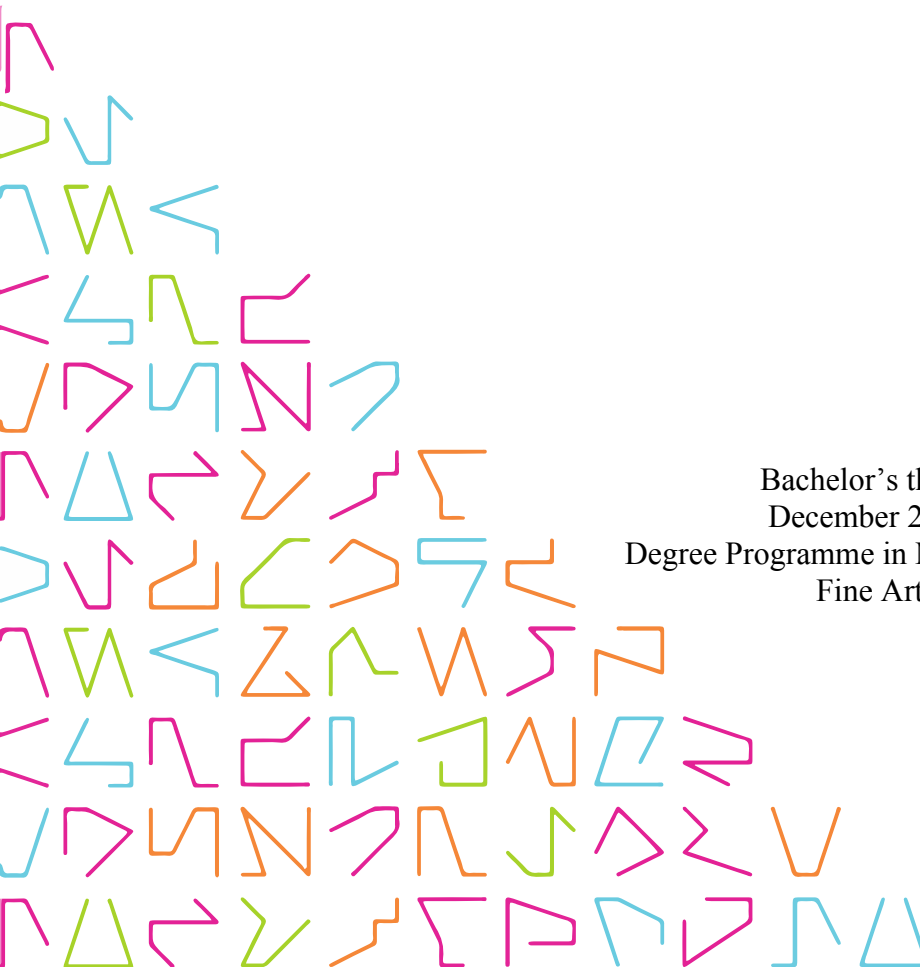


**POETIC EXPRESSION IN THE ANIMATED
DOCUMENTARY FILM**

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Bachelor's thesis
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ABSTRACT

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Poetic expression manifests in different ways in a film's form, visual style, sound and rhythm. The most frequently used means of audiovisual association in poetic narration is a metaphor. The animated documentary film has the advantage to depict the metaphors by the unlimited imagination of the filmmaker. Animation has proven to be a safe and suitable way for explaining personal topics with vulnerable subjects such as people facing mental health issues or persecution. At its deepest, as in the case of poetry, the poetic animated film reveals universal feelings, experience and knowledge.

Poetic film expression originates from the theory of poetry. Poetic expression is used in fiction and non-fiction films, of which poetic documentary is its own category. Like most documentary films, animated documentaries are aimed at adults. The animated documentary uses animation together with poetic expression to depict such emotions and personal events that would be challenging to film.

Key words: animation, animated documentary, metaphor, poetic expression, poetic film, visual association

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1 INTRODUCTION

The use of poetic expression in animated film is a goal that I want to develop further. As a poetically oriented storyteller, I want to invite the viewer to explore and recognise the hidden meanings of the story. Animation enables unlimited use of imagination to depict the poetic narration.

In the 21st century the field of animated documentary has become more known in the film literature, theatres and festivals. The contemporary documentary recognises the animated documentary as its own subfield. (Honesty Roe A. 2015: 54, 46). Similarly, the literature of animation includes the animated documentary (e.g. Collington M. 2016, Krieger J. 2011). While researching the poetic expression in documentary films, I noticed that the theory of poetry was hardly discussed. I have used the missing theoretical angle to explain poetic expression and to answer my research question: how is poetic expression depicted in the animated documentary film?

The second chapter of the thesis begins with the theory of traditional poetry. In order to maintain the focus on the poetic expression of animated films, I have concentrated on the creation and usage of the poetic expression and excluded a comprehensive historical presentation of poetry. The second chapter continues with the definition of live action and animated documentary films. The live action documentary is included in order to understand the background for animated documentaries. The chapter ends with a discussion of depicting reality. The third chapter reviews briefly poetic animated documentary film related animation genres.

The fourth chapter answers the research question by analysing the poetic expression of four poetic animations. The first animation is a promotional film of Child Line, which encourages distressed children to contact for help. The second animation depicts real people with multi-sensory experience. The third animation reflects a narrated poem which is a personal discussion of lived life. The fourth animation is a project part of the thesis about online trolling. The fifth chapter concludes the topic of poetic expression.

2 DOCUMENTARY FILM

In films, metaphors are commonly used as poetic means of audiovisual association. Metaphors communicate film's visual narrative by depicting indirectly spoken or written words. However, metaphoric expression is not necessarily connected to usage of language. Many poetic documentaries are non-dialogue.

2.1. Theoretical basis of poetic expression

The traditional western poetics which covers the early theory of storytelling and literary criticism is originally based on the Aristotelian writings in 330-320s BCE. According to *The Poetics of Aristotle* (1927: xiii, 35), a poet mimics things that might happen either probably or inevitably. Hence, in its essence, poetry is philosophical and serious.

The literature theorist Bernhard F. Godenhjelm (1914 :416-419), mentions three main genres of poetry: epic, lyric and dramatic. Epic refers to narrative poems of which novels and short stories have developed. Epic poetry is based on external perception of life including historical events and mythology. Lyrical poetry resembles the art of melody. It interprets the emotional life and inner life of a human soul. Dramatic poetry combines the epic and lyric poetry by depicting the external world with inner subjective experience.

Besides western Aristotelian poetics, historically poetry has been expressed among different nations worldwide. According to rare samples of the ancient times, poetry was expressed in hymns and songs. Examples include the oldest Indian Veda hymns and Arabic Hamasa songs, both in which the epic, lyric and dramatic poetry merge. (Godenhjelm B. 1914: 49). Another example is the internationally known Japanese Haiku poetry, dating back to the 1500s, which is inspired by nature and its ephemeral beauty (Patt J., Warkentyne M, Till B. 2010: 6).

2.1.1 Characteristics of poetry

American author and teacher of literacy Robert A. Harris (2013) has analysed in his article “The Traditional Theory of Poetry”, the characteristics of poetic expression. The summarised analysis is based on his nine points (Table 1).

TABLE 1. The Traditional Theory of Poetry (Harris R. 2013)

1. Poetry is mimetic
2. Poetry is emotional as well as rational
3. Poetry recreates, not merely recounts
4. Poetry is a “speaking picture”
5. Poetry uses devices of association
6. Poetry unifies or pulls together disparate materials
7. Poetry concentrates and intensifies its message
8. Poetry conveys meaning beyond the particular
9. Poetry is musical

Regarding the points 1. and 3. in Table1, by mimicking the poet creates something new but based in reality, may it be a feeling, a thought or a truth of something. Harris's 2. point states that, poems are as much human feeling as they are rational thoughts, one supporting the other. In the 4. and 5. points, Harris emphasizes diverse use of imagery and distinctive associative means, which result in a sensory and emotional experience in the viewer. The 6. and 7. points refer to insightful use of associative means, which connects different meanings and creates new vision in a surprising and unexpected way. As the 8. point, poems touch universal human emotion. Eventually some deeper meaning can be understood. The 9. point, Harris's musical aspect, refers to the traditional practice of narrating poems by voice. The length of verses, rhyming of words, rich imagery, and feeling of narrating all create a harmonic narrative level.

2.1.2 Rhetorical devices – devices of association

A rhetorical device is an expressive means that an author or speaker uses to convey a meaning or evoke emotion. Harris has compiled and analysed dozens of rhetorical devices in his book *Writing with Clarity and Style: A Guide to Rhetorical Devices for Contemporary Writers* (2018). In poetry, examples of the typical rhetorical devices used include metaphor, personification (personifying a thing), simile (comparison), synecdoche (partial meaning is meant as whole: mouth yawned = person yawned), oxymoron (juxtapose contradicting words: controlled chaos, old news) and antithesis (two contrasting ideas are juxtaposed). As in poetry, the antithesis can be used powerfully in speeches: *“We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools.” – Martin Luther King, Jr.*

According to Godenhjelm (1914: 366-367), the most commonly used rhetoric devices in poetry are metaphor and to it closely related personification and simile. The personification is very commonly merged into the metaphor: flowers with child-like eyes, ocean full of sadness - any non-human becomes a human being with the personified expression. Jeffrey Wainwright, a poet, translator and critique, mentions in his book *Poetry: the Basics* (2011: 168), that the metaphoric connection is explicitly made in the simile by using “like” or “as”. As an example, a poem by Anne Askew (1521-46) “The Ballad Which Anne Askew Made and Sang When She Was in Newgate” begins with a simile:

Like as the armed knight
Appointed to the field
With this world will I fight
And faith shall be my shield

Following from poetry to filmmaking, poetic expression is commonly based on using metaphors.

2.2. Live action documentary

Next, the analysis of documentary film will be introduced. The theme of poetic expression will continue subsequently.

Still from the late 1990's to early 2000s, theorists of the animated documentary aimed at analysing films by live action categorization of documentary (Honesty Roe A. 2015:47). Therefore, at first, the different types of live action documentary will be introduced. American film theorist Bill Nichols has divided fiction films into genres and documentary films into modes. Nichols includes six modes in his model: expository, observational, participatory, reflexive, performative and poetic (Table 2). Documentary film may indeed contain features of several modes, the categorization allows overlapping and flexibility. However, the categorization is based on domination of certain features. (Nichols B. 2001:99-138). The expository and observational have traditionally represented the most common documentary film modes (Collington M. 2006:206).

TABLE 2. The documentary modes and their characteristics (Nichols B. 2001: 99-138)

Expository	Film is based on factual information which can be analysed and researched. It has a rhetoric or argumentative content with a narrator.
Observational	Camera records without any or with minimal interruption by a filmmaker. The filmmaker's aim is to achieve as objective, authentic and natural flow of events as possible.
Participatory	Filmmaker becomes a subject who actively participates by asking questions and sharing experience with the other filmed subjects. In this way, the viewer can perceive social interactions in spontaneous situations and learn from activities of the filmed subjects.
Reflexive	Film questions the basis and ways of making a documentary. By unexpectedly appearing in front of the camera, the filmmaker aims to awaken critical thinking on the authenticity of the filmed subjects and situations.
Performative	Film invites its viewer to take part in the emotional world and personal experience performed by the filmmaker. The filmmaker may belong to a minority group whose voice she or he wants to present in a unique way. Instead of the traditional angle "we tell about them to you" the starting point is "we tell about us to you".

Poetic	Film's narration is not necessarily bound to events, subjects, time or place nor does it follow a chronological plot. Instead of presenting an argument, poetic documentary invites a viewer to interpret its suggestive and aesthetic narration emotionally.
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2.3. Animated documentary

The word animation is based on the Latin words “anima” and “animare”. They translate as spirit and to give life - giving spirit to lifeless subject is exactly what animation is about. Albeit animation is not based on the real life camera recording, it can alike express non-fictional, realistic events plausibly. (Nummelin J. 2015:7-8)

In the 21st century, animated documentary theorists have contemplated practical ways of analysing the films (Honess Roe A. 2015:47). However, before moving further let us clarify the concept of animated documentary. A documentary can be fully or partly animated. The partly animated does not necessarily represent the animated documentary. Annabelle Honess Roe (2015:54), researcher of animated documentaries, suggests that the animated part has to be essential in terms of the overall meaning of the film. If the animated part would be removed and the story still proceeded fine, the film would not represent an animated documentary. Honess Roe (47) analyses the use of animation in animated documentary by three concepts: mimetic substitution, non-mimetic substitution and evocative.

2.3.1 Mimetic substitution

When all or some of the footage is missing or is not available, the missing parts can be substituted by animation. Ancient real life dinosaurs can be animated photorealistically as part of the live action footage. This is called mimetic substitution, which aims at imitating real footage. Especially the expository films tend to utilise mimetic substitution.

As an example of the mimetic substitution is the animated documentary *The Sinking of The Lusitania* (Winsor McCay 1918). The American silent documentary depicts the

sinking of the British liner Lusitania, which was hit by torpedoes by a German submarine during the World War I. McCay utilised newsreels and news photos to mimic the events. The film has been accused of being propagandist, although McCay emphasized it to be the first documentation made in film with limited news material available. (Honess Roe A. 2015: 44-45)

2.3.2 Non-mimetic substitution

Likewise mimetic, the non-mimetic substitution is used when no live action footage is available. Instead of the photorealistic effect the aim is aesthetic. An interview or other informative moment can be animated to complete the storytelling of the documentary. According to Collington M. (2016: 216) the non-mimetic animated documentary has a tendency to disclose an untold voice, thus resembling Nichols's performative mode. Honess Roe (2015:48) mentions as a non-mimetic example an animated documentary *Hidden* (Heilborn H., Aronowitsch D. & Johansson M. 1999). A recorded voice interview of Peruvian refugee boy in Sweden has been animated according to the real interview situation. The film includes some live action footage to create memory-like moments of the interviewed boy. In order to protect privacy, shooting of the film has probably not been an option. Aesthetically the boy is depicted with moving big eyes and facial expression which appeal to a viewer emotionally (Picture 1).



PICTURE 1. *Hidden* (Heilborn H, Aronowitsch D and Johansson M 1999)

Similarly, the films *Persepolis* (Satrapi M. 2007) and *Waltz with Bashir* (Folman A. 2008) represent non-mimetic substitution (Pictures 2 & 3). The events of the main characters are based on real life war time experiences of both filmmakers. *Waltz with Bashir* includes emotionally appealing animated aesthetics, moments of storming memories in the subconscious and a dreamlike world. In both films, the main character is depicted as a vulnerable individual, regardless of ethnicity, nationality, religion or gender. (Collington M. 2016: 205, 216)



PICTURE 2. *Persepolis* (Satrapi M. 2007)



PICTURE 3. *Waltz with Bashir* (Folman A. 2008)

2.3.3 Evocative

The evocative use refers to depicting inner moments like dreams, mental state, imagination and memories. With respect to Nichols's documentary modes, the poetic

mode represents evocative aims. Animation can be used to depict the subject's emotional state and inner experience. As a combination of animated and live action, the film *Dimensions* (Glynne A., Chiu R. 2009) describes moments of a young man with schizophrenia (Picture 4). *Dimensions* is part of *Animated Minds*, a series of short films, which focus on communicating the subjective experience of mental health problems to a wider audience (Animated Minds 2018). Honess Roe (2015: 49) mentions an animated documentary *An Eyeful of Sound* (Moore S. 2010) which describes people with synaesthesia. The film will be further analysed in the third chapter (4.3).

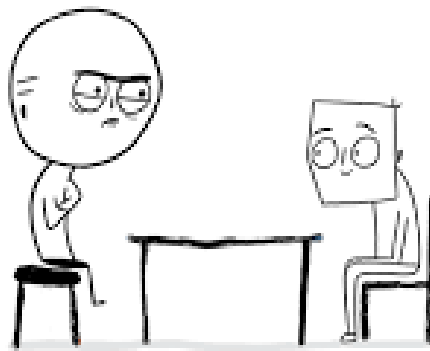


PICTURE 4. *Dimensions* (Glynne, A Chiu R. 2009)

2.4. Viewpoints for non-fictional presentation

As Honess Roe (2015: 44) encapsulates, may the documentary film be animated or live action, the chosen technique depends on what story the filmmaker wants to tell and how that story is told in the best way. Eventually, the viewer's assumption of truthful storytelling determines the credibility of the film content. In live action, film editing and staging may influence the truthfulness of the story. Technically, staging already happens during layout design by choosing the image size and angle of view. Documentary films tend to represent the filmmaker's point of view of the reality. Due to this, a biased discussion about the more truthful storytelling of the live action vs. animated documentary can be misleading. For many filmmakers, animation offers an optional way to tell about reality (Nummelin J. 2015:8) although hardly any narration is ever truly neutral or guileless (Saarinen E., Tanskanen I. 2010:21).

In terms of the earlier described Nichols's documentary modes, the observatory and participatory modes could be challenging to justify as animated since the aim is to record spontaneous real time events as they show in front of the camera. The reflexive film is strongly connected to the filmmaker's critical attitude on the depicted reality. In theory, animation could be a viable option, provided that a voice recording would reveal a biased situation which would effect on the story's truthfulness. If the awarded animation about African spiritual healer Mr Madila (Waudby R. 2015) would be non-fictive, it could maybe represent the reflexive animated documentary (Picture 5). The film starts with a curious documentarist-like main character who wants to find out more about the healer and his promises. During the interview it turns out that the healer wants to modify his answers by new takes to sound more convincing.



PICTURE 5. Mr Madila (Waudby R. 2015)

3 GENRES OF ANIMATION

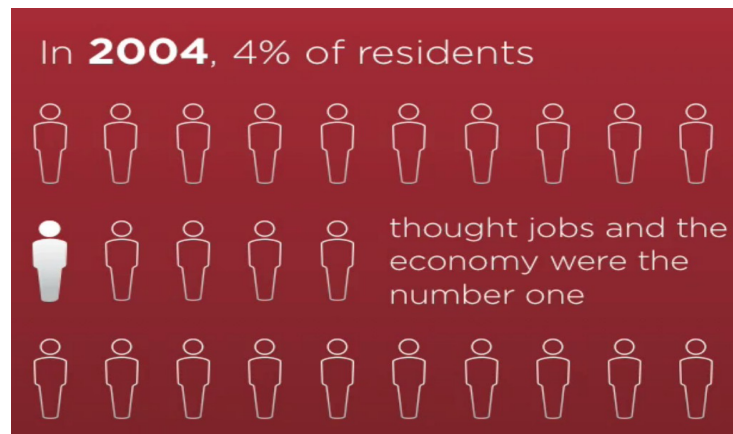
Besides animated documentary films, other genres of animation aimed at adults include kinetic typography, animated infographics and experimental animation.

3.1. Kinetic typography

Kinetic typography, in which motion graphics is strongly based on, is an animation technique for moving and shaping text or type. It is generally used in film's titles and credits. However, certain films can be narratively based on kinetic typography. These films, may it be animated or live action, include awareness raising, music videos, commercials and infographics. A moving text or type can have a visually associative, poetic meaning. It can help convey emotion or tone of film's narrative. An awareness raising poetic film *Child Line: First Step* (Buck 2013) combines kinetic typography and abstract visuals effectively (4.2).

3.2. Animated infographics

Animated infographics is commonly used to visualise statistics and raise awareness. Basic representational animated infographics can communicate information, data and statistics more effectively by using a storyline. Usually, people are naturally drawn to stories. Besides the animation of graphics, the role of sound can be important in emphasizing a meaning and directing a viewer's attention. *The Clock is Ticking on Long Island* (Duante 2010) is an example of animated infographics film about Long Island (USA), a downward going regional community facing economic and environmental challenges. The statistics support the information which is embedded in the storyline (Picture 6).



PICTURE 6. The Clock is Ticking on Long Island (Duante 2010)

3.3. Experimental animation

Experimental animation could be considered as the fine art side of animation. The term experimental refers to filmmaking that open-mindedly explores non-narrative forms and alternatives to conventional ways of working. Josh Schaffner's film is an example of experimental animation (Picture 7). The film has plenty of metaphoric meaning which is typical to many experimental films.



PICTURE 7. Experimental animation by Josh Schaffner.

4 POETIC NARRATION

4.1. Poetic expression

Poetic expression has been used in fiction and non-fiction films throughout the times. The historically early poetic documentary has roots in the modernist avant-garde movement, which aimed to depict reality in freely associative ways (Nichols B. 2001:103). Documentary theorist Jarmo Valkola (2002: 129-130) includes essay films into poetic film. Essay films can depict someone memorising the past and contemplating the future e.g. by a letter or diary. Usually the essay film uses text or speech in its narration but it can also use only visual narration (Aaltonen J. 2011:24).

Experimental documentary film is also known in the context of poetic film. Experimental filmmakers do not necessarily represent documentarists as such, rather they are interdisciplinary artists who are inspired by music, rhythms and a variety of fine arts visual means. According to Finnish filmmaker and scriptwriter Jouko Aaltonen (2011: 25-26), the poetic mode is actually not its own category, rather one of film's features. On the other hand, poetically strong expression throughout the film could suggest that the filmmaker specifically aims at distinctly poetic way of telling the story. Every documentary filmmaker has her or his own vision of telling their story.

Then how is poetic narration expressed in the animated documentary film? As discussed in the theoretical basis of the poetic expression (2.1), rich imagery and associations are characteristic for written poetry. As in live action, in the animated documentary the poetic expression shows in diverse experience of association which is realised in the film's structure: form, visual style, rhythm and sound. A thesis by Milla Rajakallio (film editing, TAMK 2015), "Continuity and Feeling - Expressive Continuity in Poetic Documentaries" has been useful for analysing the means of poetic expression.

4.1.1 Form

When analysing a documentary film's form, usually the emphasis is on the content, especially on the message (Aaltonen J. 2006: 216). However, since the message of the poetic content is very ambiguous, it is more meaningful to analyse the form from the film's narrative characteristics point of view. The poetic documentary takes shape in temporal and locational fragmentation which, when harmonically combined, evoke insights in the viewer. The impact and fluency of the fragmented narration is based on the continuity of the film's theme and thought. The theme of the film can be presented by metaphoric guidance and in several parallel moments. (Pirilä K., Kivi E. 2008: 46-47). In the poetic story, the narrator or main character stays mostly unknown. However, a viewer can explore them in some deeper level in parallel with their own experiences. The disclosure of intimate matters and moments pulls the viewer into an interactive process (Valkola J. 2002:130).

The poetic documentary finds its form in the elliptic narration - instead of showing some essential event it is visually referred to. By exploring the suggestive meanings the viewer makes subjective conclusions. (Pirilä K., Kivi E. 2008: 57). Another poetic form, the cyclic narration refers to recurring feeling, sound, lighting, object and passing of time, which create new meanings to the film's story.

4.1.2 Visual style

The visual style of an animated film is influenced by animation technique, layout design, character design, visual effects, line, colours and lighting. The techniques of animation cover 2D and 3D animation, stop motion and motion graphics. An animated film can also be a mixture of the genres including live action. 2D includes computer vector-based and hand drawn animation. In its early stages, hand drawn animation was drawn movement by movement on a transparent cel but nowadays it is made by a digital drawing table and drawing software. In 3D animation, also referred to as computer generated imagery (CGI or CG), characters are digitally modelled and posed on certain keyframes. Stop motion covers puppet, clay and item animation where the object is moved and a picture is taken after repetition of producing a sequence of photos.

Eventually, the pictures will be combined into series, where the changes of the movement create movement. Motion graphics animation refers to moving graphic elements or text, usually for making informational and promotional films. The purpose of motion graphics is not character or story driven as of the other genres of animation.

In the narration, the visual association is used to tell the story. To create the visual association, scenes with visually similar elements such as movement, action or feeling, are shown successively. Between the successive images a novel connection is born, which creates new metaphoric association. Resembling poetry, the metaphoric meaning is expressed as a reference, such as a candle going out when the death arrives. (Pirilä K., Kivi E. 2008: 66). Besides metaphors, metamorphosis is a common visual way of telling a story in animated films. In addition, repetition of a certain image emphasizes its meaning for the film's story and hence for the viewer. Depending on the content, the repeated image can e.g. refer to constant power or to a meaningful event. By repeating the image sufficiently, it is possible to create emotional intensity.

Other ways of non-dialogue, subtle narration include the change in feeling between images by the use of colours and light. The contrast created this way induces tension and drama in the narration and leads the viewer's attention. In hand drawn animation, even the style of the outlines can communicate emotion and states of mind.

4.1.3 Sound

The sound of the poetic narration is typically non-dialogue or its quality is non-explanatory and non-argumentative. However, music and sound effects often play a special role as feelings and thoughts are evoked by tempo, hits and chords. They are used to clarify the rhythm of the film and depict emotional state, passing of time, action and change in condition. Like in any film, music can intensify or change the meaning and interpretation of the images. The form related elliptic narration finds its way also in sound. In that case, many-sided and suggestive use of sound is the key. (Pirilä K., Kivi E. 2008: 57).

4.1.4 Rhythm

Karen Pearlman has researched the cinematic expression of rhythm. In her work *Cutting Rhythms: Shaping the Film Edit* (2015: 145-146), Pearlman states that rhythm creates tempo, motion and feeling in the images. By this way the former and latter images are connected energetically. The creation of the rhythm is an intuitive process of the filmmaker. Eventually, rhythm is about constant movement in relation to time and energy. (Pearlman K.: 1, 15).

In the poetic documentary, with less traditional narrative structure, the rhythm acts as the evoking force of thoughts and feelings. The film's rhythm has to be temporally appropriate with the visual storytelling in order to leave space for the viewer to find, associate and interpret meanings. The previously mentioned recurrence of images can also act as the rhythmic force.

Besides animated poetic documentary films, plenty of films exist online that represent “animated poetry” - narrated poems that are visualised by animated story. Unlike in poetic documentary, the metaphoric expression between the poems' spoken words and visual story may not be that obvious. Many of the poems seem to be depicted quite literally.

Next, the form, visual style, sound and rhythm will be analysed by four poetic and awareness raising animations: *Child Line: First Step*, *An Eyeful of Sound*, *Stroom* and *Troll*.

4.2. Analysis: Child Line: First Step

Child Line: First Step (Buck 2010) is a promotional film which encourages children and young people under the age of 19 who experience sexual abuse to contact Child Line – a UK based 24h counselling service dealing with any issue that causes distress. The film is hand drawn animated with plenty of kinetic typography.

4.2.1 Form

The film's theme and message are very clear: “you do not need to feel shame – it is not your fault – we (Child Line) are here anytime to help you”. The non-dialogue, hand drawn animated film depicts a discussion between a child and a counsellor by hand written text and abstract shapes. In the story, perception of time is linear as the story moves forward through the discussion and moments in between. The film consists of a dialogue with two very different hand writing styles which refers to two discussing sides. Cyclic form is realised by reoccurring abstract shapes that convey distressed feeling.

4.2.2 Visual style

Child Line includes plenty of metaphors to depict the delicate issues of the film - a heart beat sound combined with a shape changing polygon refer to distress of dealing with the sexual abuse (Picture 8). Hand drawn style of the animation communicates thoughts and state of emotion of the child. For a such sensitive topic, visual association of the story has been realised without shocking imagery, yet with very clear message. The film's subjects are not portrayed visually, they are introduced through written dialogue. Lines and shapes of objects communicate feeling metaphorically.

In Child Line, kinetic typography is a dominant visual element and acts as a storyteller. The words may change in shape and they may suddenly disappear which reflect the fear of the child to communicate with the counsellor. Another distinction between the child and counsellor is the style of the text. The letters of words of the child are colourful and different font than the counsellor's. The counsellor's written words are depicted in a static, calming way which reflects trust and someone who is a supporting and emotionally balanced person. Visually the film starts poetically, by floating white abstract parts on a violet background, which heavy wind blows into nowhere. Many moments in the film reflect metaphorically feeling of loneliness, more specifically, facing alone the sexual abuse.



PICTURE 8. Child Line: First Step (Buck 2010)

4.2.3 Sound

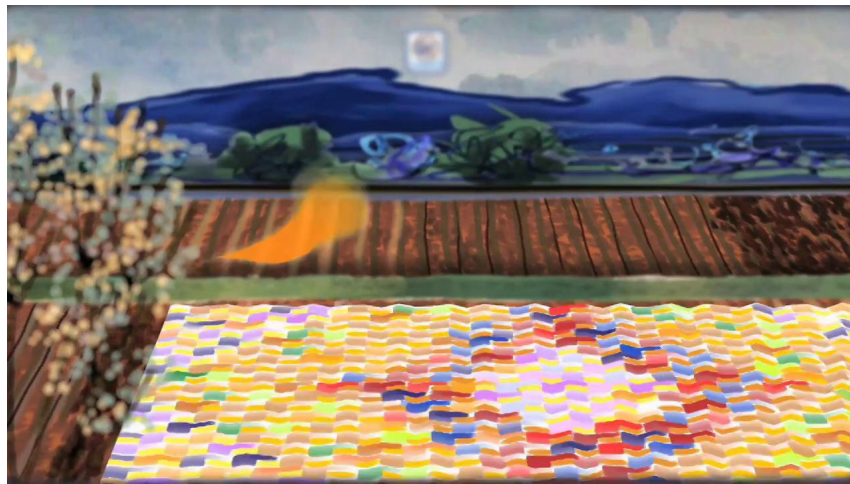
In Child Line, sound is made by sound effects and music. In a such sensitive topic, sound is used expressively as a complementary narrative level to the film's visual story. Metaphorically, some of the sound effects reflect emotionally cold and lonely feeling. Lively, orchestra-like music is used in a scene, which depicts the child enjoying again school and music classes. In a poetic way, music is used to refer to moments that are not necessarily depicted visually.

4.2.4 Rhythm

Rhythm is created by delicate use of sound and regularly appearing written dialogue between the child and counsellor. The dialogue also creates sense of passing time and progress of the confidential communication. Regularly appearing abstract shapes also have rhythmic effect by moving the story forward, yet deeper, by depicting metaphorically inner distressed feelings.

4.3. Analysis: An Eyeful of Sound

An Eyeful of Sound (Moore S. 2010) is a hand drawn animated poetic documentary about three people with a neurological, multi-sensory condition called synaesthesia (Picture 9). The mixing of senses can be experienced in a multiple ways by hearing colour and sound, seeing sound and taste as texture, colour or moving shape, tasting colour and sound. In addition, senses of touch and smell mix together and with the other senses. (Moore S. 2010). The documentary is based on recorded interviews and the visual poetic narration is much realised through elucidating the sensations by lively audiovisual storytelling.



PICTURE 9. An Eyeful of Sound (Moore S. 2010)

4.3.1 Form

The synaesthetic experiences and the story of the film are visualised by animation. The story is taken forward by a train with a synaesthete passenger. Even the film's viewer is a passenger in the train. In other words, the audience is invited to take part in the story which is characteristic to poetical narration. The synaesthetic sensations are being experienced through windows of the moving train. The interviewed synaesthetes are not specifically introduced during the film. In the middle of the film, in the second part, an interview of a researcher takes place. At that point the train stops on the train station and the view changes from the train to an office.

In the third part, the viewer returns into the role of the passenger. The synaesthetic experiences intensify towards the end. Instead of having a fragmented form, the film's temporal and locational changes are linear. The linearity helps the viewer to understand the topic more consistently. Abstract shapes that describe the spontaneous multi-sensory experience are constantly present in the film, which create poetic and artistic dimension to the visual storytelling.

4.3.2 Visual style

The visuals of the film is realised by watercolour and drawing. The world is mainly presented from a left to right moving train. By moving to a certain direction, the train creates temporal continuity. When the train stops to its final destination, the next part of the film starts with an interview of a neuropsychologist who is specialised in synaesthesia. The visual sensations are depicted as moving abstract shapes covered with texture, which are based on the interviewees' own description.

In the light of poetry, the momentarily appearing and recurring abstract elements almost like dance in front of the background, which creates poetic continuity for the visual narration. Visual association occurs together with the recorded speech, sound effects and music. Towards the end the visual feeling intensifies by an increased number and incidence of the abstract shapes. The change in the visual intensity creates tension and depicts the quite heavy sensory process of the aesthetics.

4.3.3 Sound

The sound of the film is made of instrumentally diverse music, human voices and sound effects. The rich and lively music and sound effects mirror the sensations that are described in words. During the first half minute of the film, the synaesthetic sensations are heard and shown in parallel harmony. The sound of an alarm clock generates a sensation of a yellow moving spiral. Next, in the distance of the moving train, an orchestra is playing out loud, which generates patchwork like colourful sensation. During the train journey, the background music is on adequately low level which

enables the spoken words to be heard properly. The background music and sound effects are timed in synchronicity with the speech which supports the overall rhythm of the film.

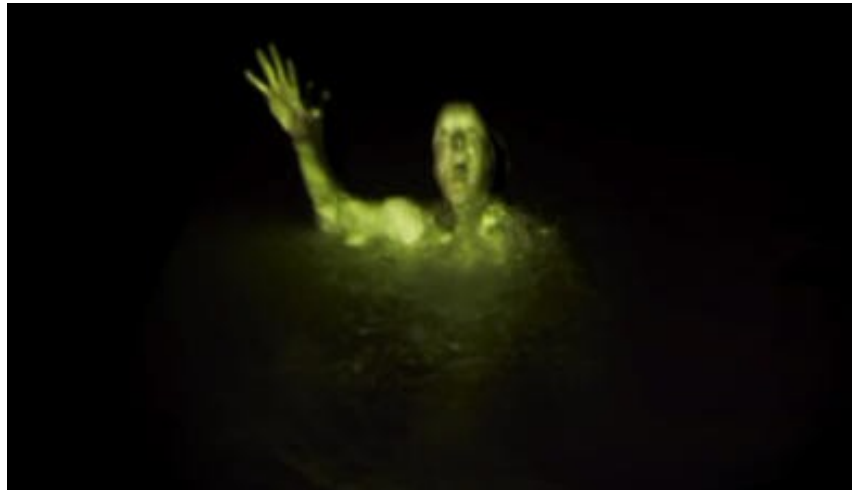
After the middle part's interview of the neuropsychologist, the background music intensifies and number of colourful shapes increase. Simultaneously, the experiences of the interviewees are heard more successively. Towards the end, the intensity increases on purpose and for some viewers it might even cause audiovisual stress. For a short moment the vibrant audiovisual narration subsides but only to continue with even more intensive sensory experience. By changing the sound level, it is possible to create rhythmically and narratively interesting contrast. During the final moments of the film, the powerfully loud circus-like soundscape subsides entirely. A silent space is left for the ending statement of a synaesthete: "I can never really get away from it but I do like silence".

4.3.4 Rhythm

The overall rhythm in the film is rousing and forward moving. The images change in a brisk tempo and they contain plenty of synaesthetic sensations describing visual and kinetic change. The speed of the train also creates rhythm with the changing landscape which is seen through the window. The rhythm of the images, sound effects and music are in synchronicity with the rhythm of the spoken words. This clarifies the diverse informational flow of the film. The poetic continuity of the film is conveyed by the rhythmically recurring sensual experiences.

4.4. Analysis: Stroom

Stroom (Sterckx F. 2010) is a surreal poetic animation (Picture 10) about an old dying man's personal discussion of the decisions made in life. The animation is based on a narrated poem. The deep message conveyed by the personal and aesthetic audiovisual narration creates a cinematic poem. Technically the animation is a combination of clay animation and projected live action.



PICTURE 10 . Stroom (Sterckx F. 2010)

4.4.1 Form

In the beginning, an old male character goes through an inner dialogue of life. The inner discussion is presented as a poem in a rather bitter and sceptical tone. The poem is narrated in Dutch and subtitled in English. The middle part of the film is the most intensive in which the old man voices (sound entirely muted) his mental affliction and emotionally charged thoughts of his lived life. In the last part the overall feeling subsides as death arrives. Space and time feel unreal, maybe due to the surreal style of the film as if the dialogue would happen inside of the character's head in deep subconscious, in a dreamlike state.

The message of the film is allegorical which I interpret the following way: eventually the happiness of life is found inside of us and our independent choices instead of fulfilling other people's wishes and expectations. In this way, the film could also resemble of mental loneliness.

4.4.2 Visual style

The visual world of the film is surrealistic. Visually, the film mostly depicts the head of the old man. The head is gently sliced, referring to the lyrics of the poem: "Slice me

gently open, and stroke my veins. It is better for my blood.” In terms of colours and light, the film is melancholic with a dark background throughout the film. However, the darkness could also reflect a dreamlike state. In the last part of the film, the man is shown in water up to his neck. In the poetic way, the character is not really introduced but the viewer can feel sharing his spirit and experience. Visually, the character speaks directly to the viewer. The hue of colours and light stay relatively calm which reflects the timeless space and keeps the viewer's attention in the surreal character. Metaphors are used throughout the film, last when the character's head descends under the water as the poem's reference to ending of life.

4.4.3 Sound

The sound consists of the narrated poem and music. At the beginning and in the ending the speech and music are peaceful in terms of the rhythm and volume. The middle part sounds massive with accelerated music that intensifies on the same level as the voice. This creates a heavy feeling on the lyrics and story. On the other hand, maybe the heavy essence of the sound is intentional towards the ending, as in the *An Eye of Sound*. The musical nature of the narrated poem emerges from emotionally moving voice, rhythmic and nuanced use of voice and the length of the verses. Occasionally, the figuratively narrated poem resembles thoughts from a diary.

4.4.4 Rhythm

The film has a harmonic pictorial rhythm which supports the peaceful, yet emotional narrating of the poem. The music accompanies the audiovisual narration and creates its own rhythmic nuances to the film's story. Regularly appearing black empty frames calm down the rhythm of the storytelling. The similar appeal of the images with black background, timeless dreamlike state and solitude, maintain the rhythm throughout the film.

4.5. Analysis of the project part: Troll

Troll is, with the exception of sound, my independent final artwork. The film is a hand drawn poetic animation with some kinetic typography and experimental vibe. Troll was realised as an animation instead of live action due to the film's evocative and imaginative nature of the story. Hence, live action documentary related mimetic substitution (introduced in 2.3) was not relevant. In the film, a man turns into a troll through metamorphosis which is easy to depict by animation. As live action, filming and interviewing of an unknown, hiding person behind the trolling would have not been possible.

The film has documentary strength in the real topic of trolling including cyber-bullying, which I got familiarised with by studying related published material. Trolling is a term used for online harassment which target individuals and social forums. At first, the idea was to depict a victim's story, but then I became more interested of the causes and the person behind the online bullying. The topic is not only actual in 2018 but psychologically interesting, which is why I realised it as a poetic animation.

4.5.1 Form

Troll discusses male trolls in a written diary-like style. At the beginning, in the background, an outlined male head starts to appear. Soon the presented image of the male's head turns into a threatening troll. The intensity of the events increase until the middle part, after which the feeling calms down yet staying mysterious. The last part reminds the viewer to treat other people respectfully. The film ends with three related webpage links which represent the main organisations working with human rights. This is a purposeful ending of the film. The very short duration (1.12 min) of the animation conveys quickly the film's message, hence resembling a TV commercial.

As a poetic feature, the story hardly has any physical space or temporal continuity, rather mental space and time. The troll stays unknown and mysterious character, whose early life is being speculated to understand possible causes to harmful trolling. The film

does not try to underline any cause, take one-sided approach nor does it try to explain any argument. Rather, the speculation opens new aspects for understanding the troll's behaviour. The cyclic rhythm creating form, takes place by the repetition of the male's head which keeps the attention in the male character and in his story.

4.5.2 Visual style

At the beginning, a faceless anonymous head looks straight into the viewer. Suddenly the head turns into an emotionally triggered troll. The hand drawn animation on a black background is very moderate in colours. The colours have been used to distinct an object from another and symbolically a boy from a girl. The characters are drawn only with outlines that vibrate the same way. As a continuous element, the rhythmic vibration is a metaphorical expression to the force of life. The vibrant outlines create a poetic vibe on the black background of the film (Picture 11).



PICTURE 11. Troll (Karukoski N. 2018)

The colour of the animated text is an earthy calm brown, for it to stand out adequately as its own element, yet matching with the other colours in the film. The visual choices have been made according to the simultaneous depiction of the text and images. In that way, the viewer's attention on the different elements would stay equal and the message clear. The use of kinetic typography makes the effect of trolling powerful.



PICTURE 12. Troll (Karukoski N. 2018)

The troll is depicted as a faceless, transparent and emotionally triggered lonely character with a computer. The troll is facing away from the viewer which reflects the anonymous hiding and reveals the cyber-bullying through the computer's screen (Picture 12).

4.5.3 Sound

The sound of the film consists of music and a few sound effects. The film starts with a rhythmic beeping without visual content (black background). As the first image appears, the beeping is accompanied with a heartbeat-like sound and violin. The beeping and heartbeat act as a metaphor to anxiety and fear, which the target of the troll experiences. The beeping is rhythmically set with the appearance of the text and other visual elements which creates its own narrative level. Gradually, the music becomes more dramatic, yet maintaining the film's mysterious feeling. The style of the music resembles old detective films in which the sound of violin refers to something dramatic to happen soon.

4.5.4 Rhythm

Especially for the (fairly) non-dialogue narration, which is typical for the poetic film, the rhythm acts as the engine of moments. In Troll, the rhythm is created by the sound,

the timing and duration of the visual elements, the order and recurrence of the images, the vibration of the characters and the vigorous ending of the story.

5 DISCUSSION

Making its way from written poetry to moving image, poetic expression has inspired filmmakers throughout the times. Metaphors are commonly used means of poetic expression in a film. The theme of the poetic film can be anything and the poetic way of telling very personal. However, when the film's theme considers inner personal dialogue, it could be more meaningful to present it in the poetic non-explaining way. When the theory and the philosophical nature of poetry is understood, one is able to recognise the poetic expression of a film.

The poetic narration of the film is presented by different means of expression in terms of the form, visual style, sound and rhythm. When time, objects, events and space change unexpectedly but with referring meaning, the film resembles the way poetry reflects reality. Poetic expression enables to peek into a deeper world of associations and meanings with a wider perspective to the film's topic. The deep moments of the poetry reflect the universal moments of humanity, they touch regardless of culture.

Especially in the animated film, the poetic documentary offers limitless use of imagination for depicting another kind of reality. This has been recognised by the filmmakers of the Animated Minds which collaborates with mental health communities to raise awareness on mental conditions. I would assume that the poetic animated documentary will increase its popularity in the future. And maybe its psychological themes would even offer a perspective to societal discussion.

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