definition of essay film is instantly significant. The general outlining of the current situation emphasises its form as hybrid and focuses on its ability to blur and overstep boundaries.

## Notes

Note 1. Sapir, Edward (1931) “Conceptual Categories of Primitive Language”, *Science*.

Note 2. Henri Thulié wrote about the interior as follows: The interior is the intimate part of life, there one deposits all one’s hypocrisies; like clothing, little by little it takes on the inflections of the body, it betrays all its habits, one can guess at a man by seeing his rooms. The choice of furniture, colours, of a thousand little nothings spread all about are traitors which recount tendencies, meannesses, and secret vices. Frequently, in describing an interior, one recounts the private life of an individual or of a family.

L’intérieur c’est l’intimité de la vie, on dépose chez soi toutes ses hypocrisies; comme le costume il prend peu à peu toutes les inflexions du corps, trahit toutes ces habitudes, on peut deviner un homme en voyant sa chambre. Le choix des meubles, des couleurs, des mille petits riens qui traînent partout sont des traîtres qui racontent les tendances, les mesquineries, les vices secrets. En décrivant un intérieur, on raconte souvent la vie privée d’un individu ou d’une famille.

Thulié Henri (1857) ‘Du Roman: La Description,’ *Réalisme*, no. 4, 38. Reprinted in Lewis, Mary Tompkins (ed.) (2007) *Critical Readings in Impressionism & Post-Impressionism: An Anthology*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 172-3.

Note 3. Pour bien comprendre une physionomie, il faut rendre l’impression qu’on a éprouvée en la voyant. Il y a toujours des traits saillants dans le visage et dans le costume qui frappent des primes aux abords. Ibid.

Note 4. There has been a lot of controversy around these issues. For the controversy, see more about Gestalt-criticism in Friedenberg & Silverman (2006, pp. 81-82).

Note 5. A wider approach to these matters can be found in Anderson, John, Robert (1980) *Documentary*

Psychology and Its Implications. San Francisco: Freeman; Anderson, Joseph, D. (1996) *The Reality of Illusion: An Ecological Approach to Cognitive Film Theory*. Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press; Cummins, Robert (1983) *The Nature of Psychological Explanation*. Cambridge: The MIT Press; Dennett, Daniel (1969) *Content and Consciousness*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul; Eco, Umberto (1997) *Kant and the Platypus: Essays on Language and Cognition*. New York: Harcourt; Ehrenzweig, Anton (1993) *The Hidden Order of Art: A Study in the Psychology of the Creative Eye*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press; Flanagan, Owen (1984) *The Science of the Mind*. Cambridge: The MIT Press; Gardner, Howard (1985) *The Mind's New Science: A History of the Documentary Revolution*. New York: Basic Books; Gombrich, Ernst, H. (1969) *Art and Illusion*. Princeton: Princeton University Press; Haugeland, John (1985) *Artificial Intelligence: The Very Idea*. Cambridge: The MIT Press; Jackendoff, Ray (1987) *Consciousness and the Computational Mind*. Cambridge: The MIT Press. These books are comparable studies on art, cognition, psychology and perspectives of the mind and consciousness, as well as scientific and historical outlines around these matters.

Note 6. See further in Landsberg, Alison (2009) *Memory, Empathy, and the Politics of Identification*. *International Journal of Politics and Culture*. (PDF) Academia.edu. In her innovative essay, she links memory questions together with, for instance, the concept of empathy, and succeeds in establishing an important role to the interconnections between them. Furthermore, see reference 63.

Note 7. As a consequence, general questions of the forms of art and their overlapping dimensions will also clear symmetrical inferences, and aspire to define the continuities between different forms of symmetry and balance in documentary studies, especially the larger connections and linkages between painting, architecture, photography, and film.

Note 8. We can draw attention to these possibilities of rewriting the history of documentary cinema with an adopted doubt concerning the limits and fallacies of historical representation.

Note 9. A structurally similar interaction is emphasised and appropriated in Johan van der Keuken's documentary *Amsterdam Global Village* (1996). In addition to narrative patterns and rhetorical figures, van der Keuken's iconographic approach circulates the dramatic and cinematic forms and enactments towards an elaborately choreographed performance, in which the Dutch cineaste emphasises the dialectic of camerawork and montage, which happens not only within single shots, or between them, but also between the audiovisual forms and details of narration and their overall context. Through this approach one can think that relentless camerawork and then a possible editing are somehow inseparable entities in order to arrange the relations between images and sounds. On a larger cognitive level, it means that both film and media are bound up with finding ways to order. Re-order and re-write actual and historical elements at display acknowledging the constructive and reciprocal processes of interaction between media and culture, providing insights into the visions that foresee the contingent realization and appropriation of fundamental discourses among documentaries. Van der Keuken's uplifting attitude narrows the one with the early filmmakers' bottomless curiosity and preference

without prejudices including a genuine exaltation towards filmmaking. Van der Keuken's disciplined philosophy of audiovisuality is not narrowly orchestrated but mostly associational, containing a collection of hypermodern advanced realism – a specific sensitivity to camera's ability to produce audiovisual memories and pieces of remembrance.

Note 10. See, for instance, Metz, Christian (1985) 'Aural Objects' in Weis, Elizabeth and John Belton (eds.) *Film Sound: Theory and Practice*. New York: Columbia University Press, 158-160.

Note 11. See Wahlberg (2008), 40-1. Our audiovisual perception is a perspective through which we can look at films from our current viewpoint. Our relation to history becomes a contemplation, a meditative practice that gives observational possibilities to comprehend and re-interpret cinematic views and visionary recitations.

Note 12. Useful parameters of these connections are laid out in Sturken, Marita and Lisa Cartwright (2001) *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Note 13. This notion aligns with the Gestalt-approach of deciding whether the effect has fulfilled all its promises.

Note 14. In film theory, Temenuga Trifonova has made a remark concerning 'hyperlink cinema', which brings together 'multiple protagonists from different social classes, ethnic or racial groups, and nations. This all simply reflects the contradictory nature of globalization'. It appears as a form of hyper-associational cinema, 'a reflection of an increased awareness of the intensification of time and space under the conditions of globalization.' These are signs and forms of temporal and spatial restructuring that happens throughout the whole architecture of communication. See, Trifonova, Temenuga (2009) *European Film Theory*. New York and London: Routledge, 284.

Note 15. "Prosthetic memories" are not the products of lived experiences, but are derived from engagement with a mediated representation, such as a film or an experiential museum, and like an artificial limb, they are actually worn on the body; these are sensuous memories produced by an experience of mass-mediated representations. Their ability to circulate widely is occasioned by their commodified form. It is precisely the commodified nature of mass cultural representations that makes them so widely available to people who live in different places and hail from different backgrounds, races, and classes, and that ultimately precludes them from being the private property of a particular group. Finally, I call these memories prosthetic to underscore their usefulness. Because they feel real, they help condition how a person thinks about the world and might be instrumental in articulating an ethical relation to the other. Prosthetic memories emerge at the interface between a person and a historical narrative about the past, at an experiential site such as a movie theatre or museum. In this moment of contact, an experience occurs through which a person sutures him or herself into a larger historical narrative. In this process, the person does not simply learn about the past intellectually, but takes on a more personal, deeply felt memory of a past event." See Landsberg, Alison (2018) 'Prosthetic memory: the ethics and politics of memory in an age of mass culture', in *Memory and popular film*, edited by Paul Grainge. Manchester University Press.

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Note 16. It is something to be found also in Agn s Varda's documentaries.

Note 17. For a seminal analysis that combines cultural and historical aspects of postmodernism, see Lyotard, Jean-Francois (1993) *The Postmodern Explained*. Minnes