

UDK 791.43/.45

DOI: 10.17748/2075-9908-2016-8-2/1-61-69

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**RADICAL POETIZATION. RETHINKING  
THE FINAL SLOW MOTION SCENE IN BONNIE  
AND CLYDE**

**РАДИКАЛЬНАЯ ПОЭТИЗАЦИЯ.  
ПЕРЕОСМЫСЛИВАЮЩАЯ ФИНАЛЬНУЮ СЦЕНУ  
РАПИДНОЙ СЪЕМКИ В ФИЛЬМЕ  
«БОННИ И КЛАЙД»**

The essay analyzes the final slow motion scene of Bonnie and Clyde (1967) to demonstrate how the avant-garde reinvention of slow motion poeticized cinematic language in the 1960s and lent a contemporary political dimension to a film set during the Great Depression. The author's approach combines American neo-formalist theory with Bakhtinian analysis of the Russian formal method of 20s to establish a theoretical connection between the Russian and American theoretical schools. This essay shows how Bonnie and Clyde's film language developed in accordance with radical avant-garde modes of thought and how avant-garde thought revolutionized Hollywood in the nineteen-sixties. The essay treats such concepts as attraction and affect which have been relevant throughout the whole of film history. Through analysis of these concepts the author proposes that the reinvention of devices provides a kind of new shock which affects spectators and helps to make a breakthrough in film language. Employing texts by Bakhtin and Comolli and Narboni, the author also demonstrates that the breakthrough always contains a political dimension, its goal being to change the audience's view of a concrete historical time. Choosing the devices to reinvigorate always depends on the political, social and cultural climate of a given historical period. But the development of these devices forms the basis of stylistic innovations in cinema.

Эссе анализирует финальную сцену из фильма «Бонни и Клайд» (1967), выполненную в технике рапидной съемки, с целью показать, как авангардное переизобретение приема радикализирует язык кино 60-х и наделяет картину актуальным политическим содержанием, несмотря на то, что ее действие развивается в эпоху Великой Депрессии. Автор обращается к статьям и книгам американских неформалистов, а также к теории формального метода русской школы 20-х, тем самым, проводя связь между русской и американской теоретическими школами. Это эссе показывает, что работа с киноязыком режиссера Артура Пенна во многом осуществлялась согласно авангардному способу мышления, что революционизировало Голливуд 60-х. Эссе делает акцент на концептах «аттракцион» и «аффект», которые являются важнейшими для всего развития истории аудио-визуальной культуры. Через анализ этих концептов автор показывает, как переизобретение приема позволяет создавать своего рода новый «шок» и воздействовать на аудиторию, равно как и развивать киноязык в целом. Привлекая труды Бахтина, Комолли и Нарбони, автор пытается доказать что поэтическая радикализация языка всегда содержит в себе политическое измерение, что в свою очередь осуществляет своего рода переворот в сознании зрителя конкретного времени. Тот или иной выбор приема для переизобретения так или иначе связан с политическим, социальным и культурным климатом своего времени. Но работа с приемом лежит в основе собственно стилистических инноваций в кино.

**Keywords:** device, slow motion, attraction, affect, form, content, defamiliarization, avant-garde, violence, revolution, stylistic innovations

**Ключевые слова:** устройство, рапидная съемка, притяжение, аффект, форма, содержание, отстранение, авангард, насилие, революция, стилистические инновации

*Acknowledgment: The essay has been written with  
the support of the Fulbright scholarship and Bard College*

*Благодарность: данная статья-размышление была написана  
при финансовой поддержке Фулбрайт-стипендии и Бард Колледжа*

In film, as in other art forms, the format of the organization of material plays a key role in expressing content. As the Russian Formalists taught, the development of forms allows us be not only to be impressed by stylistic features, but also helps us to elucidate meanings. M.M. Bakhtin / P.N. Medvedev argued that form and content are both constructive elements in the close unity of a work and that both form and content are ideological elements [1]. These statements relate to Jean-Luc Comolli and Jean Narboni's 1968 proposals in *Cinema/Ideology/Criticism*: 1) "Every film is political" [2], 2) "when we set out to make a film, from the very first shot, we are encumbered by the necessity of reproducing things not as they really are but as they appear when refracted through the ideology", 3) "this includes every stage in the process of production: subjects, 'styles', forms, meanings, narrative traditions" [3]. While French scholars proclaimed the notion that every filmmaker does not play the same role in the cinematic process, they believed that "no film-maker can, by his own individual efforts, change the economic relations governing the manufacture and distribution of his film" [4]. According to them, filmmakers' reactions differ, and these reactions provide a possibility for critics to

mark historical moments in a changing cinema. Audience reactions to these moments spur political and ideological reflection, and also help to change cultural history as a whole. The 1967 film *Bonnie and Clyde* reflects one such moment, and by examining director Arthur Penn's use of slow motion, we can explore how a filmmaker can react to changing times, the tools he employs to show his reaction and how this reaction differs from what has come before.

Stylistic innovation is a very potent method for showing political reactions and producing cinematic affect. Without changeable and renewable devices, it would be impossible to develop new film forms. I will not claim, à la Viktor Shklovsky that art is merely device, but I wish to demonstrate that the Formalist's technique of "baring the device" helps us to expose the political views and ideological meanings of a concrete historical time. Shklovsky defines the device as the smallest universal and virtually independent element of artistic form, migrating from work to work. I employ the more comprehensive definition of an artwork, developed by his contemporary Yuriy Tynjanov, who sees a work of art as "a system, composed of devices whose functions are specified synchronically and diachronically [5]. Referring to Comolli and Narboni, we can say that renewal of a device is a step outside a given system of film language, but one actually produced and understood inside a historical ideological system. Inasmuch as film language is a secondary modeling system, filmmakers can produce through modeling provocative innovations that provide different meanings, and therefore can be politically revealing.

In my essay I will attempt to analyze one of the most exiting examples of this reaction - the final scene in Arthur Penn's famous Hollywood Renaissance film *Bonnie and Clyde*, to show how its final slow-motion editing connects with the way of thinking of a new generation, and how such a device should be considered a hallmark of the 1960s. The debate about the role of this device is, in part, connected to Paul Schrader's 15-week course at Columbia University, "Films That Changed Filmmaking," which the American scholar and filmmaker reworked into a series of articles for *Film Comment* in 2015. This question of device helps us to think about the influence of technology on film and how it provides stylistic innovations. In our case, using a slow-motion technique in the final scene of *Bonnie and Clyde* helped to Arthur Penn to renew the technology of his precursors. The filmmaker described his renovation in an interview: "We shot as a gang of four cameras running at different speeds: a master, then on Warren and then on Faye. Later on we got them into a two-shot. One of the cameras was moving at an enormously high speed so it would run out of film quickly. By the time we got up to speed one camera was almost out of film. The actors were wired, every one of those bullet hits is a squib. We didn't have to rehearse because you can feel them off. They're in a metal dish and have a little powder and blood in them. It took us half a day to prepare the actors. We got one shot in the morning and one shot in the afternoon" [6]. This multiple-camera shooting process and the employment of the extremes of lens lengths [7] involved a risky and technologically complex process which would influence how later filmmakers would shoot an action scene and provide, in David Bordwell words an "intensification of established techniques" [8]. While future Hollywood directors would surround actors with more cameras and would run them at different speeds, the principle originated with Penn at this historical moment and would continue developing until Andy and Lana Wachowski would shoot *The Matrix*.

In *Bonnie and Clyde* Penn did not utilize slow motion to create a ritualized version of violence, as Akira Kurosawa did in *Seven Samurai* (1954). Instead he used it to produce a dynamic effect: *Bonnie and Clyde* does not exhibit "organic unity," but rather a conflict of film forms. Arthur Penn revolutionized forms by combining montages of different angles of slow motion shots, violently shooting the young heroes in the final scene, which in its profound graphic artificiality made a marked physical impression upon viewers. This illustrates the concept of conflict, which, according to Sergei Eisenstein, forms the basis of art [9]. In *Bonnie and Clyde* bullets violently damage bodies and create a rhythm of vibration that stands in counterpoint to the rhythm of the montage of changing angles. Dynamism is also a consequence of the dialectic of art forms (the "struggle of opposites"). Slow motion creates graphic and plastic conflict, and what Eisenstein called "conflict between an event and its temporal nature" [10]. The expressive effect of the final scene attacks the audience, a basic principle of the avant-garde that is always working with viewers to revolutionize forms, modernize vision and actively involve a viewer in the process of perception. This was more than an attempt to evoke viewer emotion, the film was created as "a block of sensations", "a compound of percepts and affects", according to Deleuze and Guattari [11].

Arthur Penn's method examined ultra-violence and reached a new dimension of expression that developed a new level of graphic violence in cinema. After screening the film, *Time Magazine* would pronounce 1967 a year of violence. Penn's examination of ultra-violence was influenced by the

"bloodbaths" of Sergio Leone's "Dollars" trilogy, as well as the aesthetics of television news in the Vietnam era. As Penn recalled: "...every night on the news we saw kids in Vietnam being airlifted out in body bags, with blood all over the place. Why, suddenly, the cinema had to be immaculate, I'll never know" [12]. By employing multi-camera, slow motion, and montage editing, Arthur Penn achieved the balletic quality of the finale scene and this moved Hollywood cinema towards a new era in terms of style and the representation of violence. Robin Wood said that Penn "romanticizes" Bonnie and Clyde in the last scene. I would add that the director transformed the "rebel-victim" into a cinematic myth, one of considerable significance for the 1960s. According to Ihab Hassan, the "rebel-victim" is a figure of protest as well as oppression, [13] and variations were presented in many novels and films of the 60s, notably *The Left-handed Gun*, *Easy Rider*, *The Graduate*, *Midnight Cowboy*. In the film, Bonnie and Clyde do not look like brutal gangsters, but instead act against the social, economic and historical climate of the Depression Era, which according to Penn made them "unknowing revolutionaries" [14].

The slow motion death of Bonnie and Clyde was spasmodically sensational. Its balletic form helped to capture death on an abstract level, the level of the unconscious and unreal. It was a moment that forced viewers to reevaluate their previous perceptions of the pair, to find in them the heroic. As Penn said: "Yes, this is where the legend takes hold in the story, but I wanted Bonnie and Clyde to become legends even beyond the reality of the film. Their deaths propel the legend beyond reality, and this is why I shot the scene in slow motion. The rhythm of the death sequence was established by a combination of six different speeds of film. During editing we cut a piece of film shot at one speed with another piece shot at different speed, for example from forty-eight frames per second to ninety-six frames per second. All these very shots cuts created this effect of spasmodic violence and lent a romantic texture to their death." [15]. Slow motion created an extra-temporal focus on the catastrophic death of the heroes and accrued additional meanings through associations with television coverage of the Vietnam war. Television's aesthetic during the Vietnam era and sensational political killings labeled death as an Event and made it continual by providing multiple views in its coverage. Arthur Penn, who first worked in television, remained well aware of its influence. At the same time the device and editing also provided the artificial disaster of their death a balletic effect that looks graphical. This form helped to eliminate the ordinary aspects of the couple and propelled viewers toward an associative connection with the photos of the legends at the start of the film.

Analyzing the process of intensification continuity in contemporary American cinema David Bordwell stated: "From the 1960s onward, exploiting the extremes of lens lengths became a hallmark." By focusing exclusively on lens length, Bordwell does not consider Penn's combination of slow-motion devices which to my mind is Penn's most significant achievement, that saw its culmination in 1969, when Sam Peckinpah would continue to apply Penn's slow motion technique of multiple-camera shooting in *The Wild Bunch* and would extend the conception of graphical violence as well as the development of intensification.

Slow-motion found its origins in avant-garde cinema, and in the French art cinema of Jean Cocteau, Jean Epstein, Maya Deren and others. This origin is very significant, because the avant-garde searched for ways to make cinema not only poetic (à la Hollywood), but to make cinematic poetry. As Jean Cocteau said: "I would distinguish clearly between a film that tries to be poetic and a film where the poetry is incidental. Moreover, the poetic is not poetry. Poetry is a product of the unconscious" [16]. Poetry influences cinematic language more progressively; it gives to language a complexity and that was part of the debate not only in terms of European, but also the American avant-garde. For example, Stan Brakhage's argument is that poetry brings back a complexity that has been destroyed by verbal language and that can be found in a baby's imagination. The search for poetry through the use of devices is a basic principle of avant-garde culture throughout the whole history of world cinema, and this also influenced narrative cinema. I do not exclude the fact that Akira Kurosawa, who also made a breakthrough to the ritualistic poetry of a samurai death, had seen Cocteau's *The Blood of a Poet* before making *Seven Samurai*. The rapid montage of his samurais falling recalls the rapid montage of the hero falling in the Cocteau's poetic dreamspace. The device was reinvented through a transnational exchange.

Examining some important examples of slow motion devices, it is clear that in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century slow motion was extremely fruitful for avantgarde aesthetics. According to Worfflin "history without names," the artistic employment of devices shows a discovery of the specific laws of the changing forms and styles. These changes have their own inner logic. Slow motion can be seen in Jean Cocteau's *The Blood of a Poet*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Orpheus*, in Jean Epstein's *The Fall of the House of Usher*, or in Maya Deren's and Alexander Hammid's *Mashes of the Afternoon* and it can be said this device helped to create a style that is hyperpoetic. Poetic language stands in opposition to

practical (communicative) language, which is based on a system of conventions. The analogy of practical language, which provides a kind of automatized utterance, can be found in American narrative cinema that also is based on a system of conventions originated in classical staging and invisible editing. In *Classical Hollywood: Film Style and Modes of Production to 1960* D. Bordwell, J. Staiger and K. Thompson confirm the classical Hollywood style as a paradigm that is both a perceptible model and a school of film-making: "Thinking of the classical style as a paradigm helps us retain a sense of the choices open to filmmakers within the tradition. At the same time, the style remains a unified system because the paradigm offers *bounded* alternatives. If you are a classical filmmaker, you cannot light a scene in such a way as to obscure the locale entirely (cf. Godard in *Le gai savoir*); you cannot pan or track without some narrative or generic motivation; you cannot make every shot one second long (cf. avant-garde works). Both the alternatives and the limitations of the style remain clear if we think of the paradigm as creating functional *equivalents*: a cut-in may replace a track-in, or color may replace lighting as a way to demarcate volumes, because each device fulfills the same role. Basic principles govern not only the elements in the paradigm but also the ways in which the elements may function" [17]. The classical Hollywood industry in Andre Bazin's term was "the genius of the system" [18]. It developed both a certain style and a certain way of thinking about cinema which created the audience's perception through readable images. This does not mean that classical Hollywood filmmakers were strictly formulaic. Directors used different devices and examined new ones, to create alternative vision (like Busby Berkley, Orson Welles, or Josef von Sternberg etc.), but Hollywood's first six decades allowed neo-formalists like David Bordwell, Janet Staiger and Kristin Thompson to start thinking about the 'group style' of classical Hollywood, where each film "strives to conceal its artifice through techniques of continuity and 'invisible' storytelling; that each film should be comprehensible and unambiguous; and that it possesses a fundamental emotional appeal that transcends class and nation" [19]. As members of this paradigm, filmmakers used devices with the aim of making their function understandable, to develop 'schemata' and 'mental sets' - the traditional formal patterns for rendering subject matter, according to Gombrich [20]. Hollywood narrative films were based on a strong group of causalities and motivations that are obvious to spectators. If these narrative causalities are impersonal and supra-individual, they nevertheless provided the determinism of the whole construction of events. A psychologically motivated character in pursuit of a clearly understandable goal served as the focus of these films.

*Bonnie and Clyde* was influenced by French New Wave, especially Jean-Luc Godard's *Breathless* (1960). As Arthur Penn remarked: "Yes, Godard had sent out a message to everybody with *Breathless*. He said, "You don't have to worry about visual continuity. Go where it's interesting." Hollywood had spent thirty years developing a narrative continuum that had to be without seams. Get rid of all the seams so it flows. Then along comes Godard and says, "It doesn't have to flow. Life doesn't flow. In fact, it moves in different rhythms." It's easy not to notice this because when you start working in a medium, you inherit all the prejudices of that medium. It's true in painting. The big moments of change in art happen when someone does something crazy" [21]. Godard, a true cinephile and kind of a new avantgardist in French cinema, created spontaneity through the unmotivated actions of his characters and through jump cuts. Arthur Penn also depicted unmotivated actions, but he used different devices and montage techniques. His final slow motion editing also provided spontaneity, through his search for discontinuity and by stepping outside the boundaries of Hollywood's classic film language. This stepping over the boundaries held a political level of meaning: it pushed the film to the vanguard of what is now called "New American Cinema," which appropriated avant-garde devices and political conceptions more freely. *Bonnie and Clyde* embodied representatives of a social movement in Depression Era America and the young audience of the revolutionary 60s identified with them. *Bonnie and Clyde* was not a film about nostalgia, despite the fact that the narrative unfolded in the 30s. Stylistic innovations that "lay bare the device," the characters' spontaneous actions, sex and violence, and the obvious broken conventions made it perfectly topical. As Arthur Penn said: "Young people in Britain and America have responded positively because it speaks to them about their own lives. The film is political in that it deals with the Depression, that moment when young people felt excluded from a society that was destroying itself economically. *Bonnie and Clyde* decided to do something and make a change. They were experiencing an identity crisis, something that today's young generation well understand" [22].

The French cinephilic New Wave which would influence New American Cinema, identified themselves with the avant-garde, which has always broken the conventions and norms of narration, as can be seen in earlier French narrative cinema from the 20s. For example, Jean Epstein, whose *Fall of the House of Usher* (1928) clashed with the powerful theatrical conventions of making mise-en-

scenes that originated in Le Film D'Art. By slow motion, rapid montage, superimposition, and complicated optics this French filmmaker created a mystery space that marked the presence of Death and Beauty. Using such a device was a kind of formalistic defamiliarization of language - "making it strange." According to V.Shklovsky, defamiliarization involves describing an object as if seen for the first time, an event as if happening for the first time. "Making strange" helps "to create a special perception of the object – it creates a "vision" of the object instead of serving as a means for knowing it" [23]. Epstein was the first to defamiliarize "real" time and space into an extremely unrealistic expression: turning decadent space into a hallucinatory experience. He belonged to the first French avant-garde that deformed the structures of narration by using complicated cinematographic devices. This deformation made film language hyper-poetic and promoted, for example, a slow motion device as a part of vocabulary of the future American avant-garde and European art cinema. Epstein and the first wave of French avant-garde cinematographers, traditionally known as impressionists, made the movie into a cinema of poetry. While *Fall of the House of Usher* was not the sort of poetic film that Bill Nichols would characterize as one that "may jump from one place to another, one character to another, and one object to another," [24] it was a definitive breakthrough into the realm of symbolism, in contradistinction to realism. The filmmaker thought about the photogenic aspect of cinema, which is constructed with spatio-temporal variables. In formalist terms, it was making objects strange to subjective and lyric visions. This breaking away from tradition by seeking alternative forms was a definite characteristic of the art of modernism. Thus Epstein, like Jean Cocteau, searched for a new form of hyperpoetic continuity in his films by using different devices. They created an alternative world as a mystery space that fits with Tzvetan Todorov's conception of fantastique. Their films, though tricky, rarely use attractions as tools to attack the audience for particular political goals, for theirs is a cinema of subjectivity.

Maya Deren would also take a fresh new step by using slow motion as a device of subjectivity. In *Mashes of the Afternoon*, Deren, along with husband Alexander Hammid, showed a female dreamscape with slow motion editing that so rent the narrative strategy that it no longer looked like a actual story. Her film displayed a trance, a kind of a dream full of sexual symbolism. This filmmaker went even farther in slow motion editing when she tried choreographing with the camera in *Study in Choreography for Camera*. In her pure cinema she deconstructed dance to ritualistic movement and helped to demonstrate David E. James' conclusion that the poetics dominant at the time marked the high modernist moment of Romanticism [25]. Breaking through to pure cinema makes a filmmaker a poet who stands apart, rather than a specialist within a narrowly narrowly confined industry. This makes such an artist an individual, romantic creator who passionately demonstrates their personal artistic point-of-view. The unique vision of the filmmaker is a basic characteristic of narrative art cinema that was strongly influenced by avant-garde and Auteur Theory. The quest for an unique vision also distinguishes films of the Hollywood Renaissance but they employ a broader field for cinematic appropriation in their efforts to think politically and produce a new cinematic affect. They knew no way to escape the real world to Art, Beauty, to another way of being, and therefore created tragic messages to a world that must be changed. And they were obsessed by an idea of the New, also critical for art cinema and the avant-garde.

While William E.B. Verrone notes similar characteristics between art cinema and avant-garde film, he does not equate them: "For instance, the terms themselves are flexible and connote different moments in time and also different types of filmmaking practice. Also, art films deliberately positioned themselves as reactionary to mainstream film, much like avant-garde film. Art cinema also works tangentially to mainstream film, often intersecting but never fully merging with it. Like avant-garde films, art films eschew classical narrative storytelling in favor of temporal/spatial dislocation, ambiguity, and perhaps metaphoric/symbolic relations" [26]. Filmmakers and spectators of avant-garde and art cinema have a strong desire to discover something New, but an avant-garde way of thinking produces the cinematic affect, which, according to Steven Shaviro, is "expressive", "symptomatic" and "productive" [27]. Affect is a basic principal of function of the media culture, but it originated from Modernity, which denies the myth of eternal return and makes accents on renovation of a society and a language. American New Cinema was a kind of response to European art cinema that originated from what A.L. Rees calls the "common battle to have film recognized as a serious art" in films by feature-length directors of "impressionism" (1911-1924) and the abstract avant-garde (1924-1929). Rees is absolutely correct: "Cinema is an obvious candidate for 'modernity' – in the social sense- because it is primarily urban, industrial and aimed at a mass audience. For many artists, cinema was an emblem of modern times, as the only independent art form to have been invented since the Renaissance" [28]. This feeling of cinema's independence as an art form manifests itself in the art cinema that originated from the

heritage of earlier avant-garde rebels. Followers of avant-garde art cinema find inspiration from modernity that, as Matei Calinesci notes: "is reflected in the irreconcilable opposition between the sets of values corresponding to (1) the objectified, socially measurable time of capitalist civilization... and (2) the personal, subjective, imaginative duration, the private time created by the unfolding of the 'self'. The latter identity of *time* and *self* constitutes the foundation of modernist culture" [29]. Most likely avant-garde art cinema finds its impulse to discover something new in aesthetics and style, and uses different devices to realize this intention. Art cinema emphasizes form as a definite structural element that provides content. This helps to rediscover the possible laws of narration, as well as to involve the audience as participants in a creative process. A re-invention of narration makes "meaning" more unconventional and creates a different relation between film and viewer. As Gene Youngblood claims: "We are interested more in what it *does* than what it *is* as a icon" [30].

Filmmakers experiment with a new process of signification, which liberates viewers from pre-conceptions, finds inspiration from the romantic intention of identifying authorship as an expression of personality. Romantic intention was a very important hallmark of the Hollywood Renaissance. The 60s provided a short period of unprecedented freedom for film directors. Producers demonstrated free will, supporting new themes for a young and radical generation. The Hollywood Renaissance was certainly the most romantic period in the industry's history, despite great chaos and concerns when the vertical integration was destroyed. Film directors created new counter-culture utopias that were romantic in many ways. One of these utopians was Arthur Penn, whose film effectively conveyed that filmmakers in the 60s had little use for the old "system".

The final slow motion shot, along with the film's chase and action scenes, recall Tom Gunning's notion of a cinematic attraction as visual shock. The cinema of attraction addresses the audience directly through a variety of formal means and devices, and "not only exemplifies a particularly modern form of aesthetics but also responds to the specifics of modern and especially urban life." As Gunning notes: "Confrontation rules the cinema of attractions in both form of its films and their mode of exhibition. The directness of this act of display allows an emphasis on the thrill itself – the immediate reaction of the viewer. The film lecturer focuses attention on the attraction, sharpening viewer curiosity. The film then performs its act of display and fades away. Unlike psychological narrative, the cinema of attractions does not allow for elaborate development, only a limited amount of delay is really possible" [31]. Gunning references Walter Benjamin, who noted that "in film, perception in the form of shocks was established as a formal principle." [32]. Gunning claims that "the aesthetic of attractions developed in fairly conscious opposition to an orthodox identification of viewing pleasure with the contemplation of beauty".

The slow motion edited scene in *Bonnie and Clyde* is not a trick from the non-continuous early cinema that Gunning analyzed, but refers more to the "deviant" style of film-making in the avant-garde, especially to Eisenstein's "montage of attractions," which undermined the conventions of bourgeois realism. The attractions of the Soviet avant-garde were more radical in that they intensified popular energy into aesthetic subversion, and may well have inspired the Russian Formalists to understand art as a process of defamiliarization that gave to the history of art forms the necessity for constant change and renewal. The slow motion device in *Bonnie and Clyde* was presented not only as a cine-attraction, as a semi-independent narrative, but also as an act: Eisenstein's visual "Cine-fist", that provides a political dimension by shocking or otherwise manipulating the viewer. The effect from Penn's final scene was no less of a shock than Eisenstein's shooting on the Odessa steps in *Battleship Potemkin* and provides the aesthetics of disagreement that revolutionizing of the form and meaning: if the youth dies violently, "don't trust anyone over 30" [33].

In the context of Penn's film, the slow motion finale is a kind of variation on Eisenstein's attraction which the Soviet filmmaker defined in *Lef* in 1923 as "any aggressive moment in theater, i.e. any element of it that subjects the audience to emotional or psychological influence, verified by experience and mathematically calculated to produce specific emotional shocks in the spectator in their proper order within the whole. These shocks provide the only opportunity of perceiving the ideological aspect of what is being shown, the final ideological conclusion" [34]. Eisenstein used the definition for his conception of "intellectual montage" as an autonomous action that escapes from naturalism, attracts audience and politically agitates. Writing about *Battleship Potemkin*, the filmmaker noted, that he revised the attractions (at least in *Strike*) to create a positive effect (pathos) – a pressing appeal to activity. Pathos helps to create the "emotional experience" of the audience, "an awakening which puts the spectator's emotional and intellectual activity into operation to the maximum degree" [35]. And pathos gives a film a poetic dimension. For Soviet cinema that created a film as an act or action, attraction and pathos were indivisible.

The slow motion device in *Bonnie and Clyde*, which is only 30 seconds long, works as a cine-attraction - almost an independent and primary element in the structuring of the film, but it has nothing in common with trick, which is absolute and complete within itself. Eisenstein's attraction is based exclusively on something relative, the reaction of the audience. It originated from agitational revolutionary theater and helped the filmmaker to force emotional influence over the audience in a desired direction through a series of calculated pressures on its psyche. In such cinema the audience became a basic object to attract, attack and "psycho-engineer." By the final cine-attraction *Bonnie and Clyde* influences audience as a film act and depicts the conflict of generations, the spirit of sexual revolution, anti-bourgeois rebellion, it problematizes the notion of freedom. The heroes are always on a road, which in part reflects the culture of the Beat generation of the 50s and the Wild Angels of 60s. But they are far from anarchists. The young couple robs banks which have grabbed property from poor Americans during the Depression, a historical period of loss and poverty, which, in Hannah Arendt's terms, serves as trigger for revolutionary discourse. Bonnie and Clyde rob banks, but in the context of the film they act like young angels of revolutionary left who are robbing ill-gotten gains. Banks that grab property from Americans can be seen as institutions that are destroying freedom, the quintessential foundation of the nation. So, the young gangsters here personify disagreement with the established system, the threshold of revolutionary action. But as can be known from Jacques Ranciere, politically there is no revolutionary subject and no revolutionary event without a disagreement [36].

As a kind of film act, which produces the affect, *Bonnie and Clyde* can be connected to the Third Cinema which originated from the Soviet avant-garde and which Argentinian filmmakers Fernando Solanas and the Spanish-born Octavio Gettino have called a cinema that "recognizes in that struggle the most gigantic cultural, scientific, and artistic manifestation of our time" [37]. Third Cinema, which grew up in the 60s, actively produces a film act, or film action, that attacks the audience with the idea of changing society, thereby modeling viewers, and contributing to the possibility of social movements or revolution. It discusses not only the "liberation of man", but shows the beginning of a new man. Third Cinema is not a phenomenon limited to the third world, it can arise elsewhere in periods of political revolutions and social protest movements. Third Cinema may focus on the documentary, but that is not the only genre which can provoke protest and promote revolutionary tasks. One only has to recall the films of Eisenstein or Godard. The 60s were a historically controversial period in America, which saw the growth of a national feeling that society must be radically changed. According to the American National Committee, between 1963-1968 2 million people participated in social protest movements, 1.1 million went to civil rights demonstrations, 680,000 participated in demonstrations against the Vietnam War, 200,000 rebelled within the ghetto [38]. This atmosphere of disagreement and protest lent its revolutionary pulse to filmmakers in the avant-garde context as well as in Hollywood.

The political dimension of *Bonnie and Clyde* was revealed not only by a new conception of heroes as "unknown revolutionaries," but by radical shifts from the classical system of continuity (based on dramatic and psychological analysis) to fragmentation. The process of centering the spectator within a diegesis through camera identification, that established the central strategies of the "institutional mode of representation" (Noel Burch) would dissipate and gave way to a new experience of perception, one which did not require a viewer's definite identification with either the rebel-victims or their killers. The edited footage of four cameras in slow motion produced the effect of open identification, forcing viewers to choose with whom they wanted to identify. This radical attack on and division of the audience reflected the split in American society of the 60s, and assaulting the audience with this shock experience had a revolutionary goal. The shock from the brutal death of the young beautiful rebels in *Bonnie and Clyde* was designed to change the viewer's consciousness entirely, by providing a modernized vision. As a viewer, if you are fascinated by the young Bonnie and Clyde, these legends who were just shot down with brutal violence by old rangers, you are compelled to change your mind completely and become a new man. If not, you are merely a reactionary whose time has passed.

The shock the final scene creates is based on the dialectical concept of conflict, and also included the conflict between the poetry of balletic slow motion, that applies to avant-garde searching of hyper-poetic language in the cinema, and the naturalistic quality of violently shooting of human bodies. Slow motion tends to "blow up" violent action, lending it particular focus, and here Penn created a dynamic effect in which bullets not only fatally destroyed the bodies of the rebel-victims, but also flew out at the audience. This attack was enhanced acoustically, in a scene which contains only the sounds of machine guns. Penn's modernization of the audiovisual component would influence the representation of violence and methods of intensification continuity throughout American cinema of the 70s and would later find reflections in Hong Kong action films: from Sam Peckinpah and Brian De Palma to

John Woo. Violence became a trope not only in New Hollywood cinema, but in cinematic schools that would follow. In short, *Bonnie and Clyde* radically changed cinema.

What conclusion we can make from this theoretic focus on the slow motion device in this one film? We see, as in a mirror, that film history is a process of reinvention of devices that constantly applies to a wide field of avant-garde audio-visual culture. The process of reinvention provides stylistic innovations and breaks barriers between cinematic schools and traditions. Filmmaker-innovators are under the influence not only of the different aesthetics of their historical time, but of established precursors who make their idea lose its "aura", its unique touch. The reinvention of cinematic devices gives to the history of stylistic innovations the character of "history without names" through transnational exchange, but the political dimension of this reinvention, that attracts the audience and produces their affect, marks any given film in the historical moment.

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Received: 21<sup>st</sup> Feb. 2016

For article citation: Artyukh A.A. Radical poetization. Rethinking the final slow motion scene in Bonnie and Clyde. Krasnodar. Istoricheskaya i sotsial'no-obrazovatel'naya mysl'= Historical and Social Educational Ideas. 2016. Tom 8. № 2. Vol. 1. Pp. 61-69.  
doi: 10.17748/2075-9908-2016-8-2/1-61-69. [en]

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Получена: 21 февраля 2016

Для цитирования статьи: Artyukh A.A. Radical poetization. Rethinking the final slow motion scene in Bonnie and Clyde. Krasnodar. Istoricheskaya i sotsial'no-obrazovatel'naya mysl'= Historical and Social Educational Ideas. 2016. Tom 8. № 2. Vol. 1. . Pp. 61-69.  
doi: 10.17748/2075-9908-2016-8-2/1-61-69. [en]