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On the Ingenious Use of the Montage Strategies in Julian Barnes's Novel *The Porcupine*

HE Zhao-hui
Shaoguan University, Shaoguan, China

Written by Julian Barnes, a well-known contemporary British writer, *The Porcupine* is a novel with a touch on Bulgaria's social realities in the early 1990s. However, it is not a realistic novel in a conventional sense. It is composed of forty-three sections, long or short, fragmented in form and laid out by means of montage strategies. In the novel, Barnes used "continuous montage" and "parallel montage" strategies to unveil the plot and tell the story and employed "psychological montage" and "contrast montage" strategies to showcase characters' consciousness and personalities. The ingenious use of different montage strategies in the novel challenges the linear narrative paradigm in traditionally realistic novels, enriches its narrative structures and textual dimensions, and highlights its dramatic conflict, hence reflecting the narrative innovation in Barnes's fictional writing and providing new space for the studies of his novels from the viewpoint of narratology and/or postmodernism.

Keywords: Julian Barnes, *The Porcupine*, montage strategies, narrative innovation

Introduction

Written by Julian Barnes, "one of England's most interesting and provocative novelists" (Scammell, 1993, p. 35), *The Porcupine* (1992) is a political fable with a strong sense of reality. Its writing originated from the nine days' experience of propaganda of his novel *Flaubert's Parrot* in Bulgaria in November 1990, during which Barnes witnessed the deterioration and decay of Bulgarian society and noted down what he saw and heard of there. "Six months later, drawing inspiration from these notes, he [Julian Barnes] started composing *The Porcupine*" (Guignery, 2006, p. 86). With no doubt, the writing of *The Porcupine* has much to do with the social reality of Bulgaria at that time, and the political and legal events in it share great similarities with what happened to Todor Zhivkov (1911-1998), the then head of Bulgaria. Thus it bears much verisimilitude with the social reality of Bulgaria and appears to be a conventionally realistic novel. With respect to its style, some critics observe that it is "the simplest of all Julian Barnes's novels" (Moseley, 1997, p. 150), falling "solidly into the conventional plot category" (Andreadis, 1993, p. 228), with "the plainness of its prose" and "plot of devices reminiscent of 19th century novels" (Gosswiller, 1993, p. 3). Moreover, some reviewers underestimate its narrative strategies, contending that Barnes's writing in this novel has turned awry from his former writing of postmodern fiction. Merritt Moseley (1997), for instance, argues that "[t]here is nothing postmodern about it:

HE Zhao-hui, Ph.D., majoring in the English Language and Literature; Lecturer at the School of Foreign Studies, Shaoguan University, China. He has an interest in the studies of British and American Postmodern Fiction.

it is not tricky, or experimental, or dazzling or even … particularly witty" (p. 148), while another critic maintains that the novel "represents a lapse in Barnes's postmodernist fiction and his momentary entrance in the most traditional, realist conventions" (Agudo, 1999, p. 296). The observation or statements as such, for my part, are inaccurate or unfavorable, as far as Barnes' writing in the novel is concerned.

After a careful reading, it is not difficult to sense that there are the ingenious or flexible use of montage strategies for laying out the plot, interior monologue strategies for displaying characters' inner consciousness, different kinds of texts or hybridization of texts of different genres for depicting characters' speeches and personalities, and juxtaposition of fictional characters with real historical figures for the delineation of (fictional) historical scenes, among others. All of these writing strategies or methods indicate that the writing of *The Porcupine* is not that simple or conventional. It utilizes various narrative methods and challenges the traditionally realistic writing patterns or paradigms. Therefore, I argue that although *The Porcupine* is not a long-length novel and its plot is not complicated either, it is by no means a traditionally simple and easily understood novel, whether in content or in narrative aspects. This paper does not analyze all of those narrative strategies or methods aforementioned but rather attempts to explore the writing strategies of montages, such as "continuous montage," "parallel montage," "psychological montage" and "contrast montage", employed in the novel, to reveal that Julian Barnes applied the narrative strategies of montage to unfold his story and challenged the simple, linear narrative mode in conventional novels, rendering the novel a narrative characteristic of fragments and looseness, and thus different from traditional realistic novels but with a sense of postmodernist writing. The ingenious or flexible use of various montage strategies proves that Barnes consciously adopted the montage strategy, a typical means of expression in film and TV making, in his literary writing. This finding suggests that the writing of novels and the making of film and TV share certain similarity and that Barnes makes innovation in his fictional writing, hence providing more possibilities for the study of his novels from the perspective of narratology and/or postmodernism.

A Brief Introduction to the Concept of Montage

The word "montage" lexically originated from French technical terminology, meaning "constitution" and "assemblage," which was later adopted in film making. It is a critical term generally acknowledged to be linked with Russian avant-garde film, with Sergei Eisenstein (1898-1948) serving as its key theorist. As for its origin, a critic insightfully puts it in this way:

> The montage would be a modern method of knowledge and a formal process, originated during the war and in the disorder of the western world. All the generation that lived the period between the world wars—Bertolt Brecht, Georg Simmel, Aby Warburg, Marc Bloch, Franz Kafka, Marcel Proust, Igor Stravinsky, Walter Benjamin...—created and thought through montage. (Huapaya, 2016, p. 113)

Many artists and/or writers used montage in their creation, as Cesar Huapaya (2016) points out, because they "adapted this point of view of the montage as a way of reaction to the historical tragedies of their time" (p. 113). This interpretation of causation is reasonable to some extent. Nevertheless, the origin of montage could be traced to the works of art and literature composed or created long before the turning up of the film theory of montage proposed by Sergei Eisenstein in the 1930s.

Montage is not merely a means frequently used in film or theatre making and has a broader connotation than one often imagined. "[M]ontage could be treated simultaneously as a type of narrative and mental operation" (Waligorska-Olejniczak, 2018, p. 82). Thinking in this vein, one would rethink the meaning and connotation of montage and reconsider its use in artistic works, especially in literary works. In the Western literature, the use of montage could be detected in the writings of Charles Dickens and Gustave Flaubert, which is possibly not the earliest use of montage in Western literature. In addition, in Chinese literature, the use of montage can be found in the writings of several poets, such as Wen Ting-yun, a poet from the Tang Dynasty (618-907), and Ma Zhi-yuan, a poet from the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368). Some of their poetic lines, for instance, are composed of the juxtaposition of nouns or noun phrases, without subject and/or predicate, but each noun or noun phrase would present or project an image in the readers' mind after reading, which is similar to the combination or juxtaposition of shots of montage, cutting from one to another, and constituting a series of scenes. It is evident that the use of montage turns up more often than not in the writings of modernist and postmodernist writers, especially after the coming of age of the theory of montage in film in the 20th century. Its application can be found in modernist writings such as Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs. Dalloway*, James Joyce's *Ulyssess*, William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* and *Light in August*, and in postmodern writers' works such as *Slaughterhouse-Five* by Kurt Vonnegut and *The Hours* by Michael Cunningham. It has become an important writing technique or device in the works of postmodernist writers, as some scholars assert (Yang, et al., 2004, p. 37).

Overall, it is not difficult to conclude that montage, as a type of narrative operation or narration, is not confined to the making of film or TV but has more meanings. It has such kinds of connotations, as a Chinese critic summarizes:

> 1. Montage is a unique way of image thinking that can reflect reality, that is, a kind of way of thinking; 2. Montage is an essential means of construction and narration in artistic works; and 3. Montage is a specific method and technique for editing, designing and expressing, especially in film and TV making. (Peng, 2000, p. 13)

The montage strategies used in *The Porcupine* refers to the second connotation mentioned in this summary. That is, Julian Barnes used montage as a writing strategy to construct and narrate the stories in *The Porcupine*.

According to the different functions of narration, montages in artistic works can be classified into two kinds: narrative montage and expressive montage. The narrative montage is involved in unfolding the plot and showcasing the story events, cutting the shots, scenes or paragraphs according to the chronological order and logical causation of stories, aiming at guiding the readers to understand the story line, which mainly includes continuous montage, parallel montage and reversal montage. The expressive montage, based on the juxtaposition of shots or scenes successively, produces or creates the rich meanings that one single shot or scene can not do in content or in form, so as to disclose characters' emotions and feelings and the artistic effects of the writing, which mainly embraces psychological montage, contrast montage and metaphorical montage (Xu, et al., 2005, p. 153). As to *The Porcupine*, Julian Barnes mainly used the strategies of continuous montage and parallel montage to unfold the plot and showcase the story events, and employed the strategies of psychological montage and contrast montage to reveal characters' psychological activities and inner consciousness, which will be discussed in the following sections.

Continuous Montage and Parallel Montage in *The Porcupine*

In *The Porcupine*, the description of the legal trial imposed upon Stoyo Petkanov, the former President of a fictional European country, is the first and foremost clue of narration. Surrounding this clue, Julian Barnes delineated the different responses and attitudes of different characters toward this open and relayed TV trial, which constitutes the subsidiary clues of the narration. In the description of the main clue and in the presentation of the subsidiary clues, Barnes used the writing strategies of montage, among others. The novel is composed of forty-three narrative sections, some long and some short, and by way of montage strategies, Barnes arranged and deployed these forty-three sections, his way of narration resembling the use of a film camera, so that the arrangement of these sections is similar to a series of shots of images in a movie, cutting from one long to one short or from one short to one long, without regularity. Each narrative section, or each shot, is like a "montage cell" (Eisenstein's words), "is linear and flat but, when placed into a tissue of differentiated cells and organized…, a three-dimensional montage-body, as it were, takes form" (Repass, 2015, p. 154). In this way, the story's plot is unfolded not in a traditional way but with complexity and innovation, which challenges the paradigm of narrating a story in light of chronological order and undermines in some sense the plainness or dullness of linear narration, thus foregrounding its temporal and spatial dimensions and enriching its artistic effects.

More specifically, Julian Barnes employed continuous montage strategy to depict the political and legal trials on Stoyo Petkanov and parallel montage strategy to narrate different characters' responses to Petkanov and the trial.

Continuous montage is one kind of narrative montage, which means that the writing focuses on one single major clue and, in light of the story's logical order, recounts the events continuously (but intermittently), displaying the dramatic conflicts in the story (Xu, et al., 2005, p. 155). The beginning of the novel witnesses the imprisonment of Stoyo Petkanov, the former President, after the fall of the old regime, waiting for an open trial conducted by the new government. Then the narrative surrounds this trial and displays the "dialogues" and confrontations in and out of the Court between Stoyo Petkanov and Peter Solinsky, the Prosecutor General, newly appointed by the new government. The forty-three narrative sections have no titles, the longest one has eleven pages, and the shortest one has less than one page. Among these forty-three sections, about thirty sections directly concentrate on and recount the trial and, according to chronological order and logical relations, they describe how Solinsky tries every means to seek out or even forge evidence to convict Petkanov and how Petkanov attempts to defend himself and discloses Solinsky's illegal conduct of embezzlement of public funds to fight against the Prosecutor General. It is easy to perceive that the narration of the trial abides by the principle of continuous montage: the narrative starts with the imprisonment of Petkanov, and then narrates (although intermittently) the trial on this former President, which begins on January 10th and ends at the end of February, lasting for forty-five days; and the novel ends up with Solinsky's conviction of Petkanov, by fake evidence, into thirty years of internal exile and with Solinsky's being abandoned by his wife due to his extramarital affairs and illegal conduct in the trial.

It is clear that the trial is not the only event in the novel, and Julian Barnes cut the plot of the trial into small pieces of subplots in light of chronological order and inserted other related events (especially other

characters' responses toward this eventful trial) before and after the subplots. Therefore, the strategy of continuous montage used in the novel is not absolutely the "continuous" montage method but rather the "intermittently" continuous montage with insertions or interludes. This finding just reveals that Barnes did not faithfully abide by the traditional, linear narration of writing, and the use of continuous montage with insertions or interludes indicates his writing innovation in the design of the plot. In actuality, in film or TV making, directors usually do not employ one kind of montage strategy such as continuous montage or parallel montage only but rather utilize multiple montage strategies to develop the plot, characterize the figures and make the film or TV show appealing and interesting. This is also what Barnes did in his design and layout of these forty-three narrative sections in *The Porcupine*.

In addition to the use of continuous montage to unfold stories in the novel, Julian Barnes also used other montage strategies such as parallel montage to supplement the plot of the story and enrich the content of the novel. Parallel montage, also a kind of narrative montage strategy, means that two or more plot clues (at different times and places, at the same time but at different places, at the same place but at different times or at the same time and place) are successively narrated and presented but unified in the larger whole plot structure, or several seemingly unrelated plots (or events) are successively presented but refer to the same theme (Xu, et al., 2005, p. 154). In the first section of *The Porcupine*, for instance, Barnes, by means of parallel montage, described the appearance and dinner event of Stoyo Petkanov in imprisonment and presented the protest movement of the women fighting against the food shortages before the new government office building. More specifically, the first paragraph of the first section in the novel delineates Petkanov's outer appearance, manners, his dinner and what he hears of then. At this moment, Petkanov is about to have a dinner in his dim-lighted detention room, hearing of the women's protest cries outside while the city is in sheer dark (Barnes, 1993, p. 1). And from the second paragraph to the end of this section, the novel addresses the women's protest movement against the food shortages: when they should be at their kitchens to prepare the suppers for their families, these women take their cooking utensils, beating them and winding through the streets toward the municipal office building to protest against the food shortages. The writing of these two plots or shots reveals and evinces the characteristic of parallel montage: first, it focalizes on Petkanov in the detention room, mainly highlighting his psychological state and showing his diet in imprisonment, and then the writing moves on (just like a camera) to the protest movement of the women who have nothing to cook. These two plots, successively recounted, seem to be unrelated to each other but are correlated and unified through the same theme: that is, whether Petkanov in detention or the women in protest movement, they are both unsatisfied with the new government's policies and/or management. The writing of these two plots in this vein thus implies the defects of the new government in dealing with its political and economic affairs.

The description of the scene of at home some young college students' watching of the televised trial of Stoyo Petkanov also employs the strategy of parallel montage. This means that while narrating the plot of the trial by way of continuous montage, Julian Barnes intermittently inserted the young students' attitudes and responses to this trial at different times and different places by way of parallel montage. To be specific, when describing the "dialogues" between Stoyo Petkanov and Peter Solinsky in the Court, Barnes inserted at some time four young students' instant responses to the trial from their watching of the relayed TV show. These students' responses are presented in italics and in square parentheses in the novel, thus different from Barnes's

narration. For instance, in the first trial, when Solinsky declared Petkanov's crimes, the narrative goes as follows:

> "Stoyo Petkanov, you are charged before the Supreme Court of this nation with the following offences. First, deception involving documents, under Article 127 (3) of the Penal Code. Second, abuse of authority in your official capacity, under Article 212 (4) of the Penal Code. And thirdly…
>
> [*"Mass murder."*
> *"Genocide."*
> *"Ruining the country."*]
> ... mismanagement under Article 332 (8) of the Penal Code."
> [*"Mismanagement!"*
> *"Mismanagement of the prison camps."*
> *"He didn't torture people properly enough."*
> *"Shit. Shit."*]
> "How do you plead?"
>
> Petkanov remained in exactly the same position, only now with a faint smile on his face. The wardress leaned towards him again, but he stopped her with a flick of the fingers. (Barnes, 1993, p. 32, italics in original)

In this excerpt, Solinsky declared Petkanov's attempted crimes in the Court and expected the latter's plead or defense, which is quite normal in writing about court trial. What is foregrounded is the speeches uttered by some students in their watching of the relayed TV trial, which occurred at the same time with Solinsky's declaration of Petkanov's attempted crime in the Court. This design or insertion of the speeches in square parentheses reflects young students' instant responses or reactions toward the trial and to Petkanov. Obviously, these young students stand side by side with Solinsky and are against Petkanov, believing that the latter has committed crimes such as "mass murder" and "genocide." In their views, the trial of Petkanov is "a great moment in their country's history, a farewell to grim childhood and grey, fretful adolescence," and is "the end of lies and illusions" (Barnes, 1993, pp. 19-20), or it is, as a critic puts it, "an exorcism of the wicked past" (Taylor, 1992, p. 37). Therefore, they all want to be witnesses of this great moment and try their best to watch the televised trial, even if there is the problem of a power cut.

In short, when presenting the "dialogues" and conflicts between Stoyo Petkanov and Peter Solinsky in light of continuous montage strategy, Julian Barnes also used the strategy of parallel montage to insert young students' instant responses to the trial of Petkanov, showcasing their attitudes toward this trial: They think of themselves as victims of the old reign and have strong hatred toward Petkanov, the head of the old government, hoping that the conviction of his crimes would mark its end and fancying that the new government represented by Solinsky would lead the nation into a free and democratic age.

Still, while presenting the responses of these young students' attitudes toward the relayed TV trial, Julian Barnes also employed the strategy of parallel montage to describe a granny's response to the trial. When the writing focuses on these young students who are watching TV in the living room, the granny of one of the students is listening to (not watching) the TV trial quietly in the kitchen, showing her concern for the trial. The granny is no doubt one of the faithful members of Stoyo Petkanov and the old government. The parallel description of these two groups of characters (young students and the granny respectively), plus the presentations of Stoyo Petkanov and Peter Solinsky, indicate that in the novel, people of different strata and

ages display different attitudes toward different political stances and/or ideologies, providing more space for readers to think and discuss, enriching and deepening the value concern and social significance of this novel.

Psychological Montage and Contrast Montage in *The Porcupine*

In *The Porcupine*, continuous montage and parallel montage strategies are used to unfold the plot and develop the story in light of the chronological order and the logic of the legal trial, rendering readers sense the drama and conflict of the Number One trial in the history of the fictional country in question. Moreover, Julian Barnes also applied other montage strategies, such as psychological montage and contrast montage strategies, to present the inner consciousness and personality features of characters and reinforce their dramatic conflicts, thus better foregrounding the affective function and artistic effects of this novel.

In the novel, Julian Barnes adopted psychological montage strategy to explore the inner consciousness of characters and to characterize their personalities. Psychological montage is a type of expressive montage, which means that the combination of scenes or of a sound and a picture can directly and graphically display the inner activities and mental states of characters, such as ideas (that suddenly come to their mind), memories, dreams, illusions, imagination, reveries, thinking and unconsciousness, and is one of the vital devices of psychological description in TV and film making (Xu, et al., 2005, p. 153). Although *The Porcupine* is a text of fiction, it is not difficult to detect that Barnes used the strategy of psychological montage to explore and exhibit ideas, memories, thoughts and even the unconscious activities of characters. In the depiction of the "dialogues" between Stoyo Petkanov and Peter Solinsky, Barnes often used the skill of "offscreen voice" or voice over, one technique of psychological montage strategy, to present the thinking or reflection of characters that are not uttered but turn up in their minds. For instance, when Solinsky argues that Petkanov would shoot those dissenters, Barnes writes of Petkanov's defense and Solinsky's inner thoughts as such:

> "Peter, you are so old-fashioned. So old-fashioned in your criticism. Of course not. We never shot people." *We'll see about that*, thought the prosecutor, *we'll dig in the grounds of your prison camps, we'll carry out autopsies, we'll get your secret police to squeal on you*. (Barnes, 1993, p. 104, italics added)

It is clear that the (italicized) content before and after "thought the prosecutor" constitutes the inner consciousness or voice of Solinsky, projected before readers in a way of voice-over, thus highlighting Solinsky's different and/or opposite attitude toward Petkanov's view of "We never shot people." This voice-over presentation of Solinsky's interior consciousness reveals his conflict with Petkanov and his determination to defeat Petkanov.

Besides the brief depiction of characters' inner thoughts, Julian Barnes also presented characters' flow of inner consciousness in detail by means of the strategy of psychological montage, making the novel a characteristic of stream-of-consciousness writing. Barnes focalized for many times the inner consciousness of Stoyo Petkanov and of Peter Solinsky and explored their thoughts and consciousness in their deep minds by way of indirect interior monologues to disclose their personalities, worldviews and political stance. Take the delineation of Petkanov's inner consciousness for example. The fourth, twenty-third, twenty-fifth and thirty-fifth sections of the novel all focalize the inner consciousness of Petkanov, recall his past experience and current thinking by the strategy of psychological montage; and while displaying Petkanov's psychological activities and personalities, the writing also relates the story's background, thus enriching and promoting the

progression of the plot. The fourth section first describes Petkanov's flow of inner consciousness after imprisonment: he worries about his situation, suspecting that he would be shot secretly but denying the idea later, for he reckons that the new government would not make him a martyr and would discredit him in another way, and then he thinks of his own strategy of fighting or resistance. Barnes wrote of his consciousness as such:

> Would they shoot him? Well, there were no bears in the ground. No, they probably wouldn't: they didn't have the guts. Or rather, they knew better than to make a martyr of him. Much better to discredit him. Which is what he wouldn't let them do. They would stage the trial their way, how it suited them, lying and cheating and fixing evidence, but maybe he'd have a few tricks for them too. He wasn't going to play the part allotted him. He had a different script in mind. (Barnes, 1993, p. 17)

Then, Petkanov's consciousness flows from one thing to another without logic and/or order: Solinsky, the Prosecutor General, bought a shinny suit in a visit to Italy (Barnes, 1993, p. 18); Gorbachev was going to follow the Frank Sinatra Doctrine (Barnes, 1993, pp. 18-19); FBI's report that "the place where the American president felt most safe, and where the FBI considered him most safe, was in Disneyland" (Barnes, 1993, p. 19); etc. These contents are not logically related and leap from one to another without causation, displaying Petkanov's chaotic consciousness and anxious psychology when he is in imprisonment. This sort of consciousness and psychology is further depicted in the twenty-third and twenty-fifth sections. Through Petkanov's consciousness, the twenty-third section briefly recalls the achievements and the failures of revolutionary movements in European countries. Petkanov attributed the failure to Gorbachev, the former leader of the Soviet Union, thinking of Gorbachev as "[a] weak fool in the Kremlin" (Barnes, 1993, p. 79). In his later consciousness, Petkanov also remembered his meeting with Gorbachev and his proposal of being incorporated into the Soviet Union so that his country would become the 16th member of the Union. The fictional scene of meeting between Petkanov and Gorbachev is not completed in the twenty-third section, and Julian Barnes continued to write of Petkanov's recollection in the twenty-fifth section as such: "But Gorbachev had turned his [Petkanov's] proposal down without even the courtesy of reflection" (Barnes, 1993, p. 87). This irritates Petkanov so that we can see in his mind his curse against Gorbachev as "that cunt in the Kremlin" and "a hypocrite" (Barnes, 1993, p. 88). The thirty-fifth section concentrates on Petkanov's consciousness after he was convicted by Solinsky in light of forged evidence. Although convicted, Petkanov now appears to be quiet and serene, believing that the conviction does not mean that his ideal faith that he has been dedicated to is definitely defeated and firmly holding that "inevitably, the spirit of Socialism will shake itself again, and in *our* next jump we shall squelch the capitalists down into the mud until they expire beneath our boots…, at the end [people] would burst into the bright sunshine" (Barnes, 1993, pp. 114-115, italics in original). This is certainly the unchanging and final consciousness of Petkanov about his faith.

All in all, in these several long narrative sections projected in the way of psychological montage strategy, Julian Barnes went deep into the mind of Stoyo Petkanov, revealing his past experience and thoughts. These narrative sections are similar to the montage shots or images (lasting for a longer time or a shorter time), foregrounding Petkanov's inner consciousness and psychological activities, profoundly uncovering his personality features and worldviews: persistent and unflinching in his faith and never succumbing to his rivals, he was a persevering and dauntless fighter for his ideal and faith.

Still, in the novel, Julian Barnes employed the strategy of contrast montage to characterize his figures, enrich the dramatic conflict and reinforce the artistic effects of the novel. As a kind of expressive montage, contrast montage refers to the concept that, through contrasts in contents (poverty and affluence, pain and happiness, life and death, nobility and humility, victory and failure, etc.) and in forms (light and dark, coldness and warmth in color, strong and weak in sound, moving or stationary in action, etc.) by way of juxtaposing shots (or scenes or paragraphs), the writing or shots would produce an effect of opposition and conflict, to express the producer's certain idea or implication or to emphasize the contents, emotions or thoughts that are wanted (Xu, et al., 2005, p. 154). Barnes used contrast montage strategy to depict the last scene of the trial, for instance. Because Peter Solinsky could not provide hard evidence, the trial on Stoyo Petkanov continues slowly with no results; when Petkanov disclosed the scandal that Solinsky once appropriated the governmental expenses to buy a suit for himself and even sleep a prostitute, the trial falls into a deadlock; to make some breakthrough, to save his face and, more importantly, to testify that "the defendant is the worst criminal in [the] entire history" of the country (Barnes, 1993, p. 94), Solinsky, in light of forged evidence, alleges that Petkanov once "authorised the use of all necessary means against slanders, saboteurs and anti-state criminals" (Barnes, 1993, p. 108), and that, in this case, Petkanov tried every means to ensure his political future even at the expense of his own daughter's life (Barnes, 1993, p. 111). What Solinsky, the Prosecutor General, provides in the final trial gives a deadly blow to Petkanov, who has always been in the upper hand in the Court. At this moment, the trial is coming to an end, and after his declaration, "Peter Solinsky sat down to loudly unjudicial applause, to the drumming of feet, the thumping of desks, and even some raucous whistling" (Barnes, 1993, p. 111). It is obvious that Solinsky convicts Petkanov, obtaining the audience's applause, and getting "his moment, his moment for ever" (Barnes, 1993, p. 111). However, the writing has not ended yet, and Barnes, the writer, turned the "camera lens" onto the relayed TV show of the trial, which goes like this:

> Daringly, the TV director split the screen. On the left, seated, the Prosecutor General, eyes big with triumph, chin raised, a sober smile on his lips; on the right, standing, the former President in a whirl of fury, banging on the padded bar with his fist, bawling at his defence lawyers, wagging his finger at journalists, glaring up at the President of the Court and his impassive, black-suited assessors. (Barnes, 1993, p. 111)

Therefore, in this paragraph, Barnes presented the images of Solinsky and Petkanov on the left and right sides of the screen respectively through the director's manipulation; with no doubt, Barnes is the real "director" in this section, who projected different or opposition images of his characters before readers by means of the contrast montage strategy. William Repass (2015) maintains that "Montage propels itself through conflict: conflict between planes, between volumes, lighting and tempo—generating many-sided perspectives" (p. 154). So herein the writing graphically displays the two characters' opposing or conflicting responses (stationary or moving, smile or angry, victory or failure) toward the conviction, stressing the effects of tension and the reality of the event, stimulating readers' affection, and inviting readers to ponder over the conviction and the images of these two characters from many-sided perspectives, such as those of political stance and value judgment.

Still, the description and presentation of the young students and the granny also evince the use of contrast montage strategy. When the young students are watching TV in the living room, the granny sits quietly in the kitchen but listens to the TV. Julian Barnes wrote of the scene in this vein:

> Stefan's grandmother refused to watch the trial…. She sat a few metres away in the kitchen…. Nowadays she spoke little, finding that most questions did not require answers…. Especially when dealing with Stefan and his young friends. How they chattered. Listen to them round the television, gabbling away, interrupting one another, unable to pay attention for more than a moment. Squabbling like a nestful of thrushes. Brains of thrushes, too. (Barnes, 1993, pp. 53-54)

It is not difficult to sense that this scene foregrounds the sound and fury of young students and the serenity and quietness of the granny, which is quite contrastive to each other and suggests their different attitudes toward the trial. The more dramatic and contrastive scene turns up when, in the trial, Stoyo Petkanov discloses the scandal of Peter Solinsky, who appropriated the public funds for private use, and at the critical moment, the camera turns to focalize the expression of Solinsky: "the TV director faded down the sound while instructing Camera Number 1 to stay tight on the prosecutor's alarmed features, *the students were momentarily silent*, Stefan's grandmother cackled to herself quietly in the kitchen while the television played to an empty sitting-room" (Barnes, 1993, pp. 86-87, italics in original). Here, in this situation, the contrast between the young students and the granny turned around: the students turned out to be silent, and the granny cackled. The contrast illustrates that the young students and the granny belong to different parties and have different political stances and ideologies: the former stands side by side with Solinsky, and the latter, like Petkanov, is one of the few hundred loyalists.

Conclusion

The above discussion reveals that the legal trial on Stoyo Petkanov is the main clue of *The Porcupine*, which was cut into smaller narrative sections by Julian Barnes and was mainly projected before the reader by way of continuous montage strategy, while the responses of other characters, such as the young students and the granny, to the trial belong to the subsidiary plots of the novel, which are mainly presented in light of parallel montage strategy. In the description of inner consciousness and psychological activities of the characters, Barnes used the strategy of psychological montage, which displays the flow of characters' consciousnesses and their personalities and enriches the psychological dimension of the novel, rendering it a characteristic of stream-of-consciousness writing. The use of contrast montage strategy better illustrates the conflicts and oppositions between the different characters in terms of social strata, views of values and political stances. All of these findings suggest that Barnes ingeniously and skillfully employed different montage strategies to enrich the narrative dimensions of the novel and enhance its readability and artistic effects.

On the whole, the application of various montage strategies makes the novel's structure fragmentary and loose, thus being "a new form of political fiction" (Byrne, 1993, p. 253): Julian Barnes divided his writing into forty-three narrative sections or montage shots, long or short, with no titles and not in a chronological or linear narrative order, which is quite different from realistic novels in a traditional sense. Why did Barnes write about *The Porcupine* in such a strategy and in such a structure? Perhaps this is related to or a reflection of the social reality of Bulgaria in the early 1990s: political turmoil, economic deterioration, and social disturbance and chaos. It is only a loose structure or a chaotic form in writing by way of montage strategies that can best reflect and represent such social realities metaphorically. As mentioned at the very beginning, the writing of this novel originated from Barnes's experience of his promotion of *Flaubert's Parrot* in Bulgaria, and accordingly, to a great extent, Barnes objectively recorded the social realities of Bulgaria at that time not in a conventionally

realistic way but rather with various modern and even postmodern writing strategies, the strategies of montage being one of them. The ingenious use of montage strategies in the novel is the very evidence that Barnes knew the theory and skills of montage quite well, and that Barnes made innovation in his writing of the contemporary political landscape and history events. Moreover, the turning up of television cameras for several times in the novel and the right treatment of the sound, the light and the color in different scenes indicate that Barnes was, as it were, consciously using the techniques of film and TV making in the writing of this novel, making readers feel like watching a movie or TV show while reading it. Taking Barnes's *oeuvre* into consideration, I argue that, whether in the exploration of themes or in the innovation of writing strategies, *The Porcupine* is a unique one, which just corroborates what a critic has assessed about Barnes's writing: "Barnes has refused to repeat himself, pressing on to innovate, straining to find new ideas [of content and form] for novels" (Levenson, 1991, p. 43). Hence, it is safe to contend that *The Porcupine* is a novel with certain innovations and experiments in its writing strategies, which definitely differentiates it from traditionally realistic novels but endows it with some characteristics of postmodern (historical) writing.

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