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From Point of View to Mind-game Films – Between Subjective Techniques and Strategies

My assumption is that the analysis of subjectivisation (subjective narrative) – one of the key elements in the development of a film medium¹ – may use two different perspectives: pragmatic and historical.

The first one focuses on an analysis of an audiovisual text. When the technique of subjectivity is incorporated into a shot or scene, it generates the intertwining between analytical conclusions and possible interpretations. Ultimately, it often results in a choice of the most plausible interpretation or a presentation of a few different versions of meaning (Jakubowska, 2006, pp. 13–37). Let us take a frame from *The Hourglass Sanatorium* (see below) (1973, dir. Wojciech Jerzy Has) as an example of an analytical-interpretative dilemma.

When we pose a question on *how* the departure from the objectivising technique is accomplished, the answer to the question seems very straightforward: through the application of a point of view. However, if we want to expand on the answer, we should refer to the question of *who*. Who owns the gaze, who sees the film character in this way? And lastly, what is the purpose in applying this unusual perspective?

¹ These issues will be considered within the general context of narration in feature films as distinct from documentaries.



Does the author-narrator (heterodiegetic narrator)² want to highlight the idea of being enclosed in a glass ball, thus referring to the poetic concept of Bruno Schulz, the author of the book the film is based on?³ Does the character-narrator (homodiegetic narrator) tell the story through pictures as if he were taking part in the events taking place in his consciousness, and in this way he can watch himself, which would be impossible in the real world? Or perhaps the gaze from below, as if one were looking from the grave, belongs to those who have died. Are the dead a symbolic collective character who also represent those who died during the Holocaust?

The second perspective – which is instrumental for this article – assumes a historical development of subjectivisation techniques, but there is much more. I would like to answer the question about the way in which these techniques fit into the differences between paradigms and modes of cinema. Here

² The author-narrator (heterodiegetic narrator) – a narrator who is not a part of the storyworld as opposed to the homodiegetic narrator who is an element of the storyworld as a character.

³ I give a more complex interpretation of the idea of a glass ball in Has's film in my analysis of *The Hourglass Sanatorium*, but I also consider other inspirations which come from Bruno Schulz's poetic storyworld (Jakubowska 2010).

I refer to the current research landscape within Polish film studies. For Jacek Ostaszewski, subjectivisation is limited to the presentation of events from the perspective of a film character. His decision results from the issues generated by the notion of a narrator and also a focaliser. Ostaszewski (2017, pp. 266–271) comments on the theories by David Bordwell, Edward Branigan, Seymour Chatman, Gérard Genette, François Jost. This thought trajectory – marked by certain reluctance to include a heterodiegetic narrator in subjectivisation techniques – is also adopted by Robert Birkholc (2019), although his argumentation is less precise, similarly to his conceptual framework. An earlier proposal by Mirosław Przyłipiak (1987) has a broader spectrum – it encompasses a character, a character-narrator and a heterodiegetic narrator. In this context, we also need to include Barbara Szczekała's definition narrowing down subjectivity to “a radically personal point of view of a character which concentrates on events which are non-existing outside his own mental sphere” (2019, p. 134).

I would like the perspectives delineated above to be examined, but also taken to extremes. If we want to detect the tendencies which are representative of different models of narration, we cannot consider only the point of view of a film character. Examples of subjectivisation techniques, which are limited solely to the character and the character-narrator, do not illustrate fully the dynamics of changes in this field. I adopt the elementary distinction proposed by Edward Branigan: “When a text is considered as an *object* for contemplation, there must of necessity be some conception of a *subject* who presents the text (author), tells the story (narrator), lives in the fictional world (character), and who listens, watches, and desires that the story be told (viewer)” (Branigan, 1984, p. 1). Even if a contemporary film is an object for play more than contemplation, a subject pertains to the level of an author-narrator (between poles of presenting and telling), character-narrator (between poles of living in the fictional world and telling/presenting his world and his life) as well as a viewer who may assume different stances (from contemplation to play). I assume that the evolution of how subjectivisation is used plays a fundamental role in the nature of the transition taking place within the scope of a film narrative (and broadly speaking in the culture of the 20th and 21st century). Therefore, one must point to the dominant and/or most distinctive techniques. I will also contemplate the distinction between a technique and a strategy in reference to narrative subjectivisation.

Not only does the theory of film narrative call for broadening of the point of view of a subject but also for clarifying the nature of an object, separating

what is told from the level of techniques and strategies i.e. how it is told (Branigan, 1984, p. 4). Hence in this article I will consider the relational nature of subjectivisation in accordance with the answers to the questions of who, what and how. I adopt the division of subjectivisation techniques proposed by Mirosław Przyłipiak (1987) as a starting point for further considerations.

- Point of view
- Interior monologue
- Point of hearing/ listening
- Free indirect subjective
- Mindscreen (or mind images)
- Frame
- Discourse

What is important here is that although the classification stems from classical cinema, the author aims to broaden it and make it more universal so that it may encompass some trends in the development of subjectivisation which emerged in later modernist narrative. The character of the classification is historical as it emerged in relation to the author's current research while indicating some borrowings (David Bordwell, Edward Branigan, Marek Hendrykowski, Alicja Helman).

In this context, the synthesis of historical developments which I propose here is a sketch (I am not researching subjectivisation techniques in the context of the early cinema of attractions⁴, I am only giving a few filmic examples for each model). It comes from the desire to picture the dynamics of the development of subjectivisation techniques but it does not have a normative character because the historical process is not only linear but is also based on repetitions and reinterpretations⁵.

⁴ At that time film narrative was just evolving and it is difficult not to agree with researchers who indicate that early cinema had the character of a spectacle rather than being narrative-driven (T. Gunning, 1986, pp. 63–70). I will not find the place for any discussion about this issue in my article.

⁵ Generally, I use a periodisation of historical modes of film narration which is based on Ostaszewski's proposal (2018). Although I will also point to some suggestions, doubts or just commentaries for this.

Subjectivisation techniques – Pre-Classical Cinema (melodramatic narrative)⁶ and Pre-Modernist Cinema (expressionism)

- WHO?

In the context of the developments of subjectivisation techniques, isolating a melodramatic narrative during the period of silent cinema seems perfectly justified. We may observe the growing importance of a film character, but – it needs to be emphasised – it is a collective character, whose emotions are clearly depicted primarily through reactions and actions which result from them (Ostaszewski 2018, pp. 56–58). An author-narrator emerges in this context – it is him who models the story that is being told and puts forward an interpretation of events – which is usually unambiguous, although his unique role is not disclosed just yet. Rick Altman emphasises: "The narrator follows no single character throughout but instead alternates regularly between two groups whose conflict provides the plot. Because the group, rather than an individual, plays the lead role, individuals serve primarily as placeholders, defined by the group, rather than as characters whose development constitutes an independent subject of interest." (2008, p. 55).

- WHAT?

Against the background of images depicting the plot, the role of perception and affects is employed; agency and subjectivity is not associated with an individual but a collective character. The characters' emotions, which are put to use as representative for a group, are presented on the screen in a more pronounced way and shape the dramaturgy.

- HOW?

Undoubtedly **point-of-view shots** begin to play an important role, although the technique is achieved by means of an editing phrase (a shot-countershot) as developed in classical film narrative. Yet, it does organise our perception of space, forms causal links and surely leads to a subjective point of view: both a collective one and that of an individual (Ostaszewski 2018, p. 64). Among the subjectivisation techniques identified by Przyłipiak we will not find one that

⁶ Ostaszewski didn't use the term "pre-classical cinema" in his major classification, although it seems to be a logical consequence of his concept. He suggests that before the cinema achieves "classical" maturity about 1917 we can distinguish "early cinema of attraction" (which loses its innovative impact about 1906) and melodramatic narrative (2018, pp. 53–54). I want to emphasise the major change between Ostaszewski's order and mine in a presentation of historical process which we can call pre-modernist narrative. Because he refers to it (with expressionism) in the context of modernists' paradigm of narration. This displacement is very significant for me. For my research it is an important assumption that since the beginning of narrative cinema we have observed a conflict between classical and modernist modes of narration.

gives an account of a character's emotions. It may be described as **affection-image**, which at that time is 'the close-up, and the close-up is the face' (Deleuze, 1996, p. 87). The French philosopher notices:

"The face is this organ-carrying plate of nerves which has sacrificed most of its global mobility and which gathers or expresses in a free way all kinds of tiny local movements which the rest of the body usually keeps hidden. Each time we discover these two poles in something – reflecting surface and intensive micro-movements – we can say that thing has been treated as a face [*visage*]: it has been 'envisaged' or rather 'faceified' [*visagéifié*]" (1996, pp. 87–88).

These motifs (the face and close-up) deserve to be accentuated particularly in the work of David W. Griffith. Although Ostaszewski tends to favour Elsaesser's belief that close-ups in this period of cinema should be defined by their role in the dramaturgy, he does mention a shot of a gangster in *The Musketeers of Pig Alley* (1912) and describes it as semi-subjective (2018, p. 64). At this point it is him who introduces the concept of subjectivisation in his classification encompassing the point of view of an author-narrator. It should be noticed that this movement – from a collective protagonist to an individual with his emotional perspective – was a dominant element in French impressionism and in Kammerspiel in German cinema (Kłys, 2010, pp. 423–438). The best example of this tendency is *The Last Laugh* (1924, Friedrich Murnau). We can see clearly the emancipation of the personality; the central position is taken by a relationship between the hero and social environment, so when the man feels negatively about people his image of the world changes towards darkness. On this background, we notice that the classical narration stands back – it is more interested in a tension seeing-knowing than a tension seeing-feeling.

Mindscreen, as one of the subjectivisation techniques, owes much to the avant-guard movements in the cinema of the 1920s and to expressionism in particular. *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920, Robert Wiene) has been discussed multiple times in this context (Kracauer, 2009, Eisner, 2011, Garbicz, 1981, Kłys, 2010, Ostaszewski, 2018, pp. 140–142, Birkholc, 2019, pp. 48–49). The film was unique not only in its own era. First of all, it offers a broad repertoire of techniques linked to a character's subjective point of view, character-narrator who tells his story, and author-narrator who gives his frame of the story. Secondly, Ostaszewski is right when he emphasises that the film constitutes a turning-point: "As Kracauer has already acknowledged, Robert Wiene's film gave birth to a trend of frame composition. It established a level of a metadiscourse while

exposing the mere act of telling a story” (2018, p. 141). The addition of the frame was vitally important (it was written later than the first version of the script), to rid the story of its dangerous plausibility. It was easier to assume that the main character went mad and to accept Caligari’s triumph than that the houses bend and twist, auguring the fall of the world, which “believes” in Caligari.

Subjectivisation techniques – Classical Cinema

- WHO?

The leading role in classical narrative is given to **a character who acts**. Although it is the plot that comes to the fore, the character also becomes a subject of film analyses. The gradual discovery of a character’s individuality is precisely what drives the dynamic development of subjectivisation techniques. Only against this background does a **character-narrator** who recounts events but rarely reveals his mental processes become an important figure. According to the general rule, there is “no narrative without a narrator” (Chatman, 1978). An author-narrator (heterodiegetic narrator) is often concealed. If he reveals his role, he does it as a non-personal narrator or an “image displayer” (Helman, 1997). It is often the case that theories that put this cinema period in the spotlight move away from viewing the film narrator as a subject, and instead put forward a category of narrative instance. Bordwell’s argument, referred to numerous times, that it is unjustified to anthropomorphise film narrative⁷, verifies both the future development of film narrative and post-classical narratology, which makes anthropomorphism of narration its most significant feature (Fludernik, 2005) and discusses city spaces or gardens in terms of storytelling. The spectator is led by linear narrative; cognitivists perceive it as his thought trajectory. Deleuze defines thinking as an exclusive activity that does not occur when a spectator simply follows the suggested logic of cause and effect. He views the spectator as a mental and spiritual automaton that loses its subjectivity.

- WHAT?

Movement-image is an essential category for classical cinema (Deleuze, 1996). Actions and reactions are responsible for a propagation of movement. Perceptions are a foundation for a character’s actions and they determine the nature of the fundamental relationship between him and the world. Sensory-motor organisation of images is given the leading role. In this cinema period a receptive character of

⁷ Jacek Ostaszewski, while having objections to the notion of a narrator (2017, p. 269), in his analyses of *Apocalypse Now* and *Bad Luck* – explicitly expresses the need for this notion, although he employs different terms: ‘narrative’, ‘an image displayer’, ‘heterodiegetic narrator’.

Birkholm refers to Bordwell’s interpretation and does not subject it to critical analysis.

perception is the rule. Emotional states gradually gain more and more importance: they provide motivation for a character's actions on the one hand and they are a factor which influences the affective tone or modifications of perception. The organisation of a system of storytelling serves the purpose of separating objectivisation as a dominant tendency from subjectivisation as a supplement to the process of storytelling. Therefore, perceptions, emotions as well as mental states become part of a framework, which enables them to be accurately isolated.

- HOW?

Point of view (POV) – is the fundamental and favoured subjectivisation technique within classical film narrative. Having said that, when it comes to the changes occurring in the relationship between silent film and sound film, it is necessary to include **a point of hearing/listening** (or sound perspective). *Lady in the Lake* (1947, Robert Montgomery), the most frequently referenced example of first-person narrative, applies both techniques. Yet, the film is not representative of classical narrative as it was considered an experiment and was not regarded highly. It is worth highlighting that Montgomery's film is not so much a matter of using the technique but building a subjectivisation strategy based entirely on the point of view/ point of hearing of the detective. The camera is integrated with his eyes which hinders our examination of the character's emotions. It is only when the man sees himself in the mirror that we can see his face. It is a significant example as it foreshadows the transition from techniques to strategies in a later period of film narrative.

Perception-image understood as a sound-optical image (Deleuze, 1996) applies the point of view and the aural point of a hero's being in the fictional world (they may complement one another or enter into conflict/interaction). On this background I would like to include Branigan's notion of **reflection** (Branigan, 1979), when a camera shows what a character sees but not strictly from his point of view. These techniques depict perception processes through movement of a camera, montage or a colour scheme. **Affection-image** may apply the techniques previously mentioned, combined with camera work: face close-ups, shots revealing a character's motor skills. In *Blackmail* (1929, Alfred Hitchcock) perception is disrupted by the characters' emotions. In the scene at the table, a woman loses touch with reality as the only word she can hear uttered clearly by another character is "knife", as the latter character has committed a murder. In modern narrative a film will extend 'sound design' in its emotional functions. In this context, **projection** (Branigan) is a more complex technique aimed at giving an impression that both the character's emotions and his perception are projected into the diegetic world, yet they do not undermine its ontological plausibility.

Monologue – the story of a character-narrator – I point to this technique, although it may be coupled with frame narrative or discourse during which a character directly addresses the viewer. There may be various motivations for a monologue: initiated by a question about a different character or an event, it may be an expression of a spontaneous story addressed to a real or an imagined interlocutor and often it is a frame for a memory-image, giving way to mindscreen. In *Double Indemnity* (1944, Billy Wilder) a character records his confession on a tape-recorder in an office and reveals the truth about a murder.

Interior monologue – in its auditory classical form – is a local technique with limited application in audiovisual text, it is based on voice over – we can hear a character’s internal voice. Contemporary films, which explore the classical model of storytelling also use it. Teenagers in *The End of F***ing World* (series TV 2017-2019) discover their thoughts and feelings which strongly contrast with their behaviour. A young man seems to be nice but his face masks dark dreams about killing the girl. Interior monologue in this function keeps closer to the category “monologue” outside mental images but we can notice that this technique, as far back as classical cinema, has evolved into mindscreen.

Retrospection in the classification proposed by Przylipiak is included in the technique of mind images, and in the context of modernist narrative, his decision is fully legitimate. Branigan, however, treats subjective retrospection and mental processes independently. His intention is to distinguish these forms of subjectivity which are characteristic of classical cinema according to what is essential for this type of narrative – starting from potentially the least subjectivised to the most subjectivised. This approach allows a memory to be described as stretched between a former perception and a current, mental “reworking” of that perception. Here, Bordwell uses the term of subjective motivation, thus emphasising an objective which is both realistic and compatible with the mythicised category of truth nature of retrospection in classical narrative.

Mindscreen (or mind images) is another complex technique including: anticipation-image, dream-image, hallucination-image and retrospection subjected to an intense distortion. But, once again, in its classical form we observe a strong border between subjectivity and objectivity. In *Spellbound* (1945, Alfred Hitchcock) a sequence of dreams are designed by Salvador Dali. Finally, the director and the artist are intensifying it by means of camera work, montage, lighting and shadows, special effects and symbols: an eye, a man without a face, scissors or a macabre landscape. Surrealistic images give us a work of subconsciousness based on Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalysis. But in the later film *Vertigo*, (1958)

Alfred Hitchcock provokes a big change in the classical narration into a deformation of objective reality. Yet, it needs to be emphasised that mindscreen, not only conveying some complex processes, makes use of the techniques mentioned earlier (POV, perception-image, affection-image and projection which may cast onto the outside world both emotional and mental states), but also gives an impulse to change techniques into the strategy.

Interior monologue could be a complex technique within mental processes and certainly it is particularly important in the context of research into subjectivisation theory and the development of cinema itself. We can observe this evolution between classical and modern cinema. Interior monologue unfolds in a person's mind and it may include both memory-images and all the other techniques referred to earlier. The most interesting examples emerge within film noir, a critical point in the development of classical narrative (see: *Sunset Boulevard*, 1950, Billy Wilder).

In *How to Be Loved* (*Jak być kochaną*, Wojciech Jerzy Has) the interior monologue of the character is bookended by shots which depict looking in the mirror and make use of the technique of POV at the time when the female character is re-applying lipstick. Mindscreen encompasses a whole range of memories: from the most distant from the pre-war period, to post-war memories. In the interior monologue, presented as a voice-over, the character is commenting on her flight to Paris – the reasons behind it and her own emotional state; the perception of the outside world is complemented by her own projection and fantasies expressed in her thoughts. Lack of continuity and jumping between different regions of memory open the film up towards memory narrative, characteristic of modernist narrative. However, the desire to organise her memories is the main motivation for the character who wants to see her own life from a distance, from a bird's-eye perspective. Whether this is possible is another matter. Balancing between a depiction of reality and a depiction of consciousness translates to balancing between tendencies present in classical narrative and surpassing them.

What is important with regards to the techniques depicting mental processes – considering a broad range of different tones of emotional and mental condition, their intensity or deviation from an assumed norm – is exposing subjectivity against the background of objective reality.

Frame is identified as a distinct technique in both Branigan's and Przylipiak's proposals. Przylipiak emphasises its autonomous role, whereas in my

view it is an auxiliary technique precisely because it encompasses border imagery. Yet, if we want to grasp the constitutional characteristics of classical narrative, framing remains extremely important. It is also fundamental in the philosophical perspective as it allows one in classical storytelling to separate an objective perspective from a subjective one. For this purpose the frame is one of the best techniques.

Subjectivisation as strategy – Modernist Cinema⁸

- WHO?

We can detect two tendencies in modernist cinema. One is focused around a character and the point of gravity in a story is shifted from the “mystery of the plot” towards the “mystery of the character” (Ostaszewski, 2016, p. 53). Deleuze emphasised that a character perceives rather than acts. The reasons for retreating from acting may vary; it may be shock, trauma, boredom, alienation, but it results in action coming to a halt or significantly slowing down. The character is no longer predictable. His motivations are unclear. We notice a break from the sensory-motor scheme and cause-and-effect logic. The character is activated and so is the author-narrator, who presents subjectivity and also subjectivises presentation. The breaking from narrative links compels the spectator to reflect.

The other tendency lessens the role of a character and makes him a purely conventional figure. ‘Filmmakers’ attention is further drawn towards the author-narrator. A different and explicitly personalised perspective is manifested in films and it goes against classical narrative and its theoretical analysis. The development of modernist narrative strongly indicates that subjectivisation does not need to apply solely to a character; its effect may be that a heterodiegetic narrator – sometimes explicitly and closely linked to the author – is empowered. In modernist cinema an author-intellectual is equipped with a pen-like camera and he attempts to add his own stamp. Even if the theory of film narrative formally pinpoints the category in the textual field via the concept of an implied author, it has to be acknowledged that auteur cinema celebrates its own triumph in this cinema period and it gives an impulse to the

⁸ In Ostaszewski’s classification the modernists period in cinematography consists of free waves: pre-modernist cinema (1919-1929), modernist (1950-1975) and slow cinema (the first decade of 21st century). We can find an alternative solution in Rafał Syska’s book. He proposes not only his own dating (modernism: 1950-1982) but also persuades us to use the idea of ‘neomodernist cinema’ for the third wave. Each of these classifications has weak and strong arguments. But I think that the concept ‘slow cinema’ is based rather on critical perspective and loses in this name a strong bond with modernism. I use both terms “neomodernists cinema and slow cinema in my text.

development of subjectivisation techniques in other areas thus significantly broadening the concept of subjectivisation⁹ which provokes reinterpretations of classical theory of narration.

- WHAT?

If, in agreement with Deleuze, we acknowledge the transition from movement-image to time-image to be the major breakthrough, it should not come as a surprise that an exploration of consciousness is the most dominant feature of modernist narrative. Consequently, mindscreen takes precedence over other subjectivisation techniques. In this context memory has a unique role: memories are no longer a distinct and clearly circumscribed part of narrative. In this regard, Ostaszewski is correct when he writes: “What determines modernist narrative [...] is the promotion of subjectivisation from being deployed locally in order to justify the use of retrospection to the rank of a general compositional strategy” (Ostaszewski, 2016, p. 53). This movement, from technique to strategy, seems to be the most important thing. Firstly, the strategy discovered from the author’s perspective, it is a fully deliberate decision to build a special attitude towards artistic work as an expression of an individual storyworld (Lubelski, 1992, pp. 15–19). Secondly, Lubelski remains Michela Foucault’s conception. According to the French philosopher, the strategy “triggers discourse possibilities” and indicates over individual controlled and normalised ways of enunciating/storytelling as “regulated discourse” (Foucault 1977, pp. 92–99). Thirdly, the strategy exposes elements of a fight (it has a strong collocation with military action). In this case we can observe the battle between free subjectivity and limited, tight gripped over subjectivity. Fourthly, it is a category strictly related to a game. And in this sense we should notice the relational model in filmic narrative – even a small change in one region has an effect in another (Żyto, 2010, pp. 10–13). All these meanings play important roles, although they are not exposed with the same force. For modernism a crucial feature is the relation between author and “regulated discourse”, for postmodernism a game and discourse, for mind-game films the tension between a fight and a game will be key, in this context they are a special part of postmodern tendencies.

⁹ In this context the objections made Birkholc follow the classical narrative theory formulated for the purpose of classical narrative. The phenomenon distinguished by the author: “The effect of subjectifying narration which is created in modernist cinema does not need to be related to the point of view of the character”, does not make him reinterpret the subjectivisation theory but results in defending the existing opinions of some authority figures, in some ways against the explicit examples given by the author. Birkholc, R. (2019). *Podwójna perspektywa. O subiektywizacji zapośredniczonej w filmie*. Kraków: Universitas, p. 62..

- HOW?

The techniques mentioned in the context of classical narrative are still being developed and made use of, but the three strategies that define subjectivisation most pronouncedly in this period of cinema are **discourse**, **free indirect subjective** and **mindscreen**. All strategies emerged as a part of the evolution of film narrative, and also of ideological and philosophical changes.

Przylipiak defines **discourse** as a technique which “is materialised by means of an explicitly pronounced transition of the film and each of its elements into a statement”. He expands on his definition by stating that “the condition [for it] is that a real or a fictional author is present – in some way – in the diegetic world and that he is aware of language and the act of communication and reveals explicitly what is presented is his statement – an artistic creation”. Przylipiak gives an example of *Providence* (1977, Alain Resnais) where the creative process is explicitly revealed. The situation, when the creativity is simultaneously presented as a story about the author and his work and constructed into discourse in such a way as to discuss the possibilities of it is an important stream not only in modern cinema (*8½*, 1963, Federico Fellini, *Carmen*, 1983, Carlos Saura) but also in the next period in cinema (*Adaptation*, 2002, Spike Jonze).

But it is necessary to highlight a different aspect of discourse, or more precisely dominance of discourse, which Przylipiak does not observe in his classification. An example, which is equally representative for this strategy, is *Pierrot le fou* (1965, Jean-Luc Godard), where there is no “framing” with regards to the creative process. In this film characters remain conventional figures and they are easily manipulated by the heterodiegetic narrator. It is transparent that the relationship between the heterodiegetic narrator, the implied narrator and the actual author in Godard’s work veers towards a strongly personalised figure of an author-narrator. The author-intellectual often puts forward a so-called film academic essay on a subject (*The Illumination*, Krzysztof Zanussi, 1973) addressed to the spectator-intellectual.

Free indirect subjective in Przylipiak’s theory takes a secondary position¹⁰. However, in modernist narrative it seems to have a more important status. It makes use of reflection and projection in their subtle form. Birkholz emphasises that free indirect subjective is distinguished by overlapping two points of view – that of the character and the narrator (2019, p. 81). However, Przylipiak reserves this technique for those films that “invoke in the spectator an irresist-

¹⁰ Giving the interior monologue such a high position in the ranking seems to be motivated by research on the relationship between literary narrative and film narrative rather than the true importance of the technique in the context of classical narrative.

ible feeling of subjectivisation although they do not apply any bold procedures” (1987, p. 241). Hence, *Chinatown* by Roman Polański (1974) and *The Mirror* by Tarkowski (1975) are among the examples he enumerates. I believe that his intuition for indicating the technique that subtly “softens” an objective picture of the world, accentuates the extent of information available to the character and balances between the subjective and the objective is entirely legitimate. Birkholm includes films such as *The Dancing Hawk* (1978, Grzegorz Królikiewicz) but also *Natural Born Killers* (1994, Oliver Stone) or *Requiem for a Dream* (2002, Darren Aronofsky) within the scope of the technique. I would like to argue that the use of focalisation in analyses does not authorise an extension of this technique as what Birkholm does is *de facto* dismantling it as he fails to recognise that the films he examines reveal mental processes and sometimes a discourse technique. In those films, it is not so much the double perspective but the multiple points of view of the character, the character-narrator and the author-narrator that play an important role.

As part of mindscreen, “memory narratives” become complex strategies developing numerous techniques. From today’s perspective *Hiroshima Mon Amour* (1959, Alain Resnais) seems an extraordinarily important film for the entire film trend of “narrative of memory”. The experience of war exerts an influence on characters’ attitudes and simultaneously they are an expression of cultural reworking of the post-war traumas. Subjectivity encompasses the whole of the narrative and objectifying elements such as a museum or documentary photography are merely a counterpoint.

The strategies that evolved from the exploration of time are described in multiple ways: crystalline narrative (Deleuze, 1995) and modular narrative (Cameron, 2008). In this context it is desirable to distinguish labyrinthine narrative, which may reference some issues related to memory as well as discourse strategies. *The Saragossa Manuscript* is an excellent example of problematising the category of a narrator and the use of the device of a story within a story. A character from the outer story becomes a character-narrator in the inner story and another character appears in his story who starts telling his own story and so on. Regression and shifting between multiple storytelling levels are also possible. It may appear as a paradox when it turns out that one of the stories of the innermost levels probably belongs to the outer level (Jakubowska, 2013, p. 349).

Subjectivisation techniques and strategies – contemporary Post-Classical Cinema¹¹ (the cinema of attractions, interactive techniques)

My intention is to identify three aspects, which are the most influential for the development of subjectivisation in contemporary film narrative. The extent of their impact varies. Changes generated by the first two tendencies are a result of the development of technologies. Meanwhile, the contemporary cinema of attractions as well as the films that make use of interactive techniques spawn some changes of subjectivisation techniques and strategies within the scope of the answer to the questions of who(?) what (?) and how(?).

- WHO?

The dominant role is again given to **the character who acts**. We can notice sensory-motor relationships recurring with great impact. The author-narrator is hidden as he returns to the formula of “an image displayer”. What is interesting here is that the spectator becomes the centre of attention – it is about getting him excited, whether emotionally (intensified in 3D, 4D or 5D cinema) or through the possibility of him manipulating the film narrative. What is at stake here is gaining access to the character’s experience, the impact of that experience on the spectator, triggering the spectator’s subjective sensory sensations or drawing him into making choices about his preferred narrative pathways.

- WHAT?

The main tendency is bound for changing the storyworld into the game-world. In cinema of attractions a character-player possesses super powers for fighting against a ‘bad’ antagonist (antihero) or a ‘bad’ world. As in early narration he represents a group which defends right and values. We have only two sides: white and black, without shadows or any doubts. Fast cinema guarantees only strong impulses: adrenaline, maximises immersion in the world full of chases, traps, explosions, destruction, total war or star wars. The most representative series launched was *Star Wars* (1977, Georges Lucas) and then continued by *Guardians of the Galaxy* (2014, James Gunn) in contemporary cinema.

¹¹ Describing contemporary cinematography I have decided to highlight two tendencies: post-classical and postmodernist cinema. Post-classical films continue to change classical norms and rules of storytelling at the same time. Ostaszewski gives examples and theoretical background which is based on wide research (2018, pp. 128–132). He marks 1975 as the starting point of this tendency – the premiere of *Jaws* (Steven Spielberg). Nevertheless, I will focus on the last three decades of cinema (1990-2020). I will also try to stress that in my opinion mind-game films as a part of postmodernist narrative play a more important role of subjectivisation strategy in contemporary cinema.

- HOW?

Perception-image is used in order to integrate the point of view with sound perspective and also with the centre of kinetic sensations. Filmmakers transfer the experience of a gamer onto the film narrative. This inspiration is strongly emphasised by Ostaszewski. This reference to video games is rightly indicated in the change of terminology: the first-person narrator becomes the first-person shooter. *Hardcore Henry* (2015, Ilya Naishuller) is a telling example of the shift where the technique becomes a strategy. The action of the film recalls a multi-level video game with the possibility of progressing to the next level where different types of weapons and surroundings are introduced (Ostaszewski, 2017, p. 274).

Free indirect subjectivity is described by Ostaszewski with a reference to the third-person narrative and a semi-subjective image [Mitry] but it applies mainly to the gamer's experience. The film theorist analyses *Elephant* (Gus van Sant, 2003) in this context. "Before the two armed teenagers attack people in the school building in Portland, the camera follows the future victims around the building corridors. The last act of the film – hunting for the school students – reminds the viewer of the aesthetics of TPS (third-person shooter games)." (Ostaszewski 2017, p. 275).

This strategy remains innovative precisely when we consider references made to game narrative and it applies to those films in which the presence of the main character on the screen takes the form of an avatar.

"Interactive" techniques are another tool which redefines the category of subjectivisation. Ostaszewski does not include these types of phenomena as they are not included in his definition of subjectivisation. Yet, I propose to consider that in this case, the receiver, similarly to a game user, is confronted with some possible choices. His choices are subjective although they are restricted to some strictly limited options¹². The technique applies to the film narrative structure. Alternative scenes/events/choices are available to the recipient. Interactive tendency is still a space for experiments rather than belonging to an existent and clearly defined cinema movement. However, *Sufferrosa* (2010, D. Marcinkowski), a film referencing the labyrinthine narrative structure of *The Saragossa Manuscript*, is a symptomatic example of when branching out of a story may result in a differ-

¹² Not only has the mode of production altered narrative paradigms that formerly seemed unchangeable but also the reception of highly varied formats in film history. Thus, for a long time, there has been a rule that the speed and the sequentiality of a film's projection is mechanically fixed so that the viewer has no possibility to interrupting the "reading" to "leaf" back and forth through the scenes or to studying the composition of a single shot for longer than the actual running time.

ent structure of the film text – the recipient may decide on the order of different segments of the story and activate the chosen options. What is interesting is that *Black Mirror: Bandersnatch*, 2019 again uses framing. Similarly to classical narrative, we encounter border imagery: the film action is paused so that the recipient has time to take action and choose between available options. On an intellectual level the choice between different brands of breakfast cereal is not attractive for the gamer/spectator. The slowing down of action may discourage him rather than draw him to a computer screen. Although the artistic value of *Black Mirror: Bandersnatch* is not high, it proves that the development of subjectivisation techniques on the part of the recipient, considering current distribution models via the Internet and digital platforms, is possible. Indeed, the door has been opened.

Subjectivity strategies – contemporary Post-modernist cinema (mind-game films)

The most symptomatic trend for the development of subjectivisation techniques is the contemporary mind-game film. This strategy has evolved primarily from modernist narrative, which, however, has been significantly redefined. It takes advantage of the broad range of subjectivisation techniques with all their complexity, and thus makes a philosophical perspective an important motivation and a basis for exploration.

- WHO?

The character again acts, but his actions take place in the realms of consciousness or in virtual worlds. Therefore, his actions may be illusory, conceived and fictional. **The character is no longer in control of his actions.** As long as the character-forger was a figure who, according to Deleuze, evolved from modernist narrative, in the narrative of mind-game films he often turns into an unaware forger: his schizophrenia, paranoia or trauma completely impair his consciousness. The subject's identity falls apart and this, in turn, results in the deconstruction of the character and the narrator, their intermingling, their constant revaluation and redefinition. The role of an unreliable narrator gains in importance (Ostaszewski, 2010). The intensification of the receiver's engagement is a characteristic feature which distinguishes it from modernist narrative. What is interesting here is that neo-modernist films (Syska, 2014) often create an effect of distancing from the character. Contemplation as a preferred attitude of a viewer in slow-cinema seems to neutralise the process of identification with the protagonist. Whereas mind-game films place importance on identifying with him. The viewer becomes a player incorporated into the text. His perception and emotional activity and engagement are closely related to the character –

they allow for experiencing alternative states of consciousness, exploration of split personality and paranoid states. “Productive pathologies” are considered in the context of schizoanalysis (Deleuze, Guattari 1983) as a diagnosis of contemporary society transposed to the context of cinema and developed there (Elsaesser 2018, pp. 40–47).

- WHAT?

Virtual worlds are the main subject matter of mind game films. They are the culmination of the trend, envisaged in Deleuze’s theory, to explore the cinema of time-image and a cluster of the features of crystalline narrative. The myths of an objective world, objective time and the myth of truth have collapsed. In this context Patricia Pisters’ proposal to add a concept of the neuro-image (2012) to Deleuze’s classification seems compelling.

The phenomenon of mind-game films is well explored in Polish film studies. It is influenced by the reception of Buckland’s (2009) and Elsaesser’s (2018) theories, but also by Polish researchers. Przyłipiak initiated the research with his proposal of a classification, which favoured as a crucial category ‘indiscernibility’ (2016, pp. 251–255). In my opinion it is the same direction which was noticed by Deleuze, when the optical or visual description replaced the motor action: “We run in fact into a principle of indeterminability, of indiscernibility: we no longer know what is imaginary or real, physical or mental, in the situation, not because they are confused, but because we do not have to know and there is no longer even a place from which we do not ask” (1995, p. 7).

With this in mind, Barbara Szczekała’s monograph (2018), in which the author favours a pragmatic perspective and very skilfully employs the concept of focalisation in her research, deserves particular acknowledgement. Subjectivisation takes extreme forms which result from the intensification of life amidst the screens as well as the annexation of changes in the area of philosophical thought (both ontological and epistemological) by cinema. In this context, Manfred Jahn’s constructivist idea that she refers to has echoed loudly – “it is founded on the assumption that we cannot access things the way they are” (2017, p. 136). Szczekała chooses to adhere to cognitive studies grounded within the framework of classical narrative in the works of Bordwell and Branigan. She acknowledges, however, that this constructivist perspective may also be adequate in the case of mind-game films.

For the purpose of her own research Szczekała narrows down the notion of subjectivity (2018, p. 319), which I mentioned in my introduction. The narrowing down of the concept works well in the context of the research revolving

around mind-game films, but it does not reflect the dynamic relationship between objectivisation and subjectivisation which is present throughout the history of cinema.

- HOW?

Mind-game films (Elsaesser, 2018, pp. 29–35) defined in the context of postclassical narrative appear to be the most precise term although puzzle films (Buckland, 2009, p. 1–12) define the same phenomenon and refer to the same film titles: *Lost Highway* (1997, David Lynch), *Mulholland Drive* (2001, David Lynch), *Fight Club* (1999, David Fincher), *eXistenZ* (1999, David Cronenberg), *Memento* (2000, Christopher Nolan), *The Prestige* (2006, Christopher Nolan), *Inception*, (2010, Christopher Nolan). Barbara Szczekała is right to favour Elsaesser's term in the title of her monograph although she adheres to Buckland's interpretation and treats both terms as synonyms. Yet, the difference resulting from employing that particular term seems to be as significant as the relationship between labyrinthine narrative and rhizome narrative. The two terms: forking-path films (Bordwell, 2006, pp. 80–86, pp. 92–93) and puzzle films were coined in the context of classical narrative theory. Szczekała describes Bordwell's intentions accurately: "[He] tried to 'rationalise' or 'linearise' any impossibilities and contradictions within the narrative, and import them into the classical model of storytelling that he reworked himself" (2018, p.38). In other words the term puzzle films suggests that any complexities and contradictions within narrative may be put together into a whole, just like scattered pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. The studies on labyrinthine narrative and rhizome narrative in Poland also addressed this issue. The comparison of genealogy and aims of the two narrative structures pointed to some common features while marking the difference with regards to their philosophical foundations. The concept of rhizome appears to be more adequate "if we want to put emphasis on 'the lack of any a priori order' and contradictory hypotheses generated by these narratives, particularly when we take into account the ontological and epistemological status of the depicted reality" (Żyto, Jakubowska, 2015, p. 20). Undoubtedly analyses of David Lynch's films, reading in postmodern paradigm and relation labyrinth – rhizome, opened the door to mind-game films (Jakubowska, 2006, pp. 127–222).

Nevertheless, it must be stressed that rhizome narrative (or network narrative) does not capture the game-related aspect of the films discussed here, which seems to be particularly important. The same objection could be raised with regards to *modular narratives* (Cameron, 2008). *Misdirection films* (Friedman, 2017) are, in turn, based on the idea of retrospective reinterpretations. Szczekała sums up this issue: "What *misdirection films* have in common with Elsaesser's and Buck-

land's theories (and what makes them different from Bordwell's theory) is an assumption that "narrative games" are an alternative model of storytelling and they bear the hallmarks of a genre which had been present (although it was, so to say, "dormant") almost throughout the whole history of cinema and eventually started to flourish in the mid 1990s" (2018, p. 39). The above paragraphs can be compared with Andrzej Zalewski's category 'strategic disorientation' which aims "to destroy regular canons and provoke a perceiver to ask the fundamental questions" (1998, p. 7). In mind-game films radical subjectivisation, which concerns the homodiegetic narrator, the heterodiegetic narrator, and the main character themselves is a fundamental question. Pulling the viewer into the game concerns primarily the relationship between objective and subjective, and the levels of subjectivity. Furthermore, the game changes identification from passive into active. Instead of contemplative projection-identification it proposes an affective game of identification with the character who went mad. Subjective feeling of the world does not go backstage, but it is a dangerous centre. Only sometimes do we succeed in completing the filmed puzzle, to add the frame, which similarly to *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* gives us the impression of "control" of the worlds' unbelievability. Other films seem to be an impossible puzzle.

Conclusions

It is possible to grasp the complexity and the dynamics of subjectivisation techniques only under the condition that we acknowledge that audiovisual text and a methodical inquiry to find answers to the questions of WHO?, WHAT?, HOW? are communicating vessels; this acknowledgement also creates an opportunity for a comprehensive approach to the processes occurring throughout the history of film narrative. It also reveals how subjectivisation techniques develop into strategies and how certain figures are given less or more importance within narratives. Therefore, it is essential to refer to the historical perspective of the theory of film narrative. Classifications based on classical narrative require reinterpretation. They are clearly determined by the context of initial assumptions, which are no longer adequate for the research of both modernist and contemporary films. Some of the problems start to belong to the dimension of historical debates. It becomes secondary to decide whether a researcher is more prone to employ the concept of a narrator (who tells a story) or a focaliser (who sees/shows) once the definition of narrative in post-classical narrative theory is not limited to the medium of film and is considered to be a category within transmedialism while the process of storytelling is viewed in very broad terms. In the context of changes within the history of narrative, subjectivisation appears to be a fundamental concept. However, when its definition is narrowed down, it neither reflects the character of changes in the

scope of the opposition between objective-subjective nor does its resonance with the notions of individuality, personality or the bias of a group/community put forward the subjective as the objective.

I have no doubts that the conflict between the faith in the objective and the faith in the subjective present in cinema leads to the ultimate victory of subjectivity, while what is objective becomes inaccessible. Yet, it is an unusual victory.

In the 1980s, according to Deleuze's diagnosis, we no longer believed in love or death, we did not believe in what happened to us because the world reminded us of a mediocre film. Deleuze valued modernist cinema as it compelled our reflection and our realisation that we needed to have faith in the world. His postulate to abandon cinema was a metaphysical gesture and it was a way to return the spectator his body and enable him to regain faith in the world. However, today our presence in the cinema is exclusive as we are surrounded by electronic and digital screens belonging to a complex network of correlations between the authorities, the capital and the flow of information chaos and falsifications. In this context, there seems to be no way out beyond the controversial reality of the screens. Private and public lives evolve on the screens and what is private becomes public and what is public becomes private. We do not exist unless we exist on the screens of social media. Unless we connect to a group – a collective character who puts forward a profiled subjectivity – we do not exist.

Schizophrenicity was to be an introduction to a life devoid of fascism. (Foucault 1983). However hotspots of fascism are the answer to the terror of identification – they just propose a righteous, objective image of the world, where the "narrator-author" is hiding backstage.

The cultural struggle for the character's individuality fails as soon as we can no longer rely on him. Mind-game films offer us an exercise in "productive pathologies", they teach us non-linear thinking, by means of leaps, associations, and all while being distracted. They teach us to switch between schizophrenic regions where nothing is the way it appears to be. What they have to offer is a love-hate game and a life-death game. It will bring a victory or a failure. They put the case at knifepoint. Ultimately they do not offer faith in the world but they deprive us of faith in "I". Deleuze's optimistic prospect for Ego (Me = Others) assumes the victory of pluralism, tolerance and diversity instead of egocentrism. But there is also the most dangerous option: Me or Others. Contemporary cinema reminds us, that mind-blow is also world-blow.

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From Point of View to Mind-game Films – Between Subjective Techniques and Strategies.

The starting point for this paper is the statement that subjectivisation (subjective narrative) – is one of the key elements in a film medium. However, when its definition is narrowed down, it neither reflects the character of changes in the scope of the opposition between objective-subjective nor its resonance with the notions of individuality, personality or the community.

I focus on a historical expansion of subjectivisation techniques, but there is much more. I would like to answer the question about the way in which these techniques fit into the differences between paradigms and modes of cinema. Firstly, I consider subjectivisation techniques in Pre-Classical Cinema, Pre-Modernist Cinema and Classical Cinema. Secondly, I reveal how subjectivisation techniques develop into strategies and how certain figures are given less or more importance within narratives. In this context I research subjectivisation in Modernist Cinema. Thirdly, I draw attention to the relationship between subjectivisation techniques and strategies in contemporary Post-Classical Cinema (the cinema of attractions, interactive techniques). My final suggestion is that mind-game films (representing Postmodernist Cinema) are the domain of a subjectivisation strategy. I have no doubt that the conflict between faith in the objective and faith in the subjective present in cinema leads to the ultimate victory of subjectivity, while what is objective becomes inaccessible.

Mind-game films offer us an exercise in “productive pathologies”, they teach us non-linear thinking, by means of leaps, associations, and all while being distracted. They teach us to switch between schizophrenic regions where nothing is the way it appears to be.