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Master's Paper

**Multimodal construal of the character's image in contemporary English
cinematic discourse: A pragma-stylistic perspective**

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INTRODUCTION

The paper focuses on stylistics and pragmatics of multimodality in the construction of character in contemporary cinematic discourse.

The movies are very important aspect of the modern life. Everyone likes good movies and well written, constructed, and developed characters.

The analysis of how characters are constructed in the modern fictional movies will explore how the viewers respond to certain moviemaking techniques.

The relevance of the work is explained by the general orientation of contemporary stylistics towards the exploration of essential features of various multimodal texts across genres.

This research is relevant nowadays as the movie industry never stops and filmmakers come up with new ideas all the time. It is important that the analysis of the movies stays up to date with means of creating the meaning in the fictional movies.

The aim of this work is to explore stylistic and pragmatic features of multimodal means of constructing the character in modern fictional movies.

The aim is achieved by **the following tasks**:

- 1) to survey pertinent features of multimodality within the framework of film stylistics;
- 2) to reveal the characteristics of the movie as a type of multimodal text;
- 3) to specify a pragma-stylistic perspective for cinematic character presentation;
- 4) to define the concept of cinematic character and distinguish its main aspects of study;
- 5) to elaborate on the landscape model for the character presentation in contemporary movies;
- 6) to determine verbal means and film techniques employed in the depiction of means of constructing the character in contemporary English cinematic discourse.

The object of the study is contemporary English fictional movies viewed as multimodal texts.

The subject of the paper concerns stylistics and pragmatic aspects of the character construction in contemporary fictional movies viewed through the prism of multimodality.

Illustrative material includes 15 movies released since 2018 to 2023.

The practical value of the work on this topic lies in its potential to provide insights and recommendations for professionals in the movie industry. The moviemaking field evolves all the time, so it is very important to keep abreast. Moreover, the analysis of how viewers respond to certain character construction techniques can help movie directors to better understand how they can achieve the desired effect. The research results can be applied in teaching courses in Stylistics of English, Cognitive Linguistics, modern English cinematographic discourse, etc. The results can also be applied to writing students' papers, diploma papers, and post-graduates' researches.

The scientific novelty of the paper lies in its transdisciplinary approach to analyzing movie characters. Moreover, this research deepens the knowledge about the theory of the landscape extrapolated on the fictional character modeling.

Research methods include:

- 1) Multimodal analysis, aimed at the value of various modes and their combinations;
- 2) Pragma-stylistic analysis, aimed at the use of words and their role in shaping meaning within a certain context;
- 3) Semiotic analysis, concerned with signs, symbols and metaphors used in the fictional movies.

Structurally, the paper consists of an introduction, two chapters with conclusions to each of them, general conclusions, a resume in Ukrainian, a list of references, and a list of illustrative material.

CHAPTER ONE

CHARACTER IN CINEMATIC DISCOURSE: THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS

1.1 Multimodality within the framework of film studies

The development of technology and new media have brought to the forefront the multimodal character of communication, while meaning has always been crafted multimodally via the usage of semiotic resources (language, or code) and sensory resources, such as smell or taste. (Lyons, 2016)

These resources are defined as modes and the theoretical approach concerned with their use in communication is called multimodal analysis. (ibid.)

Agnieszka Lyons (2016) defined mode as a set of socially and culturally shaped resources for making meaning. Modes are developed through social processes and communication, and thus fluid and context-dependent.

Multimodal studies are grounded on three keystones: First of all, it is considered that communication always involves the use of multiple modes, and their intermodal relationships contribute to meaning-making. Second of all, meaning is designed by the selection and configuration of different modes in interactions. Finally, resources used by participants of a conversation are socially shaped over time to develop a common cultural sense of the way in which they can convey meaning. (ibid.)

The beginning point for multimodality is to expand the social interpretation of language and its meanings to the whole range of symbolic and conversational modes or semiotic resources for making meaning that are engaged in a culture – such as image, writing, gesture, gaze, speech, posture. (Jewitt, 2009)

According to Carey Jewitt (2009) multimodality starts from the point that all modes, like speech and writing, consist of sets of semiotic resources. From this point of view the modes and semiotic resources a human being chooses (or are permitted) to use shape communication and meaning.

Gunther Kress (2009) provides examples of modes used in representation and communication: images, writing, layout, music, gesture, speech, moving image, soundtrack.

1.2 The notion of mode in multimodal communication

Modes are different processes of communication such as speaking, listening, writing, reading, or viewing. (Lee, 2021)

There are various modes of communication. They all convey meaning in different way and manner. These differing potentials have an essential effect on the choice of a mode in specific communicative situations. (Kress, 2009)

Writing has words, clauses, sentences, organized through grammar and syntax. It also has some graphic resources such as font, size, bolding, spacing, frames, colour. For framing its units it utilizes syntactic, textual and social-semiotic resources (for example sentence, paragraph, textual block, genre etc.). (ibid.)

The mode of speech jointly possesses aspects of lexis, syntax and grammar with writing. Though, there are some fundamental differences. The resources of the mode of speech are called 'material'. Sound, a material resource of speech, provides with resources such as energy – loudness or softness – which are used to produce variations of stressed and unstressed elements, of rhythm and accent, that produce the rhythmic organization of speech and the accentuation of words. Speech also has vowel quality, length and silence. Speech makes use of sound to frame its units. (ibid.)

Visual mode is using of images and other characteristics that readers see. This mode is used to communicate illustrations of how something looks or how someone feels. The visual mode resources are: color, layout, style, size, perspective. (Arola, 2014)

Spatial mode is engaged if physical arrangement. This mode helps to understand why physical spaces are arranged in particular ways. The spatial mode

possesses next resources: arrangement, organization, proximity between people or objects. (ibid.)

The gestural mode calls attention to the way movement, such as body language can make meaning. When a person interacts with other people or sees them in movies, this person can get a lot about how others feel and what they are trying to express via gestural mode of communication. The gestural mode includes: facial expressions, hand gestures, body language, interaction between people. (ibid.)

1.3 Movie as a multimodal entity

Movies use different modes simultaneously. It makes a movie an ideal representation of a multimodal text. For example, in one scene, one character could be giving directions to another character by pointing (gestural) to a map and explaining (spoken language) how to get to a local landmark. (Steckmest, 2021)

Movies are entities specifically designed to convey meanings and have effects on their viewers, to build and combine patterns made in a multiplicity of the modes of communication – visual, acoustic, spatial and more. (Bateman, 2012)

To create rich and elaborate webs of meaning movie producers utilize a diverse selection of signs, such as spoken language, written language, visual representation of different types, spatial organizations, proxemics, codes of dress and other social conventions and so on. (ibid.)

Bateman (2012) states that throughout history many unique types of material substrates have been used for creating semiotic modes of different degrees of complexity. On the whole, any material substrate can be serving this function, as long as this material is sufficiently controllable to be used in purposeful articulations.

As an example we can take a certain group of a society that develops its own semiotic code. If they can manipulate it competently enough they have an opportunity to leave tracks recognizable (as purposeful tracks) by other members of this group.

Such preliminary condition of controllability is useful to return to whenever multimodal analysis is to be undertaken. Thus, a film is at least one and possibly several semiotic modes. A combination of ways of making and communicating meanings. (ibid.)

1.4 Movies from the perspective of pragmastylistics

Pragmastylistics can come in handy when analyzing movie characters. Just as term itself suggests Pragmastylistics is stylistics but with a pragmatic component added to it. (Hickey, 1993)

Hickey (1993) defines stylistics, pragmatics and pragmastylistics as follows:

Stylistics is a study of style. Style, in its turn, consists of linguistic features that do not affect the meaning or the information conveyed in message in the direct manner. Style involves difference from a standard usage of a language, in order to achieve literary, rhetorical, persuasive or other effects. (ibid.)

The fundamental principle in any study of style is that there must be more than one way of doing or saying something. (ibid.)

Pragmatics, in its turn, is not directly interested in language, but in what its users do with language. It can be put that pragmatics is the study of language usage. Practically, this incorporates the study of such areas as how language in general or specific languages express social distance or intimacy, superiority, equality, or inferiority; how the users of a specific language achieve or try to achieve what they want. (ibid.)

Also, pragmatics studies presupposition, every so often referred to as a condition which must be satisfied in the real world of a certain utterance is to be either true or false or be appropriately uttered. This means that for an utterance to be appropriate, or even to be true or false, in a certain context, then something else must be true and must be known or acceptable to speaker and hearer. (ibid.)

Pragmastylistics pays special attention to those features which a speaker may choose, or has chosen, within a range of acceptable forms in the same language that

would semantically, or truth-conditionally, equivalent, but might perform or achieve different objectives or do so in different ways. (ibid.)

Thus, we can establish that pragmastylistics involves the study of all the conditions, linguistic and extralinguistic. This allows the rules and potential of a language to integrate with the specific elements of the context to create a text capable of generating specific internal changes in the perceiver's state of mind or knowledge. (ibid.)

Pragmastylistic approach plays a crucial role when analyzing how a movie character is built. Through the scope of pragmastylistics a viewer can perceive personality, traits and style of communication of a certain character on screen.

Let's take a look at the example from the 2022 series "The Terminal List":

Liz : *But I have no appetite for cutting civilians because they picked the wrong time for a Sunday stroll. That is not who we're fighting. I need to hear you say it. Do you copy me?*

Reece: *I copy you.*

Figure 1: *The Terminal List*

This is a series about a Lieutenant Commander of a Navy SEALs platoon James Reece. Throughout the course of the series he uses the word *copy* to convey his understanding. In military slang *to copy* means to receive, process and understand certain information. It is very similar to *affirmative* or *roger* (Bowyer, 2007, p. 59).

In the excerpt given above, Liz uses *copy* as a keyword to draw attention to her words and underline the importance of her speech. Even though there are more everyday ways of saying "Do you copy me?", such as "Do you understand me?" or "You got that?", they wouldn't have been that effective in this particular situation. After all, *copy* is protagonist's catchword to which both, him and a viewer would react in a specific way.

According to Sarah Kozloff (2000), the understanding of movies is very much influenced by what the characters say (p. 267).

One of the functions of a movie dialogue is creation of the diegesis and establishment of identities. (ibid.) The term diegesis refers to the world within a movie where the story takes place. (Bunia, 2010, p. 679-720)

Dialogues present information about the movie's universe. It's rules, customs, habitants, and history. By saying or discussing certain aspects or historical events that took place in the movie's universe, characters identify the diegetic world. (Kozloff, 2010, p 35)

Thus, when in the movie "The Creator" (2023) one of the characters says "*It has been 10 years since the nuclear explosion took place in Los Angeles. Almost a million people were burned alive in a few seconds by the artificial intelligence designed for our protection*" a viewer perceives several key pieces of information about the movie's internal world.

First of all, there was a tragic event unfolding before the current situation that shaped the state of society and its living conditions.

Secondly, this event took place in Los Angeles. Without this specification the whole tragedy would not have the same effect on a viewer (this movie is American, so it is rather intelligible that the American audience would have more personal reaction to the event that took place on their home soil, and not in any other part of the world).

Finally, the tragic event was caused by some entity that was meant to save and protect the very people it ended up hurting. It implies the idea of betrayal, as well as justification for prohibition and military action against the artificial intelligence models that will be showed later on in the movie.

To reword briefly, movie dialogues are powerful instrument for movie directors and producers for creation of a fictional world and establishing characters within its realm. Properly crafted dialogues keep the audience engaged, present important information, and provide deeper comprehension of the characters, their relationships, and their essential role in the plot of the movie (Kozloff, 2010, pp 34-37). Thus, dialogues play an important role in both moving the plot and constructing characters.

1.5 Cinematic character: facets of study

The character in a movie is of crucial importance. The whole plot of the movie is driven by its character's actions, dialogues, interactions.

Eder (2008) outlines four main traits of a film character.

First, it is a fictitious being with physical, mental, and social properties and relations.

Second, it is an artefact with aesthetic structures, created by devices of certain media like film.

Third, it is a symbol conveying higher, more abstract layers of meanings and themes.

Finally, it is a symptom indicating sociocultural circumstances of their production and reception.

The importance of characters cannot be overemphasized. They serve individual and collective self-understanding, the mediation of images of humanity, of concepts of identity and social role. (ibid.)

A movie character is perceived as a cognitive framework that encompasses three landscapes – emotional, behavioral (action-oriented), and cognitive, each of which is portrayed through multiple modes of representation.

The interaction between characters on a screen is realized through multimodal performance by actors in a specific setting. (Bednarek, 2010, p 18) Thus, actors bring their own personal traits into fictional characters they portray in the movie. As Mills (2005) stated “body and voice of the actor are themselves the medium through which skill is expressed.”

For example, the effectiveness of television drama is massively dependent on the close-up shots of character's faces and facial expressions, through which their thoughts, emotions, and reactions are communicated to a viewer. Character's identity incorporates more than just a single dialogue. If we focus only on the speech

part of character's screen manifestation we might overlook the rich meaning expressed through other aspects of the performance. (Bednarek, 2010, p 18)

Bednarek (2010) provides with the list of aspects of the performance.

In terms of action, we must pay attention to:

- What is done on stage (movement, placing of objects, etc.).
- Gestures of characters (what kind of gestures they use, what triggers them to use gestures in a specific situation).
- Body position and posture changes (again, what may trigger a character to obtain particular posture).
- Facial expression (what kind of emotion a character conveys through the facial expression, what kind of meaning they transmit to other characters in a scene).
- Direction of gaze.

On the side of the speech aspect there are:

- Assignment of general pronunciation features (unusual speech features, different accents, etc.)
- Assignment of intonation contours and tonic placement for each line (as intonation may broaden the understanding of a character's attitude to a situation)
- Paralinguistic phenomena (loudness, speed of delivery, pauses, etc.)

Finally, from the point of view of appearance of a character next features must be taken into a consideration:

- Sex, age, and physical size of actors
- Skin color, hair color and other physical feature
- The clothes characters wear (pp. 18-19).

Hence, a movie character is a multimodal entity. It is created via means of different modes (linguistic, gestural, visual, aural).

1.6 Camera in the depiction of the character in movies

The story of a movie unfolds before a viewer's eyes as a sequence of shots made by the filming crew. Hockrow (2014) claims that camera is the viewer. (p 34) The camera's movement affects the viewer's perception of the film. The camera is the eye of the viewer, and there are multiple types of camera shots to create the view filmmakers want viewers to see.

First type of shot is a wide shot. It is used to establish the setting and make the whole moment feel real. (ibid.) This type of shot shows a character with their relation to the surroundings to a viewer. This camera technique allows the audience absorb all the information at once. This technique helps to emphasize the distance between objects and characters, isolation of a character, the size of an object of a character, etc.

Let's consider an example from the 2023 movie *Five Nights at Freddy's*:



1)

Figure 2: *Five Nights at Freddy's* (0:26:10)

2) Mom: *Go watch your brother, okay?*

Mike: *Okay. Garret.*

(car engine starts)

(engine revving)

Garret?

Here the viewer is presented with a tragic event from his childhood, when his little brother was kidnapped. In this instance, the wide shot is utilized to convey isolation. Josh Hutcherson's character Mike is haunted by this memory. Despite the wide shot there is no one to ask for help. The protagonist's small, in relation to the

trees surrounding him, posture creates a feeling of helplessness and inability to change the situation.



1)

Figure 3: *Five Nights at Freddy's* (0:26:11)

In the following shot a viewer sees a car with Mike's little brother driving off the screen, while the wide shot is preserved. In spite of other people's cars standing on the background, not a single person can intrude the situation.

The next type of shot crucial for the character creation is the close-up shot. This kind of shot allows to draw all the viewer's attention to a specific element. Many moviemakers use close-ups to emphasize an important line or facial expression of a character. (Hockrow, 2014, p. 36)

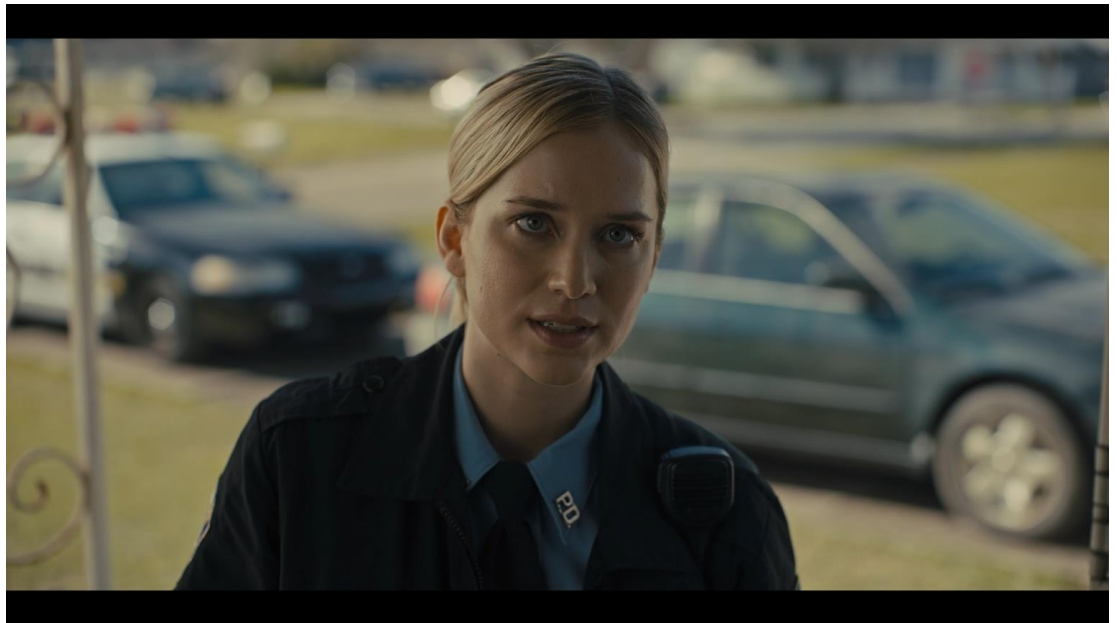
Specific attention to the eyes must be paid during close-ups. Eyes are the windows of the soul and close-up shots are often used by filmmakers to show the character's eyes. (ibid.)

Let's look at close-up shots from FNAF:

1) Vanessa: *If you're too whacked out to remember to lock a friggin' door, accident or not, you're liable. It's called criminal negligence.*

Mike: *You wouldn't understand.*

Vanessa: *Well, then help me. 'Cause the moment I file that report, it's out of my hands.*



2)

Five Night's at Freddy's (0:49:42)



3)

Figure 4: Five Nights at Freddy's (0:49:45)

In this scene the close-up is used to create intimacy between characters. Vanessa wants to help Mike after finding out he was taking pills during his work to sleep. She gives Mike a stern look. Her facial expression, combined with the line she produces, emphasizes that Vanessa is able to cover Mike but she needs a strong and serious reason to do so.

On his part, Mike looks down during the conversation, which is a sign of embarrassment and nervousness. According to the plot, Mike is trying to remember the face of his brother's kidnapper, and to do that he uses sleeping pills. Now he has

got two options: tell Vanessa the whole tragic story or get fired after she files the report.

The close-up shot has a power to relate the plot of the story to the audience. The viewer sees the characters' world through their eyes, so close-ups helps the viewer understand a character's state of mind at a certain point of the movie.

The last but not least type of general shot is medium shot. This shot is often used to single out a subject from the crowd. (Hockrow, 2014, p. 34) The medium shot is focused on a specific subject, while still leaving some of the background to the viewer. It is not that dramatic as the close-up, nor distancing like the wide shot. To some extent, this is the size in which people interact with each other. The viewer can capture the body language and the actions of the character (Recording Moving Images, 2021, p. 207) and often used to present two, or sometimes three actors at a time (Leonardi et al., 2011).

Let's take a look at the medium shot from FNAF:



Figure 5: *Five Nights at Freddy's* (0:37:32)

Here the viewer sees the animatronics in action for the first time. Their primary goal is to entertain children and bring joy. Due to the medium shot the viewer can see that they are performing on a stage as some kind of a rock band. Even without knowing that later in the story the animatronics will be the main source of suspense and horror, seeing them performing in an empty hall that couple

of decades ago used to be packed up with kids delivers an uneasy and, somewhat, liminal feeling.

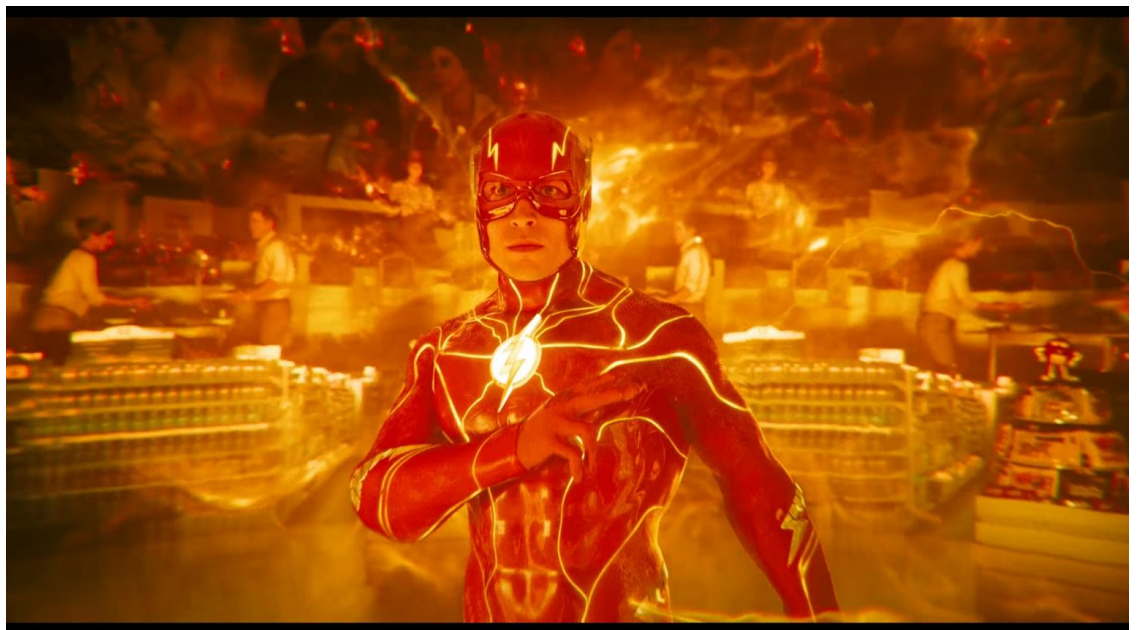
1.7 Costumes in the character's construction in movies

The costumes play a narrative role. Pieces of clothes can depict certain connection of the characters, their hierarchy, their contextualization in the space of action. (Figueiredo, 2019)

Different accessories and details of the clothing are a basis for the viewer's intuitive reading. The costumes are very crucial element of the cinematographic narrative and they are fundamental key for the construction of the characters. (ibid.)

The importance of a physical appearance is especially important for superhero movies. In such films, the costume can show a range of non-verbal meanings essential for the plot. A superhero's wardrobe is a code that may convey their superpower, biography, role in the story, belonging to a certain part of society, etc. (Brownie & Graydon, 2015)

Let's take a look at The Flash's costume (Muschietti, 2023):



1)

Figure 6: *The Flash* (0:31:26)

According to the plot, The Flash's main superpower is his supernatural speed. Sometimes he can acquire a speed level allowing him to create electric energy that

can dig a hole in his timeline, so The Flash gains an opportunity to interfere in another timeline.

The most prominent detail of his superhero costume is a lightning symbol on his chest. This element provides the viewer with an overall idea of the character being lightning fast. (Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, 2023)

Also, the color of the costume is worth mentioning. It is absolutely red, and red color, in its own way, relates to danger, violence, power and, sometimes, love, passion and anger. (Kovsh & Dziuba, 2022)

In the movie, apart from the danger and power peculiar to each and every superhero movie, The Flash's motivation is trying to save his mother that was murdered when he was a child. Barry Allen travels to another timeline to save his mother, or, at least, have a revenge on her murderer. In this way, the red color's meaning also broadens to the meaning love (to his mother) and anger (to her murderer).

1.8 The receptive aspect of the character's presentation in cinematic discourse

Eder (2007) formulates four levels of the character perception by the viewer. They are: basic perception level; formation of mental models; inferences about indirect meanings; inferences about real (communicative) contexts.

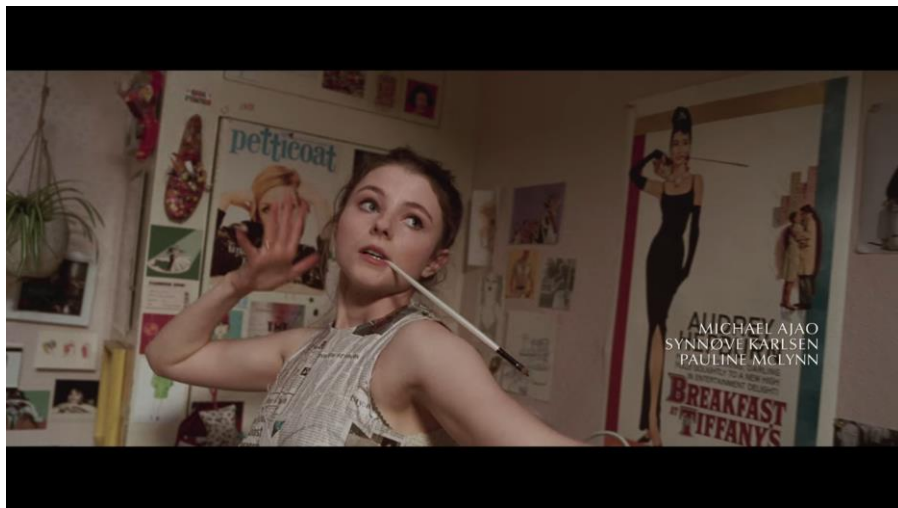
The first level, the basic perception level, is the process of viewing the character through the body language of an actor, a soundtrack that starts right when the character appears on the screen, the character's outfit, and so on. In the mind of the viewer these audio-visual character representations connect with one another to create a full basic picture of the character. (ibid.)

In *Last Night in Soho* (Wright, 2021) the first time the viewer sees Eloise, performed by Thomasin McKenzie, when she pretends to be dancing on some kind of a party:



1)

Last Night in Soho (0:00:55)



2)

Figure 7: Last Night in Soho (0:01:35)

She wears a long dress made of newspapers. She is dancing to a song by Peter and Gordon titled “A World Without Love”. The viewer can immediately understand that Eloise is obsessed with fashion and soundtrack adds to the idea of her obsession with the fashion of 1960s. She is interacting with imaginary people around her.

On the second level, formation of mental models, the viewer develop an idea about a character based on their previous life experience stored in their memory. The viewer constructs their understanding of a character’s place in the fictional world within the movie. This understanding, though, is not stable and will change according to the new information obtained from the movie (Eder, 2007).



1)

Figure 8: *Last Night in Soho* (0:02:23)

2) Eloise: *Fabulous. Who are you wearing? Eloise Turner. Who are you wearing? Eloise T, of course. E.T. Ellie Turner.*

As the viewer experiences Eloise's first lines they can instantly understand two things: Eloise is pretending to be attending a fashion show; Eloise dreams of becoming a famous fashion designer. Her giving compliments to the imaginary fancy dress and then answering "*Eloise T, of course*" gives away her desire of becoming a designer, it is bad manners not to know about.

On this point, the viewer understands in what direction Eloise's story and the whole plot (as she is a protagonist) is about to go.

On the third level, inferences about indirect meanings, the viewer draws conclusion about the indirect meaning, as a product of associative, metaphorical thought. The work of art is a world in itself (Hofmann, 1967, p. 59), and within this world the character is a tool for metaphorical embodiment of traits, virtues, or conflicts (Eder, 2007).

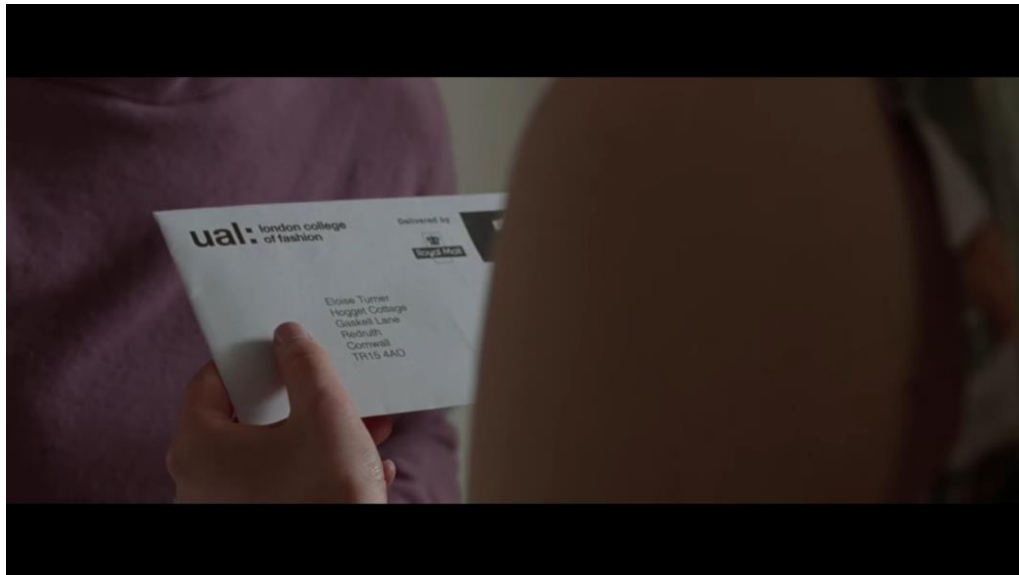


Figure 9: *Last Night in Soho* (0:03:14)

Now the viewer can come up with metaphorical understanding of Eloise's character. The viewer sees the list of acceptance from London College of Fashion, and as will be revealed later Eloise lives in a rural place in Cornwall. These two pieces of information add up to a metaphor of a young girl from the small town, suburb, or village that wants to go to the capital to establish her name, make a career, basically, to conquer the world. However, such stories in movies (and real life) not necessarily always have a happy-ending.

On the last level, inferences about real (communicative) contexts, the viewer enters a dialogue with the filmmaker. All the reception levels discussed above connect the viewer with starting points that allow the viewer to learn about causal relationships, which link the character with reality. (Eder, 2007)

From this point of view, Eloise's character as caused by the filmmaker's perspective on the '*small town girl's dream*' problem. Her actions and attributes can be viewed as reflecting the intentions and strategies supposed to have been pursued by the filmmaker. Using the levels of reception the viewer can interpret Eloise's character in the context of the movie *Last Night in Soho*, and evaluate the means used to represent and portray her.

Conclusions to the Chapter One

1. The reception of the character occurs spontaneously, at a preconscious level, and involves non-verbal processes.

2. Communication within the realm of fiction possesses a remarkable quality. Despite being meticulously scripted by filmmakers and producers, fictional dialogue often resonates with viewers as authentic and lifelike.

3. In films, a blend of linguistic elements and non-verbal cues come together to form a cinematic conversation. Thus, movies are multimodal entities and understanding of this information must be held in one's mind when analyzing movie characters and ways they are constructed.

4. Modes refer to distinct communication processes, encompassing activities like speaking, listening, writing, reading, and viewing.

5. The character in a film is a construct of diverse elements. It encompasses not just their direct involvement in conversations, interactions with other characters, and internal characteristics within the movie, but also factors like the soundtrack, the actor's portrayal, and the viewer's background knowledge and personal experiences. It is very important for filmmakers and those, who are analyzing the character to take into account what the audience sees when looking on the screen.

6. The process of creating the character starts with deciding on what kind of behavior they are going to show, what actions they will be taking part in, and ends with choosing the right outfit and soundtrack.

CHAPTER TWO

LANDSCAPING CINEMATIC CHARACTERS MULTIMODALLY: A PRACTICAL ASPECT

2.1 Landscape model in cinematic character presentation

For the second chapter, devoted to the analysis of how movie characters are constructed multimodally, I am going to use the theory of the landscaping (Изотова, 2018). Though this theory was initially applied to model fictional psychonarrative, it effectively can be adapted to the study of character cinematographic discourse.

Viewed as a cognitive construct, cinematic character can be represented through three landscapes: feelings and emotions; actions; and reflection.

The landscape of the character's feelings and emotions reveals how the character's feelings emotions are portrayed in the modern fiction movies, and what role they play in convening the film character.

The landscape of actions throws light on the characters' behavior. Thus, we will look at how characters' behavior is shown on the screen, how it affects the viewer, and what kinds of cinematographic techniques are used for this particular goal.

The landscape of reflection uncovers the character's thoughts. Therefore, our study will touch upon the characters' reactions to each other's emotions and actions. Also, this landscape exposes how meta-multimodality is used in cinematography.

Meta-multimodality is understood as multimodal response to the multimodal manifestations. It is a self-referential commentary on multimodality using multiple modes of expression (Izotova, 2023).

2.2 The landscape of the character's feelings and emotions

As the name suggests the landscape of emotions is concerned with how emotions are manifested on the movie screen.

Let's take a look on the example from the Joker (Philips, 2019) movie:

- 1) The Speaker: *Good morning. It's 42 degrees at 10:30 on this Thursday, October 15th. I'm Stan L. Brooks, and here's what's happening. It's day 18 of the garbage strike, with 10.000 tons of garbage piling up every day. Even the nicest sections of the city are looking like slums.*



2)

Figure 10: *Joker* (0:01:22)

The movie starts with the image of the main character painting his face with a clown make-up. Multiple speakers on the news are talking about a garbage strike that nearly paralyzed the whole city. The protagonist puts a fake smile using his fingers but then fingers slip down and the viewer can see a tear falling down from his eye.

From the very beginning the audience can understand that the protagonist is not happy with his life, the whole city he lives in does not function properly, and him working as a clown, someone who must bring joy to the people, is some kind of a sick joke.

As the viewer needs to see emotions of the character, to show such scene filmmakers use the close-up camera technique. For such technique, the ability to play necessary emotions by the actor is essential (Wiley, 2003).

Now let's see how emotions are portrayed in a dialogue in the movie *The House That Jack Built* (von Trier, 2018):

1) Lady 1: *So I'm standing here holding this jack. Crap's not working. Do you, uh, do you have a jack I could borrow?*

Jack: *No, I'm sorry.*

Lady 1: *No?*

Jack: *No.*



2)

House That Jack Built (0:02:10)



3)

Figure 11: *House That Jack Built (0:02:19)*

In this scene the over-the-shoulder shot camera technique is used. This technique is used to orient the viewer, characters, who are framed together are connected. They are a part of a collective emotional context of the scene (Lannom, 2020).

The viewer can see two character with the different attitude to the same situation. The Lady 1, played by Uma Thurman, is highly emotional. Her car broke in the woods and it is possible that Jack, played by Matt Dillon, might be her only chance of fixing her car. On his side, Jack is absolutely uninterested in the situation. It is manifested through both linguistic mode, his answers are relatively small and unengaging compared to the woman's, and visual mode, his face is still and rather tired.

Also, the spatial mode underlines difference between Jack and Lady 1, as Jack sits in the car and is not willing to get out of it to help Lady 1, and the woman stands outside.



1)

Joker (0:05:45)

2) The doctor: *These are tough times. How about you? Have you been keeing up with your journal?*

Joker: *Yes, ma'am.*

The doctor: *Great. Did you Bring it with you? Arthur.*

Joker: *I've been using it as a journal, but also as a joke diary. I think I told you I'm pursuing a career in stand-up comedy.*

The doctor: *No, you didn't.*

Joker: *I think I did.*

Figure 12: *Joker*

In this scene from *Joker* (2019) the viewer sees the main character in the office of the psychiatrist. This part is filmed mostly using close-ups as it is a dialogue. The audience can see the doctor being absolutely unemotional and even distant from her patient.

From the dialogue the viewer learns Joker's name, Arthur, and that he has a condition.

During the dialogue the doctor asks Arthur to hand her his journal. Arthur starts nervously tapping his legs and does that unwillingly.



Figure 13: *Joker* (0:05:40)

The use of the visual mode in the scene shows that the journal is, for some reason, very important to Joker and it features some information he wouldn't like to share with people, even his doctor. In the dialogue he says that he used the journal as a joke diary as Arthur had told his doctor that he wants to become a stand-up comedian. Nevertheless, the doctor cannot remember that happening. The linguistic mode explains Arthur's emotional response to the request of handing over his journal.



1)

House that Jack Built (0:18:55)



2)

House that Jack Built (0:19:04)

3) Jack: *Uh, ahem, now may I...*

Lady 2: *Not without a badge.*

Jack: *Bravo, bravo, bravo, that's excellent. That's exactly just the type of response we like to see.*

Figure 14: *House That Jack Built*

In the dialogue Jack tries to somehow justify his conversation with this lady. The opposition is created through the spatial mode. The characters are separated by the thin entrance net-door. Lady 2 is startled as the viewer can see from the face of

Siobhan Fallon Hogan, who played her. Jack, switches between emotions when he needs to.

The over-the-shoulder shot in this scene again creates the idea of connection of the characters in the scene. However, here it also used to show the arrangement of the space (the net-door in particular).

Jack changes his emotional state when he understands that seriousness and assertiveness do not serve his purpose. Instead, he starts actively using non-verbal means of communication (gestural mode) and say more appealing and praising things (linguistic mode).

His main goal is to show Lady 2 that they are on the same side, so she opens the door. In this excerpt it is done by emotional reaction and emotional talk.

Let's analyze the extract from Parasite (Joon-ho, 2019):



1)

Parasite (0:23:19)

2) Ki-Woo: *What are you talking about?*

Da-Hae: *It's all fake. Acting like a bizarro. Like he's a crazed artist. He's a big fraud.*

Ki-Woo: *Da-song?*

Da-Hae: *You know, like he would stop in the middle of the street and pretend he was struck by a sudden inspiration.*

Ki-Woo: *Randomly stare up at the clouds and ponder the shapes?
Something like that?*

Da-Hae: *Exactly! He's the worst! And he acts like he can't behave
normal. Like he's completely perplexed. Makes me want to puke.*

Ki-Woo: *So Da-Song is a fraud. What does that have to do with your
English problems?*

Da-Hae: *I'm just saying.*

Figure 15: *Parasite*

In the dialogue, Da-Hae wants to have a small conversation with Ki-Woo to express her love interest towards him. However, Ki-Woo guides the conversation back to the cause of his presence there – English class. The moment he does that, Da-Hae's non-verbal behavior speaks disappointment and even embarrassment.

The frame constructed in the way that both Ki-Woo and Da-Hae are full participants of the scene. The medium range shot used here to make the conversation look usual as this is the distance in which people interact with each other. Ki-Woo and Da-Hae look at each other but Ki-Woo looks relaxed, and Da-Hae is at tense. Ki-Woo's gaze is straight and Da-Hae looks from under the brows. The frame is constructed in the way that Ki-Woo is bigger than Da-Hae. All the modes used in the scene speak volumes that Ki-Woo is in the lead of the situation, he has full control and able to choose in what direction he wants to move this interaction.

As I said, in the previous example, despite one character is being in the lead and the other is being led, they both are fully legitimate participants of the scene. Let's now analyze a sequence of extracts from *Joker* (Philips, 2019) to see how two characters despite being in one frame are separated:



1)

Joker (0:14:55)

2)

Figure 16: *Joker* (0:15:16)

On the first frame Arthur is invited on stage by Murray Franklin, played by Robert De Niro. According to the plot, he is Arthur's idol, a kind of successful man he wants to become. Their interaction is filmed through the medium shot. Murray calls an advertisement break to talk to Arthur. All of the background is blurred, it is basically non-existent in the scene. Arthur's face screams happiness and delight. The colors used in the scene are warm and bright, they are soothing. Both characters look directly at each other. They are of same height, which shows that they are equal and both choose the interaction to continue.

On the second frame, however, the viewer is taken back from the imaginary world of the protagonist to the real world he lives in. The first thing that catches the

eye is the color spectrum. It is cold and gray. Gray is the color of depression (Huyghe, 2016). The protagonist of the movie is very lonely and it is portrayed in this scene through the blur of the background in which his mother sits. There are technically two characters in the frame but only one of them is active.

The use of close-up reaction shot allows aims the viewer's attention to the emotions of Arthur. He gives a sad, tired smile.

The effect of blur that connects these two scenes is referred to as the shallow focus. It is the technique that keeps one part of an image in focus while the rest is out of it. Such technique emphasizes one part of the scene to draw the viewer's attention to a particular subject of the frame (Maio, 2019).

Let's analyze the extract from *Oppenheimer* (Nolan, 2023) to see how one emotion spills over into another one within one scene.

1) Strauss: *What was that? What did you say to him?*

Oppenheimer: *Oh, he's fine. Mr. Strauss, there are... things in my past you ought to be aware of.*



2)

Figure 17: *Oppenheimer* (0:12:00)

The dialogue happens right after Oppenheimer has a quick interaction with Albert Einstein after which last one leaves with irritation. When Strauss asks Oppenheimer what happened, Oppenheimer gives him a quick look and smiles showing that there is nothing to be concerned about. However, a second after he takes his glance away and his voice cracks when he wants to speak. Emotional state

of the character is manifested by the aural, visual, and linguistic modes in this extraction. Oppenheimer cannot say the thing he wants to and instead decides to go with just “things you need to be aware of”. Such choice of words gives the viewer the clue that these ‘things’ are rather harsh and horrible ones.

In this excerpt we can see how an emotion of satisfaction spills over into an emotion of anxiety and, perhaps, shame. It is shown not only by the actor’s facial expression but also by the pause between his lines. Oppenheimer is sure and confident when answering a question about his very recent small conversation with Einstein, and second after he takes some time before starting to talk about himself and his past.



Figure 18: Oppenheimer (2:07:30)

This frame is taken from a scene where Oppenheimer gives the speech after the nuclear bombardment of Japan. He was the one, who constructed the bomb and the audience celebrates him with applause. Suddenly, the whole room goes bright white and the only thing Oppenheimer can hear is the sound of his nervous breathing, the rustling of the leaves, and the sound of the falling snow. In spite of all the celebration, he is not happy, even otherwise. The aural mode here makes the viewer experience silence. In this very excerpt such decision works perfectly, as it gives the audience time to process the information they have just been given.

The close-up shot focuses attention on Oppenheimer's face which show understanding of what has happened (namely bombardment). The bright white color envelops him, leaving Oppenheimer one on one with his thoughts and fears. He imagines the consequences of the nuclear bomb falling right in this audience, and how people slowly start to disintegrate and dissolve in the air.

The visuals of the scene make the viewer experience what the protagonist is experiencing, feel his emotions. On the level of the inferences about real (communicative) contexts. The viewer scans the filmmaker's point encoded into the character.

2.3 Multimodal means of conveying the character's feelings and emotions

The emotions are crucial part of any movie. Carrol (2005) was saying that spectatorship is deeply rooted and dependent on the importance of emotions in movie viewing.

One of the best ways to make the viewer experience emotions is to show the characters' emotions.

As we have learned from the study of the landscape of emotions, all of the modes are essential for the conveying of the emotional state of any character. However, the gestural mode might be the most used one. After all, emotions are portrayed by human face expressions. It is the most common and easy way of showing emotions on the screen.

In many contexts, emotions of different valence and different intensity are used in sequence in order to enhance subsequent affective judgments. (Philippe & Guintcheva, 2015) Thus, the sequence of emotions in Joker (2019) was used to emphasize the loneliness and alienation (Mukhopadhyay, 2020) from the world he lives in.

Spatial mode can be used to show relationships between characters, their emotional dependence, as in Parasite (2019), or characters' equality (at least an imaginary manifestation of), as in Joker (2019).

Visual mode, mostly in terms of color spectrum, can be used to reflect the inner state of a character.

Finally, the aural mode goes hand in hand with gestural in the process of constructing emotions. The way the character speaks, or his sudden tone changes, voice cracks, or even sudden silence, can give away a lot about the character's emotional attitude to the situation.

In some cases, the character's attitude and emotions are the attitude and emotions of the filmmaker and they reflect the idea they would like the viewer to get. In *Oppenheimer* (2023) the moviemakers encoded an anti-war message, and have manifested it via the protagonist's emotional state.

Thus, emotions in movies are shown rather non-verbally, leaving the words as means of strengthening of other modes.

2.4 The landscape of the character's actions

The action is essential for every movie. It moves the plot and changes the whole arrangement of the movie. In the previous chapter, we were talking about emotions but most of the time emotions in the certain scene are provoked by the action in another.

Let's analyze some action scenes from *Joker* (2019):



1)

Joker (0:23:11)

- 2) Arthur: *Hey, what's your name? Arthur. Hey, Arthur, you're a really good dancer. I know. You know who's not? Him.*

Figure 19: *Joker*

In this scene Arthur acts out a sketch, where he pretends to be dancing in the club, and someone compliments his dancing moves. After this 'interaction' Arthur pretend to be shooting a third person but the bullet actually fires from the revolver.

In this scene, the camera switches to the handheld shot technique. This is type of camera movement, where the camera is supported only by a shoulder of the cameraman (or some rigs for creating the shaky effect are used). The handheld shot technique is used to create chaotic scenes. It reflects the panic, or urgency (Deguzman, 2020).

The aural mode plays an important role in this particular scene. The gunshot is significantly louder than Arthur's voice and the sound of the TV. It is in a same way unpredictable for the viewer as for the protagonist.



1)

Joker (0:32:29)



2)

Figure 20: *Joker* (0:32:36)

In this sequence of frames, the viewer sees the first confrontation where Arthur decides to stand his ground. The revolver is again involved in the scene. However, the sound of the shot is not that loud anymore, its loudness is approximately of the same level as the sound of the underground.

The camera uses wide shots to show the whole stage. These two frames are divided by a blink of the light. The scene can be described ‘before and after’ Arthur took the action in his hands.

The following chasing scene is shot using the handheld camera to show the action.

Now, let’s analyze some action scenes from *The House That Jack Built* (2018):



1)

House That Jack Built (0:22:29)



2)

Figure 21: House That Jack Built (0:22:37)

In the scene, the viewer can see the second murder performed by the protagonist. It is quite tricky as the first murder was portrayed rather like a quick outburst of rage and annoyance. Jack fails to finish his crime from the first attempt as he and his victim fall down. He does not finish at the second attempt because of sudden episode of remorse, or at least it is viewed as one by the viewer.

The visual part of the scene is constructed using the technique called random camera movement. It is defined as camera movement that is not motivated by the character's actions, but the audience's experience (Deguzman, 2020).

On the part of the filmmaker, such visual representation is used to create more documentary like atmosphere, as the whole plot of the movie is Jack trying to somehow make an argument for his crimes.

On the side of the viewer, it creates the unsureness about the main character. Random camera movement and actor's performance in the scene do not quite reveal if Jack really wants to murder this poor woman. The suspense is built up only to unveil that Jack was just playing a spectacle and the crime was actually planned to be finished.

The character's voice plays a very important part in the scene. When the viewer hears Jack starting ask how can he fix everything in rather caring manner, they are being left uncertain about what attitude should they have towards the character. The switches between medium shots and close-ups, creating a feeling of not having 'the full picture,' reinforce this hesitancy.

Let's take a look on the action scene from *Barbie* (Gerwig, 2023):



1)

Barbie (0:48:34)



2)

Figure 22: *Barbie* (0:48:44)

This extract is taken from the chasing scene where Barbie is being followed by the top executives of Mattel. The scene features a frequent usage of wide shots. The viewer can see that chasers do not function as a single unit. As the matter of fact, only the CEO of Mattel, played by Will Ferrell, says anything during the whole scene. Only Barbie knows where she needs to go and it is shown via the camera focus on the exit door.

The upbeat music is used as the action intensifier as the camera stands still for creative artistic purposes. Also funny noises and screams of the workers who run around add up to the comic effect of the scene.

This is the example of how wide shot, not supposed to be used in action scenes, is accompanied by music and sound to work out perfectly fine. In this equation, the aural mode creates all the movement, while the visual mode gives the information about the characters participating in the scene.

On the one hand, the viewer sees Barbie, who appears to be confident in her goal and what she needs to do to achieve it. On the other, there are the workers of the company, who just run around not sure about what exactly must be done. The culmination of unclarity is reached when the CEO wants to climb over the wall, and all the workers do not understand if they should help him, or not get in the way of him doing this.

Now, let's analyze the fighting scene from *Tenet* (Nolan, 2020):



1)

Tenet (0:46:08)

2)

Figure 23: *Tenet* (0:47:16)

This fight happens when the ‘Protagonist’ (this is the main character’s name in the movie) and his handler Neil are on the mission of stealing a painting from the plane. However, two masked men appear to stop them.

The fight is filmed via the shaky handheld camera. The masked man fighting the Protagonist sometimes acts weirdly during the fight, and these weird moves let him manipulate with time.

The visual mode creates an opposition between two characters in the fight. The viewer sees familiar main character and a previously unrepresented character. This input data causes the viewer to root for the Protagonist. This result is

determined by an individual's propensity to experience fear caused by the perceived absence of information at any level of consciousness or point of processing (Carleton, 2016).

The masked man's weird time-manipulating moves are accompanied by unpleasant noise and frantic intermittent breathing.

The combination of visual and aural modes creates the hostile appearance of the character. The viewer can tell the good guy from the bad guy based on the information obtained from these modes.

The linguistic mode later in the scene strengthens this feeling of hostility when the Protagonist defeats his opponent and asks him who he is. According to the pattern of such scenes, the masked man must be unmasked to reveal his identity. However, in this case as the mysterious one simply escapes by slipping away, leaving the Protagonist and the viewer without any clue.

Our next scene is a fighting scene from *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings* (Cretton, 2021):



Figure 24: *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings* (1:45:44)

This frame is taken from the scene where Shang-Chi is fighting his father. Shang-Chi's color is yellow, while his father's color is blue. Blue color is a symbol of the hidden danger, which makes the viewer feel alienated and uncomfortable, and

yellow color is a symbol of friendship (Kovsh & Dziuba, 2022). When blue and yellow colors are combined in a scene, blue loses its brightness (ibid.)

Such play with colors construct the story alongside with the fight itself. The viewer can interpret these two characters by their color spectrum. The father, blue color, is the villain and must be defeated, the son, yellow color, is the positive character trying to save the situation.



Figure 25: *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings* (1:45:16)

In the course of the fight, Shang-Chi manages to obtain five of the magic rings from his father. They immediately turn into yellow symbolizing them choosing Shang-Chi. This yellow color stands out from the gray surroundings of the scene. The visual mode and gestural modes convey the idea of Shang-Chi being the chosen one to become a hero and gain control of the ten rings to use them for good intentions.

The spatial mode in this action scene creates the idea of Shang-Chi defeating his father on his own, using just his skills and abilities. The space in the scene is vast but all the other characters are on the other side of the battlefield. There is nothing to use as a weapon except the five rings which ‘have switched’ the side. The viewer sees the story of the fight as a story of the establishment of a hero, who needs to overcome his dearest person, his father, and also emerge victorious from the battle with the grand power, which drove his predecessor crazy.

2.5 Multimodal means of conveying the character's actions

The action drives the movie. Action scenes are used not only to entertain the viewer but also to give them keys to the characters.

As we have learned from the analysis, multiple modes are used in the action scenes. However, the visual and the gestural modes are the most vital ones.

Gestural mode conveys the actual movement of the characters. The way they move can reveal lots of information about their part within the internal world of the movie.

The visual mode, on its part, is positioned towards the viewer. The use of the frame by the filmmakers shapes what the viewer sees, and, as a consequence, their attitude to the episode, scene, the whole movie. The most usual camera technique for the action scenes is shaky handheld camera. This technique creates movement and can as well be used to show chaos, like in *Joker* (2019), or uncertainty, like in *The House That Jack Built* (2018).

The visual representation of characters is playing a huge role in the construction of these characters. Visual differences create opposition between characters. The viewer can tell the good from the evil in *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings* (2021) based on the color they are shaped with, and understand the hostility of the mysterious masked man in *Tenet* (2020).

The aural mode is usually used just as space filler because silent action scenes are not viewed that intensively. However, the absence of any music in the murder scene from *House That Jack Built* (2018) allows the viewer to focus solely on the actual action and their attitude to it. On the opposite, in *Barbie* (2023) music is used as the instrument for creating the movement.

The linguistic mode is mostly absent from the action scenes. It can be used as an introduction to the action, as in *Joker* (2019), or as a tool of underlining a certain quality of the character, like in *Barbie* (2023).

Thus, we can summarize that gestural and visual modes are leading the action scenes in movies, while other modes are used rather occasionally and for a particular reason in different situations.

2.6 The landscape of the character's reflection

Reflection is an effect produced by an influence (Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, 2023). In movies, just like in the real world, actions bring consequences. The characters' activity changes the fictional world around them and provokes other characters' reaction.

If action moves the plot of the movie, then reflection is the point to which the plot moves.

Let's analyze how reflection is portrayed in Joker (Philips, 2019):



1)

Joker (0:01:43)



2)

Figure 26: *Joker* (0:03:22)

In the next scene we see Joker at work. Here the wide shot is used to underline multiple ideas.

First of all, Joker is a small part of a society. The camera does not focus on him, he is on the side of the frame, so the viewer needs to take his couple of seconds to even find the character, who is supposed to be the main action mover. It would be fair to say that such camera using technique emphasizes unimportance of Joker for the world he lives in.

Second, the camera rather focuses on the pile of garbage in the middle of the frame. It is somehow ironic that this stack of trash is placed right in front of ‘Wig & Jewelry’ store. Just as a wig creates a picture for others that everything is okay with your hair, the people in the streets choose to buy jewelry, have a stroll, and try not to notice bad things happening around.

Finally, if to speak about indifference, Joker gets attacked by a group of teenagers who steal his sign he uses to work. For a minute the viewer watches Joker chasing them shouting “Stop them!”. No one is interfering. Some of the bystanders throw a quick look at the action and proceed on their own business.

The scene ends with Joker taking the beating and right in this moment the music starts playing. The track is titled ‘Defeated Clown’ and will be used more, later in the movie.

On this point, the viewer understands several things about the main character. He is a part of a low, insecure stratum of society. Sad, dark, almost crying like sounding theme of the character resembles his inner state. The audience sees the man, who is not even near of being in control of things that happen to him. The writers use the technique of indirect characterization (Heckmann, 2022) to show that Joker cannot stand his ground.

1) Penny: *He [Thomas Wayne] will make a great mayor. Everybody says so.*

Arthur: *Oh, yeah. Everybody who? Who do you talk to?*

Penny: *Well, everybody on the news. He's the only one who could save the city.*



2)

Figure 27: *Joker* (0:11:39)

The excerpt is taken from Arthur's dialogue with his mother. They have a small conversation about the biggest businessman in town, Thomas Wayne, running for mayor. The linguistic mode in this dialogue shows that Arthur's mother only watches TV and does not go outside. Television in the movie is used as a means of distraction. The news are followed by entertaining programs that force people to believe certain things. (Korobko, 2018)

However, Arthur knows the real order of things and he is aware of his mother not knowing anything about what ordinary people actually think.

Arthur's meta-multimodal response in this interaction involves gestural and linguistic mode. His "Oh, yeah" line matches perfectly with the facial expression. Nevertheless, Arthur's response does not involve any sign of anger, and he is not trying to convince his mother otherwise. The lack of emotional involvement gives the viewer the idea that the topic of politics does not play a big role in Arthur's life. At least its role is not big enough to enter into a confrontation with his mother, who is clearly wrong in Arthur's eyes.

1) Penny: *You're gonna kill me. You're gonna give me a heart attack!*

Arthur: *Don't give me your...*

Penny: *No. No. I'm not talking to you until you stop being angry!*

Arthur: *Okay. Okay. I'm not angry, Mom. I'm not angry. Please. Mom, is this real?*



2)

Joker (0:49:29)



3)

Figure 28: *Joker* (0:49:32)

This interaction happens when Arthur finds out that his mother was hiding the truth about Thomas Wayne being his father. This conversation is different from the one we analyzed earlier by the high tone of voice of both characters.

The aural mode gives away that the subject of the father is significant to Arthur. He is not afraid of a conflict with his mother over it. On her side, Penny understands the seriousness of the situation and decides to lock herself away from the son.

Arthur's speech in this scene is intermittent. The viewer can understand that he is nervous.

The spatial mode plays a crucial role for the metaphorical meaning of the scene. The door, which separates Arthur and his mother, symbolizes a wall that appeared between them. The door is the metaphor of the conflict itself. The spatial mode reveals the consequence of Penny's previous actions and Arthur's finding out the truth.



Figure 29: *Joker* (0:13:24)

Arthur imagines being on the Murray Franklin's show. In his mind, he plays the situation where Murray notices him in the crowd. In the scene, camera focuses on Arthur, the light projector is aimed at him, and all the people applaud and laugh at what he has to say.

The light, warm colors add to the feeling of security and happiness. When Murray asks Arthur on stage the orchestra plays a joyful jazz music, as the opposite to doomy and dark 'Defeated Clown' theme we heard previously in the movie.

Meta-multimodal response of the crowd to Arthur is portrayed through the aural and gestural modes. The scene symbolizes Arthur's dreams of being loved and noticed by the people around him.

Now, let's analyze reaction scenes from *Gran Turismo* (Bloomkamp, 2023):

1) Jack: *You're a good friver, Nick. I don't know how many times you need to hear that – but you get a little emotional. And when you get emotional...*

Nicholas: *You're a mechanic. If I want driving advice, I'll talk to my team leader, not some flamed-out has-been who couldn't back it up 50 years ago.*



2)

Figure 30: *Gran Turismo* (0:16:22)

This dialogue is an excerpt from the Lamborghini's team dinner during which they talk over their plans on how their best driver Nicholas can win races. Jack, the mechanic, wants to give some piece of advice to the young pilot but he does not want to listen to it.

The scene utilizes multiple close-ups to show reaction of all the staff members and one wide-shot to show meta-multimodal response to Nicholas hitting the table with his hand.

All the talking is suddenly stopped and staff members turn to Nicholas. He is seated at the head table to emphasize that he is the most important among all the present.

Nicholas' choice of words displays the mockery with which he views Jack. Instead of just saying 'I do not need you advice' he decides to put Jack in his place. Just by putting "You're a mechanic" Nicholas belittles Jack by accentuating that he is just a simple mechanic worker, who can be easily replaced, and in no authority to give pieces of advice.

Jack, on his part, simply leaves the table not wishing to participate in the conflict and no one stops him.

1) Jack: *You really think that you're gonna put some kid who's been playing a game in his bedroom into a 200-mile-an-hour rocket? It'll tear him to pieces.*

Danny: *These players have clocked more track time than you have in your entire career.*

Jack: *Oh, on, what do you call it, a console? Huh? You know that if you get in a wreck out here, you can't hit reset, right? How many guys you go to before you went to me?*

Danny: *A few.*

Jack: *Yeah, "a few."*



2)

Figure 31: *Gran Turismo* (0:11:21)

The interaction between Danny and Jack happens when Danny wants to invite Jack to take part in Nissan's experiment on bringing top Gran Turismo players into actual racing.

The wide shot establishes the scene and is accompanied by roaring engines. It creates the atmosphere of Jack being at the height of his work when getting this unusual offer.

Jack's reaction to such proposition is negative. His answer is manifested via linguistic, gestural, and aural modes.

Jack's choice of words fully exposes his refusal. He wants to talk sense into Danny by saying how dangerous this plan is. Jack uses the phrase "hit reset" to emphasize that the racing in real life is way more different than in video game.

When Danny tries to argue, Jack sits down. He leaves the business talk by doing this. Such change in the spatial order manifests that Jack is not considering this conversation seriously anymore.

The chuckles when Jack repeats "a few" after Danny show that he understands that Danny has talked to many other mechanics before him. Their refusal is viewed as Jack being right about the whole undertaking.

Let's look into excerpts from another racing related movie *Ford v Ferrari* (Mangold, 2019):



1)

Ford v Ferrari (1:14:16)



2)

Figure 32: *Ford v Ferrari* (1:14:18)

This extract is taken from the fighting scene between Carroll and Ken, the two main characters of the movie.

The camera takes multiple ranges in the scene. It starts with the close-up of the fight, then continues into a close-up of Ken's wife, then camera takes the wide over-the-shoulder shot of the fight to finish it in the medium shot of Ken's wife again. The camera movement shows that despite the fight being very important to its participants for the world around it's not that big of a deal. During the close-ups the sound of the fight is rather loud but during the wide shot it is significantly distant, and the viewer can hear the sound of cars driving by and other people talking.

The meta-multimodal response of the world is constructed with the help of the spatial, aural, and visual modes.

Ken's wife brings a chair out of the house to sit and read a magazine across the street from two fighting people. Her actions show the viewer how mundane such conflict is.

A small group of people gathers to spectate the performance. However, they do not interfere and they do not come to close remaining distant. It can be interpreted as the fight being the problem only of Carroll and Ken. Others perceive it just as a spectacle and nothing more.



1)

Ford v Ferrari (2:21:00)



2)

Ford v Ferrari (2:21:09)

3) Crew member: *What do you think, Dan?*

Gurney: *She's fantastic! No vibration in the box. Smooth as silk.*

Carroll: *You drove it for less than an hour... 'don't know shit after an hour.*

Figure 33: *Ford v Ferrari*

The scene takes place right after the scene with Ken's death in a car accident. Some pilot tests the new car and Carroll is not satisfied with the way Gurney assesses the car.

The scene is filmed via over-the-shoulder wide shot. It establishes the scene and let's the viewer to see what Carroll sees. Then, camera switches into a close-up on Carroll's face.

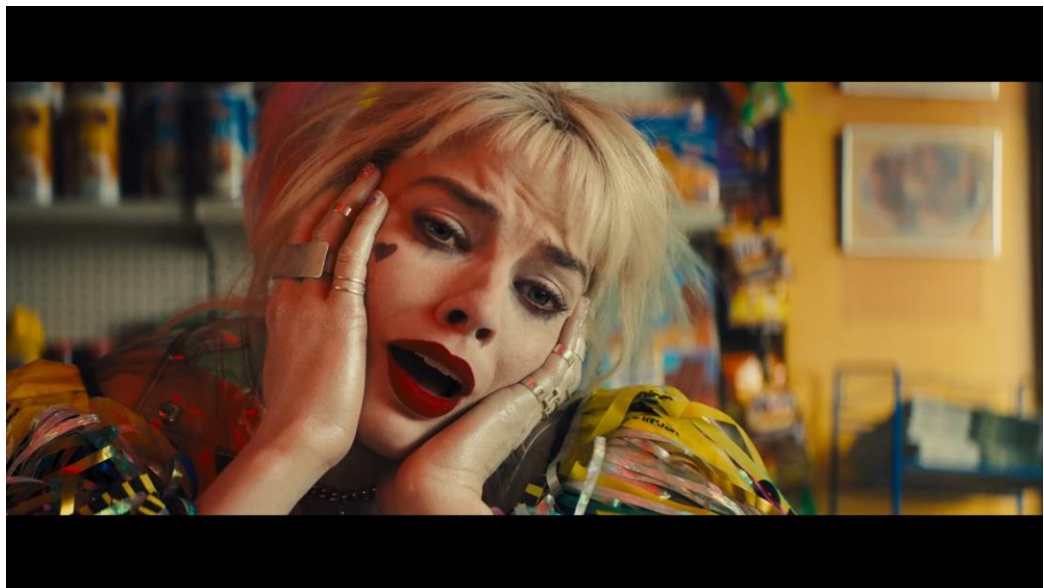
Carroll's reaction is shaped with the help of gestural and linguistic modes.

The lines give away the character's attitude to what he just saw. Carroll names what exactly made him lose his temper.

He leaves the scene angrily taking off his glasses. This sequence of actions alongside with its place in the movie's plot, show the viewer that Carroll thought Ken as the best pilot and mechanic. Ken's working principle was fully different than one's of Gurney.

The meta-multimodal reaction of the character gives the information about his attitude to other characters. Properly staged reaction scene can shape certain details without directly pointing them out.

Let's analyze a reaction scene from *Birds of Prey* (Yan, 2020):



1)

Birds of Prey (0:13:05)



2)

Figure 34: *Birds of Prey* (0:13:09)

This excerpt is particularly interesting because Harley Quinn reacts to the action of the cook, and to the sandwich itself.

The reaction to the cook is linguistic and aural. Harley asks the cook not to add a lot of hot sauce in a demanding manner.

The reaction to the sandwich is constructed by the work of the camera and Margot Robbie's acting. The whole scene is shot with close-ups switching between Harley Quinn's face and the process of cooking the sandwich. Such visual decision creates the feeling of connection between the protagonist and the sandwich (which is leveled up to a character in some way in the scene).

The close-up also limits the space shown to the viewer. The spatial mode is affected by this decision. It creates a feeling that nothing except for Harley Quinn and her sandwich exists in the frame, and, therefore, in the world right now.

Now, let's get back to *The House That Jack Built* (2018):

1) Verge: *I just have one question.*

Jack: *What's the question?*

Verge: *Wasn't there something about you building a house? Wasn't Jack going to build a house?*

Jack: *Yes. I... I... I was trying. But I didn't get very far.*



2)

House That Jack Built (2:10:23)



3)

Figure 35: *House That Jack Built (2:10:30)*

The house is a place where a person encodes their own cultural meaning. The consumer shapes the home in the process of building and living in the home and the home, concomitantly, shapes the consumer's life. In many ways, the home is a metaphor for the consumer's life. This idea of the home as a metaphor for living is developed. (Claiborne & Ozanne, 1990, pp 367-374)

Bachelard (1994) views a house as an entity that reflects a person's understanding of pattern of their life.

When Verge asks Jack about the house he was supposed to be building, Jack's reaction is shown being down. Verge plays a role of Jack's conscience here.

The close-ups focused on the characters' facial expression show that Verge is utterly calm in the scene. There is nothing he wouldn't expect and he also does not judge Jack.

On his side, Jack starts feeling shame, which is constructed via gestural and aural modes.

Jack takes his eyes off Verge and tries to explain himself but everything he says turns into unconfident mumbling.

The scene is followed by the police making their presence known by calling Jack to surrender. The police symbolizes the reaction of the fictional world to the Jack's actions. However, this reaction is not seen, only heard. When the police finally makes attempt to break into the building, Jack is already gone and they fail to catch him.

Let's analyze a reaction scene from *Barbie* (2023):



1)

Barbie (0:09:10)



2)

Barbie (0:09:12)

3)

Figure 36: *Barbie* (0:09:15)

In the scene, the main Ken, played by Ryan Gosling, wants to show off in front of Barbie. However, he does that unsuccessfully and gets hurt. The following reaction of other characters gives the viewer the idea about the relationships between the characters in the fictional world.

The difference between characters' reactions is manifested by the gestural and aural modes.

Barbie is rather surprised. Allan is scared and he starts to scream, while the Rival Ken is amused by what he just saw.

The scene starts with the wide shot to establish the scene and the action, and then switches to the reaction shot. The difference between this scene and similar scenes from other movies is that the reaction shots here are not all close-ups. The only close-up we see is Barbie's reaction. The following reactions of Allan and the Rival Ken are filmed in medium shots.

Ken wanted to show off in front of Barbie, that is why her reaction is filmed via the close-up. The camera movement technique underlines that in this scene, Barbie is the one whose reaction is important for Ken.

Allan's and the Rival Ken's reactions being filmed through the medium shot allows the viewer to see them and get the information needed, while also showing that for Ken they are not that important.

2.7 Multimodal means of conveying the character's reflection

Reactions are very important for any movie. The presence or absence of the reaction shapes the viewer's attitude to the fictional world of the movie. Character's reactions to each other's actions reveal rules by which they and the world they live in is regulated.

As well as with actions, reflection is mostly conveyed through the gestural mode. In some way, reactions are also actions that involve certain movement or display of emotions. Characters' reactions are shown through their facial expressions and words they say as the response.

The spatial mode reinforces the ideas planted by gestural modes. Thus, in *Birds of Prey* (2020) the use of very limited space in the reaction shot establishes connection between two participants of the scene, and emphasizes almost mesmerized Harley Quinn's reaction to the sandwich. In *Ford v Ferrari* (2019), the spatial mode encircles the conflict of two characters. The reaction of others is limited with the simple spectating. They are not allowed to enter the zone of the fight to somehow influence it.

The aural mode can explain the character's attitude to the trigger. In *House That Jack Built* (2018) the way Jack answers the questions gives away his shame about him not achieving his main goal. In *Joker* (2019) the sound let's the viewer to distinguish and important topic from the less important one. Therefore, the viewer can tell that political debate with his mother is not important to Arthur. However, the truth about his father is a vital subject.

Properly staged reactions make the movie intense, create and then resolve conflicts.

Various multimodal means can be used to show reactions on the big screen. Different combinations can bring different result. Also, the genre of the movie is of great importance when filming a reaction scene. Thus, reactions in comedies like *Barbie* (2023) are tend to be exaggerated to create jokes and comic effects. In dramatic movies such as *House That Jack Built* (2018), or *Gran Turismo* (2023), reactions are more down to earth to keep things realistic.

Conclusions to the Chapter Two

1. The landscape theory can be successfully applied to the analysis of the characters of the modern movies.
2. To convey emotions filmmakers tend to use close-up filming and modes of gestures and space.
3. When showing the characters' actions moviemakers tend to utilize visual representation and spatial mode. This helps to establish the scene, where the action takes place, and to transfer the action to the reaction.
4. To show reactions usually close-ups are used. The gestural mode is of great importance for the conveying of reflection. However, the aural mode also plays a big role in shaping character's attitude and their response to the trigger, which gives the viewer the information about the reaction.
5. All in all, every mode is used to convey each part of the characters' constituents. Different combinations of modes can give different effects. Filmmaker

accentuate modes that are necessary for the certain particular scene, while ignoring other.

6. Emotions, actions, and reflections of the characters' are connected. In certain way, the movie is the combination of those. Emotions lead to actions, actions provoke reactions, and reactions are actions and emotions. They give the viewer the keys to the fictional world they are spectating. The viewer shapes their attitude to the movie and its inhabitants based on the events unfolded on the screen. The way they are portrayed plays an essential role in the process of decoding and understanding the movie.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The movie character is the key to the movie. The proper construction and analysis of the character is the topic that has been discussed for almost a century now.

Since the dawn of cinematography people were studying the means of portraying people on the screen as close to the real people as possible.

During the research we analyzed different making up components of the character analysis.

We defined the place of multimodal means of communications within the framework of cinematographic discourse. The three main factors of the multimodal studies were established to be:

First, the effective communication that typically incorporates various modes, and the connections between these modes play a crucial role in creating meaning;

Second, the meaning emerges through the deliberate selection and arrangement of different modes during interactions;

Third, the tools and expressions employed by conversation participants are influenced by societal factors, gradually shaping a shared cultural understanding of how meaning is conveyed.

The notion of the movie character can be defined in multiple variants but they all can be summarized as: the movie character is a person, or any other being, that exists in the narrative.

The character's perception by the viewer is shaped by the plot of the movie, the character's place in this plot and its actions, as well as the way the character is presented from the point of view of its physical appearance.

There are multiple methods of showing the character to the audience starting with camera movement and types of shots, and finishing with the character's clothes and color spectrum.

The approach from the point of view of landscapes has proven to be very convenient. It allows to break down the character into segments, and analyze it piece by piece.

The further researches are ought to focus on the use of multimodal means of the character construction in different genres. A movie of certain genre must evoke particular feelings and provoke specific reactions from the audience. There are combinations of modes that serve better to the movies of one genre than of other.

In conclusion, this paper has shed light on the process of constructing characters multimodally in modern fictional movies, and the way the viewers read and decode these characters.

The analysis of different landscapes of the character's constituents exemplified the interplay between linguistic, visual, audial, spatial, and gestural modes.

RESUME

Роботу присвячено вивченню прагмастилістичних особливостей мультимодального конструювання образу персонажа в сучасному англійськомовному кінематографічному дискурсі. Матеріалом дослідження слугували 15 фільмів, випущені у період з 2018 по 2023 рік.

Персонажа розглянуто як когнітивний конструкт, який об'єднує три ландшафти — дій, емоцій і почуттів, рефлексій.

В сучасному англійськомовному кінематографічному дискурсі мультимодальне конструювання персонажа відбувається у єдності і взаємодії різноманітних семіотичних систем, зокрема вербальної, просторової, візуальної, аудіальної та жестикуляційної.

Кваліфікаційна робота складається зі вступу, двох розділів з висновками до кожного з них, загальних висновків, резюме українською мовою, списку використаної літератури та списку ілюстративного матеріалу.

У першому розділі роботи узагальнено основні терміни та поняття, які використані для мультимодального аналізу конструювання персонажа, зокрема мультимодальність, кінематографічний персонаж, ландшафт, кінематографічний текст, кінематографічний діалог.

У другому розділі використано ландшафтну модель для конструювання кінематографічного персонажа; здійснено поетапний аналіз різних семіотичних модусів, задіяних для репрезентації персонажа в сучасному англійськомовному кінематографічному дискурсі.

Ключові слова: кінематографічний дискурс, ландшафтна модель, мультимодальність, кінематографічний персонаж, кінематографічний діалог.

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