

UDC 378

**Analysis of Art House Media Texts Use during Media Studies in the Student Audience
(Alain Robbe-Grillet Movies Case Study)**

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Abstract. The study of media culture and virtual world requires knowledge and skills of the analysis of media texts of different levels of complexity. In this sense, the cinematic legacy of the great French writer, screenwriter and filmmaker Alain Robbe-Grillet (1922-2008) gives productive opportunities for the analysis of works of the elite media culture and fits well into the main range of media education goals of higher education (especially in the training of future culture experts, art historians, sociologists, linguists, psychologists, teachers). The article examines the main approaches to the analysis of art house media texts of A. Robbe-Grillet in the context of media education.

Keywords: analysis; media text; media competence; media education; media literacy; media culture; students; university; Robbe-Grillet; art house; film; cinema.

Epigraph:

*«I am being pressed from all sides: why don't you speak easier for the public to understand; why not make an effort to get better understanding? And so on. In any case, these claims are absurd. ... What should I make easier? If I'm racking my brains over a mystery which seems to me as a lack of my own meaningful continuity, then how can I make a full and complete story out of it? What could I "simply" draw from such a paradoxical relationship to the world and my essence, from the relationship where everything is ambivalent, contradictory and ephemeral?»
Alain Robbe-Grillet, 2005, p.23*

Introduction. The study of media culture and virtual world requires knowledge and skills of the analysis of media texts of different levels of complexity. In this sense, the cinematic legacy of the great French writer, screenwriter and filmmaker Alain Robbe-Grillet (1922-2008) makes productive opportunities for the analysis of works of the elite media culture, and fits well with the main range of media education goals of higher education (especially in the training of future cultural scientists, art historians, sociologists, linguists, psychologists, teachers).

Even such a sophisticated connoisseur of the artistic world as Vladimir Nabokov (1899-1977) claimed that antinovel does not exist, however "there is one great French writer, Robbe-Grillet" [Nabokov, 1997, p.579], with his poetic and original creations, where "shifts and interpenetration of successive impressions, etc. undoubtedly belong to the field of psychology – the psychology in the best sense of the word" [Nabokov, 1990, p. 80]. Rene Predal, a famous French film expert, agrees with V. Nabokov's opinion. He points to the original cocktail of intelligence and humor combined with the elegance of the visuals in A. Robbe-Grillet's films [Predal, 1988, p.415].

The literary style of Robbe-Grillet isn't called "the school of sight" for no reason: he totally visualized the literary text, and that is why his coming to the cinematography was deeply motivated [Gapon, 1997, p.76].

For a long time it had been said in Russian cinema studies that the author of the famous film "Last Year at Marienbad" (1961) was Alain Resnais, while the script-writer Alain Robbe-Grillet was unjustly in the shade. However the further career of these two artists has shown that Robbe-Grillet played the "first violin" in this remarkable duet. That's why he introduced to Alain Resnais not a traditional screenplay "story", but the director's script, i.e. frame-accurate description of the film [Robbe-Grillet, 2005, p.439]. In "Madienbad" there's no Time, usual for the realistic culture. "There's no time. No time at all. No its fluidity, its reversibility. No future, no past with their co-existence in the present" [Demin, 1966, p.210]. And we are unable to understand when this or that event happens and whether it happens at all, or if it's just the imagination of the characters. The

audience gets drawn into the stream of consciousness, into the continuity, selectivity and variability of the virtual world with a particular mental space and time, “with its eccentricities, obsessions, lacunae which is... the time of human life” [Vinogradov, 2010, p.272].

In particular in all the film works by A. Robbe-Grillet instead of the traditional “reality” there is virtual dreaming unsteadiness of intertwined time and space, labyrinths of subconscious, ironical author’s play with genre and narrative stereotypes, the conditional “characters”-phantoms, a centuries-old mythological arsenal that includes concepts like labyrinth, dance, double, water, door etc. [Rob-Grillet, 2005, p.109].

Following the theory of the famous American cyberneticist Norbert Winner (1894-1964), A. Robbe-Grillet justly assumed that the more information a message contains, the more data there is of which the recipient is unaware, the less obvious and unquestionable will the meaning seem to him, the less importance he will attach to it. His novels and films brought too much information to the critics from the academic world and their faithful followers, and that made them unintelligible, incomprehensible and inaccessible for them [Robbe-Grillet, 2005, p.221].

Of course in the process of media education of the students it is easier for the teacher to refer to media texts having resistant structural codes. In other words – to the works with clearly expressed fabulous, mythological foundation or basic framework of entertainment genres. Here we can efficiently use the works of V.V. Propp who clearly highlighted the main plot situations and typology of fairy-tale characters [Propp, 1998, pp.60-61]. Our previous publications contained the examples of the analysis of specific audiovisual media [Fedorov, 2008, pp.60-80; Fedorov, 2009, pp.4-13] based on V.V. Propp’s methodology. The analysis of media texts of other popular genres (such as detective and thriller) is based on similar principle [Bykov, 2010; Demin, 1977, p.238; Shklovsky, 1929, p.142; Eco, 1960, p.52; Todorov, 1977, p.49], and this type of analysis can also be successfully used in media education [Fedorov, 2011, pp.88-99].

However this technology is not enough for the analysis of more complex and ambivalent media texts, moreover, “the message turns out to be some empty form to which a variety of meanings can be attributed” [Eco, 1998, p.73]. This introduction of complete emptiness into the game by means of the very forms of the narration, often mislead the audience, first seducing then disappointing, because the author’s task is “to produce nothing: neither the objects of the world, nor feelings, but only to “work” in a transparent strangeness of a trap with numerous hooks, the trap for humanist reading, for Marxist or Freudian reading, etc., and finally the trap for the lovers of meaningless structures” [Robbe-Grillet, 2005, p.24]. In this regard Y.M. Lotman rightly emphasized that “the text is shown not as a realization of a message in any given language, but as a complex device containing multiple codes that can transform the received messages and generate new ones like an information generator possessing the traits of an intellectual personality” [Lotman, 1992, p.132].

For nearly a quarter of a century (1971-1995) A. Robbe-Grillet has been a media educator. He taught literature and film art at the universities of New York and St. Louis where he tried to “strengthen the faith in culture, the joy of intellectual effort, the belief in the priority of the spiritual, and – why not? – the proud sense of belonging to the elite in the hearts of the students who need it” [Robbe-Grillet, 2005, p.101]. In this case the analysis of his own novels and films was often the subject of his media studies in the student audience [Robbe-Grillet, 2005, p.131]. Unfortunately the transcripts of these lectures and seminars have not been preserved. I am sure that they would have given a unique opportunity to dive into the atmosphere of the direct dialogue between the author and the audience.

To partially fill this gap by studying autobiographical and theoretical texts of the master himself [Rob-Grillet, 2005, etc], we shall follow the methodology developed by U. Eco [Eco, 1998, p.209], A. Silverblatt [Silverblatt, 2001, p.80-81], L. Masterman [Masterman, 1985], C. Bazalgette [Bazalgette 1995]. In the analysis of A. Robbe-Grillet’s cinematic creations we shall rely on such media education keywords as “media agencies”, “media/media text categories”, “media technologies”, “media languages”, “media representations” and “media audiences”, because all these concepts are directly related to the value, ideological, market, structural, content, audiovisual, spatial and time aspects of the analysis of media works.

U. Eco’s and A. Silverblatt’s approaches are primarily focused on the analysis of individual media texts. However taking into consideration the consistent implementation of author’s concept

in all A. Robbe-Grillet's works we can experiment and try to analyze hermeneutically the entire set of his cinematic work.

Ideology, the author's moral attitudes in social and cultural context, market conditions that contributed to the media text's planning, creation and success (dominant concepts: "media agencies", 'media/media text categories", "media technologies", "media languages", "media representations" and "media audiences").

In his works A. Robbe-Grillet has always tried to keep separate from ideology and politics in their traditional significance. For example before filming the movie "Last Year at Marienbad" (1961) A. Resnais asked him "if it was possible to make the fragmentary phrases from the dialogues heard in the hotel relevant to the situation in Algiers or be perceived as such" A. Robbe-Grillet answered that it was unacceptable from the point of view of morality and his author's concept in general [Robbe-Grillet, 2005, p.400]. The emphasis on the moral aspect is not accidental here: the conventionality of moral status in society is always emphasized in A. Robbe-Grillet's works. This is especially evident in the film "A Man Who Lies" (1968), where the main character (hero? traitor? phantom?) brilliantly performed by Jean-Louis Trintignant remains a mystery for the lovers of "realistic morality".

Alain Robbe-Grillet wrote: "I know better than most vicious people what bloodthirsty monsters dwell in me, and I feel neither guilt nor remorse on this occasion. On the contrary, I think it's just necessary that the secret was allowed to come to the surface, to the light, that things that are usually hidden in the darkness of the night, that put on masks, withdraw into themselves, hiding behind the closed doors and disguise in another's clothes became evident [Robbe-Grillet, 2005, p.238].

However the absence of direct political references in A. Robbe-Grillet's cinematic work doesn't mean that he himself was out of politics. On the contrary he believed that "liberal capitalism was proved to be quite a viable system. I shot two films in Czechoslovakia under communism. It was a tough and completely insane system isolated from the whole world which produced nothing but weapons. People were not paid, but they did nothing too. They liked it. It was a sort of virtual reality, science fiction. Capitalism has shown that it can adapt itself to many things and, in particular, it is able to correct some of its mistakes" [Robbe-Grillet, 2002].

On the one hand, A. Robbe-Grillet has never denied that he was influenced by such classical authors as G. Flaubert, F. Dostoevsky [Robbe-Grillet, 2002]. On the other hand, his creative work was originally aimed at the destruction of the foundation of the traditional realistic prose and fiction films, and here he was much closer to L. Carrol, F. Kafka and S. Freud, whose influence on his works A. Robbe-Grillet also repeatedly emphasized. For example, in the film "It's Gradiva Who is Calling You" (2006) A. Robbe-Grillet used not only the images of mystical and erotic novel "Gradiva" (1903) by German writer Wilhelm Jensen (1837-1911), the works of Austrian writer Leopold von Sacher-Masoch (1836-1895) and graphical sketches from Eugene Delacroix's Moroccan album (1798-1863), but also the concept of Sigmund Freud's essay (1856-1939) "Delusions and dreams in Jensen's "Gradiva" [Freud, 1907], which eventually allowed him to create some kind of investigation into the nature of creativity, mixed up on such favorite Freudian motifs as dream, the unconscious, sexuality, desire, victim and executioner complexes. However in my opinion Freudian and masochistic motifs (albeit in ironic and mocking interpretation) can easily be found in all Alain Robbe-Grillet's works, especially in his "Successive Slidings of Pleasure" (1974), "Playing with Fire" (1975) and "La Belle Captive" (1983).

Alain Robbe-Grillet (among other experimenters including M. Duras, Jean-Luc Godard and others) sought to create a new type of media text possessing the structural and semantic "openness", initially aimed at polysemanticity and polyphony of meanings, where the central role is given to the reader/viewer who must decode and construct the work, and the process of the audience's contact with media texts is equated to co-creation [Gapon, 1998].

Naturally in the social and cultural context of the 1960-es, when literature and cinematography were largely focused on the traditional plot construction, such attitude often caused critical repulse [Barthes, 1993, p.1241]. A. Robbe-Grillet's films were usually attacked for the lack of "naturalness" in the actors' performance; for the inability to distinguish "reality" from mental conceptions (memories or visions); and finally for the tendency of stressed and emotional elements of the film to turn into "postcards", pictures, paintings, etc. These three complaints essentially came to one: the structure of media texts prevented the huge part of the audience to

trust the objective truth of things. The viewers, the fans of “realism”, were confused by the fact that Robbe-Grillet didn’t try to make them believe in what was happening. On the contrary, instead of pretending to be a piece of reality, the action in A. Robbe-Grillet’s films “was developing as a reflection on the reality of this reality” (or its *irreality* – whatever you like). It no longer seeks to hide its inevitable falsity presenting itself as somebody’s “story” that he “lived through” [Robbe-Grillet, 2005, p.596].

However despite the initial skepticism from the critics and distributors, the avant-garde film by A. Robbe-Grillet and A. Resnais “Last Year at Marienbad” won the Golden Lion of St. Mark at the prestigious Venice Film Festival (1961), and later was widely demonstrated at European screens and even gained legitimacy at the faultfinding French Film Critics Association which declared it the best film of the year (1962). “Trans-Europ-Express” (1967) that destroyed all the “basic” ideas of the detective genre was also a significant box office success.

Of course the film market conditions of the 1960-es to some extent contributed to the planning, the process of creation and distribution of A. Robbe-Grillet’s auteur cinema. To some extent the “firmness” of the traditional realism on the screen was shattered in the late 1950-es – early 1960-es by the French “New Wave” (especially J.-L. Godard’s films), films by F. Fellini (“La Dolce Vita”, “8 ½”), M. Antonioni (“The Adventure”, “The Night”), L. Bunuel (“Viridiana”), I. Bergman (“Wild Strawberries”). That’s why a part of the audience quite loyally perceived the radical experiments with the structure of media texts and its genres. Some producers and distributors who took the financial risks of production and distribution of Alain Robbe-Grillet’s films felt such changes in social and cultural situation too.

Of course this did not concern the conservative and ideologically engaged Soviet box office where Alain Robbe-Grillet’s films (as well as Jean-Luc Godard’s) had never been shown at all. The films by A. Robbe-Grillet were available for the Soviet intellectual elite only at private demonstrations and foreign business trips. At the same time in European countries of the so-called “socialist camp” the attitude to his work was not homogeneous. For example, Czechoslovakian authorities allowed Alain Robbe-Grillet to shoot his avant-garde films not only in 1968 which was the loosest year for Czechoslovakia in political sense (“The Man Who Lies”), but also after the Soviet invasion of Prague and respectively after the change of management in the country (“Eden and After”, 1970).

Narrative structure of the media texts dominant concepts: “media/media text categories”, “media technologies”, “media languages”, “media representations”.

During the collective discussion with students we can conclude that A. Robbe-Grillet’s cinematographic works are built contrary to the traditional structure of realistic media text: there is no classic plot with a clear division into the entanglement, the climax and the denouement, no psychological and social motivations, everything is deception, ambiguity, denial of dogmatic petrification and unambiguity. There is “no story, perhaps, there is an event, of which the author himself is not sure, and there are different versions of the event in the minds of different people. All this is immersed in an undifferentiated stream where the Real and the Imaginary are reflected in each other, becoming basically indistinguishable. So... a situation where it is impossible to clearly distinguish reality from dreams, memories, fantasy is intentionally created. A man is in a sort of a labyrinth created from images which are equally real and fictitious” [Vishnyakov, 2011, p.20, 333].

The development of action in A. Robbe-Grillet’s media texts can be compared not only with a sophisticated computer game of search and investigation (web-quest), but also with a “whirlpool: the closer you get to the solution, the more narrow the circles become, the faster the whirlpool draws in, and as a result you fall into the void. Associatively it is also a trap or a maze: the farther you go, the more difficult it becomes to get back” [Akimova, 2001, p.7]. And all this in the labyrinth of self identification of the ghostly “characters”, their (un)dressing, (non) recognition, meeting/parting, death/resurrection, search/finding, pleasure/torture, capture/release...

Breaking the classic narrative structures, A. Robbe-Grillet often uses plot situations, stereotypical episodes and scenes familiar from mythology, fairy-tales or popular culture opuses. Describing them using “common” language the author mocks and distances from it [Gapon, 1997, p.75]. At the same time the development of action in A. Robbe-Grillet’s works has nothing to do with logical tale filled with psychological details about the characters’ lives in any particular society. It is a synthesis of piled up fragments of crimes, mysteries, intrigues within the framework of several genres of mass culture and archaic mythology, constantly returning in this or that way to

the theme of creative process itself, and the repetition of the phenomenon of text “reflectivity” and its hypertextual character becomes its main peculiarity [Savelyeva, 2008, pp.7-8]. This obtrusive repetition of the same actions, return to the same details may seem monotonous. However, with each new turn some new details appear, while others on the contrary disappear [Akimova, 2001, p.8].

According to A. Robbe-Grillet, integrity is “nothing but a great phantasm of the last groundless dreamer dreaming of a harmonious system” [Robbe-Grillet, 2005, p.397]. This explains why the intrigue (which is always present in the master’s works) does not hinder its cinematic message completely open for different interpretations which remains in the state of permanent transformation. At the same time the “poetics of the possible” dominates, when every variant of understanding enjoys full rights among others simply because it exists in the author’s fantasy (or any person from his audience) [Gapon, 1999]. And “time scattered by some secret inner catastrophe allows the fragments of the future to show through the present or to freely connect with the past. The time recalled and dreamt of, the time which as well as the future could exist, is subjected to constant changes in the presence of radiant space, the place of pure visibility” [Blanchot, 1959, p.198].

V.P. Demin precisely wrote about this type of media text structure: “an episode of a work where the plot is not dominant affords itself a lot of liberties. It openly tends to become everything, it claims to a special role. It doesn’t want to be a link, a step in the general stairway of action. It doesn’t mind to stop this action completely ... the concept of the film “Last Year at Marienbad” is whimsical and capricious. Everything in this film is vague, subtle and indistinct. The viewer constantly has to guess what scenes unfold before him, what preceded them and what will happen in future and is shown now only as a distant association. These guesses sometimes look solid and are supported by further events, but mostly are called into question. ... It is a constant entanglement and perplexing of the viewer, liberation of the events unfolding before his eyes from temporal and any other conditionality. The main technique was the technique of “incomplete information”, and without it the film could not have become what it is. We are being intrigued all the time: first by hiding the essential moments of what is happening, and then even by rethinking those grains of understanding that we managed to grasp somehow” [Demin, 1966, p.69, 209, 211].

In my opinion V.P. Demin’s thoughts are well correlated with the view of the writer and the director himself.

A. Robbe-Grillet wrote: “The film “Last Year at Marienbad” was immediately interpreted as another psychological variation on the topic of lost love, oblivion, memories because of its title and also under the influence of the previous works by Alain Resnais. Those who watched the film most willingly pondered over such questions as: did the man and the woman really meet and fall in love last year at Marienbad? Does the young woman recall the past events pretending she doesn’t remember the handsome foreigner? Or has she really forgotten everything that had happened between them? etc. It must be said clearly: those questions are totally meaningless. The world in which the film takes place is characterized by the fact that it is the world of the constant present which makes it impossible to turn to memory. It is the world without the past, it is self-sufficient in every given moment and it gradually disappears. The man and the woman come into existence only from the moment they appear on the screen; before this they are nothing; and as soon as the film ends they turn into nothingness again. Their existence lasts for as long as the film lasts. There can be no reality beyond the image seen by the audience and beyond the words it hears [Robbe-Grillet, 2005, p.597].

Experimenting, Alain Robbe-Grillet replaces the usual plot scheme by the storyline where the idea is born, where it becomes clear and sharp, and then “gains flesh” right in front of the viewers. At first glance, the “plot” of “Trans-Europ-Express” is like this. But the classic pair “creator - creation” (author – character, intention – result, freedom - compulsion) is constantly exposed to destruction, turned inside out, it explodes in the course of a systematic confrontation within the narrative material itself [Robbe-Grillet, 2005, p.233].

All the other audiovisual texts by A. Robbe-Grillet where he intentionally retreats from his works to let them exist freely and independently in people’s minds are also open for countless interpretations. Instead of the traditional narrative plot the illusion of these or those events is

created, and the idea of their rationality and logic is destroyed at the slightest test for strength [Akimova, 2001, p.7]:

- illusion of love drama in “L’Immortelle” (1963);
- ironical and illusory nature of the parody of detective stories and thrillers in “Trans-Europ-Express” (1967);
- ephemerality of “psychological” war drama in “The Man Who Lies” (1968);
- surrealist fragility of criminally erotic detective drama spiced by a fair dose of parody, Freudianism and masochism in “Eden and After” (1970), “Successive Slidings of Pleasure” (1974), “Playing with Fire” (1975), “La Belle Captive” (1983) and “It’s Gradiva Who is Calling You” (2006).

Schematically we can present the peculiarities of genre modifications, iconography, characters ethics, problems of A. Robbe-Grillet’s cinematographic heritage as follows:

Historical period, scene of action. Although A. Robbe-Grillet’s media texts contain some references to the historical period and scene of action, in general they are in no way tied directly to any political or social context. The films take place in Western or Eastern countries in XX or XXI century, and though the characters speak French it doesn’t necessarily mean that they are French.

The setting, household goods. The best illustration of the role the setting and household goods play in A. Robbe-Grillet’s media texts can be the quotes from his novels: “The wood around the window is coated with a brownish varnish in which thin lines of a lighter color, lines which are the imitation of imaginary veins running through another substance considered more decorative, constitute parallel networks or networks of only slightly divergent curves outlining darker knots, round or oval or even triangular, a group of changing signs in which I have discerned human figures for a long time ... On the polished wood of the table, the dust has marked the places occupied for a while—for a few hours, several days, minutes, weeks — by small objects subsequently removed whose outlines are still distinct for some time, a circle, a square, a rectangle, other less simple shapes, some partly overlapping, already blurred or half obliterated as though by a rag. ... At the very top of the stone stairway, the little door has opened, allowing a yellowish but sustained shaft of light to enter, against which stands out the dark silhouette of the man wrapped in his long cloak. He has but to climb a few more steps to reach the threshold. Afterward, the whole setting is empty, the enormous room with its purple shadows and its stone columns proliferating in all directions, the monumental staircase with no handrail that twists upward, growing narrower and vaguer as it rises into the darkness, toward the top of the vaults where it disappears. ... Outside it is snowing. The wind drives the fine dry crystals over the dark asphalt of the pavement and with each gust the crystals fall in white line, parallels, curves, spirals, no sooner disrupted than they are again taken up in whirls, chased round at ground level, now suddenly immobilized again, forming renewed spirals, scrolls, forked undulations, arabesques in motion, and then again disrupted” [Robbe-Grillet, 1996, p.28; 1999; 2001, p.14].

So in A. Robbe-Grillet’s audiovisual texts the setting and household goods are changeable, subject to continuous variative repetition. Again and again it all seems a product of author’s fantasies woven from our fears and pleasures. The characters and the viewers are plunged in the world of labyrinths, night roads, mysterious houses, mirror reflections, falsification and parody.

For example, the action of “Last Year at Marienbad” (1961) takes place in the hotel, “sort of a huge international palazzo in baroque style, with pompous but cold decoration; in the world of marble, columns, stucco, gilded moldings, statues and stone-faced servants. Nameless, polite and of course idle clientele seriously but dispassionately observes strict rules of social games (cards, dominoes...), high society dances, empty talk and gun shooting. Within this secluded and suffocating world people and things in varying degrees seem victims of some witchcraft, like in those dreams where you feel led by some kind of fatality, and the attempts to change it somehow would be vain” [Robbe-Grillet, 2005, p.440]. The “décor” of the film “L’Immortelle” (1963) is mystical old Istanbul/Constantinople with its dilapidated palaces, dark rooms labyrinths (the central image of Baroque art) and the deserted sea shore. In “The Man Who Lies” (1968) the labyrinth of rooms appears again in a certain European town of war and post-war times. In “Eden and After” (1970) A. Robbe-Grillet builds a décor of a then trendy student café in glass and metal. In “Successive Slidings of Pleasure” (1974), “Playing with Fire” (1975), “La Belle Captive” (1983) and “Gradiva” (2006) there are mysterious villas, bedrooms with sadomasochistic accessories... And again all this is presented in theatrically illusory and unsteady key of surrealist dreams ruled by

maze wanderings, repeated scenes (even the death scene which will never end), imperishable bodies, timelessness, multiple parallel spaces with sudden disruptions aside, and finally the theme of the “double” – “are these the characteristic features and natural laws of eternally enchanted places?” [Robbe-Grillet, 2005, p.14].

Here is the list of A. Robbe-Grillet’s favorite items used in his audiovisual media texts: labyrinth, water, fire, mirror, crystal glass or other glass vessel (usually falling and breaking into thousand pieces), key, doorknob, rope (to bind women’s hands), shoe, statue, photo/picture...

All these are a kind of signs without a signifier, related to the permanent process of destruction/reconstruction.

Audiovisual techniques, iconography. In my opinion R. Barthes noted aptly that “in A. Robbe-Grillet’s works, at least in the form of a tendency, there simultaneously exist: the rejection of history, plot, psychological motivations and meaning of the items. Hence optical descriptions take on special significance this writer’s works” [Barthes, 1993, p.1241]. At the same time delicate and quaint visuals of A. Robbe-Grillet’s films contrary to classical realism are always the product of “the universe faced and simultaneously generated by our subconscious and unconscious (value shift and replacement, confusion of thoughts, turmoil and bewilderment, paradoxical images created by imagination, dreams, visions, sexual fantasies and phantasms, night fears and nightmares)”, not of the fake, artificial world of everyday life, the world of “the so-called deliberate and conscious life which is just a tasteless, bland, colorless, vulgar, soothing result of all kinds of our censorship, i.e. different prohibitions: morality, reason, logic, respect for the established order of things” [Robbe-Grillet, 2005, pp.231-232].

One of the important manifestations of the game basis in A. Robbe-Grillet’s novels is also the fact that the finished pieces of mass production, cliché images of mass culture are placed into the text [Savelieva, 2008, c.15]. The master easily moves the film action onto a book cover or a billboard, and vice versa the characters depicted on a cover or a billboard become heroes of the narration. “Robbe-Grillet seems to constantly provoke the desire to restore the normal flow of time, to find the source of the narration to make us fail and realize the futility of these attempts” [Alchuk, 1997].

In particular, in “L’Immortelle” (1963) not episode but cinematic background was chosen as the sole means of narration. Various parameters of the setting (actors tallness and his position in the frame, his gestures, camera movement, passage of a supplementary or a car, lighting, etc.) gave birth to a chain of associations, allowed to draw some parallels, to make oppositions and resort to ingenious junctions which were almost independent from spatial and temporal continuity [Robbe-Grillet, 2005, p.225].

In “Trans-Europ-Express” (1967) the whole action with pursuits, endless traps and false paths, deceptions and dead ends the characters get into, is merrily, lightly and smartly developed accompanied by the dramatic and exquisite arias in Russian from “La Traviata”, skillfully cut and torn into parts by Michel Fano. There is no doubt that Jean-Louis Trintignant’s intensified, unexpected, subtle and sophisticated acting contributed to the film’s success with the audience too. However the impressive box-office was probably also achieved with the help of “a cohort of pretty girls (more or less naked), chained and tied with ropes, and offered to the viewers as victims, in other words as an age-old myth about a female slave with whom a man can realize his worst and most sinful sexual fantasies, phantasms of violence” [Robbe-Grillet, 2005, p.235].

The visual sequence of oriental motifs in A. Robbe-Grillet’s works (“Eden and After”, “A Noise That Drives You Crazy”, “Gradiva”) is well illustrated in his statement: “Arab and Mongol palaces fill my ears with the echoes of moans and sighs. Symmetrical pattern on marble slabs of Byzantine churches is reflected in my eyes as women’s hips wide spread, wide open. It is enough for me to see two iron rings in the wall of an ancient Roman dungeon to imagine a beautiful female slave chained and sentenced to long and slow tortures of loneliness and emptiness” [Robbe-Grillet, 1997, p.6].

With all this, despite the irony and evident parody of many sadomasochistic motifs in A. Robbe-Grillet’s works it is always emphasized that the outcome of the game in many respects depends on the victim. And then the version that the sadistic fantasies can be merely products of “victim’s” or “executioner’s” imagination is proposed to the audience.

Anyway, “leitmotiv” visual images appeared from the very beginning in A. Robbe-Grillet’s cinematographic works: mysterious architecture (for example, facades of buildings with ruined

interior), labyrinths, vague imprints, bifurcation/splitting, “eternal return”, items-rhymes; photos/pictures, motionless figures making strict compositions; a woman – an object of desire; a woman – captive; threat of violence, poisoning, blood (or something similar to blood), image/illusion of an act of violence; car/motorcycle; night road accident; wound as initiation or trace; death, etc., served on the screen in a shift of reality and dream, creating a feeling of illusiveness of what is happening [Vinogradov, 2010, p.279, 281]. There is no doubt that all this helps the play of audio and visual symbols and signs on which the montage structure of A. Robbe-Grillet’s media texts is built.

Thus in “Eden and After” (1970) from the very beginning, in the credits, A. Robbe-Grillet introduces not the professional identity of those who participated in its creation but a kind of key images/symbols of the media text: architecture, composition, makeup, sharp objects, games, adhesives, flowing blood, sexual violence, labyrinth, murder, card game, distance, theatricality, phantasm, etc. [Vinogradov, 2010, pp.280-281].

Special role in A. Robbe-Grillet’s media texts is given to visualization of female body which is constructed “as an object even it is not clear of whose desire. It is in the magnetic field of desire” [Ryklin, 1996, p.16], primarily of a man burdened with ironically served Freudian and sadomasochistic complexes. And all this in the atmosphere of painful charm of the deceptive space of a dream.

The images of the “characters”-phantoms are often given in deliberate static accompanied by off-screen sound or distanced, cold voice intonations. Here speech loses its semantic and emotional content, it is deprived of its communicative meaning [Gapon, 1997, p.75]. Moreover, contrary to the tradition the actors in A. Robbe-Grillet’s films often look at the camera. All these violations of the usual audiovisual conventions often cause rejection in the conservative part of the audience.

Characters, their values, ideas, clothes, physique, vocabulary, mimics, gestures.

Alain Robbe-Grillet has repeatedly admitted that most of his ephemeral “characters”, “people from the world of shadows” are “murderers, sorcerers and treacherous seducers who penetrated into my dreams so deeply that their intrusion entails new violation of laws, opens up new depths” [Robbe-Grillet, 2000]. So there is no surprise that as a rule they have no nationality, no profession, no character, and no name (or this name is merely a convention, a symbol). In this sense this phrase of the character from “La Belle Captive” (1983) seems programmatic: “I have no name, I lost it. I have a phone but it’s out of order. You can’t get through”.

A. Robbe-Grillet broke the traditional image of a character-personality, a product of education and environment. Instead in his works appeared “quasi-characters” – phantoms, “doubles”, whose appearance and disappearance, deceptive unsteadiness is constantly emphasized (audio-visually too). Their behavior is devoid of psychological motivation and usual logic and depends solely on the author’s will, play and imagination. They are blurred, vague, inauthentic/false, they are constantly rearranged during the narration to the point when they even exceed the limits of the originally planned outline. They fall to “a multitude of characters similar to each other but non-identical to themselves. The characters multiply, each of them “takes away” a part of a single image. They seem to complement each other, to represent different manifestations, features of a single character. But these individual components do not form an integral image, the character breaks, shatters into “splinters” [Savelyeva, 2008, pp.9-10].

Besides in A. Robbe-Grillet’s works there are essentially no such usual concepts as “positive” and “negative” characters. Also the author does not show his sympathy for any “figure on the landscape” which is traditional for classical art...

A. Robbe-Grillet’s “characters” never talk about politics or social problems. Here are their typical phrases-allusions: “The past can be easily changed but facing future we’re always powerless”, “I’ll find you whenever I like. Tonight, or maybe never or yesterday... Time does not exist for me”, “Any dream is erotic”, “If I imagine a handsome blonde rushing on the highway on a big beautiful motorcycle, it will immediately become a reality”.

The “characters” of A. Robbe-Grillet’s media texts are usually approximately 16-40 years old. Male “characters” have proportional figures. The women are slender and delicate. Their clothes can be plain and functional as well as exotic and colorful. In A. Robbe-Grillet’s later films female “characters” more often appear in “Eve’s dress”...

The impression of the “characters” shaky uncertainty is emphasized by unnatural acting style: theatrical poses, gestures, facial expressions (sometimes we can feel their arrogant contempt for the rest of the world), and often neutral speech tone, without intonation accentuation of words or syllables.

In general the analysis of A. Robbe-Grillet’s audiovisual legacy leads to the conclusion that “the only meaningful “character” is the viewer, the whole story unfolds *in his head*, and he *imagines* it [Robbe-Grillet, 2005, p.598]. This is fully consistent with the basic author’s concept of the master: any media text does not reflect and cannot reflect external reality, it is its own kind of virtual reality.

Significant changes in the lives of the characters. For Alain Robbe-Grillet it is extremely important to show how the “characters” unaware of secret passions sleeping in them fall into “unusual, exceptional conditions, where there are no laws, prohibitions and rules of civilized society, no social barriers and guarantees” [Robbe-Grillet, 2005, p.241]. So they get into mysterious places-labyrinths, car accidents, they become prisoners, accused, witnesses of mysterious games and rituals, murders...

Originated problem. A. Robbe-Grillet’s “characters” try to get out of the above mentioned extreme situations, they can investigate the course of events, try to explain something. Because their own life is often threatened... In other words “anxiety is uncertainty. Freedom creates anxiety. Despair is the lack of opportunities” [Robbe-Grillet, 2002].

Searches for the solution of the problem. However as a rule all these attempts draw the “characters” into a dream maze with the illusory opportunities to get out...

Solution of the problem. In Alain Robbe-Grillet’s works there is no “classical” solution of the “problem”. Audiovisual fabric of the master’s media texts is non-linear, asynchronous, scattered in time and space, and it always cannot be unambiguously interpreted.

The studies on the analysis of art house media texts ends with problem and text questions determining how well the audience has mastered the received skills: “With what media texts known to you can you compare A. Robbe-Grillet’s audiovisual texts? Why? What do they have in common?”

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Filmography

Last Year at Marienbad / L'annee derniere `a Marienbad. France-Italy, 1961. Director: Alain Resnais. Scriptwriter: Alain Robbe-Grillet. Cast: Delphine Seyrig, Giorgio Albertazzi, Sacha Pitoeff and others.

Awards: Golden Lion of St. Mark (Venice Film Festival, 1961). Best Film of the Syndicat Français de la Critique de cinéma in France (1962).

L'immortelle. France-Italy-Turkey, 1963. Director and scriptwriter: Alain Robbe-Grillet. Cast: Françoise Brion, Jacques Doniol-Valcroze, Guido Celano and others.
Awards: Prix Louis Delluc for best debut of the year (1963).

Trans-Europ-Express. France-Belgium, 1967. Director and scriptwriter: Alain Robbe-Grillet. Cast: Jean-Louis Trintignant, Marie-France Pisier, Nadine Verdier, Christian Barbier, Charles Millot, Daniel Emilfork, Alain Robbe-Grillet, Catherine Robbe-Grillet and others.

The Man Who Lies / L'homme qui ment. France-Czechoslovakia, 1968. Director and scriptwriter: Alain Robbe-Grillet. Cast: Jean-Louis Trintignant, Ivan Mistrak, Zuzana Kocurikova, Sylvie Breal, Catherine Robbe-Grillet and others.
Awards: Silver Bear for Best Actor at Berlinale (1968).

The Erasers / Les gommes. Belgium-France, 1969. Directors and scriptwriters: Lucien Deroisy, René Micha. Novel by Alain Robbe-Grillet. Cast: Claude Titre, Françoise Brion, Georges Genicot and others.

Eden and After / L'Eden et apres. France-Czechoslovakia, 1970. Director and scriptwriter: Alain Robbe-Grillet. Cast: Catherine Jourdan, Lorraine Rainer, Sylvain Corthay, Catherine Robbe-Grillet and others.

N. Took the Dice... / N. a pris les des... France, 1971. Director and scriptwriter: Alain Robbe-Grillet. Cast: Catherine Jourdan, Sylvain Corthay and others.
Re-montage version of "Eden and After" (**L'Eden et apres, 1970**).

Jealousy / La Jalousie. German Federal Republic, 1972. Director: Klaus Kirschner. Scriptwriter, author of the novel: Alain Robbe-Grillet. Cast: Ingrid Resch, Michael Degen, Vadim Glowna and others.

Successive Slidings of Pleasure / Glissements progressifs du plaisir. France, 1974. Director and scriptwriter: Alain Robbe-Grillet. Cast: Anicée Alvina, Olga Georges-Picot, Michael Lonsdale, Jean-Louis Trintignant, Jean Martin, Isabelle Huppert, Alain Robbe-Grillet, Catherine Robbe-Grillet and others.

Playing with Fire / Le jeu avec le feu. France-Italy, 1975. Director and scriptwriter: Alain Robbe-Grillet. Cast: Jean-Louis Trintignant, Philippe Noiret, Anicée Alvina, Sylvia Kristel, Agostina Belli, Serge Marquand, Christine Boisson and others.

La belle captive. France, 1983. Director: Alain Robbe-Grillet. Scriptwriters: Alain Robbe-Grillet, Frank Verpillat. Cast: Daniel Mesguich, Cyrielle Clair, Daniel Emilfork, Arielle Dombasle and others.

Taxandria. Belgium-Germany-France, 1994. Director: Raoul Servais. Scriptwriters: Raoul Servais, Frank Daniel, Alain Robbe-Grillet. Cast: Armin Mueller-Stahl, Elliott Spiers, Katja Studt and others.

A Noise That Drives You Crazy / Un bruit qui rend fou / The Blue Villa. France-Belgium-Switzerland, 1995. Directors and scriptwriters: Dimitri de Clercq, Alain Robbe-Grillet. Cast: Fred Ward, Arielle Dombasle, Charles Tordjman and others.
Awards: San Diego Film Festival grand prix, USA (1995).

It's Gradiva Who's Calling You / Gradiva / C'est Gradiva qui vous appelle. France-Belgium, 2006. Director and scriptwriter: Alain Robbe-Grillet. Author of the novel: Wilhelm Jensen. Cast: James Wilby, Arielle Dombasle, Dany Verissimo and others.

Campana de la noche. Canada-Argentina, 2010. Director: Michael Mills. Author of the story: Alain Robbe-Grillet. Cast: Oscar Farfan, Rene Solas, Tatiana Solas and others.

УДК 378

**Анализ элитарных медиатекстов на занятиях в студенческой аудитории
(на примере кинематографического наследия Алена Роб-Грийе)**

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Аннотация. Изучение медийного, виртуального мира требует от человека знаний и умений анализа медиатекстов различного уровня сложности. В этом смысле кинематографическое наследие выдающегося французского писателя, сценариста и режиссера Алена Роб-Грийе (1922–2008) дает продуктивные возможности для анализа произведений элитарной медиакультуры и вписывается в основной спектр медиаобразовательных задач высшей школы (особенно при обучении будущих культурологов, искусствоведов, социологов, филологов, психологов, педагогов). В статье анализируются основные подходы к анализу медиатекстов А. Роб-Грийе в контексте медиаобразования.

Ключевые слова: медиатекст; анализ; медиакультура; медиаобразование; медиакомпетентность; вуз; студенты; фильм; кинематограф; Роб-Грийе.