

The Flying Carpet
Studies on Eisenstein and
Russian Cinema in Honor
of Naum Kleiman

—
Edited by Joan Neuberger
and Antonio Somaini



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THE FLYING CARPET

Studies on Eisenstein and Russian Cinema
in Honor of Naum Kleiman

Edited by
Joan Neuberger and Antonio Somaini

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JOAN NEUBERGER, ANTONIO SOMAINI

INTRODUCTION

The image on the opposite page (Fig. 1) comes from a place that the authors of this volume know very well: the apartment located in Moscow on Smolenskaya Ulitsa and known as the Eisenstein Cabinet or the Eisenstein Memorial Flat. After Eisenstein's death on February 11, 1948, Pera Atasheva, his closest friend and assistant throughout the 1930s and 1940s, managed to gather in this apartment part of his library and belongings, while the rest of his books ended up anonymously in the vast holdings of the Lenin State Library of the USSR, later renamed Russian State Library. In the bookshelves that are visible in the photograph – together with two photographic portraits taken in different periods of his life, a porcelain Buddha, and a comic strip drawn by Walt Disney and dedicated to him on the occasion of his visit to Hollywood in 1930 – we can catch a glimpse of the variety of books that Eisenstein collected over the years and that became the primary sources of the surprising constellations of references that we find in his writings. Moving from top to bottom, we find, among others, Alexander Benois's *Istoriia zhivopisi vseh vremen i narodov* [*A History of Painting of All Times and Peoples*], Allen Churchill's *A Treasure of Modern Humor*, Edward Lear's *More Nonsense* and *The Book of Nonsense*, two books on Michelangelo and his correspondence, Allardyce Nicoll's *Masks, Mimes and Miracles*, Jens Ferdinand Willumsen's *La jeunesse du peintre El Greco*, Edgar Johnson's *A Treasury of Satire*, and, in the middle shelf on the right, a book on Japanese Kabuki theater. Michelangelo and El Greco, humor and satire, masks, mimes, and Kabuki. Eisenstein's readers know well that these are not random juxtapositions, but rather structural nodes of that highly



crafted, montage-like web of references that stretches across all of Eisenstein's writings, becoming more and more dense in his work of the 1930s and 1940s.

This book is dedicated to the man who has helped generations of scholars navigate through the meanderings of this web without getting lost: our dear friend Naum Kleiman, whose presence can be felt just outside the margins of our photograph. A film historian and film critic, longtime director of the Moscow State Central Cinema Museum and director of the Eisenstein Center, editor of a whole series of publications of Eisenstein's texts both in Russian and in many other languages, Naum Kleiman has been a key reference point for entire generations of scholars working on Eisenstein and the history of Russian and Soviet cinema throughout the world: from the United States to South America, from Eastern to Western Europe, from India to Japan. After the death of Pera Atasheva in 1965, Naum Kleiman turned the apartment on Smolenskaya Ulitsa into a magic, inspiring space that would soon become a key destination not only for film scholars but also for film directors, artists, and writers visiting Moscow from the 1970s to this day. Always ready to receive them and spend countless hours with them, drinking a nice cup of tea while being surrounded by Eisenstein's books and belongings (for example, the etchings by Piranesi that are discussed in one of the chapters of *Nonindifferent Nature*, or one of the *lubki* that are discussed in his essays on colour), Naum shared and keeps on sharing with unparalleled generosity his deep knowledge of Eisenstein's oeuvre and of the history of Russian and Soviet cinema. The conversations may unfold in several different languages, often at the same time: Russian, German, English, and often also French, with the help of Naum's daughter Vera. Countless projects have been discussed while seated around the table or on the sofa under a Mexican *serape* at Smolenskaya, and many of them have materialized into books on Eisenstein's work, editions of Eisenstein's texts, festival programs, museum exhibitions, and even films.

The editors and the authors of the thirty-four contributions in this book are among the many beneficiaries of Naum's great

knowledge and generosity. They are part of a wide international community of Eisenstein and Russian-Soviet film scholars that connects different countries and different academic traditions, woven together like the thread of the drawing *Les Parques* [*The Fates*] (1947) that we chose for the cover of this book: an international community that has found in Naum Kleiman and in his work not only a crucial reference point, but also a dear friend always ready to help. It is to him, on the occasion of his 80th birthday, that this book is dedicated.

Thank you from all of us, Naum, and happy birthday!

ADA ACKERMAN

HOMMAGE À UN HOMME QUI COLLE AVEC ESPRIT ET INTELLIGENCE

Dans « Les cheminements de l'invention », Eisenstein s'attarde sur les processus créatifs, à propos de sa conception de la séquence de la Bataille des Glaces dans *Alexandre Nevski* et de sa manière de surmonter, au cinéma, les défis posés par cet épisode¹. Après des nuits d'insomnie, la solution lui serait venue d'un livre de contes folkloriques d'Afanassiev sur lequel il serait tombé par hasard, alors qu'il parcourait les rayons de sa bibliothèque, en quête de réponses à ses interrogations. On le sait, en matière d'art, intervient toujours un élément mystérieux, imprévisible, incontrôlable, qui défie toutes les tentatives des chercheurs de reconstituer et de rationaliser *a posteriori* l'ensemble des décisions et étapes ayant conduit l'artiste au résultat qui nous est parvenu.

Dans la recherche, il en va de même : le hasard a sa part dans la rencontre d'un chercheur avec un corpus, avec d'autres chercheurs ; il intervient dans la découverte de matériaux inattendus, dans la manière dont certains livres nous apparaissent, comme s'ils nous appelaient ; sans parler des intuitions, fulgurances et libres associations – ces bonds de guenon chers à Eisenstein – *daïmones* au surgissement énigmatique que l'on serait bien en peine de tenter de dompter et de maîtriser.

Dans mon travail de recherche, le hasard, la bonne fortune, les rencontres providentielles ont joué une part qui n'a cessé de me fasciner et de m'émerveiller. Cela a été le cas à plu-

1 Sergueï Eisenstein, « Les cheminements de l'invention. *Alexandre Nevski* », *Réflexions d'un cinéaste*, Moscou, Éditions du Progrès, 1958, pp. 49-60.

sieurs reprises avec Eisenstein. J'ai commencé à m'intéresser aux relations que pouvaient entretenir, chez lui, sa pratique graphique avec sa pratique cinématographique, après avoir découvert ses dessins érotiques que ma mère, Galia Ackerman, cherchait à faire publier, avec Jean-Claude Marcadé, à la demande de son ami Vladimir Alloy qui en était le détenteur, selon des modalités et des péripéties décrites par ma mère dans le présent volume. Ces dessins me semblaient en effet à mille lieues de ce que je connaissais alors d'Eisenstein et je souhaitais comprendre comment ils s'articulaient avec le reste de son œuvre. Une fois plongée dans ses écrits, autobiographiques comme théoriques, je fus totalement absorbée et fascinée, et, comme la plupart des eisensteinienens, je n'ai dès lors jamais cessé de vouloir comprendre et découvrir encore et davantage son travail, et d'admirer la portée, immense, de celui-ci. Après avoir décidé, en 2006, de consacrer ma thèse de doctorat à Eisenstein et à son intérêt pour l'art d'Honoré Daumier, je souhaitai me rendre à Moscou pour étudier les fonds Eisenstein conservés au RGALI ainsi que pour rencontrer le grand spécialiste du cinéaste, Naoum Kleiman, grâce auquel tant d'écrits et de documents d'Eisenstein ont pu être conservés et publiés. Je pris rendez-vous avec lui lors de mon arrivée à Moscou. Au téléphone, Naoum Kleiman me demanda de me rendre à « Smolenskaïa », car c'est ainsi qu'on appelait le Cabinet Eisenstein, la reconstitution de l'appartement du cinéaste réalisée par sa veuve, Péra Attachéva, du fait qu'il se trouvait rue Smolenskaïa. Quel ne fut pas mon étonnement d'entendre ce nom si familier pour moi ! « Smolenskaïa », c'était pour moi un mot de l'enfance, que j'avais beaucoup entendu dans la bouche de mes parents et de mes grands-parents maternels, Mark et Lily, car ces derniers habitaient depuis 1966 rue Smolenskaïa – ma mère y vécut avec eux quelques années avant d'émigrer en Israël. « Smolenskaïa », c'était donc l'appartement de ma grand-mère, alors déjà veuve, dans lequel j'avais habité lors de mon tout premier voyage à Moscou, à l'âge de huit ans, en compagnie de ma mère. Un appartement se trouvant dans un bâtiment moscovite typique, ainsi que je le découvrirais plus

tard, mais qui m'avait alors frappée, notamment par sa cage d'escalier grisâtre, ses paliers maussades, son ascenseur vétuste et surtout son odeur, indescriptible mais reconnaissable entre toutes, cette odeur spécifique aux cages d'escalier moscovites. Et voilà que Naoum Kleiman prononçait ce mot, « Smolenskaïa », qui me renvoyait des années en arrière. Bien plus, il s'avéra que le Cabinet Eisenstein se trouvait non seulement rue Smolenskaïa, mais aussi dans le même bâtiment que l'appartement de mes grands-parents, dans la cage d'escalier voisine. On accédait chez mes grands-parents par le *podezd* numéro 9, au Cabinet Eisenstein par le *podezd* n°7. Je me rendis donc au Cabinet Eisenstein, que j'ai depuis eu l'occasion et la chance de visiter à de nombreuses reprises pour des sessions de travail avec Naoum et son équipe, avec une émotion toujours renouvelée. Là, pour la première fois, entourée des nombreux livres et objets d'Eisenstein, autour d'un thé généreusement accompagné de biscuits, Naoum m'apprit, avec l'accueil chaleureux qui le caractérise, qu'il avait bien connu mes grands-parents, et qu'il était fort touché de rencontrer leur petite-fille – moi. Ceci constitua pour moi une surprise supplémentaire, et de taille ! Mon grand-père Mark avait en effet dirigé le département juridique de l'Union des écrivains, et à ce titre, il avait rencontré énormément d'intellectuels, de créateurs et d'artistes confrontés à des problématiques de droits d'auteurs, parmi lesquels Chklovski, Paoustovski, la veuve de Bulgakov et bien d'autres. C'est ainsi qu'il avait fait la connaissance de Naoum Kleiman, qui s'avéra être... son voisin. Naoum avait, entre autres, été touché par le fait que le père de ma grand-mère, qui avait habité avec elle et mon grand-père à « Smolenskaïa », s'appelait Ekhiel, un prénom juif rare en URSS. Or Naoum porte lui aussi ce prénom, en guise de patronyme – Ekhilevitch. Naoum avait par ailleurs offert à mon grand-père les éditions des écrits d'Eisenstein qu'il avait réalisées, et mon grand-père les avait transmises à ma mère, qui me les a transmises à son tour. Elles figurent toujours, bien entendu, sur les rayons de ma bibliothèque, qui les abritent précieusement.

J'ignorais tout cela lorsque j'avais décidé de commencer à travailler sur Eisenstein, et j'eus comme l'impression d'un malin hasard. Comme si les fées du Potemkine s'étaient, d'une certaine façon, penchées sur mon berceau. Juste avant de rencontrer Naoum Kleiman pour la première fois, j'avais d'ailleurs, en termes de hasard, souri à l'idée que son nom le prédisposait tout particulièrement à s'occuper d'Eisenstein et à en préserver l'héritage. En effet, dans le prénom hébraïque « Naoum » (un des prophètes auteurs du Tanakh), j'entendais « oum », ce qui veut dire en russe « esprit », « intelligence » ; j'entendais « naoum », qu'on pourrait traduire en russe par « vers l'esprit ». Dans « Kleiman », j'entendais, selon un montage linguistique qui n'aurait peut-être pas déplu à Eisenstein, « kleï », la colle, en russe, et « man », l'homme. Qui de plus approprié, pour travailler sur l'artiste du montage par excellence, qu'un homme qui colle avec esprit et intelligence ?

Quelques années plus tard, j'eus droit à un autre beau et émouvant hasard. C'était à l'hiver 2009, alors que je travaillais sur le fonds Eisenstein aux Archives littéraires et artistiques nationales russes, à Moscou. Les yeux épuisés par la lecture sur microfilm et par les efforts pour déchiffrer la graphie énigmatique et cryptique d'Eisenstein, le corps refroidi par la salle de lecture où le chauffage fonctionnait capricieusement, je commençais à regarder mes voisins et à m'évader dans mes pensées. Tout à coup, il me sembla voir, sur l'une des tables avoisinantes, des documents comportant l'écriture d'Eisenstein. Je m'approchai donc du lecteur en question et lui demandai s'il travaillait sur le cinéaste soviétique. L'homme, assez âgé, arborait un visage sympathique, un regard plein de malice. Il me dit que oui. Il avait une loupe avec lui, à l'aide de laquelle il examinait, des heures durant, les manuscrits d'Eisenstein pour s'assurer de les transcrire correctement. J'eus à peine le temps de lui exposer le sujet de ma thèse – Eisenstein et Daumier, qu'il se présenta à moi et commença à me fournir énormément de détails et d'informations passionnantes sur Eisenstein, sans que je ne lui demande rien, ce qui me toucha très fort et m'émut beaucoup, car j'avais jusque-là souvent été confrontée à des

réactions plutôt territoriales de la part des chercheurs. Le lendemain, et les jours qui suivirent, Vladimir Zabrodine – car c'était lui – autre grand eisensteinien auquel on doit beaucoup, m'apporta et m'offrit des livres et des articles pouvant m'intéresser et m'aider pour mes recherches. J'étais stupéfaite et émerveillée par tant de générosité et de bonté, alors que je n'avais quasiment pas eu la possibilité de me présenter réellement. Il m'apprit ensuite que je lui rappelais sa fille, à laquelle il disait que je ressemblais de façon troublante, jusque dans ses gestes et attitudes. En raison de cette ressemblance, il voulait absolument m'aider car il n'avait plus revu sa fille, partie à l'étranger des années auparavant. Depuis, à chaque séjour que j'effectue à Moscou, je retrouve avec émotion Vladimir Zabrodine qui continue à me manifester la même affection et avec lequel j'ai toujours plaisir à échanger autour d'Eisenstein.

Cette année 2009 m'apporta une autre surprise eisensteinienne : j'enseignais alors l'histoire de l'art à l'Université Paris-X-Nanterre, en tant qu'allocataire monitrice. Un de mes collègues, Basile Baudez, me raconta un jour par mail qu'il allait chez un coiffeur, Hervé Boudon – son travail a été récompensé par plusieurs prix, et il a entre-temps publié différents travaux sur l'histoire et l'esthétique de la coiffure et a participé à de nombreuses expositions. Passionné d'art et d'histoire, Hervé Boudon accueillait dans le salon qu'il a dirigé jusqu'en 2014 des clients avec lesquels il aimait s'entretenir de ses intérêts. Parmi eux, m'apprit Basile Baudez, figurait un certain Daniel Eisenstein, qui se présentait comme un parent éloigné du cinéaste soviétique. Je pris donc contact avec Hervé Boudon et me rendis à son salon de coiffure, situé tout près de l'Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art où je travaille désormais. Hervé Boudon me montra des croquis architecturaux que lui avait laissé ce Daniel Eisenstein, avec des mentions en russe qu'il ne pouvait déchiffrer, ne parlant pas cette langue. Tous deux imaginaient que c'était des croquis de Sergueï Eisenstein. En réalité, il s'agissait d'esquisses de son père, Mikhaïl Eisenstein, qui avaient été réalisées à Riga, ainsi que je le lui expliquais lorsque je pris connaissance de ces documents. Hervé Boudon

me laissa les coordonnées de Daniel Eisenstein que je contactai, espérant le rencontrer. Malheureusement, celui-ci, fort âgé, n'était déjà plus en très bonne santé et habitait dans le Sud. J'ai essayé à plusieurs reprises de l'appeler et de lui donner rendez-vous, mais je n'y suis hélas jamais parvenue. J'ai depuis perdu sa trace et l'énigme reste donc entière : qui est (s'il est encore en vie) ce Daniel Eisenstein ? Quel lien de parenté avait-il avec celui que l'on appelle, entre eisensteiniens, SME ?

Quoi qu'il en soit, je reste à l'affût des prochains hasards eisensteiniens qui se présenteraient à moi, avec l'envie et le désir de continuer à les raconter, pendant longtemps encore, à celui sans lequel aucun spécialiste d'Eisenstein ne pourrait travailler ou exister en tant que tel : Naoum Kleiman, dont l'intelligence, le savoir, la générosité et la ténacité ne cessent de nous combler et de nous éblouir.

GALIA ACKERMAN
DESSINS SECRETS
DE SERGUEÏ EISENSTEIN
Histoire d'une publication

Au printemps 1997, une vieille connaissance, Vladimir Alloy, a demandé à me rencontrer. Vladimir, qui n'est plus de ce monde, mérite que je lui consacre quelques lignes. Après avoir émigré en France, depuis St-Pétersbourg, en 1975, quand il avait tout juste trente ans, il s'était dédié à un travail d'archiviste, en recherchant partout – en Russie, en URSS, dans l'émigration – des mémoires, des documents, des œuvres inconnues, bref, tout ce qui pouvait avoir trait à l'histoire et la culture russes. En l'espace de quelques années, il permit à plusieurs volumes d'almanachs historiques de voir le jour, et on lui doit la publication en russe de grands auteurs interdits en URSS, comme Venedikt Erofeïev¹ ou Youri Dombrovski².

À l'époque dont je parle, Alloy se rendait souvent en Russie – cela fut possible pour les émigrés politiques à partir de la fin des années 1980, avec l'avènement de la *glasnost* gorbatchévienne. L'ouverture de la Russie lui permit de recentrer ses activités dans sa ville natale en y créant une maison d'édition et une revue.

Je ne subodorais pas le motif de sa visite. Il est arrivé chez moi avec une valise et m'a expliqué qu'il y avait dedans une collection de 547 dessins érotiques d'Eisenstein achetée en 1995 auprès de Nikolai Moskvine, le fils du dernier cameraman

1 Cf. *Moskva-Petouchki*, Paris, YMCA Press, 1977. Édition française, *Moscou-sur-vodka*, (trad. Anne Sabatier et Antoine Pingaud, postface Michel Heller), Paris, Albin Michel, 1990.

2 Cf. *Fakoultet nenoujnykh vechtcheï*, Paris, YMCA Press, 1978. Édition française, *La Faculté de l'inutile* (trad. Jean Cathala et Dimitri Sesemann), Paris, Albin Michel, 1988

d'Eisenstein, Andreï Moskvine (mort en 1961). D'après Alloy, Eisenstein aurait légué cette collection, son « jardin secret », à Moskvine qui, à son tour, l'aurait transmise à son fils. Nikolaï aurait cédé cette collection à Alloy, sentant sa fin proche (il est effectivement mort quelques mois plus tard). Alloy était en possession d'un certificat de cette vente. Ensuite, Alloy avait réussi à acheminer la collection à Paris (par valise diplomatique, probablement).

Connaissant mes liens avec plusieurs maisons d'édition parisiennes, il m'a proposé de chercher un éditeur pour publier l'intégralité de cette collection. Je n'étais absolument pas une spécialiste d'Eisenstein, mais j'ai tout de suite compris, en voyant ces dessins sulfureux, qu'ils pourraient changer la perception que l'on avait de leur auteur, cette icône du cinéma mondial. Alloy ne cachait pas qu'il souhaitait, grâce à cette publication, mettre en valeur ces dessins pour les vendre ensuite. Il avait besoin d'argent pour sa maison d'édition à St-Petersbourg, mais aussi pour s'installer confortablement avec sa compagne russe, Tatiana Pritykina.

Le caractère parfaitement assumé – anticlérical, nécrophile, zoophile, homosexuel, sadique, et j'en passe – de ces dessins à la fois subversifs et exquis ne rendait pas mes recherches faciles. L'un après l'autre, les quelques éditeurs que j'avais contactés ne donnèrent pas suite au projet. Finalement, Jean-Claude Marcadé, spécialiste de l'avant-garde russe et ami, m'a mise en contact avec Gilles Néret, historien de l'art et éditeur, qui représentait les éditions Taschen à Paris. Néret fut immédiatement enthousiaste. On a déjeuné à plusieurs reprises dans la rue de Buci, près de son domicile, pour discuter d'une édition façon Taschen, intégrale, avec des traductions des légendes et des commentaires. Comme Taschen publie dans plusieurs langues, cela aurait permis une diffusion mondiale. Mais un jour, Néret m'a appelé en catastrophe. Complètement dépité, car il venait de recevoir un fax de Benedict Taschen, avec un dessin du cuirassé Potemkine. J'en reproduis l'essentiel ici :

Dear Gilles,

I am sorry that it took longer than anticipated to let you have my reply regarding the book project about the Eisenstein collection.

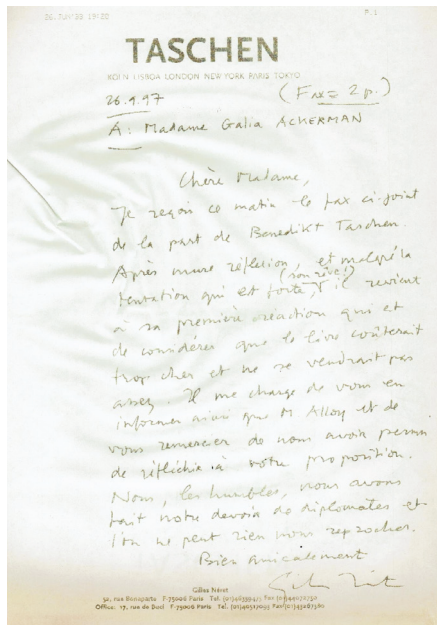
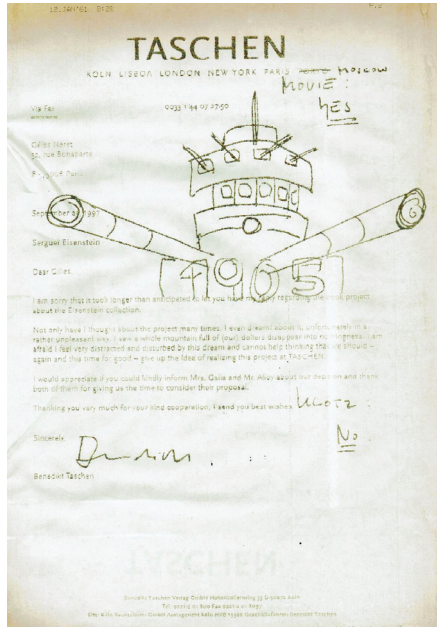
Not only have I thought about the project many times, I even dreamt about it, unfortunately in a rather unpleasant way. I saw a mountain full of (our) dollars disappear into nothingness. I am afraid I feel very distracted and disturbed by this dream and cannot help thinking that we should – again and this time for good – give up the idea of realizing this project at Taschen [Fig. 1].

Néret m'a renvoyé ce fax avec son commentaire :

Après mûre réflexion, et malgré la tentation qui est forte (son rêve !), il [Taschen] revient à sa première réaction qui est de considérer que le livre coûterait trop cher et ne se vendrait pas assez... Nous, les humbles, nous avons fait notre devoir de diplomates et l'on ne peut rien nous reprocher [Fig. 2].

Presqu'en dernier ressort, j'ai eu alors l'idée de m'adresser à un vieil ami, écrivain et éditeur aux Éditions du Seuil, Olivier Rolin, bien qu'il ne s'occupât point d'éditions illustrées. Rolin en a parlé rapidement à Claude Cherki, le PDG du Seuil, qui nous a convoqués, moi et Vladimir. Nous étions début octobre 1997, à quelques jours seulement de la Foire de Francfort. Exubérant, Cherki a ordonné à son staff de préparer de toute urgence une fausse maquette du livre, avec une dizaine de dessins, et le texte en charabia, pour la présenter à Francfort. Je garde encore une copie de cette maquette [Figg. 3-4-5].

De retour de Francfort, Cherki nous a conviés à un nouvel entretien. Il nous a raconté qu'il avait fait une présentation du projet dans sa suite d'hôtel à Francfort où il avait invité la crème de l'édition internationale. Il savourait une grosse affaire conclue : quinze ou seize éditeurs venaient designer une option pour l'achat d'une édition clé en main dans leur langue. Cela signifiait que nous devions nous mettre immédiatement au travail : Jean-Claude Marcadé et moi avions pour mission d'étudier une collection totalement vierge – établir une chronologie,



Figs. 1, 2



Fig. 3

souvent absente sur les dessins, créer une typologie par groupes, déchiffrer les légendes parfois énigmatiques, en plusieurs langues, etc. Il fallait également écrire des textes de présentation qui allaient accompagner les 250 dessins que nous avons à sélectionner : moi, sur la vie d'Eisenstein à la lumière de ces dessins, et Jean-Claude, sur leur portée artistique.

Les délais étaient extrêmement serrés, trois ou quatre mois au total ! On travaillait dans les locaux du Seuil, en présence de Vladimir, qui ne voulait confier sa collection à personne. Finalement, tous les clichés furent faits, les textes écrits, la vraie maquette finie. Il ne restait aux maisons d'édition partenaires qu'à remplacer le texte en français par celui de leur langue. Et c'est là que le ciel s'abattit sur nous. À l'exception d'un éditeur portugais, tous les autres ont renoncé à leur option. Ils n'ont pas explicité leurs motifs. Je crois qu'ils avaient tout bonnement peur. Car on entrait, de plus en plus, dans l'ère du politiquement correct, et les dessins, plus d'un demi-siècle après leur exécution, gardaient leur potentiel explosif.

Cherki ne savait pas quoi faire. Une édition française et une petite rétribution portugaise ne rendaient pas l'édition rentable. Après plus d'un an de tergiversations, il a quand même décidé de publier le livre dans lequel le Seuil avait déjà beaucoup investi (les clichés et les à-valoir), mais de façon plus réduite : 150 images au lieu de 250, un format plus petit, nos textes réduits, notre bibliographie sacrifiée. C'est ainsi que parut, en automne 1999, l'album *Dessins secrets* tiré à 3000 exemplaires [Fig. 6], qui n'a provoqué aucun scandale dans le pays laïc (heureusement !) qu'est la France. La réception fut plutôt positive et bon enfant : « Le cul racé d'Eisenstein » (*Têtu*) ; « Eisenstein, "Potemkine" classé X » (*Marianne*) ; « Raccord d'éjac » (*Zoo cinémas en liberté*) ; « Secrets d'Eisenstein » (*Politis*) ; « Montage et érotique » (*La Quinzaine littéraire*) ; « Le culotté Potemkine » (*Libération*), etc. Ajoutons que cette édition est depuis longtemps épuisée et qu'elle est devenue un objet de collection, *a collector's item*, sans que l'on puisse rééditer cet album car Alloy n'avait cédé les droits que pour quelques années.

Peu de temps après la publication, Vladimir Alloy revint me voir, en compagnie de Tatiana et de son énorme chien dont je ne

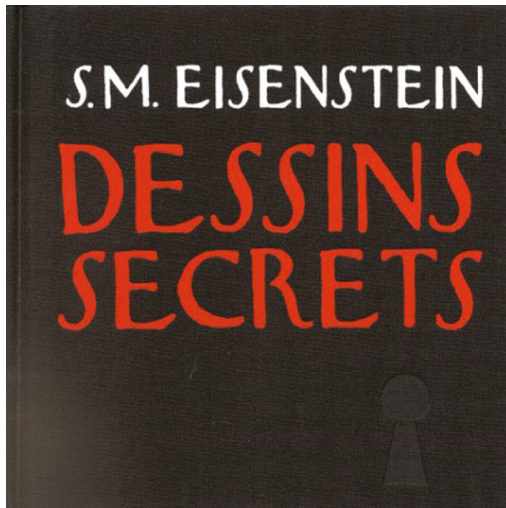


Fig. 6

saurais dire la race. Un Newfoundland, probablement. Il pensait que l'heure était venue de vendre sa collection pour laquelle il espérait tirer près d'un million d'euros, à 2000 euros pièce. J'ai promis de me renseigner et j'ai appelé un ami, metteur en scène suisse, Hans-Peter Litscher, qui, comme je le savais, avait des contacts aux Etats-Unis. En effet, il a contacté quelques universités américaines ayant des collections d'*erotica*, mais il ne pouvait s'agir que de sommes trois ou quatre fois plus modestes. Alloy semblait très déçu, et c'est dans cet état d'esprit qu'il repartit à Saint-Pétersbourg.

Fin décembre 2000, il m'a appelée de nouveau, de Moscou, en me poussant à entreprendre de nouvelles démarches pour la vente. Il avait l'air accablé : peu de temps auparavant, son chien adoré était mort. J'ai demandé s'il revenait bientôt à Paris. Il m'a répondu, sur un ton sinistre : « Je rentre demain à Saint-Pétersbourg, et pour la suite, on verra ». Ce que je ne savais pas c'est qu'il planifiait déjà son suicide. Il a informé tous ses amis de ses intentions en affirmant qu'une voix l'exigeait. Pour un chrétien qu'il était (un Juif converti), c'était bizarre de céder à une tentation diabolique, mais son esprit était visiblement troublé. Il mit fin à sa vie le jour même du Noël orthodoxe, le 7 janvier 2001, en laissant une lettre détaillée où il léguait sa collection Eisenstein au Musée Russe.

Il semblerait que le Musée Russe n'ait pas accepté ce legs car il manquait des tampons de la douane : la collection a deux fois franchi la frontière russe de façon illégale. Pendant quelques années, personne ne sut ce qu'il en était advenu. Finalement, une spécialiste d'Eisenstein, Oksana Boulgakova, l'a retrouvée à l'Ermitage où elle fut mise en dépôt par Tatiana Pritykina. Et c'est en 2017 que cette collection fut mise en vente par Alexander Gray Associates (galerie new-yorkaise) en association avec l'*art dealer* Matthew Stephenson. [Fig. 7]. Dans le dossier de presse, les vendeurs donnent une version un peu différente de celle qui nous a été donnée par Alloy :

Upon his return to Moscow at the height of Stalin's rule he [Eisenstein] kept the explicit images hidden until his death in

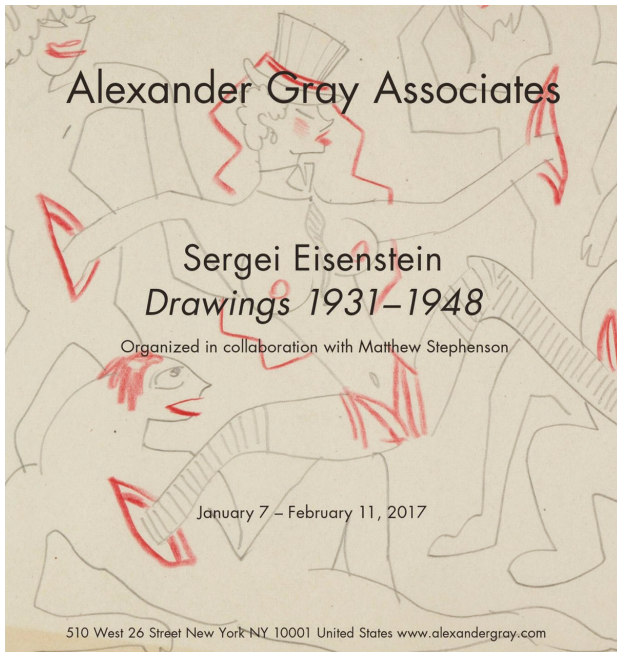


Fig. 7

1948. His widow, the writer and filmmaker Pera Atasheva, donated most of his graphic archive, with the exception of his sex drawings, to the Russian State Archives of Literature and Art in Moscow (RGALI). Atasheva entrusted the erotic drawings to Eisenstein's close friend and collaborator, the famous Soviet cinematographer Andrei Moskvin, who protected the director's reputation by keeping these drawings hidden. After Moskvin's death in 1961, his widow safeguarded the drawings. In the late 1990s her heirs sold the drawings to the family of present owner. A quarter of the drawings were also donated to the permanent collection of the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg. [Fig. 8].

Cette version qui montre le rôle joué par Péra Attacheva est peut-être plus exacte. Eisenstein fut terrassé par une crise cardiaque à cinquante ans, il n'aurait pu anticiper sa mort et « caser » sa collection qui lui permettait de se décharger dans l'atmosphère si confinée de l'URSS.

Il nous reste à regretter que cette collection, ce « coffre à trésors interdits » d'Eisenstein, conservée avec amour pendant des dizaines d'années, n'ait pas été publiée dans sa totalité, à cause de l'erreur de jugement de Taschen, et qu'elle soit désormais éparpillée et difficile à consulter, à l'exception d'un quart déposé à Saint-Pétersbourg. Ainsi va le monde...



Fig. 8

FRANÇOIS ALBERA
DE SMOLENSKAÏA À ODESSA

1. *La rencontre*

Mercredi 9 juillet 1975, je m'envole pour Moscou depuis Sofia où je suis arrivé la veille de Salonique, en train à vapeur (10 heures de route). Je suis invité au festival du film grâce à l'entremise du quotidien du parti suisse du Travail, *Voix ouvrière*, où je publie depuis quelques années des critiques d'art et de cinéma. Le but de mon voyage est cependant de mettre en place une édition de textes d'Eisenstein aux éditions Complexe de Bruxelles dont le directeur, André Versaille, m'a sollicité après que j'eus publié mes *Notes sur l'esthétique d'Eisenstein* à Lyon¹. Il voudrait éditer les œuvres complètes du cinéaste... et a pris à cet effet contact avec la Vaap, agence soviétique qui gère les relations entre éditeurs occidentaux et soviétiques. Le festival dure jusqu'au 23, après quoi les invités des « délégations étrangères » (la délégation suisse ne compte que deux personnes, Erwin Leiser – qui est pourtant suédois – et moi – qui suis français) peuvent choisir une destination dans une république d'URSS pour quelques jours de visite. Tous les Français veulent aller en Géorgie (il y a là Marcel Martin, Bertrand Tavernier, Pascal Aubier et Jacques Tati qui cherche à monter une production en URSS). J'ai choisi l'Ouzbékistan dont j'ai découvert le cinéma au festival de Nyon trois ans plus tôt et qui m'a fasciné. Aussitôt arrivé à Moscou je cherche à téléphoner à Naoum Kleiman dont j'avais obtenu l'adresse (celle du « Cabinet Eisenstein ») et le numéro de téléphone. J'obtiens

1 François Albera, *Notes sur l'esthétique d'Eisenstein*, Lyon, C.E.R.T. / C.I.R.S. Université de Lyon, 1974.

un rendez-vous à 10 heures le samedi 12. Je reste, ce jour-là, toute la journée à Smolenskaïa à faire connaissance et à parler avec Naoum. Stupéfaction et charme de l'appartement-musée, si vivant : on boit le thé dans la théière et les tasses supposées d'Eisenstein, parmi ses livres, la couverture mexicaine est accrochée au mur au-dessus du divan, partout des bibliothèques avec des livres accumulées, des revues, des papiers, aux murs les photos dédicacées, au-dessus de la table où l'on se tient, un lustre baroque. Juché sur l'une des bibliothèques une gouache de Fernand Léger offerte par le peintre. À d'autres reprises j'y dormirai même, quand les conversations se seront prolongées tard dans la nuit. Naoum fait vivre cet endroit, on poursuit quelque chose commencé avant nous, on participe de l'esprit des lieux. Excitation de découvrir, dès qu'on ouvre un livre, des annotations marginales d'Eisenstein, des petits papiers, des dessins. Je me plonge dans *Des Grâces d'Oraisons* du RP Poulain – le livre, publié en 1901, est paraphé et daté de 1931. Naoum m'engage aussitôt à déchiffrer ce qu'a pu écrire le cinéaste dans les marges, entre les lignes, en général en français mais aussi bien en anglais, allemand, russe. Remarques drôlatiques où il opère sans cesse des rapprochements entre extase mystique et orgasme sexuel. Quelques années plus tard, Naoum me remettra la courte correspondance en allemand entre Wilhelm Reich et Eisenstein, en 1934 (que je publierai dans les *Cahiers du cinéma*, puis dans *Screen*). Comme j'arrive de Suisse, il me demande aussitôt d'enquêter sur l'existence ou non du petit film tourné à la Sarraz. Je m'y appliquerai et découvrirai « l'autre film », *Frauennot-Frauenglück* tourné à Zurich après le Congrès de La Sarraz. À la place de Vertov qui devait s'en charger mais avait préféré rentrer en Ukraine pour commencer *Enthousiasme*... Curieux chassé-croisé des deux cinéastes : avant ce film sur l'avortement, Eisenstein n'a pas pu se rendre à Stuttgart à la FiFo et c'est Vertov qui y est allé.

Naoum mobilise les compétences de tous ceux qui viennent le voir. Le grand projet d'une édition « complète » des écrits formulé à Oxford à l'occasion de l'exposition de dessins partait de ces partages linguistiques et culturels pour former des

équipes de travail. La fin du monde socialiste mit fin également à ce projet qui eût été mené à bien par un éditeur de RDA.

Arrive dans l'appartement Hans-Joachim Schlegel, éditeur allemand des *Schriften*, édition admirable par son parti pris de lier les textes aux films et donc privilégier les articles « de circonstance ». Nous faisons connaissance. On parle également politique. L'Allemagne fédérale d'alors fait régner les « interdits professionnels » pour les militants d'extrême-gauche. Le lendemain à 11 heures, nouveau rendez-vous à Smolenskaïa. Cette fois je rencontre Yamata, éditeur japonais des écrits d'Eisenstein, Grossev, un Bulgare sauf erreur, Lars Kleberg et Ana-Lena Wibom de la Cinémathèque suédoise.

Quelques films au festival tout de même (mongol, vénézuélien, thaïlandais, marocain).

Le lendemain je suis, à 10 heures, à Smolenskaïa. On travaille sur la bibliographie et un plan d'édition pour ce qui sera *Cinématisme*. Naoum plaide pour un ensemble de textes inédits en russe ce qui lui permettra de « stimuler » les éditeurs soviétiques à les publier enfin dans leur langue originale... Il a composé un choix de textes sur les autres arts qui proviennent notamment de parties apparues après la grande édition en 6 volumes de *Montage, la Non-Indifférente Nature*, d'articles épars. Arrivent Annette Michelson et Stephen Rudy (sémiologue américain). J'étais lecteur d'Annette et elle déplore gentiment que j'aie critiqué, dans mon petit livre, son article « Film and the Radical Aspiration » dont elle convient cependant qu'il donnait une approche infra-politique du cinéma d'avant-garde. Je quitte le « Cabinet » à 19.30 et je vois, dans les salles de l'Hôtel Rossiya où se tient le festival, des films bulgares, finlandais. Le lendemain en fin de journée, je retourne à Smolenskaïa. Jeudi 17, j'y suis dès le matin. Le dimanche 20 j'y fais la connaissance de Sergei Ioutkévitch. L'après-midi on nous montre au festival, hors-programme, *le Miroir* de Tarkovski. Le 22, avant midi, je fais la connaissance de Jay Leyda et, à 16.00, Naoum a organisé une grande réunion eisensteinienne avec tous les chercheurs présents à Moscou... Le lendemain c'est la clôture du festival. Ont été couronnés *Dersou Ouzala* pour l'URSS, *la*

Terre de la grande promesse de Wajda pour le monde socialiste et *Nous nous sommes tant aimés* de Scola pour l'Occident progressiste. J'appelle Naoum au téléphone dans l'après-midi. Il ne viendra pas aux cérémonies de clôture où je me rends, à 21.00, avec Annette Michelson, Salle Saint-Georges du Kremlin. On est là jusqu'à minuit. Le 24 juillet je pars pour Tachkent et Samarkande. Retour le 29. Une conversation téléphonique avec Naoum et le 30 je repars pour Sofia puis Athènes où je vais voir Théo Angelopoulos.

Ce n'est que le début d'un assez grand nombre de voyages à Moscou pour travailler à ce volume, *Cinématisme*, dont on relira ligne à ligne la traduction française d'Anne Zouboff avec Naoum pour préciser les termes, unifier les équivalences choisies, éclaircir par des notes des passages, identifier des noms, des lieux... C'est une leçon de lecture : chaque notion doit être définie avant qu'on puisse choisir son équivalent français, replacée dans un champ lexical qui soit propre à l'idiolecte eisensteinien, soit culturel russe (comme la fameuse notion d'*obraz*). Béla Epstein viendra nous prêter main forte, et surtout Micha Iampolski et Natacha Noussinova qui deviennent des amis proches. J'habiterai régulièrement chez eux. Des cinéastes passent, Kieślowski il me semble, mais surtout les amis de Naoum comme Iouri Nordstein, Herz Frank dont il me montrera des films une autre fois. Chacun de mes voyages aura un but affiché différent de ce travail sur les textes d'Eisenstein car les éditions Complexe ne peut pas financer ce travail ni les déplacements. Je suis donc condamné à des doubles journées : sélectionner des films au Goskino pour Rotterdam, Locarno, organiser la rétrospective Barnet, puis Kouléchov et, en plus, continuer à établir ces textes d'Eisenstein, recueillir des images ou des textes que l'on photographie souvent (comme on fait à nouveau de nos jours avec les appareils numériques), faute d'accès aisé à une photocopieuse. Tout un réseau, autour de Naoum, collabore à ces activités généreusement (et refuse d'être mentionné et remercié car nul n'est censé le faire). On mêle ces diverses recherches. Je rencontrerai en 1984-85 Kouchnirov, biographe de Barnet, puis Aleksandra Khokhlova, puis, en 1989-1990, sa fille

Ekaterina. Leonid Trauberg. En 1978, j'irai à New York voir Jay Leyda sur place (on s'était revu entre-temps à Moscou), il me fait visiter la salle du Greco au Metropolitan et m'introduit au MoMA dans le fonds qu'il a déposé où je trouve le manuscrit en allemand de « Dramaturgie der Film-Form » et ses variantes en anglais qui fera l'objet de ma thèse.

Smolenskaïa était un lieu d'initiation aux « mystères » eisensteiniens et Naoum en fut l'ordonnateur. Un chamane.

2. *Survivances et antécédents du Cuirassé Potemkine : Eisenstein au miroir de Zamiatine*

Il y a quelques années j'avise dans une librairie un livre de Iouri Bouïda, *Le Troisième Cœur* ([2008] traduit chez Gallimard en 2012 sous le titre : *Potemkine ou le troisième cœur*)². L'auteur, dont on a déjà pu lire en français *Le train zéro*, *Yermo* et *La fiancée prussienne et autres nouvelles*³, y met en scène un personnage de Russe émigré en France, Fiodor Zavalichine, que la vision du *Cuirassé Potemkine* au Casino de Grenelle sous l'égide des « Amis de Spartacus » animé par Léon Mousinac, va bouleverser. En effet Zavalichine, natif d'Odessa, faisait, en 1905, son service militaire et son régiment avait été chargé de réprimer les manifestations d'ouvriers et d'étudiants qui avaient éclaté dans la ville en lien avec la mutinerie du cuirassé. Allant voir ce film parce qu'il se déroule dans sa ville natale – quoique les émigrés russes aient accueilli avec hostilité cette œuvre du « Juif bolchevik Eisenstein » –, l'ancien militaire se rend compte soudain qu'il a participé à un atroce massacre. Il en conçoit, vingt ans plus tard, une culpabilité qui le taraude à tel point qu'il court comme un fou, après la séance, se dénoncer comme criminel au commissariat du XV^e arrondis-

2 Iouri Bouïda, *Potemkine ou Le Troisième cœur*, Paris, Gallimard, 2012.

3 Id., *Le train zéro*, Paris, Gallimard, 1998 ; *Yermo*, Paris, Gallimard, 2002 ; *La fiancée prussienne et autres nouvelles*, Paris, Gallimard, 2005.

sement. Bien que l'actualité du moment soit avant tout dominée par l'affaire de « la tombe de Deauville » (un excavateur a mis à jour les corps de sept femmes égorgées), l'événement donne lieu à un entrefilet dans *Paris-Matin*... Le journaliste, qui vient de lire *Les Frères Karamazov*, est en effet convaincu d'une proximité entre la prise de conscience tardive de Zavalichine et l'histoire, contée par Dostoïevski, d'un homme ayant commis un crime, l'ayant oublié et se trouvant, quatorze ans plus tard, pris de remords rendant sa vie insupportable, qui l'amenaient à des aveux et à la mort « dans la lumière ». Aussi se rend-il à l'hôpital où l'Odessiste a été transporté après ses aveux car il est pris de crises convulsives. On apprend ainsi qu'après sa démobilisation (en 1905), Zavalichine a travaillé chez Gaumont en Russie, puis fait la guerre contre l'Allemagne, et a été affecté au corps expéditionnaire russe auprès du département cinématographique de l'état-major. Transféré en France il y est resté, après avoir participé à de durs combats meurtriers qui lui valurent d'être décoré par la France et la Russie, et a trouvé un emploi de technicien aux studios Gaumont. Enfin, quand la France eut reconnu le passeport Nansen, en 1922, qui autorisait les réfugiés russes à monter des affaires dans trente-huit pays, il a ouvert un atelier de photographie. Tout au long du récit qui ne cesse de multiplier ses bifurcations, l'épisode traumatique du *Potemkine* revient, chaque fois différent. Tel interlocuteur lui dit qu'à l'évidence « les bolcheviks mentaient », puisque c'est un fait reconnu que les soldats avaient alors tiré en l'air, par-dessus les têtes, et que « personne n'avait été tué à Odessa pendant ces journées... ». « Que s'est-il passé, alors ? », demande Fiodor ; et Sérioja : « C'est de l'hypnose... Le cinéma, mon vieux, c'est un art hypnotique, nuageux... » Qu'importe, convaincu de sa culpabilité, l'Odessiste part pour Lourdes avec une jeune meurtrière unijambiste qui espère un miracle, en un *road movie* plein de rebondissements et s'achève, classiquement, par une fusillade fatale sur les marches d'une église.

On pourrait continuer longtemps d'évoquer tel ou tel épisode de ce roman en privilégiant ceux qui ont un rapport avec le cinéma ou la photographie (ils ne manquent pas) : ce serait

certes rendre justice à la documentation de l'auteur, son matériau, mais non à ses qualités littéraires. Or dès les premières pages éclate une écriture très originale, faite d'images fortes, de micro-actions violemment ramassées et organisées selon une construction répétitive, une sorte de tourniquet vertigineux ou de projection de lanterne magique folle où la même action, le même instantané sur un personnage sont repris en boucle. Le récit – à un niveau macroscopique – joue également de la surprise dans ses rapprochements de divers faits (on a vu ci-dessus celui du spectateur traumatisé par le *Potemkine* et la découverte d'un charnier) dont la rencontre a souvent la puissance d'un montage *cut* ou d'un montage alterné dans un film qui ne se soucierait pas de cohérence diégétique et de continuité mais d'« attraction », y compris intellectuelle quand surgissent inopinément des citations d'Olivier de la Marche, Pascal ou Rilke. Outre des effets d'effraction qui appartiennent à un certain fantastique naturaliste, une brutalité d'action propre au « polar » de la « Série noire » de l'époque Jim Thompson, Lionel White et autres, et une complexité structurale à la Robbe-Grillet, ce roman ranime en palimpseste le film d'Eisenstein, présence fantômatique, sorte de cauchemar qui poursuit le personnage et dont les procédés d'écriture empruntent manifestement à la logique associative, attractionnelle, au découpage « cubiste » que pratiqua Eisenstein dans son film. Ce qu'on appelait il y a quelques décennies un *intertexte*.

À moins que l'intertexte de Bouïda ne soit la nouvelle de Zamiatine « Trois jours », datée en 1913 et contant trois journées à Odessa d'un marin qui se trouve témoin et mêlé aux manifestations d'hommage à Vakoulintchouk dont le corps a été exposé sur la jetée et devant lequel défilent hommes, femmes et enfants. Mais aussi aux émeutes qui suivent, pillages et incendies suivis de la répression policière et militaire et à la riposte du Cuirassé puis à son départ vers le large quand s'approche l'escadre venue le maîtriser. Parmi les différentes versions probables ou fantasmées qu'évoque Bouïda dans son roman, y aurait-il aussi cette réminiscence de Zamiatine ? Mais surtout, est-il inimaginable qu'Eisenstein, dont la boulimie de lecture est

sans égale, n'ait pas lu ce texte, publié douze ans avant qu'il ne réalise son film ? Peut-être même a-t-il décidé de réduire *1905* à l'épisode du cuirassé à cause de lui. Apparemment il n'y fait aucune allusion et, plus étonnamment, aucun commentateur, à ma connaissance, n'a établi de rapport entre cette nouvelle et le film⁴. Fût-ce pour établir qu'il y eut bien de tels événements à Odessa à ce moment-là – ce dont certains, emportés par leur élan, ont attribué à la seule imagination du cinéaste ! Eisenstein s'avisait lui-même de l'existence d'une actualité reconstituée de Gaston Velle – il en parle dans ses *Notes pour une Histoire générale du cinéma* en 1947 quand il peut lire les premiers tomes de *L'Histoire générale du cinéma* et le *Méliès mage* de Maurice Bessy et Lo Duca. Il évoque le reportage de *L'Illustration* paru peu après les événements. Mais il ne dit rien de *Zamiatine*. Pas plus qu'il ne parle de *Nous* quand il travaille à son projet *Glass House*. Pourtant la lecture de « Trois jours » stupéfie par son écriture « cinématique » et, plus que cela, « eisensteinienne ». Une référence par anticipation.

Bien sûr, le point de vue adopté par *Zamiatine*, celui d'un marin de la marine marchande qui se trouve mouillé à Odessa de manière fortuite au moment où le *Potemkine* a jeté l'ancre à quelque distance du port, n'est pas celui du film qui ne procède pas, sauf cas particuliers, à des focalisations sur un personnage. Les événements sont cependant évoqués assez précisément par des locuteurs de passage. Ainsi le chef de la salle des machines, qui a pu descendre à terre avant les autres, revient à bord et apostrophe l'équipage : « Vous restez là, vous z'êtes au courant de rien ! Il s'en passe des choses ! [...] *Sur le cuirassé, là, ils ont jeté leurs officiers par-dessus bord. Y'a un lieutenant qui leur a tué un gars, et ç'a été le début...* »⁵

4 Je m'en suis assuré auprès de mon collègue et ami Leonid Heller, spécialiste de *Zamiatine* (voir infra).

5 Dans toutes les citations de la nouvelle de *Zamiatine*, les italiques sont de mon fait. Je suis la traduction d'André Markowicz (à quelques détails près), parue sous le titre *La Caverne et autres nouvelles* (Malakoff, Solin, 1989).

Peu après il entraîne le narrateur par le bras et lui agitant sous les yeux son moignon (il a perdu deux doigts à la main droite), il lui dit : « Il mouille sur la Nouvelle Jetée. Ça, c'est sûr. *Des foules et des foules qui vont le voir...* »

Soulignons la présence de ce *moignon* brandi qui « fait image » (c'est un poing). Le cinéma soviétique d'Eisenstein à Dovjenko en passant par Vertov ne craindra pas de mettre l'accent sur des corps mutilés par la guerre, par les conditions de travail. Mais cette information selon laquelle le cuirassé mouille *sur la Nouvelle Jetée* est également à relever. Plus tard, quand le narrateur s'est mêlé à la foule, il parle d'une *procession* : « Nous nous trouvons pris dans une *marée humaine qui descend depuis le haut de la ville jusqu'au port*. Quelque chose qui ressemble à un chemin de croix. » Et ce chemin « *tourne sur la Nouvelle Jetée* ». À la lecture, ce passage appelle un plan du film où la foule descend comme à la verticale, en rangs serrés sur un escalier d'abord vide et soudain plein, deux caches latéraux accentuant encore cet effet de colonne. Puis ces plans, en plongée lointaine, où la courbe de la jetée, noire de monde, semble partir vers le large, le hors-cadre, dessinant une figure graphique sur l'écran⁶.

Les gros plans et les très gros plans se succèdent maintenant : « ...il y a tant de gens de toutes sortes. *Des panamas*, des gosses aux *pièdes nus*, des soldats, des *gants*, des *parapluies* de soie, des *savates*, des *cols amidonnés*... » Un usage « eisensteinien » de la métonymie qui ramène les passants à un accessoire, un vêtement : panama, gant, parapluie, savate, col, indice en outre d'appartenances sociales disparates (« *pièdes nus* » et « *cols amidonnés* »). Des gros plans d'objets qui s'animent devant nos yeux et font penser aussi à l'analyse de quelques photographies du film par Roland Barthes (la femme au foulard trop bas, au mouchoir, à la bouche de poisson).

6 On a pu trouver absurde ces foules revenant de loin sur cette jetée courbe, semblant ne venir de nulle part (ainsi Barthélemy Amengual dans son *Que Viva Eisenstein !*, Lausanne, L'Âge d'Homme, 1980). On a ici l'explication.

Plus loin c'est la présentation du corps de Vakoulintchouk (qui n'est pas nommé) qui poursuit la métonymie du couvre-chef et de l'accessoire : « Soudain, devant nous, les gens ôtent leur *chapeau*. » Et cette phrase laconique : « Un silence oppressant nous *recouvre* ». Comme si le silence coiffait l'ensemble des gens qui se sont découverts. Ce silence oppressant rappelle aussi celui que commente Eisenstein, sur le cuirassé, quand les marins promis à la mort pour certains tombent à genoux *recouverts* du prélat blanc, chape de silence, lui aussi et que leurs camarades baissent la tête, impuissants.

Devant le corps du marin abattu, une femme en *foulard* murmure : « Il est là, oh, il est là, mon Dieu... Qu'est-ce qu'il est beau *on dirait qu'il dort* ! » Il est étendu sur des drapeaux. Un visage jaune, mort paisible. Les lumières des *cierges*, effrayantes en plein jour. On ne parle qu'en chuchotant. [...]. On *jette des sous* dans une assiette devant le défunt puis on s'écarte. On lit sur *une feuille épinglée sur sa poitrine*, une feuille qui fait une tache blanche sous le soleil.

On pourrait mettre en regard de ce texte, de cette série d'instantanés, de brefs « cadres », la séquence du film correspondante et les accents qu'elle comporte (les *cierges*, le corps paisible du mort, la feuille épinglée sur sa poitrine, le calot jouant le rôle de l'assiette).

Puis Zamiatine revient à son écriture métonymique, toujours axée sur les accessoires et particulièrement les couvre-chefs. Un cri : « Hé, toi, *le chapeau* ! ». Puis on explique ce qu'il y a sous ces deux mots : *cri* et *chapeau*. Un matelot a apostrophé un quidam en chapeau melon qui ne s'est pas découvert devant le mort. De même dans le film, ce moment où un jobard en panama, lance, goguenard, « À bas les Juifs ! » et se fait rabrouer, rabat son chapeau sur son visage.

Il y a encore les orateurs et maintenant la foule, « obscure marée de têtes » (plans en plongée verticale sur la foule compacte) et soudain « les gens jettent leur chapeau en l'air, agitent les bras » car la vedette du cuirassé accoste. Une image de film muet : « Les matelots, sur la vedette du *Potemkine*, ouvrent

la bouche, ils crient sans doute, *on ne les entend pas*. Ils sont venus demander des provisions.

Et les gens jettent des filets de pommes de terre, du saucisson, des paquets de toutes sortes.

Ils repartent.

La foule bouge, tangué, avance vague à vague. Au-dessus d'elle on peut presque voir le nuage de passion qui ne demande qu'à éclater, se déverser... Des orateurs réapparaissent... On acclame encore le cuirassé. Soudain un deuxième « hourra » « roule, s'amplifie comme la première vague de la tempête, suivie par une deuxième, qui la rattrape, puis par une troisième. Nous n'entendons plus rien d'autre qu'un hurlement de joie, un cri dans la tempête mêlé à un tocsin haletant, à l'oppressante gaité d'une sirène. » Tout près de la jetée un grand navire noir remorqué par le torpilleur du *Potemkine*. Il grouille de monde. « Sur le pont, des drapeaux rouges, des dizaines d'ouvriers. Ils agitent leur chapeau, ils saluent la terre ferme à coups de sirène. La rive s'agite et crie à corps perdu, hurle furieusement : "Hourra !" ».

« Il faudra bien que quelque chose se passe, il faudra bien ! »

Il se passe en effet « quelque chose », un embrasement général des quais, de la ville et la répression qui s'abat, les salves qui claquent. Du bateau qu'il a regagné, le narrateur entend « le fracas massif et incessant des coups de feu [...], des claquements secs et inhumains, terribles parce que *mécaniques*. Depuis minuit les mitrailleuses n'arrêtent pas... » Un matelot monte au mât et raconte aux autres : « "On peut tout voir d'ici, tout comme si on y était... Là, c'est les soldats qui chargent à coups de baïonnettes... Oh, nom de Dieu !" Un hourra dispersé, écrasé. Comme des brindilles sèches qui se cassent, à coups de revolver, et puis, d'en haut, de la côte, une salve de fusils... »

« Un choc assourdissant, un coup de massue. Les vitres tremblent et éclatent. Secondes de stupéfaction. Et puis, traversent tout notre être, cet éclair : le *Potemkine* fait l'ouverture. Et c'est un tourbillon humain. Les gens sont devenus fous. Ils courent, ils renversent les tables ; les bancs, les chaises, la vaisselle croulent. Les messieurs sautent par-dessus les dames

élégantes couchées sur le trottoir. En une seconde l'escadron de cosaques a été balayé des abords du boulevard. On file jusqu'aux portes cochères, on se plaque le front contre les murs. [...] Une salve de fusils résonne, se brise. La foule se répand sur le boulevard, mais elle est attendue par le mur sombre et lourd des croupes des chevaux cosaques. L'armée ne laisse passer personne. »

Comme dans l'actualité reconstituée de Gaston Velle, on regarde du bateau avec des jumelles : « Regardez dans vos jumelles, si vous ne me croyez pas, regardez voir ».

On annonce maintenant la venue de l'escadre « avec ordre de prendre le *Potemkine* vivant ou de le couler ». Le bateau de commerce d'où l'on suit maintenant les événements doit quitter le port, mais « le comité a donné l'ordre de faire grève », les matelots ne bougent pas. Finalement le comité, à terre, consent à ce que les bateaux repartent et on est remorqué jusqu'à la rade. « Nous avançons et nous voilà de plus en plus près du *Potemkine*. On voit déjà ses canons et ses tourelles blanches. Au poste de commandement, deux matelots. Une masse de chemises blanches regroupées à la poupe, un meeting sans doute. Un homme grimpe au-dessus de ses camarades, il parle, les rubans de son béret flottent dans le vent. Nous sommes rivés à nos jumelles... [...] Nous avançons toujours plus près du *Potemkine*, les bouches noires des canons s'ouvrent de plus en plus larges. [...] On a rejoint le *Potemkine*. Encore une seconde... [...] Nous les saluons donc [bien qu'ils fussent des mutins]. » Le *Potemkine* maintenant se met en mouvement puis s'arrête en face d'Odessa. « On voit à bord du cuirassé luire un éclat joyeux, une fumée ronde et duveteuse. Et, un coup de tonnerre. [...] On n'entend qu'un clairon qui sonne. Tout seul. "Ils jouent l'attaque"... »

« Sur le cuirassé, bien en vue : ils ont hissé le pavillon rouge du combat. Une petite flamme brille, le fracas bien connu du coup de feu et, quelque chose de nouveau : l'air qui gronde et qui hurle. [...] "Ça, c'est déjà du sérieux : un obus de guerre. Une seconde et 'baoum' !..." On suit à la jumelle les fumées lointaines de l'explosion, quelque part au milieu de la ville. Et,

de nouveau le clairon. Le pavillon rouge descend lentement le long du mât du *Potemkine*. Le cuirassé reste longtemps immobile, tout blanc, silencieux. » Les matelots du bateau sont montés sur la dunette et suivent les événements. Ils ont trouvé des sachets de cerises et « crachent vaillamment les noyaux par-dessus bord, discutent pour savoir où l’obus et tombé... »

Mais voici qu’arrive l’escadre. Le *Potemkine* s’est mis en marche et avance tout droit sur elle, suivi de son torpilleur. « À la jumelle on distingue bien trois cuirassés, avec des torpilleurs. Ils arrivent, ils se dirigent sur le *Potemkine*, en ordre de bataille. [...] L’escadre envoie des signaux au *Potemkine*. Le *Potemkine* hisse le pavillon rouge, augmente l’allure au maximum, suivi par le torpilleur. Maintenant, tout de suite ! [...] Alors soudain, l’escadre des trois cuirassés et des torpilleurs qui avançait sur le *Potemkine*, lentement, fait demi-tour et se retire, sans un coup de canon. “Ça alors, c’est bien ! Mince alors ! Hourra !” hurle le matelot déluré à la boucle d’oreille. “Hourra !” reprend tout l’équipage... ». Un cuirassé s’est même rallié au *Potemkine*, le *Grégori Pobédonosets*...

Bien des choses diffèrent et bien des choses se ressemblent entre le texte et le film. Est-ce seulement en raison du commun objet qui est le leur ? Des mêmes images frappantes – on en a relevées quelques-unes – même si le témoin qui sert d’intermédiaire entre l’auteur et le lecteur chez Zamiatine se trouve au milieu des événements et se fie souvent, outre à ce qu’il peut voir, à ce qu’on lui raconte. Il règne une certaine indistinction, en particulier pour ce qui touche au déclenchement de la répression qui suit une série de pillages dans les docks, des incendies, des tonneaux mis en perce, des sacs de sucre déversés, des stocks de charbon en feu, une bacchanale où l’on se saouïle, jette à la mer des caisses, des vélos, des bidons de kérosène. Des scènes qui rappellent plutôt *La Grève* (avec les provocations suscitées par la police par le lumpen-prolétariat) ou *Octobre* avec certains débordements lors de la prise du Palais d’Hiver, dans les caves. C’est après ces excès et ces incendies qu’une compagnie de cosaques fait tinter les fers de ses chevaux sur les pavés et galope. Et la réponse du *Potemkine* est

incertaine : est-ce lui qui tire ou les insurgés qui ont lancé des bombes sur les cosaques ? Mais on retrouve cette même exaltation d'un mouvement de masse qui fusionne avec les mutins du cuirassé, ce passage du singulier au général, du détail à l'ensemble. On retrouve une même écriture discontinue, elliptique ménageant des écarts d'échelles, créant des chocs qui a pu faire dire que cette littérature jouant des relations espace-temps et de fragmentation du monde perçu avait rendu possible le cinéma⁷. Zamiatine travaillant avec Kornéï Tchoukovski à une édition russe d'O'Henry parlait à son propos de « cinématographe » et tenait pour une erreur de prétendre le cinéma inventé par Edison : « Edison et O'Henry l'ont inventé à eux deux » corrige-t-il.

En 1913, comment résonne « l'année 1905 » ? Sans doute plus comme une défaite que comme le fondement du mouvement qui aboutira à Octobre 1917. C'est pourquoi l'espérance que mettent les Odessistes et les matelots du bateau-témoin dans la révolte du *Potemkine* si elle gonfle, gagne toute la ville, tous ceux qui assistent à ce face-à-face des autorités et du cuirassé mutiné, si elle appelle les "hourras" et vient relayer et démultiplier la grève générale du port, elle bute également sur l'issue de cette insurrection : le *Potemkine*, apprennent les marins, est parti en Roumanie, « l'ordre règne à Odessa ». « "En Roumanie !" fait d'un ton dépité le matelot déluré à la boucle d'oreille. Il allume son brûle-gueule. Il crache. »

7 Cf. Leonid Heller, « Temps-mouvement, espace-lumière. Effet-cinéma, Zamiatine et la prose des années 1920 », *Revue des études slaves*, vol. LXXI, n° 3, 1999 et « Cinéma, cinématisme et ciné-littérature en Russie », *Cinémas*, n° 2-3, printemps 2001 « Eisenstein dans le texte ».

JACQUES AUMONT

EISENSTEIN CHEZ LES AUTRES

Comment quelque chose d'un cinéaste peut-il se retrouver dans d'autres films que les siens ? Comment penser la question de l'influence, en allant jusqu'à envisager ce qui, dans la parenté entre les œuvres, échappe à l'intention et même parfois à la conscience ? Comment Eisenstein a-t-il survécu « chez » d'autres cinéastes ? Et qu'est-ce qui, alors, *survit* ?

Le titre que j'ai choisi fait allusion à celui d'un roman qu'Eisenstein connaissait bien, le deuxième de la trilogie autobiographique de Gorki, *En gagnant mon pain*, qui s'appelle en russe « *ou lioudièi* », « chez les gens » : « au service de quelqu'un », ou « en pension ». Qu'est-ce qu'être au pair dans les films des autres, comment vous prennent-ils en pension, que peut-on offrir à leur service ? Comment un cinéaste fait-il ses classes, son apprentissage de la dure réalité du monde et du cinéma « chez les gens » ? Comment l'invention d'un cinéaste, dans la mesure même où elle se produit en rapport avec d'autres « gens », devient-elle une dissémination, une circulation, et par là une *vertu*, une force ?

Un premier aspect de la question consisterait à se demander ce qu'Eisenstein a pris ou reçu des autres. Eisenstein a beaucoup lu et infiniment retenu, parfois de sources mineures. Il s'est souvent occupé de tracer la généalogie de certaines de ses idées filmiques, en les rattachant à une chose vue, parfois anecdotique (tel le profil d'Ivan le Terrible reconnu dans les branches d'un arbre à Alma-Ata), à une sensation vécue, à un fonds culturel hétéroclite, mais retravaillé dans le sens d'une cohérence théorico-formelle, à partir d'un principe central, celui de la contradiction (Eisenstein était vraiment hégélien). Plu-

tôt que la célèbre analyse de la bataille sur la glace d'*Alexandre Nevski*, je prendrai pour exemple de cette capacité d'auto-analyse génétique un texte plus nerveux, *Torito* (« petit taureau »), écrit en 1934. Eisenstein y démonte un cadrage de son film mexicain inachevé ; il en trouve des sources, entre autres, dans une photographie du Palais des Doges de Venise, des toiles de Chirico, des collages de Max Ernst, des gravures de Callot ; et il y reconnaît aussi – bien qu'il s'agisse d'un seul plan fixe – des structures narratives prises chez Zola ou dans le récit de « Fort Chabrol » par Paul Morand...

Torito devait être inclus dans un essai théorique qui se serait appelé *La Méthode* (en hommage à Descartes ?) et la fin du texte dérive, comme souvent chez Eisenstein, vers des considérations plus générales sur les mécanismes de la création – qui abordent notamment le problème de l'emprunt et du transport de formes. Je ne suivrai cependant pas les traces de ce texte, dont la démarche n'est pas sans lacunes, à tout le moins celle-ci : il accumule les références à la peinture, à la littérature, à la poésie ou à la science, mais il ne désigne aucun emprunt même minuscule à un cinéaste¹.

Emblème et citation, ou : citer, c'est comprendre

Intéressons-nous donc à Eisenstein « chez les autres » lorsque ce sont les autres qui l'invitent. La première chose à remarquer, c'est qu'il s'est très vite fabriqué à cette fin une carte de visite. Eisenstein est de ce petit nombre de cinéastes, nés en même temps que le cinématographe, et qui en ont inventé un emblème : Griffith et la chevauchée infernale du Ku-Klux-Klan dans *Naissance d'une nation*, Charlot avalé par les roues den-

1 Alors qu'il a multiplié ces emprunts. Pour donner un seul exemple, l'incarnation d'Ivan le Terrible par Tcherkassov (à laquelle il a accordé personnellement beaucoup d'attention, veillant lui-même aux grimaces) évoque de près celle de Conrad Veidt dans *Le Cabinet des figures de cire*. Eisenstein n'a payé sa dette formelle qu'envers deux cinéastes, Griffith et Disney, dans deux textes de 1940-41.

tées de la machine des *Temps modernes*, Dreyer et le visage de Falconetti dans *Jeanne d'Arc*. Et le landau du « *Potemkine* ».

Évidemment, c'est un emblème mal lisible. Charlot avalé par la machine ou les larmes de Falconetti nous parlent clairement : ce sont des synonymes en image, respectivement de la mécanisation et de son caractère inhumain, et de la résistance humaine à la mécanisation par la visagité. Les paladins fascistes de *Naissance d'une Nation* portent un déguisement effrayant, mais la vitesse de leur chevauchée et son montage alterné en font le modèle princeps d'une forme narrative et idéologique promise à une fortune énorme : le sauvetage en dernière minute. Chaplin a inventé un emblème social et politique, Dreyer, un emblème anthropologique, Griffith, un emblème esthétique du cinéma, et à chaque fois, l'identification est immédiate, simple, non ambiguë.

Le landau dévalant les marches n'équivaut immédiatement à aucun concept, hésitant plutôt entre la sollicitation d'une empathie et le pur stimulus de mouvement et de vitesse, et c'est justement en raison de cette équivoque, et de ce qu'il y a en lui d'ininterprétable, que le landau a fasciné, qu'il a fait image, qu'il est revenu dans des films sans être encombré *a priori* d'une sursignification (penser au contraire à la façon dont est revenu le visage de la Jeanne de Dreyer, par exemple chez Godard). C'est par les escaliers et le landau qu'Eisenstein le plus souvent se résume, et c'est par là qu'il a été d'innombrables fois salué dans des films aussi divers que *Partner*, *Brazil*, *Speed*, *Carlito's Way* et bien d'autres.

Avec la reprise de cette image emblème, on n'arrive pas encore tout à fait à la *citation*. Si l'on veut conserver un sens un peu fort à ce mot, la citation doit impliquer au moins deux choses qui excèdent la simple évocation. Dans le cas du landau, il n'est pas faux d'y percevoir une sorte de graphème de mouvement ; le landau dévale les marches de façon accélérée, inarrêtable, saccadée, et ces trois traits font partie de ce qu'on peut citer : si élémentaire soit cette analyse, encore faut-il l'effectuer. D'autre part, le landau ne fonctionne pas seul, ni seulement par rapport à l'escalier (ce que tout le monde a vu), mais également

par rapport à la figure d’anonymat des soldats : fusils alignés et pointés, rangées de jambes qui descendent l’escalier – mais le descendent comme on le monterait. Or, sans ce second terme à quoi opposer le landau, la citation perd la moitié de son sens, ou tout sens.

La plupart du temps, les citations sont moins tendues vers ce qu’elles citent, moins soucieuses de lui rendre justice, en l’utilisant bien et en l’ayant compris, que de se gratifier à bon compte. Dans *Vera Cruz* de Robert Aldrich (1954), au moins deux moments semblent être des souvenirs du film mexicain inachevé d’Eisenstein : la mise à mort du partisan Juariste par les cavaliers de l’armée impériale, qui évoque le supplice des *peones* de *Sandunga*, massacrés par les sabots des chevaux ; et, dans l’avant-dernier épisode du film, la frise des partisans qui encerclent tout à coup les soldats impériaux. Devant ce genre de réminiscences, on se dit que le réalisateur, ou peut-être son assistant, avait dû voir le montage de Sol Lesser et que, sans rien comprendre à la logique de ces plans sublimes, irrémédiablement cassée par *Thunder Over Mexico*, il en avait retenu de grossières lignes de force, narrative dans le premier cas, graphique dans le second.

C’est donc ailleurs que l’on a fait, d’Eisenstein, des citations probantes – chez des cinéastes qui connaissent l’analyse et la dialectique. Vers la fin d’*Okraina*, Boris Barnet cite la scène des tranchées du début d’*Octobre*. Il ne cache pas son emprunt presque littéral, d’autant moins que la situation fictionnelle est exactement la même : on est en 1917, sur le front ; il s’agit de montrer, en les opposant, l’hésitation entre guerre et fraternisation. L’une des images choisies pour cela est l’écrasement des soldats dans les tranchées, figuré dans les deux films par un raccord : raccord entre ce qui écrase – un tank ou un obus – et ce qui est écrasé – un soldat qui se baisse et s’arc-boute. Dans les deux films, l’effet est gros, et dans celui de Barnet, il grossit encore, à cause du caractère ostensible et conscient de la citation (le film d’Eisenstein était dans les mémoires en 1933). La citation ne fait peut-être gagner que cette insistance, ce soulignement de l’idée ; en un sens donc elle ne gagne pas

grand-chose – mais rien non plus n'est perdu, l'effet cité l'est vraiment, sans résidu. On peut voir là un cas assez pur de remploi non littéral.

Il faudrait peut-être réserver le nom de citation à la citation analytique. On trouve ce type de citation vraie, par exemple, chez Godard. Même lorsque sa citation semble paresseuse, comme dans les plans de *Tout va bien* qui essaient de refaire des cadrages du *Potemkine*, Godard ne cite que pour problématiser (ces plans sont accompagnés d'un commentaire qui explique que l'on ne peut pas refaire Eisenstein, parce qu'on ne sait plus). Plus souvent, son analytisme est patent, comme dans la scène de la jeune partisane qui va être fusillée dans *Les Carabiniers*, et que l'on recouvre d'un linge blanc tandis qu'elle appelle « Frères ! », comme les matelots sous le prélat du *Potemkine* – auxquels elle ajoute et mêle une autre citation, lorsque, en un superbe faux-raccord, sa chevelure blonde par deux fois s'échappe de sa casquette, évoquant la chevelure de la jeune morte sur le pont ouvrant dans *Octobre*, et plus largement, le principe du faux-raccord par redoublement qu'a inventé Eisenstein dans *Potemkine*.

Le disciple et l'imitateur : reprendre un langage, c'est reprendre ses problèmes

Avec Godard s'exerçant sur Eisenstein, on n'est déjà plus tout à fait sur le terrain de la citation mais de la communauté ou de la reprise de problèmes. Des images comme l'écrasement des soldats dans les tranchées, ou la chevelure blonde qui pend dans l'écartement inexorable du pont, sont des images violemment poétiques, parce qu'elles reposent l'une et l'autre sur une logique de collage/montage (plutôt collage dans le premier cas, plutôt montage dans le second). Cette logique est au cœur de problèmes d'agencement, et surtout, de productivité, qu'a souvent rencontrés Eisenstein, et qui sont ceux du filmique en général. Aussi la retrouve-t-on, différemment, chez beaucoup d'autres cinéastes (Godard ne se distingue qu'en ce qu'il dé-

signe explicitement un point d'ancrage de son travail de montagiste/collagiste).

Il ne s'agit plus, ici, de citations, mais de rencontres, ou de *confluences*. Sans doute, dans la confluence en question, il y a un cours d'eau plus nourri que les autres, et peut-être plus ramifié. Eisenstein invente une des langues du cinéma en même temps que plusieurs de ses contemporains, et à partir des inventions de plusieurs autres. Pour rester un peu superficiel, il est patent qu'il a repris et poussé selon leur logique propre des propositions de Griffith, de Fairbanks, de Walsh, d'Ince, de Chaplin ; il est non moins clair que son travail est contemporain et concurrent de ceux de grands *documenteurs* de la réalité comme Vertov, Grierson ou même Ruttmann. L'hydrographie de ces fleuves et ruisselets est complexe, parce qu'ils ne cessent de se nourrir mutuellement et ne désirent rien tant que diverger. Mais le fleuve Eisenstein est celui dont l'eau, excessivement mêlée, a la couleur la plus reconnaissable.

Cette couleur, c'est ce qui s'est appelé le montage – un terme dans lequel nous ne sentons plus aujourd'hui, parce que le mot est fatigué, ce qu'il contient d'étrange dans sa référence à une ingénierie très datée. D'ailleurs Eisenstein est pour beaucoup dans cet effacement et cet oubli de l'origine historique du mot et du concept, puisque, au fond, son souci majeur a été de retravailler sans cesse et sans fin cette notion, pour l'appropriier à plusieurs substrats et à plusieurs cadres de pensée du cinéma. Eisenstein a été celui pour qui le cinéma était le montage, mais à condition d'ajouter que le montage a dû, pour cela, changer constamment, élargir sa définition, et parfois la retourner, comme un gant. Ce n'est pas le lieu de dresser un tableau des extensions successives du concept, qui a dû se plier à des visées différentes (signifiante, expressive, réaliste-ontologique) ; s'articuler à des bases théoriques différentes (théorie structurale du montage harmonique, théorie psycho-idéologique du monologue intérieur, théorie politique de l'extase) ; se conformer à des points d'application différents (le fragment, le raccord, le cadre, la phrase et la ligne, etc.). La question serait plutôt de savoir comment cette langue cinématographique particulière,

le « eisenstein muet », est devenue une sorte de langue savante et universelle du cinéma, un peu comme les langues anciennes dans l'Europe médiévale puis renaissante – tantôt langue érudite à laquelle on confiait les textes les plus importants, tantôt *lingua franca* qui permettait les échanges et les confrontations, tantôt infléchissement vers le vernaculaire, donnant de nouvelles langues dans lesquelles, plus tard, on pourrait se mettre à exprimer de la pensée.

Il serait facile de suivre les transformations de cette langue universelle et savante dans des films où sa science est devenue langage et savoir communs : il y a comme une histoire du montage eisensteinien dans les films. Il serait facile de prendre une scène d'un film de John Woo ou d'Abel Ferrara, pour y repérer des étymologies eisensteiniennes et une syntaxe montagiste. Ou bien il suffirait de confronter Eisenstein à un cinéaste qui en a tiré systématiquement toutes les leçons possibles, Hitchcock. Le cas « Hitchcock-Eisenstein » est facile à instruire si on se limite à l'aspect le plus évident du montage, la concaténation des plans : c'est à travers Hitchcock qu'Eisenstein se retrouve dans les formes brèves inventées par le télévisuel (le *clip*, la *pub*). Mais il y a aussi chez Hitchcock une conscience des effets du montage dans le cadre qui est, simplifiée et appauvrie, la même que chez Eisenstein. Cela est très net à propos des gros plans d'objets sursignifiants, comme les cymbales de *L'Homme qui en savait trop* ou les menottes des *Trente-neuf Marches* ; mais cela est vrai aussi de procédures plus indirectes comme l'utilisation de la plongée pour dominer un personnage, que l'on trouve de la même façon dans *Vertigo* et dans *Ivan le Terrible*.

Arrêtons-nous sur un autre cas, celui du *Dieu noir et le diable blond* de Glauber Rocha (1964). Nous sommes aux débuts de cette vague mondiale de « renouvellement » du cinéma qui a suivi la Nouvelle Vague française. Glauber Rocha n'est pas le premier représentant du *cinema nôvo* brésilien, mais il en est vite devenu, en Europe et dans son pays, la tête de file. Ce film, son second long-métrage, raconte une histoire qui sera reprise dans un film plus connu, *Antonio das Mortes* : l'histoire des paysans surexploités du *sertão*, dans la province du Nordeste

dont Glauber était originaire, et l'histoire de leurs révoltes dans les années trente de notre siècle. *Le Dieu noir et le diable blond* est un diptyque, où l'on voit les masses paysannes miséreuses se soulever autour d'un *Beato*, un Bienheureux qui prédit une espèce d'Apocalypse simpliste et prêche le massacre, puis un groupe de *cangaceiros*, des bandits d'honneur, ici également sur le mode exalté, sanguinaire et assez fou. Les deux volets sont reliés par deux actants : d'une part, un couple de vachers qui se met successivement au service des deux leaders charismatiques et échappe au massacre, et d'autre part, le tueur de hors-la-loi, Antonio das Mortes (personnage historique comme les deux autres).

La scène de l'assassinat du *Beato* par la femme du vacher est longue et lente, les gestes y sont hiératiques. Elle est immédiatement suivie par une scène de massacre qui, en moins d'une minute, offre plus de quarante plans, dans une utilisation du montage court, haché, très singulière à cette date. En outre cette scène exhibe un trait auquel se ramène tout montage eisensteinien : la production et l'organisation de la contradiction. Contradictions entre directions, lorsqu'on enchaîne la foule fuyant de droite à gauche, puis de gauche à droite, puis de droite à gauche, pour aboutir à une vue frontale². Contradiction entre fixité et mouvement, notamment à la fin, lorsqu'on voit Antonio das Mortes tirer, reprenant de façon à peine transposée le célèbre effet-mitrailleuse d'*Octobre*. Autre contradiction, entre fixité et mouvement, avec les plans fixes de visages qui s'opposent aux zébrures de jambes et de corps du début. Contradiction entre plans rapprochés et plans éloignés, ou, plus discrètement, entre les deux tailles de plans du tireur. Etc. Le tout, bien sûr, dans une scénographie (les escaliers), une mise en scène (la dégringolade, la fuite en pagaille, le massacre), une sélection de détails (les visages en sang), un sens du typage,

2 C'est presque l'application littérale d'un des cas de contradiction graphique prévus dans un article d'Eisenstein qui, en 1929, synthétise son approche du montage, « Dramaturgie der Film-Form » (voir l'intéressant commentaire de François Albéra, *Eisenstein et le constructivisme russe*, L'Âge d'homme, Lausanne, 1990).

individuel et de groupe – qui évoquent très immédiatement les escaliers du *Potemkine*. Sans parler de l'opposition violente, à l'échelle de toute la séquence, entre les plans flous, filés, aux figures humaines indistinctes, et les plans nets, stables, sur les bouches qui s'ouvrent pour crier et mourir [Fig. 1, 2, 3].

Le cinéma de Glauber Rocha est l'un des cas les plus singuliers de l'histoire du cinéma, puisqu'il est l'un des rares moments où c'est un Barbare (très cultivé et très fin, mais désirant produire de l'art barbare) qui a emprunté des formes à l'art occidental³. Glauber a explicité, dans ses écrits, les références qu'il s'était choisies : Visconti par-dessus tout, qu'il vénérât, mais aussi Buñuel, Rossellini, Eisenstein. Ce que nous venons de voir est le mariage, pas si étrange qu'on aurait pu *a priori* le penser, de ces trois derniers cinéastes. Dans le livre de Rocha intitulé *Le siècle du cinéma*, Eisenstein ouvre le chapitre intitulé « Néo-réalisme » ; plus loin dans le même chapitre, on trouve en succession immédiate *Glauber Fellini*, et *Il faut revenir à Eisenstein*. Dans ce dernier, daté de 1969, on lit : « Montage signifie, comme l'a écrit Eisenstein, la liaison de toutes les structures *de la réalité* [s.m.]. Montage signifie une relation dialectique entre les divers éléments qui constituent le film. » Un sérieux déplacement de la notion, qui mêle néo-réalisme, dialectique, montage, anti-idéalisme, anti-contenutisme, mais qui au fond lui reste assez fidèle.

Circulation des problèmes, communauté des cinéastes

Outre la citation (plus ou moins retravaillée), outre la reprise de principes esthétiques explicites et clairement formulables, on peut avoir affaire à une communauté de problèmes. Comment Eisenstein a-t-il prêté sa force théorique et sa force formelle à d'autres cinéastes, à d'autres films ? Et qu'est-ce que cela signifie, si les projets narratifs, idéologiques, figuratifs de

3 C'est, on le sait, le principe de l'*anthropophagisme* défendu par Oswald de Andrade à la fin des années 1920.



Fig. 1, 2, 3

ces films sont différents des siens, voire opposés ? Autrement dit, n'y a-t-il pas, autour de certaines questions que couvre le nom d'Eisenstein, une espèce de communauté, de cinéastes ou de films ?

Je suis obligé de choisir, parmi les problèmes multiples dont s'est occupé Eisenstein, celui qui peut constituer le carrefour d'une telle circulation. Je poserai, sans pouvoir le démontrer ici, que le problème eisensteinien par excellence, pour ce qui est de la figuration filmique, est celui de la surface, ou plus exactement, de l'investissement de la surface par une force (*dunamis*), et par conséquent, par des tensions, des flux différentiels, traçant des mouvements, infléchissant des directions, tirant la surface le long d'elle-même (conflit entre la largeur et la hauteur, conflit entre les formes géométriques et les figures) et la fouettant avec des bouffées de profondeur qui la creusent ou la bossellent. C'est, si l'on veut, l'espace théorique délimité, à un bout par *Le Carré dynamique* (1930), à l'autre bout par la notion d'extase telle que l'avance dans les années quarante *La Non-indifférente Nature*.

Carré dynamique : qu'est-ce que la dynamisation, et quel est ce carré qui en est l'instrument ? Il est assez facile, via l'italien ou le latin, d'arriver du carré au cadre, et de comprendre que le problème est de créer une tension dynamique dans le cadre. Pourquoi ? Parce que ce n'est pas un cadre pictural. L'image cinématographique inscrit la trace d'un mouvement, mais cela n'est pas assez si elle reste soumise à une fixité intangible, celle du cadre, qui lui vient de la peinture – ou d'ailleurs plutôt, comme le dit la conférence de 1930, d'une influence pernicieuse de la tradition théâtrale et de son habitude de tout voir à travers un cadre horizontal et modéré. La solution alors proposée était rudimentaire : il fallait renoncer à l'horizontalité, sans pour autant tomber dans le défaut inverse d'une assumption du vertical ; par conséquent, il fallait inventer une forme malléable, grosse de toutes les proportions et de toutes les directions imaginables, sans coïncider avec aucune de façon stable. C'est le sens du « carré dynamique » : le carré n'est ni horizontal ni vertical, donc il contient l'un et l'autre. Ce n'est

là que la réécriture de thèses plus radicales concernant la figure et son champ, celles par exemple de « Dramaturgie de la forme filmique » (cité plus haut), celles des cadrages « graphiques » d'*Octobre* ou de *la Ligne générale*, cultivant les diagonales, les fuites perspectives violentes, les raccourcis.

Le temps a passé, l'industrie, à Hollywood comme à Moscou ou Alma-Ata, a tranché quant au cadre standard, mais Eisenstein cherche toujours à dynamiser la surface de l'image de film. Il ne peut plus jouer sur le format, il ne peut plus non plus jouer au graphiste. Pourtant cette interrogation n'a pas disparu. Soit, au début d'*Alexandre Nevski*, la scène de la rencontre entre Alexandre et les Tatares. Cela est moins spectaculaire que le *Potemkine* ou même que la leçon qu'en a tirée Rocha. Il s'agit d'introduire à un récit fort dramatisé (chaque caractère y sera incarné par un personnage typique) ; à l'exception des cinq premiers plans, sur l'immobilité et le silence des dunes, parsemées de taches qui sont des os, l'ensemble, un peu plus de cinquante plans, est très nettement déterminé par des nécessités narratives et idéologiques. Il faut poser une situation comme historique (la Russie est occupée par les Tatares mais surtout menacée d'invasion par les Chevaliers Teutoniques) *et* comme actuelle (c'est l'enjeu de la fin de la séquence, où Alexandre explicite l'évident parallèle entre 1238 et 1938) ; et d'autre part, de produire une figure de héros qui, elle, soit pleinement épique, la figure de Nevski.

Le trait le plus frappant dans cette présentation du héros est qu'il n'apparaît pas dès le début, mais seulement au milieu de la séquence, après qu'a commencé l'affrontement entre les Tatares qui convoient des esclaves russes, et les Russes libres en train de pêcher et de construire des bateaux. Souci d'efficacité narrative : en introduisant Alexandre au milieu du conflit, on souligne que ses sujets attendent tout de sa grande sagesse, tandis que même ses ennemis le respectent. Mais cette apparition n'est pas seulement retardée, elle est visuellement frappante. Nevski apparaît de dos, solidement planté sur ses pieds, à l'avant-plan, tandis que s'étend devant lui le lac où l'on a vu l'armée pacifique des pêcheurs levant leurs filets. Il porte un vêtement

blanc, comme ses sujets, mais qui concentre sur son dos large et calme la lumière collectée dans les plans qui précèdent par la troupe des jeunes russes ; il est une figure éclatante, éblouissante, solaire. Deux plans plus loin, on le retrouve, filmé de plus près, tourné vers les Tatares et vers nous, inaccessible, semblant ruminer un grand dessein. Son entrée dans la scène mondaine se fait à grandes enjambées, puissantes et élégantes, sous le signe d'une beauté classique dont sa figure ne se départira jamais durant le film.

C'est le premier enjeu figuratif : comment faire que la figure de Nevski recueille un certain nombre de qualités (expressives) qui auront été dispersées dans la scène : la blancheur éclatante, le calme et la sûreté, la grandeur ? Il est clair par exemple que le lumineux est attribué au camp russe, y compris le ciel, qui couvre et protège les pêcheurs levant leurs filets – tandis que les occupants tatares sont voués au sombre. Mais en dehors de ce paramètre très visible, il y a tout un travail, plus dissimulé, scénographique et représentatif, et qui vise à produire des tensions significatives (à dynamiser l'espace du cadre, et aussi l'espace scénique, pour y inscrire du sens – ici, forcément le sens héroïque). Cela donne, par exemple, des solutions de cadrage comme les deux fortes contre-plongées éliminant le sol ou presque, et laissant les figures surgir du bord inférieur du cadre (une solution eisensteinienne typique, presque une signature, depuis *Octobre* qui l'a inventée), ou le léger décadrage qui place les corps en bord de scène, tandis qu'un objet se figure au centre, dans la profondeur.

La tension produite ainsi, dans les plans pris à l'unité, n'est pas bien forte. Mais ce qu'ajoute cette scène très narrative, et qui déplace la question du dynamisme, c'est une réflexion sur le découpage en plans d'une scène narrative – réflexion qui provient en droite ligne des exercices pédagogiques effectués au VGIK dans les années trente. Ici, un élément scénographique me frappe, l'espèce de cahute en rondins de bois, qui apparaît constamment, énigmatique. On comprend qu'elle est la métamorphose pacifique (une tour de guet pour les pêcheurs ?) des drakkars des Suédois vaincus, dont il est question dans le chant

– mais cela n'éclaire pas son rôle de pivot visuel de l'ensemble. Tantôt elle occupe le plan, son volume est souligné ; tantôt elle est toute petite au loin. Tantôt une figure se tient près d'elle, tantôt elle est déserte. La seule chose évidente, c'est sa forte liaison thématique au camp russe (chaque fois qu'elle apparaît à l'image, c'est en même temps qu'une figure blonde, vêtue d'une tunique blanche), et son caractère non praticable (elle ne sert à rien dramatiquement). Mais cet accessoire jamais spécifié, du coup, devient ce qui secrètement ancre et oriente l'espace de jeu, et ses variations de taille, de position dans le cadre et dans l'espace, de relation aux personnages, sont un autre facteur puissant de dynamisation de l'espace filmique, dans le rapport des plans entre eux [Fig. 4, 5, 6].

Dynamiser le cadre, ce n'est plus seulement, alors, y inscrire des graphismes spectaculaires et surprenants. C'est aussi créer des densités variables de l'espace, mettant en jeu toutes ses dimensions : les verticales, horizontales et les obliques de la surface du cadre, les rapports de distance ou proximité, la luminosité, la plus ou moins grande incandescence ou la matité des figures, etc. Cette séquence n'est pas la plus typiquement eisensteinienne du cinéma d'Eisenstein, et la « dynamisation » y emprunte des voies discrètes, presque souterraines. On trouverait des solutions plus audacieuses du même problème dans certaines réalisations américaines, par exemple au moment de l'apparition du Scope. Dans sa conférence de 1930, Eisenstein avait rejeté le Scope, tout juste bon à filmer les serpents selon lui. Dans les années cinquante, pourtant, quelques-uns se sont essayés à dynamiser cette pierre tombale qu'est l'horizontale du Scope : voir la scène de la course de voitures sur la falaise dans *Rebel Without A Cause*, ou la scène de l'enterrement dans *Forty Guns*, par exemple, qui essaient l'une et l'autre de briser la prison du rectangle, la première en jouant la perspective et l'étagement dans la profondeur, la seconde en jouant la largeur et le mouvement.

Je citerai trois autres solutions, qui se situent à une distance variable d'Eisenstein, mais répondent à leur manière à sa question. Premier exemple, le plus proche formellement d'Eisens-



Fig. 4, 5, 6

tein : la scène du début de *Faces* (Cassavetes, 1968) où Jeanie danse devant les deux hommes. Dans la première partie de la scène, celle où les deux hommes essaient de se « couper » mutuellement dans leur danse avec la femme, on multiplie les faux-raccords, principalement sur les regards et les gestes des mains. L'espace-temps de la scène est comme déchiré par des coupes qui semblent refuser toute continuité visuelle, tout en assurant une continuité diégétique absolue. Me frappe notamment le rôle joué par un immense chandelier, en amorce, souvent un peu flou, et qui a pour fonction de fournir un point de référence stable à l'espace dans sa déchirure – comme la petite tour en rondins de *Nevski*. Dans la seconde partie de la scène, c'est un jeu tout aussi affirmé entre, d'une part, des gros plans de visages, insistant sur l'épiderme troué, des visages qui sont des paysages dignes des prophéties de Balázs dans les années muettes, et d'autre part, des perspectives violentes sur la pièce, soulignées par le carrelage noir et blanc et par la production réitérée d'un corps en amorce, sauvagement découpé par le bord du cadre. Durant toute cette partie, on ne peut pas ne pas penser au creusement de l'espace, à la dynamisation par la variation violente du rapport entre les figures et le cadre, qui fonde l'exercice de mise en scène du meurtre dans *Crime et Châtiment* proposé par Eisenstein aux étudiants du VGIK en 1933 (voir Nijny).

Deuxième exemple : *Vangelo secondo Matteo* (Pasolini, 1964). Comme *Faces*, le film de Pasolini reprend avec obstination la question du dynamisme spatial, en lui donnant au moins une dizaine de solutions différentes. Dans le Massacre des innocents, le dynamisme résulte à la fois du prélèvement de morceaux autonomes sur la scène (les portraits fortement individués mais anonymes des soldats d'Hérode) [Fig. 7, 8, 9], de la production de mouvements d'appareil qui déstabilisent l'espace, de l'utilisation d'un objectif à longue focale, détruisant l'effet perspectif dû à la différence des taille des figures. (Cette scène cite la musique de Prokofiev pour la scène de l'incendie de Pskov dans *Nevski*). Plus frappant encore, l'entrée



Figg. 7, 8, 9

à Jérusalem. Le cadre est « dépassé » par la surface qu'il est censé enclorre, grâce à un effet de mise à plat de l'image, dans les plans où la supposée Jérusalem est prise d'en bas. La disposition des figurines dans l'espace, par petites grappes ou petits alignements bien séparés les uns des autres et répartis de façon homogène, le filmage avec un objectif long, suppriment tout rapport de profondeur entre les figures humaines et leur décor architectural. L'effet est immédiat, et le cadre est à peu près impuissant à contenir la scène, à lui assigner une frontière. Le défaut de cette solution est son picturalisme (on pense un peu trop à la *Maestà* de Duccio [1311]), qui est celui du film en général. Ce qui sauve de la plate citation de peinture, c'est l'insert, que Pasolini sait toujours ménager pour rompre un équilibre représentatif qui menacerait de s'installer – ici, l'insert sur les soldats romains, hautement politique dans sa visée d'ailleurs, puisqu'il s'agit de dire que ce ne sont pas les Juifs, mais les Romains, qui organisent la répression.

Dernier exemple, encore plus paradoxal, puisqu'il travaille la dynamisation de la surface dans un sens absolument non eisensteinien : *Le Sacrifice* (Tarkovski, 1986). Tout, avec ce film, nous situe aux antipodes du territoire eisensteinien : la thématique, entre mysticisme, folie et réflexion sur la mémoire ; le style, par plans très longs et fluides, refusant presque toujours les prestiges du décadrage ; la lenteur générale ; le jeu d'acteur, reposant sur une nudité des corps et des visages et le refus de tout cosmétique ; etc. Or sur ces prémisses anti-eisensteiniennes, Tarkovski s'intéresse, à sa façon, au problème du cadre, de sa dynamisation, et même de sa dynamisation dialectique (c'est une des contradictions théoriques flagrantes de ce cinéaste, que d'être à la fois anti-marxiste et profondément hégélien). Pour dynamiser le cadre, il invente de faire *glisser des strates d'image* les unes sur les autres : pensons à un moment du *Sacrifice* où ce glissement est littéral, avec le plan en noir-et-blanc – donné comme contenu psychique, sans qu'il soit possible de l'assigner à un psychisme individuel – où la caméra, panoramique verticalement, depuis un angle de 45° environ jusqu'à

l'angle droit, balaie une scène de panique, de fuite, de guerre ou de manifestation, puis aboutit sur un miroir qui reflète les bâtiments, intouchés par cette guerre civile, enfin, fugitivement, sur un enfant endormi, peut-être le protagoniste lui-même, revivant par quelque anamnèse un événement enfoui. La fuite des manifestants se déroule d'abord de haut en bas, mais à mesure que la caméra panoramique et que son axe approche de la verticalité, apparaissent des directions contradictoires ; de larges bandes blanches horizontales ouvrent l'espace et dérèglent le mouvement des figures. L'espace se dédouble en vertical et horizontal, tendu à l'extrême entre le dynamique et le statique. Puis, le dédoublement affecte la surface de l'image tout entière, avec la substitution du reflet dans le miroir à ce qu'on imagine alors avoir vu à travers une vitre [Figg. 10, 11, 12]. Enfin, c'est le statut imaginaire de ce qui est figuré qui se dédouble en bloc, avec l'apparition de l'enfant endormi, aussitôt coupé.

Tout est résumé, un peu théoriquement, dans ce panoramique, mais le reste de l'épisode (et le reste du film) varie ce principe du dédoublement, par exemple avec le jeu, insistant, répété, sur la reproduction de l'*Adoration des Mages* de Léonard et le reflet dans la vitre qui la couvre, ou avec le jeu des panneaux, des ouvertures, des cloisons et de la profondeur qui épisodiquement les troue. L'image est double chez Tarkovski, parce que son projet est de suggérer un arrière-monde, de façon plus directe que beaucoup d'autres auteurs du « cinéma d'art » européen, et donc de façon plus franche au plan figuratif. L'image tarkovskienne a pour emblème, non pas le miroir, mais la glace sans tain, qui réfléchit et à la fois ne réfléchit pas, qui suppose à la fois la transparence et l'opacité. Double par nature, elle ne peut qu'ouvrir sans cesse sa surface à une autre surface qui la fait miroiter, littéralement ou métaphoriquement.

Peut-être jugera-t-on qu'il y a un peu d'exagération dans le fait d'avoir proposé comme continuateur des idées théoriques d'Eisenstein quelqu'un qui les a contestées – comme pour démontrer à tout prix que les idées théoriques échappent à leurs porteurs. Pourtant, c'est bien l'arrière-plan de ces notes. La préoccupation du dynamisme, inaugurée par un cinéaste qui



Fig. 10, 11, 12

n'aimait la peinture que violemment tirée hors d'elle-même (« extatique »), ne peut, une fois communiquée au cinéma tout entier, avoir de limites, et tout cinéaste conscient de la contradiction inhérente à la production d'images en mouvement qui sont limitées par un cadre (horizontal de surcroît), ne peut que travailler à faire éclater cette contradiction, d'une façon ou d'une autre, dans ses images ou dans leur jeu mutuel, dans la bande-image ou dans son rapport à la fiction et au sonore. Le carré dynamique travaille la mise en scène de cette mémoire collective et imaginaire qu'on appelle l'Histoire, chez le Oliveira de *Non ou la Vaine Gloire de commander*, avec son jeu systématisé sur l'avant-plan et l'arrière-plan, sur deux rideaux de figures toujours prêts à s'échanger (ou alors à se battre). C'est la même question, à peine vêtue autrement, qui informe la séquence du voyage vers Cinecittà du jeune Rubini, dans *Intervista*, avec ses apparitions de plus en plus exotiques et invraisemblables : ce n'est même plus tant le carré, alors, qui est dynamisé, que le cube, le malheureux cube scénique et ce qu'il charrie de rapport au drame, au théâtre.

Eisenstein, qui a théorisé fortement l'image, son cadre, sa dynamisation, a aussi beaucoup pratiqué – artistiquement et expérimentalement – l'explosion du cube (voir *Ivan le Terrible*, voir le cours sur *Crime et Châtiment*). C'est « chez les autres », chez des autres foncièrement autres, que les deux aspects parfois se constituent en question unique : celle des frontières respectives du miroir et du rêve.

ERIVONEIDE BARROS

NOTES OF THE MASTER EISENSTEIN: A LEGACY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

We value our great masters of literature from Pushkin and Gogol to Mayakovsky and Gorky not just as masters of plot. We value in them the culture of masters of speech and word.

Sergei Eisenstein

Throughout his filmmaking and teaching career, Sergei Eisenstein published a great deal related to artistic performance in specialized magazines, journals, and later in books. In *Immoral Memories*, when reflecting upon his teaching practices at the Directing Cinematography course at the VGIK (Russian State Institute of Cinematography) and exposing his passion for teaching, Eisenstein summarizes the way he understands and organizes his teaching structure:

Whether in live contact with students, in published essays on principles I've come across, or in the exposition of methods and the peculiarities of the method of our art and of art in general, my slogan has been, is, and presumably always will be: "Tell all. Hide nothing. Make no secrets of anything."¹

When Eisenstein's educational activities are considered both in the theoretical and critical scopes, that unrestricted posture of disclosing knowledge acquires a meaning that is not guided simply by the act of "sharing" but that infers the education

1 Sergei M. Eisenstein. *Immoral Memories: An Autobiography*, trans. Herbert Marshall (London: Peter Owen Publishers, 1985), 73.

process as a dialectic process, as something built from conflict, from questioning and critical discussion.

Dealing with the legacy from such a character requires a similar ideological positioning in order to preserve the essence of his work, as well as to keep his memory alive and kicking through his writings and artistic productions. In Eisenstein's case, the figure of Naum Kleiman became a key reference, precisely because it preserves the singularities of the Eisensteinian perspective. Both have the same awareness that knowledge must be disseminated, discussed, and analyzed in its multiple aspects. That point of view also seems to guide Kleiman's activities in gathering and disclosing Eisenstein's works.

As a historian and film critic, Naum conceptualized and gathered up courage to materialize the first large project around the filmmaker's works around the 1960s – the six volumes of his writings – which, as we see it, had a major importance in keeping Eisenstein's intellectual *legacy* and opened doors to other projects to get greater critical outlook. In subsequent years, Kleiman kept that venture going by fighting to organize and keep the Eisenstein Museum, the publishing of articles and books, and the lectures around the world talking about valuable themes for the understanding of such production, and proposing discussions concerning Eisenstein's contributions for the development of the arts in the twentieth century, both directly and indirectly.

It is also interesting to observe that essence that arises in Kleiman's relationship with other researchers as he quite generously provides access to materials and makes it possible to edit and publish works in different languages, sharing readings, questioning and disclosing research, besides joining researchers from different countries with a common goal: keeping Sergei Eisenstein's production alive.

To that end, Kleiman always presents the contemporary Eisensteinian works in public classes and articles, as well as the amazing relevance of his themes for the different areas in which the creation of artistic procedures is discussed nowadays. That dialog with the development of modern artistic theories and the

influence in other filmmakers' works are not only due to the fact that Eisenstein's works are among the pioneers of the film language or have an essential role in the *avant-garde* period, but also reveals all the liveliness of a restless view that sought to understand the *nouveau* art and the possibilities that unfolded with the technological development through different media, such as 3D films and video performances. Definitely, his artistic legacy is essential to thinking about dialogs between the cinema and other arts, like the theater, painting, dance, and literature.²

From the possible interactions among the arts, we have chosen the relation of the teacher Eisenstein with the literary text and its importance in the teaching program developed by the filmmaker.

Before moving on, it is important to reinforce Eisenstein's meaningful contribution to the reorganization of the old GIK, which used to be a technical level institute, to become a university, VGIK. In the 1930s, Eisenstein becomes the head of the course which he had been teaching since 1928, being in charge of organizing the new program of the so-called Directing Workshop.³

Due to the erratic social and political scenario established by the first five-year plan,⁴ Eisenstein outlines a multidisciplinary

2 In the Brazilian studies developed regarding Sergei Eisenstein's movies, the concept of montage gained a core part. There are but a few researchers who examine other aspects of his intellectual production. Eisenstein's books *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory* and *The Film Sense*, both translated into Portuguese, are mandatory in film courses and other art programs in Brazilian universities. Moreover, that might explain the timely interest in the matters involving montage theory and some specific movies, such as *Battleship Potemkin* and *October*," and in a time leap, the first part of *Ivan The Terrible*.

3 On that theme, see Masha Salazkina and Natalie Riabchikova, "Sergei Eisenstein and the Soviet Models for the Study of Cinema, 1920s–1940s," Sergei M. Eisenstein, *Notes for a General History of Cinema*, eds. Naum Klieman and Antonio Somaini (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016), 405–414.

4 We will not discuss the historical issues here, but we highlight the

program in which the director-to-be should know the different potentials of each art form, since “The basis of the film director’s activity consists in revealing, manifesting, and organizing, in contradictions, the pictures and phenomena of class-reflected and perceived reality,”⁵ as he states during the presentation of his teaching method for the program. Deliberately, the program brings the theoretical and practical study of aspects of the different arts and the critical thinking, such as the Meyerhold’s system of biomechanics, “the specific features of working in the circumstances of Soviet society” and cinematographic techniques,⁶ besides discussions that involve reading the literary classics as we shall see subsequently.

The prolific process of creating a didactic method has moved beyond the establishing of means of analyzing and understanding the artistic phenomena. According to Eisenstein, the director-to-be should have a critical and reflexive education in the other art forms, in order to develop a foundation for the creative resolution and later critical selection of artistic aspects for the creative process in their cinematographic work.

analysis of the theme made by Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet Union 1921–1934* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

- 5 Sergei M. Eisenstein, “Programme for teaching the theory and practice of film direction,” *Hollywood: Life and Letters Today*, 6 and 7, (1936–37). Filed document. Acervo Fundação Casa de Rui Barbosa – Rio de Janeiro, Vinicius de Moraes collection. This typed document belongs to the Filing Foundation of the Brazilian poet, critic, and musician Vinicius de Moraes. The program was published with three other texts: “A reading list,” “Detective work in the GIK,” and “Cinematography with tears.” That program is published with additions in “Teaching Programme for the Theory and Practice of Direction. How to Teach Direction,” *Selected Works. Vol 3. Writings 1934–47* (London: BFI Publishing, 1996), 74–99. In the volume edited by Taylor, the same excerpt received the following translation: “The basis of director’s activity consists in disclosing, exposing and setting out in all their contradictions even the images and phenomena of a reality that is reflected and realised through class” (76).
- 6 Eisenstein, *Selected Works*. 3:82.

The genesis of that material formulated in the dynamics of the classroom, in the invigorating relationship between teacher and students, succeeds in producing the students' autonomous artistic creation process, as evidenced by Eisenstein's following statement: "I have no wish for followers of my stylistic manner. It is no part of my task to bring forth... Eisen-pups."⁷ Under such perspective of teaching activities that assumes the autonomy of the student, that is, the development of skills and competences whose outcome must be revealed by providing a unique view, with a singular artistic creation, there is no place for the idea of a disciple as the one that literally follows the guidance of the master, who owns the ultimate knowledge, or of someone who follows an established doctrine. What Eisenstein proposes in his classes is an ongoing dialog in which the building process of an artistic, whole, and peculiar consciousness occurs in a dialectic way.

The notes, the course program, and the texts Eisenstein wrote as a script for the directing classes throughout the 1930s and 1940s have been reworked, published and discussed by him. His teaching practice had an essential role in the subsequent years after he returned from Mexico. Without being able to finish his artistic projects, the classroom and writing a course program guided by deep discussions on the artistic performance became his main activities, thus providing a substantial stimulation for his intellectual production,⁸ besides being a laboratory for important concepts that have later been published. It is evident that the teaching plan he built is oriented to a class prototype in which the utterance between theory and practice, between the theoretical making and thinking, are essential at building

7 Eisenstein, *Immoral Memories*, 74.

8 "Eisenstein's views were formed out of his own regard for artistic expressiveness and from the institutional conditions he found at VGIK. The task of finding "artistic solutions," of isolating and exploring "expressive possibilities," was to become Eisenstein's instructional protocol. It would also reinvigorate his interest in the larger artistic experience." Vance Kepley, Jr., "Eisenstein as pedagogue," *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, 14:4 (1993): 6.

a cohesive program as a methodology, not as the leaders of a restricted approach, but as resources to expand both a reflexive and self-reflexive outlook in order to conceive creative resolution forms facing the different possibilities of art (re)creation.

The material coming from Eisenstein's classes reveals the multitude and the wealth of conceiving a dynamic creative process in which all elements join a deep dialog: "The art is in every fragment of a film being an organic part of an organically conceived whole."⁹ That statement leads to a later but central discussion – not only in the sentence above, but also in Eisenstein's production: the interest in reading the literary classics as a means of understanding artistic composition.

That approach to literature as a reference for teaching cinema, in other words, the relationship between different arts in the learning process, is a discussion that resonates in modern art teaching and learning studies, as it establishes a critical exercise on the possibilities of trials between different arts, seeking for ways of providing a systematization of the artistic processes by trying to understand the multiple forms of composition and their possibilities. Specifically on joining cinema and literature in teaching, Eisenstein explains:

However, work on the classics must not be organised along the lines of superficial borrowing but as a matter of studying all the elements that constitute their specificity. We must interpret their signs and observe how a particular element should develop into a new one, passing through different stages in time and class.¹⁰

The structure of composition guides that clarity on the differences between the literary and the cinematographic elements and the point at which they both build a dialog or must dis-

9 Sergei Eisenstein, "A Course in Treatment," *Film Form – Essays in Film Theory*, trans. Jay Leyda (New York and London: A Harvest/HBJ Book, 1949), 92 .

10 S. M. Eisenstein, "Cinema and the Classics," *Selected Works. Vol I. Writings, 1922–1934* ed. and trans. Richard Taylor (London: BFI Publishing, 1988), 276.

tance themselves. When questioned about the common point between the literary and the cinematographic works, Eisenstein states that there are aspects in the literary text that are “cinema equivalents,” and the director should be able to understand those elements in order to integrate them to the script, saying: “In this way we can conceive of both the renewal and the fertilization of both the formal aspect of and the opportunities for cinema, and not just of the thematic or plot aspect which, in the final analysis, is successfully implemented in other forms of literature.”¹¹ Thus, the discussion is centered on the artistic aspects whose expressiveness imprints the genesis of the system of composition, establishing an expressive structure that makes the cinema an art, for instance, thus distancing cinematography from a mere registration of facts. As an example, let us take an excerpt from *Bel-Ami*, written by Guy Maupassant (1850–1893), in which Eisenstein analyzes the construction of the artistic image.

This example can serve as a model of the subtlest montage structuring, in which ‘twelve o’clock’ is depicted in sound on three different planes: ‘somewhere far away’; ‘nearer’; ‘at a considerable distance’. The striking of these clocks, heard at various distances, is like filming an object by shooting it in a number of dimensions and by a sequence of three different shots: ‘long shot’; ‘medium shot’; ‘extra long shot’. What’s more, the striking itself – the uncoordinated instances of bells striking on different notes – is by no means chosen as a naturalistic detail of Paris by night; by the use of these separate bells Maupassant is above all creating an image of ‘midnight, the hour of decision’, not simply informing us of the time.¹²

11 Eisenstein, “Literature and Cinema. Reply to a Questionnaire,” *Selected Works*, 1:98.

12 S. M. Eisenstein “Montage 1938,” *Selected Works. Vol. 2. Towards a Theory of Montage*. eds. Richard Taylor and Michael Glenny, trans. Michael Glenny (London: BFI Publishing, 1991) 304.

Although that is a long excerpt, it deserves to be fully transcribed because it brings structural procedures that “reveal” the way that the artistic image is built for the spectator.¹³ Eisenstein demonstrates that the structuring process of a literary work is common to any artistic text.

Without a doubt, there’s some concern to establish a method of composition and artistic conceptualization in the teaching-learning process proposed by the teacher-filmmaker, which seems to be connected to the need for the actual recognition of cinema as an art, and his classes had (and still have) a relevant role in that reflection. We cannot disregard that Eisenstein starts his teaching practice in a period when the cinema was a recent language, consequently thinking about the seventh art in dialog with the other languages seems an appropriate path to develop that matter.

The work method revealed by the material of the classes at the VGIK shows that Eisenstein understood teaching practice in the scope of a critical investigation, and his artistic education project was based on understanding how art works in order to generate in each student the ability to analyze several artistic objects and conceive a singular artistic project.

It is relevant to observe that the essence of the educational act present in Eisenstein’s materials has a deep connection with what are known as alternative teaching practices, that currently are being used in regular schools as a new educational process, in which students are effective protagonists in the learning process and the teacher is a mediator between the knowledge and the self-reflexive education of the student. Thus, the student builds the creative resolution of a specific theme in a critical manner from cooperative classes.

Finally, we point out that the principles of teaching practice developed by Eisenstein extend to his artistic works, indicating

13 The analysis of that Maupassant excerpt brings another essential aspect present in Eisenstein’s classes: the development of artistic image theory. However, we will not develop that issue in this brief essay.

the reason that his movies have an impact beyond the events that surround the theme in each work. The multiple possibilities that unfold from the deep essays performed by the teacher-filmmaker for thinking about arts education and the myriad aesthetic aspects considered in his writings make it possible to use his legacy in academic courses in the several majors in arts, as well as in experimenting with the potentialities of different languages.

Every critical and creative learning process leaves a legacy thanks to the resonances generated in the dialogic act of learning. In addition, certainly when preserving Eisenstein's works, Naum Kleiman allowed that legacy to become essential for future generations.

EVGENII BERSHTEIN

EISENSTEIN'S LETTER TO MAGNUS HIRSCHFELD: TEXT AND CONTEXT*

In January 1944, in Alma-Ata, in the midst of feverish work on *Ivan the Terrible*, Sergei Eisenstein found the time to sketch an essay entitled “‘*Sdvig' na biologicheskii uroven'*” which can be translated as “Shift to the Biological Stage,” or “A Shift One Biological Level down” (I assume that Eisenstein intended a pun here as he was fond of wordplay). The complete text of the essay remained unpublished until 2002 when Naum Kleiman included it in the first volume of Eisenstein's *Method*.¹

In his essay, Eisenstein revisits his theory of psychological regress and illustrates it by examining the ways regress informs a variety of artistic texts. He argues that the human unconscious preserves the memory of the primordial biological stage, an aquatic stage characterized by the absence of differentiation between the sexes. In this primordial stage in the development of life, androgyny – or, to use Eisenstein's term of choice, “bisexuality” – was the biological norm. While in the course of evolution, sexual differentiation developed, religion, ritual, mysticism, and art are all based on the continuing power of this “initial, primary, unified bisexual element (*iskhodnogo, pervichnogo, edinogo biseksual'nogo nachala*).”² According to Eisenstein, the restoration of sexual unity underlies the sensation of achieving the “superhuman state (*sverkhchelovecheskoe sostoianie*)” characteristic of mystical and religious phenom-

* I am grateful to Thomas Schestag and Chris Muñoz for their linguistic assistance.

1 S.M. Eisenstein. *Metod*. 2 vols., ed. Naum Kleiman (Moscow: Muzei kino, 2002), 1: 278–294.

2 *Ibid.*, 285.

ena.³ He concludes by noting that this “regressive impulse” toward primary bisexuality can, however, be put to a *progressive* use by uniting men and women in collective labor that advances a common social ideal.

In this essay, Eisenstein discovers references to bisexuality in a number of writers and artists, from Leonardo da Vinci and Shakespeare to Balzac, Nietzsche and the modern French playwright Jacques Deval (1895–1972). Eisenstein’s scientific acknowledgements go to the early twentieth-century sexual theorists, most importantly Freud’s student Sándor Ferenczi, but also to Otto Weininger, a key modern thinker on the themes of bisexuality. Equally important are the personal anecdotes which Eisenstein relates in some detail. In one of them, he recollects his 1932 visit to the “notorious” Institute for Sexual Science (*Institut für Sexualwissenschaft*) in Berlin, run by Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld. A patient was introduced to Eisenstein at the Institute, a male Bulgarian engineer, dressed as an elegant lady.

И сей болгарин на мой вопрос... что побуждает его носить дамский наряд и дамскую прическу (парик) и что он при этом испытывает, вполне убежденно и последовательно отвечал, что вместе с надеванием женского платья он как бы начинает ощущать себя целостным и превосходящим обычных людей.⁴

When I asked this Bulgarian man what moves him to wear a lady’s costume and hair (a wig) and what he felt while doing so, he answered with great conviction and consistently that putting on a woman’s dress, he kind of begins to sense that he is whole and superior to ordinary people.

Eisenstein brings up Hirschfeld’s patient to illustrate the link between bisexuality, understood as co-existence of both sexes in a person, and this person’s sense of the superhuman power. Before moving on to discuss the bisexual imagery in Ni-

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid., 286.

etzsche's writings and the philosopher's attraction to Wagner, Eisenstein paints a picture of Hirschfeld's Institute as a memoir recording his visit.

He points out that Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld was away on a world tour during his visit ("on the roads of his worldwide chase for new exhibits for this Institute's museum, the only one of its kind"). Hirschfeld's Institute appears to Eisenstein not so much as a scientific center but rather as "an enterprise that assisted, in every possible way, with various types of 'intimacies' (*raznym tipam 'sblizhenii'*) for those 'seekers' who stayed in the semi-hotel semi-hospital set up for patients whose sexuality deviated from the norm." Eisenstein recalls the Hirschfeld enterprise as an "uncomfortable institute (*neuiutnyi institut*), a cross between a marketplace for 'dangerous liaisons' and the psychological 'anatomical theatre.'"⁵ However, Eisenstein notes with appreciation the richness of Hirschfeld's collection, full of documents pertaining to "people who love strangely [*liu-dei so strannostiami liubvi*]" – figures from the past, such as Tchaikovsky and Verlaine, as well as contemporaries, including some prominent Nazis. According to Eisenstein, this was the reason the Nazis raided the Institute and burned its archive soon after Hitler came to power.

Strikingly, in this essay, Eisenstein neglects to mention several important facts relevant to his memoir. The 1932 visit to Hirschfeld's institute was not his first: he had already visited Dr. Hirschfeld in 1930 and had had a personally and intellectually significant conversation with him. He had also long been a reader both of Hirschfeld's research and of the annual scientific almanac dedicated to the study of "sexual intermediate stages (*sexuelle Zwischenstufen*)" that the German doctor published in 1899–1923. Also undisclosed remains the fact of Eisenstein's correspondence with the Institute: at a critical point in his intellectual life, Eisenstein wrote a letter to Hirschfeld and received a reply from Karl Giese, Hirschfeld's associate, who was also

5 Ibid.

his lover and life partner (the director himself was away, never to return to Germany).⁶

Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld was not only a prolific author and publisher; he was also the public face of German sexual science in the Weimar period.⁷ Yet despite his notoriety, he did not fully belong to the medical mainstream given that his activities were not limited to science and medical practice. Hirschfeld was a prominent advocate for homosexual rights, and in this capacity he ran the Scientific Humanitarian Committee, a political lobbying organization working to abolish the German “sodomy law,” Paragraph 175 of the German criminal code. In the international arena, he founded and chaired the World League for Sexual Reform. The Institute’s sprawling and opulently furnished Berlin mansion not only offered medical services and a patient dormitory but also housed a museum and archive. Seminars, performances, public events and drag balls were also hosted in the mansion. Tourists and celebrities (in particular those

6 Russian State Archive for Literature and the Arts (RGALI), f. 1923, op. 2, ed. khr. 1123, l. 140.

7 There is an extensive historical literature on Hirschfeld, his activities and his Institute. Ralf Dose’s *Magnus Hirschfeld: The Origins of the Gay Liberation Movement*, trans. Edward H. Willis (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2010) serves an excellent succinct introduction to the topic and features an extensive bibliography. Writer Christopher Isherwood, who lived at the Institute in 1929, provides a witty and colorful depiction of the Institute’s atmosphere and some of its characters in *Christopher and His Kind* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1976), see 15–35. It is worth noting that the multifaceted activities of energetic Dr. Hirschfeld also took him to the field of film production: he co-wrote the 1919 melodrama *Anders als die Andern* (Different from Others), directed by Richard Oswald and featuring Conrad Veidt as a gay man driven to suicide by societal opprobrium and the effects of the sodomy law. In the film, Hirschfeld played the part of a sexology expert, that is, himself; Karl Giese played the tragic protagonist as a boy. The film caused a considerable controversy that prompted the Reichstag to create a film censorship board. Coincidentally, when Eisenstein’s *Battleship Potemkin* was released in Germany, it encountered problems with that very board.

who were gay) visited the Museum collection. It is thus fair to say that the Institute served as a community center for “people who love strangely,” to use Eisenstein’s expression.

In addition to his public prominence, there was also an intellectual reason that set Hirschfeld apart from mainstream sexology and made him interesting for Eisenstein. At the turn of the century, Hirschfeld coined the notion of “sexual intermediate stages” as a generic explanation for homosexuality. As historian Robert Beachy points out, “although Hirschfeld’s understanding of “sexual intermediary” expanded and grew more complex, his belief in the biological basis of sexual and gender variation remained unshaken.”⁸ By the late 1920s and 1930s, the model that implied some kind of psychophysiological sexual intermediacy in every case of homosexuality seemed outdated to many experts. It was, however, exceptionally close to Eisenstein’s views. Among Eisenstein’s voluminous writings on issues of sexuality in general and homosexuality in particular, one premise remains surprisingly constant and immutable in both his theory and self-analysis: his view that the homosexual impulse stems from the subject’s bisexuality (understanding “bisexuality” as “androgyny” or Hirschfeld’s “sexual intermediacy”). Eisenstein’s notion of “bisexuality” may be less rooted in physiology than Hirschfeld’s *Zwischenstufen* but his insistence on the tight link between sex/gender and sexual orientation allied him with the German physician’s scientific positions. One should not be surprised, therefore, that of all the riches of Hirschfeld’s collection, it was the cross-dresser’s confession that stuck in Eisenstein’s memory. For the Soviet visitor, the Bulgarian engineer personified a notion of the sexually intermediate that was both the Institute’s specialty and Eisenstein’s intellectual obsession.

Eisenstein became interested in the question of bisexuality both analytically and *self-analytically* as early as 1919–20 when he first read Weininger’s *Sex and Character*. But his own elaborate theory took shape a decade later, in Mexico when he

8 Robert Beachy, *Gay Berlin: Birthplace of a Modern Identity* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014), 173.

began to see bisexuality as a regressive state connected to the “protoplasmic” life and “prelogical” mind. Exploring ecstasy as both an artistic technique and ontological phenomenon, he identified bisexuality as a foundation for “*ek-stasis*.” He defined “genius” by its ability to sense and enter the “dialectical motion of the universe” and ascribed to bisexuality the role of a “physiological prerequisite” for a creative dialectician – that is, a genius.⁹

It is important to stress that connecting bisexuality to dialectical process was not a fleeting idea for Eisenstein but a fundamental element of his thinking. It was toward the end of his stay in Mexico, in early 1932, that Eisenstein came up with the formulation: “the dialectical principle in sex is bisexuality... this is why almost all ecstasies have a distinct element of bisexuality.”¹⁰ In his later notebooks, he does not tire in repeating and further developing this thought. As late as 1940, he writes: “I should put in order... the topic of bisexuality... of course it is related to ecstasy. In the area of sex, [it is] the dynamic unity of opposites. And the recreation of a stage of universal development... And [it is so] for everyone personally. That is, [it is] the ecstatic in every parameter.”¹¹ Here Eisenstein applies the language of Hegelian (and Marxist) dialectics to (bi)sexuality.¹² Since his time in Mexico, the interconnected notions of *ecstasy*, *dialectics* and *bisexuality* formed the fundamentals of Eisenstein’s theoretical thinking.¹³ In his self-analysis, he points out the “sexual-ecstatic catastrophe based on B.S. [bisexuality]” noting that “this trauma gave [him] a powerful impulse toward the undifferentiated.”¹⁴

9 RGALI, f. 1923, op. 2, ed. khr. 1123, l. 139.

10 RGALI, f. 1923, op. 2, ed. khr. 1136, l. 90.

11 RGALI, f. 1923, op. 2, ed. khr. 1161, l. 19–20.

12 See Yuri Tsivian, *Ivan the Terrible* (London: British Film Institute, 2002), 65.

13 See Masha Salazkina’s excellent *In Excess: Sergei Eisenstein’s Mexico* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), especially 90–135.

14 RGALI, f. 1923, op. 2, ed. khr. 1137, l. 139.

It was in Mexico, on May 23, 1931 that Eisenstein wrote a letter to Magnus Hirschfeld, which he then copied in his notebook. The letter is mentioned in Oksana Bulgakawa's biography of Eisenstein, although her overall account of the Eisenstein–Hirschfeld connection contains some errors.¹⁵ Here is the full text of the letter:

Mexico, D.P. 23/V-1931.

Dear Doctor,

To spare you the task of deciphering my signature, I will name myself immediately: This letter comes from S.M. Eisenstein, who, on his part, shot the “Battleship Potemkin” and to whom you graciously showed your institute around 1 1/2 years ago.

At the moment I'm shooting a film in Mexico. However, this does not keep me from turning to theoretical works in my free time – works in the areas of film making and creativity in general.

Recently I've been quite occupied with the question of identification, and in conjunction with this I recall the inscription you made on one of your brochures that you so kindly gave to me as a souvenir. “To the master of empathy.” You wrote it with great emphasis. Your assistant who was present smiled subtly and ambiguously. You added the remark: “He understands what I mean by this.” I wasn't then able to go into this more and question you about this – I wasn't alone and I was in a hurry.

However, I feel now that a clarification on your side about this “empathy” and its sexual-mechanical explanation can be of great use for my work. So, dear doctor, please be so kind and have one of your associates write down an answer and clarification of the problem of “empathy,” and if possible, enclose some printed materials on the topic.

15 Oksana Bulgakowa, *Sergei Eisenstein: A Biography*, trans. Anne Dwyer (San Francisco: Potemkin Press, 2002), 104, 131.

A second request would be an outline of *Hegel's* (the father of the modern dialectic) sexual type with particular emphasis on possible | and to what extent expressed | traces of bisexuality in him.

Please be so kind as to send the answer to Mexico *D.P Hotel Imperial*, where I will stay for another 2–3 months, after which I will travel through California, Hawaii, Japan and China back to Moscow.

Anyhow, I ask you to do this as soon as possible, as a letter from Europe takes 2–3 weeks to arrive here.

Respectfully yours,

P.S. Could I be in some way helpful to you in my travels? Write to me and I'll be glad to help in any way possible.¹⁶

16 RGALI, f. 1923, op. 2, ed. khr. 1124, ll. 61–64. Below is the German original:

Mexico, D.P. 23/V-1931.

Sehr geehrter Herr Doktor,

Um Ihnen das Entziffern meiner Unterschrift zu ersparen, nenne ich mich sofort. Dieser Brief stammt von S.M. Eisenstein, welcher seinerseits den "Panzerkreuzer Potemkin" gedreht hat und dem sie in liebenswürdigster Weise vor zirka 1 1/2 Jahren Ihr Institut gezeigt haben.

Augenblicklich drehe ich einen Film in Mexiko. Dieses hindert mich aber nicht während meiner freien Zeit mich [mit] theoretischen Arbeiten abzugeben—auf dem Gebiete des Filmschaffens und des Schaffens überhaupt.

In letzter Zeit habe ich mich viel mit der Frage von Identifikation beschäftigt und im Zusammenhang mit dieser entsinne ich mich der Inschrift, welche Sie mir auf einer Ihrer Broschuren machten, die Sie so liebeswürdig waren mir, als Andenken mitzugeben. "Dem Meister der Einfühlung." Sie schrieben es mit grosser Betonung. Ihr Assistent der dabei war lächelte fein und zweideutig. Sie bemerkten dazu "er versteht, was ich damit meine." Ich konnte damals nicht auf näheres eingehen und Sie darüber ausfragen—Ich war nicht allein und in großer Eile.

* * *

Two queries contained in this letter deserve our attention. The first—regarding the connection between empathy (*Einfühlung*) and identification – intrigued Eisenstein deeply. In his diary, he frequently returns to his conversation with Hirschfeld and to the inscription “To the master of empathy (*Dem Meister der Einfühlung*)”¹⁷ Eisenstein clearly suspects that one’s ability

Ich fühle aber jetzt [,] das[s] eine Aufklärung Ihrerseits über diese “Einfühlung” und ihre sexual mechanische Auseinandersetzung von großem Nutzen für meine Arbeit sein kann. Also, lieber Herr Doktor seien Sie bitte so liebenswürdig und lassen Sie jemanden von Ihren Ihnen nahestehenden mir eine Antwort und Aufklärung über das Problem “Einfühlung” niederschreiben und wenn möglich gedrucktes Material dazu fügen.

Als zweite Bitte wäre ein Umriß von *Hegels* (dem Vater der modernen Dialektik) Sexualtypus mit besonderer Betonung möglicher | und inwiefern ausgedrückter | Spuren von Bisexualität in ihm.

Die Antwort seien Sie bitte so liebenswürdig mir nach Mexiko *D.P. Hotel Imperial* zu senden, wo ich noch 2-3 Monate verbleiben werde, um dann durch California, Hawaii, Japan und China nach Moskau zurück zu gehen.

Dennoch bitte ich es so bald als möglich zu machen, da ein Brief von Europa hierher 2-3 Wochen geht.

Mit vorzüglicher Hochachtung,

P.S. Könnte ich Ihnen nicht vielleicht auf meinen Reisen auch irgendwie behilflich sein? Schreiben Sie mir und ich werde froh sein alles mögliche zu tun.

- 17 From Eisenstein’s diary entry made on January 24, 1931: “I am writing today to the old bugger—‘Mother Magnesia’ as they call him so that he give me all he has on the question of *Einfühlung* and identification. “Id[entification] and H[omosexuality]!” H[omosexuality] as a primitive system—the simplest and most direct of id[entifications]!?” (J’écris aujourd’hui au vieux bougre – “Mutter Magnesia” (comme on l’appelle!) – pour me donner tout ce qu’il a sur la question de *Einfühlung* et identification. “l’id. et l’H.” L’H comme le système primitif – plus facile et plus direct de l’id.!) (RGALI, f. 1923, op. 2, ed. khr. 1117, l. 41).

to identify with another person parallels the homosexual impulse, and that both have common roots in the undifferentiated: “*De veras H.S.* is the very *earliest* erotic stage in relation to an external object... in its mechanics, [it is] *identification*, that is, again, the first stage of virtual *unity*.”¹⁸ Eisenstein’s question regarding Hegel’s suspected bisexuality reflects Eisenstein’s tendency to see the connection between one’s creative world and one’s sexual character as a *very* direct one. Motivated by such logic, Eisenstein filled his notebooks with psychological portraits of bisexual geniuses, from Oscar Wilde to Jesus Christ (in one drawing they converge, and Jesus acquires a physical resemblance to the poet, as well as a young male companion named Johnnie—that is, St. John, “Jesus’s favorite disciple”). Walt Whitman, Rimbaud, Gogol, and many others were also supposed to have personified the connection between ecstatic creativity and bisexuality.

The reply from the Institute arrived in July 1931. Disappointingly, it was not from “Mutter Magnesia” (Hirschfeld’s nickname, which Eisenstein was fond of using in his notebooks). The scientist was traveling in Asia, and it was his associate Karl Giese who replied, writing that he had no information regarding Hegel’s sexual type.¹⁹ However, Giese reported that Dr. Hirschfeld was frequently called, in jest, “a Hegelian for his love of wordplay (*Heglianer, für seine Liebe zu Wortspielen*).”²⁰ Eisenstein copied this passage from Giese’s letter into the fragment entitled “Bisex & dialectics” and followed it with observations about his gay Mexican friends’ love of wordplay.²¹ Eisenstein’s own talent for punning was clearly present in his mind as well, as he affirmed the link between bisexuality and wordplay. This correspondence with Giese shed, however, no new light on the question of “empathy.”

18 RGALI, f. 1923, op. 2, ed. khr.1136, l.146 (February 23, 1931). Here and in all other quotations from Eisenstein’s manuscripts, italics stand for his underlining.

19 RGALI, f. 1923, op. 2, ed. khr. 1123, l. 140.

20 RGALI, f. 1923, op. 2, ed. khr. 1127, l. 38.

21 Ibid.

The mechanics of identification continued to interest Eisenstein, as illustrated by the following diary entry from the late 1932:

В детстве [я] остро реагировал на боль и гибель животных—в стадии маленького возраста. Людские: взрослые и детские оставляли вовсе равнодушным. Упрекали меня за это. (Сейчас одинаково безразличны!)²²

As a child, I reacted strongly to animals' pain and death—in the stage of [their] young age. Those of humans, adult or young, did not move me. I was reproached for that. (Nowdays none of them move me).

In the diary, this observation is surrounded by Eisenstein's thoughts connecting ecstasy, bisexuality, and genius. Here he cites Hirschfeld's inscription —“*Dem grossen Meister der Einfühlung*” — again. Clearly, Eisenstein felt the need to specify and delineate the concept of “empathy” as it applied to him personally. Other people's suffering did not trigger in Eisenstein the impulse to identify. Perhaps what Eisenstein saw as a sexual nature of his “*Einfühlung*” accounted for this indifference

Eisenstein's attempt at correspondence with Hirschfeld reminds us of the consistency of his thinking on sexuality since his Mexican period. All his central theoretical points on the topic, as he expressed them in 1944, had crystallized in his mind circa 1931–32. The world changed: Hirschfeld died in exile in 1935; Giese killed himself in 1938 near Brno, as the German army marched into Czechoslovakia; Hirschfeld's colleague psychiatrist Arthur Kronfeld, who had emigrated to the Soviet Union, committed suicide in 1941 in Moscow as the German army was advancing on Soviet capital. Aware of the fact that Hirschfeld's (and, to some extent, his own) social and intellectual world had been erased, Eisenstein let his unfinished and ambiguous conversation with the German

22 RGALI, f. 1923, op. 2, ed. khr. 1144, l. 23.

scientist and activist linger for years. As another “*mémoire posthume*,” it echoed “what happens if it is not the author that has died but the fragment of life and history that were his contemporaries.”²³

23 Sergei Eisenstein, *Beyond the Stars: The Memoirs of Sergei Eisenstein*, ed. Richard Taylor, trans. William Powell (London: BFI Publishing, 1995), 183.

ROBERT BIRD
THE RULE OF TARKOVSKY

Andrei Tarkovsky could be viciously critical of both Soviet and foreign filmmakers. When asked to name his favourite Soviet director he was liable to answer: “None.” In December 1984 he declared:

I completely deny that I am unambiguously linked to the cinema most of all; this is the whole drama. Everyone tries to find parallels to my work and thus link me to some “forerunners.” This, as a rule, fails, and then they use my own acknowledgements that I, for instance, really love the early Dovzhenko. Of course this is a mistake: I have no relation to Dovzhenko’s cinematic stylistics. I’d link myself more to the literature, poetry and religious philosophy of the early twentieth century.¹

While it is impossible to agree with Tarkovsky’s self-exclusion from “cinema,” his rejection of the “rule” of genealogical influence raises the question of just how we should place his work in the history of the medium.

Tarkovsky Watches World Cinema

At more generous moments, Tarkovsky expressed sincere admiration for Aleksandr Dovzhenko, Jean Vigo, Luis Buñuel, Robert Bresson, Akira Kurosawa, Kenji Mizoguchi, Ingmar Bergman, Michelangelo Antonioni and Federico Fel-

1 Iurii Kublanovskii, “Inspiratsiia vdokhnoveniia,” *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, December 29, 1992:7.

lini. Though a prolific writer (or interviewee – texts published under his name were usually edited stenograms of spoken comments), he dedicated essays or homages only to Dovzhenko, Buñuel, Fellini, and Grigorii Kozintsev (although, in his innate spirit of competitive rivalry, he dismissed Kozintsev's *Hamlet* [1964]). As suggested by these references, when pressed to do so, Tarkovsky usually placed himself in the international tradition of poetic cinema. After watching *The Testament of Orpheus* (1960) on Italian television he wondered, "Where are you, the greats? Where are you Rossellini, Cocteau, Renoir, Vigo? You greats, poor in spirit? Where is the poetry? Money, money, money and fear... Fellini is afraid, Antonioni is afraid... Only Bresson fears nothing."² Yet at the same time Tarkovsky did not view the poetic tradition uncritically. When asked about Sergei Paradjanov in 1967 he responded, "I don't understand. Perhaps there is some point in taking tastelessness to the point of absurdity."³ Tarkovsky subsequently came to revere Paradjanov as a filmmaker, but only after they became personal friends, which suggests one of the vulnerabilities of poetic cinema: its reliance on a patient, sympathetic viewing posture.

Tarkovsky's canon comes most clearly into view in a top-ten list he compiled while working on *Solaris* (1973), dated April 16, 1972:

1. *Diary of a Country Priest* [dir. Robert Bresson, 1951]
2. *Winter Light* [dir. Ingmar Bergman, 1962]
3. *Nazarín* [dir. Luis Buñuel, 1959]
4. *Wild Strawberries* [dir. Ingmar Bergman, 1957]
5. *City Lights* [dir. Charles Chaplin, 1931]
6. *Ugetsu* [dir. Kenji Mizoguchi, 1953]
7. *Seven Samurai* [dir. Akira Kurosawa, 1954]
8. *Persona* [dir. Ingmar Bergman, 1966]

2 Andrei Tarkovskii, *Martirolog: Dnevnik 1970–1986* (n.l.: Mezhdunarodnyi institut imeni Andreia Tarkovskogo, 2008), 285–286.

3 Irma Raush, ed., "Andrei Tarkovskii: Odin god zhizni," *Kinostsenarii* 4 (1991) 175.

9. *Mouchette* [dir. Robert Bresson, 1967]

10. *Woman in the Dunes* [dir. Hiroshi Teshigahara, 1964]⁴

At a conference in 1982 Tarkovsky showed clips from Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai*, Bresson's *Mouchette*, Buñuel's *Nazarín*, and Antonioni's *La Notte*, explaining that these films "had made the most incisive impression on him, as opposed to having influenced him."⁵ Indeed, along with Dovzhenko's *Earth* (1930) and Bergman's *Cries and Whispers* (1972) these are the films which arise most frequently in his essays and lectures.

Perhaps Tarkovsky's highest form of flattery was his borrowing of specific shots, most conspicuously from the filmmakers from his canon. Aleksandr Gordon attributes the ending of *Sergei Lazo* (1967) – scripted and acted by Tarkovsky – to Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai*. Tarkovsky himself associated the horse-race at the beginning of the second part of *Andrei Rublev* (1966) with Mizoguchi (and, to be sure, Chinese landscapes in ink).⁶ In the documentary short *Tempo di Viaggio* (1980), a collaboration with Tonino Guerra, Tarkovsky is filmed fielding a phone call from "Michelangelo," and Tarkovsky's affinity with Antonioni is palpable throughout the subsequent feature *Nostalghia* (1983). The scenes of the seizure of Domenico's family takes place in a square that is also featured in Francesco Rosi's *Tre Fratelli* (1981), also scripted by Guerra (and based on a story by Andrei Platonov). The long take at the end of *Sacrifice* owes a debt to the stunning penultimate shot in Antonioni's *The Passenger* (1975). Tarkovsky's links to Ingmar Bergman (and Scandinavian cinema more generally) were likewise complex. He gave serious consid-

4 Reproduced in *Kinovedcheskie zapiski* 14 (1992): 54; see another version of the same list in A. M. Sandler, ed., *Mir i fil'my Andreia Tarkovskogo : Razmyshleniia, issledovaniia, vospominaniia, pis'ma* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1991), 317.

5 Tony Mitchell, "Tarkovsky in Italy," *Sight and Sound* (Winter 1982–1983): 55.

6 Aleksandr Gordon, *Ne utolivshii zhazhdy: Ob Andree Tarkovskom* (Moscow: Vagrius, 2007), 181; *Andrei Tarkovsky Interviews*, ed. John Gianvito (Jackson: University of Mississippi, 2006), 53–4.

eration to inviting Bibi Anderson to star in *Mirror* (1975),⁷ and cast Erland Josephson, one of Bergman's regular actors, in both of his final films, in addition to employing Bergman's usual director of photography Sven Nyqvist on *Sacrifice* (1985), the very plot of which owes a marked debt to Bergman's *Shame* (1968).

Mostly, though, Tarkovsky always took pains to present his cinema as utterly *sui generis*. Despite his affection for his elder French colleague, Tarkovsky claimed that, "when people tell me during the shooting of my film that a certain scene is in some way reminiscent of Bresson – and this has happened – I will immediately change the approach to avoid any resemblance. If there's such an influence it doesn't show on the surface of my work. This is an influence of a deeper nature."⁸ Footage of Tarkovsky receiving a Grand Prix for Creative Achievement together with Bresson at Cannes in 1983 shows Tarkovsky rather diffidently sharing the stage with his alleged idol and wholly ignoring Orson Welles, who presented the prizes. Clearly, even in the company of the greats, Tarkovsky craved a stage of his own. When one colleague predicted that *Solaris* would be "at the level of world standards," Tarkovsky responded that it would be "beyond the limits of any world standard."⁹

Independent and Experimental Film

Although he once praised Andy Warhol's *Sleep* (1963), he otherwise displayed little interest in or taste for experimental film. In his seminal essay "Imprinted Time" (1967) Tarkovsky lumps together John Cassavetes's *Shadows* (1959), Shirley Clarke's *The Connection* (1961) and Jean Rouche's *Chronicle of a Summer* (1961), faulting them for "insufficient consistency in their very ambition to show full and unconditional factual

7 Tarkovskii, *Martirolog*, 44, 61.

8 In James Quandt, ed., *Robert Bresson* (Toronto: Toronto International Film Festival Group, 1998), 581–82.

9 Tarkovskii, *Martirolog*, 63.

truth.”¹⁰ One might speculate that Tarkovsky found these films too open to contingency, falling into the Soviet category of “naturalism” rather than “realism.”

Tarkovsky’s exposure to Western independent film sharply increased with his departure to Italy in 1980. He accorded rare praise to Franco Piavoli’s 1982 film *The Blue Planet* (*Il pianeta azzurro*), a dialogue-free montage of natural sights and sounds, shown at unexpected scales. Tarkovsky addressed to Piavoli the following note (in Italian):

The Blue Planet is a poem, a journey, a concert of nature, the universe, life...

It is an image different from those we always see.

Really and truly anti-Disney.

Andrei Tarkovsky

29 June 1983, Rome¹¹

Beyond this note, however, there is little evidence that Tarkovsky availed himself of the opportunity to test his established preconceptions of film against the work of other independent filmmakers. After completing *Nostalghia* with the sponsorship of the Soviet foreign film concern and RAI, he was able to complete his final film *Sacrifice* through the Swedish Film Institute, thus ensuring that he could continue to make films free of the pressures caused by commercial backing or by independent production.

At the beginning of September 1983 the independent American filmmaker Stan Brakhage welcomed Tarkovsky to the tenth Telluride Film Festival. Brakhage was there to show his short film *Hell Spit Flexion* (1981, later included in *The Dante Quartet* [1987]), and also as a regular visitor and friend of the organizers. Tarkovsky had been invited at Brakhage’s behest to accompany a short retrospective, comprising *Ivan’s Childhood*

10 Andrei Tarkovskii, “Zapechatlennoe vremia.” *Voprosy kinoisustva. Istoriko-teoreticheskii sbornik* 10 (1967), 96.

11 I am grateful to Dr Trond Trondsen for supplying a copy of the note; the current whereabouts of the original are unknown to me.

(1962) and his new film, the joint Soviet-Italian production *Nostalgia*. Brakhage got as close to his Russian counterpart as he could, personally awarding Tarkovsky with a medallion and also securing the chance to show Tarkovsky a selection of his own work, projected onto the “sepia-toned floral” wallpaper of a small and unbearably hot hotel room: *Window Water Baby Moving* (1959), *Dog Star Man, Part IV* (1961–4), *Untitled No. 6 of the Short Films* (1975), *Made Manifest* (1980), *Arabic 3* (1980–2), and *Murder Psalm* (1980).¹²

With great humor and self-effacement Brakhage tells of Tarkovsky’s responses to his work. Tarkovsky responded by declaring that “Art must have a mystery to it and this is too scientific to be Art,” and then “ran, in the course of an hour and a half, through every argument against my work and any other individual’s work that I have ever heard, from the Emperor’s New Clothes argument through this-is-too-rapid-it-hurts-the-eyes, through ‘this is sheer self-indulgence’ to ‘film is only a collaborative art.’ And in detail, ‘the color is shit’ and ‘what is this paint? Why do you do this?’” (12). Brakhage assures us that he “gave for everything [he] got,” using all his experience of responding to derision. Some of Tarkovsky’s arguments Brakhage found strange, especially his view that “innovation is reckless and destructive” (13). The next day the Polish director Zbigniew Rybczyński told Brakhage that “he’d never heard [Tarkovsky] talk so much all at once [or] so excited about anything and that my [i.e., Brakhage’s] films would cast a shadow through his [i.e., Tarkovsky’s] work.” Tarkovsky was to make but one more film, *Sacrifice* (1985), in which there are no obvious homages to Brakhage, but it remains possible to dream of circumstances that would have allowed for a more substantive encounter between the filmmakers and their worlds.

As Brakhage observes, it’s possible that Tarkovsky simply lacked a ready frame of reference for independent or experi-

12 Stan Brakhage, “Telluride Gold: Brakhage Meets Tarkovsky.” *Rolling Stock* 6 (1983):11. Further citations of this article are given parenthetically.

mental cinema like his own. With tight state control over the technologies and media of filmmaking, there was really nothing like independent film in the USSR (although bold experiments sometimes took place on the margins of the state industry, in film schools and provincial studios). Brakhage stresses that, despite Tarkovsky's outsider status in the USSR "he can spend unbelievable fortunes such as we haven't seen in this country since Cecil B. DeMille. [...] As long as the Russians agree to make it, he can have as big a crowd as he wants in his film and he can string them out in beautiful patterns across the mountains or he can rebuild villages and towns" (11).

Despite all of these contrasts and misunderstandings between Tarkovsky and Brakhage, there are also significant convergences that allow one to imagine a conversation occurring between the two bodies of work and which make their almost accidental confrontation into a meaningful encounter. One similarity is the autobiographical emphasis of many films. J. Hoberman has written that, if he only had had the budget, Brakhage would have made a film like Tarkovsky's *Mirror*¹³; in fact, with its documentary chronicle of twentieth-century horrors, *Mirror* is not a world away from *23rd Psalm Branch* (1967). It is not difficult to imagine Tarkovsky moving in the direction of Brakhage-like montage of "jolting fluidity" (to borrow Hoberman's phrase) given *Tempo di Viaggio*. Brakhage enumerated the reasons he found Tarkovsky's cinema so compelling:

I personally think that the three greatest tasks for film in the 20th century are (1) To make the epic, that is to tell the tales of the tribes of the world. (2) To keep it personal, because only in the eccentricities of our personal lives do we have any chances at the truth. (3) To do the dream work, that is, to illuminate the borders of the unconscious. The only film maker I know that does all these three things equally in every film he makes is Andrei Tarkovsky, and that's why I think he's the greatest living narrative film maker.

13 J. Hoberman, "The Condition His Condition Was In." *Village Voice*, January 10, 1984: 52.

The same three criteria make it clear why J. Hoberman has grouped both men together as a “conservative avant-garde.” And yet Tarkovsky left no trace, in his films or his writings, of reciprocating this high regard.

Tarkovsky's screening lists

Unexpected light on Tarkovsky's relationship to world cinema is shed by the lists of films which he requested from the State Film Archive (Gosfilmofond) for demonstration to cast and crew as part of the preparation for his films. Some of his choices are very telling vis-à-vis his own films, others suggest more the purpose of entertainment, while a few are simply puzzling. Still, at the very least these lists characterise the cinematic epoch and atmosphere within which Tarkovsky and his collaborators were working – and within which his films must inevitably be placed.

Films requested for *Andrei Rublev*

L'Age d'or [dir. Luis Buñuel, 1930]
The 400 Blows [dir. Francois Truffaut, 1959]
Una vita difficile (Italy) [dir. Dino Risi, 1961]
Il posto (Italy) [dir. Ermanno Olmi, 1961]
*Fidel Castro in Moscow*¹⁴

Films requested for *Solaris*

Born Losers (USA) [dir. Tom Laughlin, 1967]
Bonnie and Clyde (USA) [dir. Arthur Penn, 1967] *Tenth Victim*
 (Italy) [La decima vittima; dir. Elio Petri, 1965]
Casanova-70 (Italy) [dir. Mario Monicelli, 1970]
The Chase (USA) [dir. Arthur Penn, 1966]
My Sister, My Love (Sweden) [dir. Vilgot Sjöman, 1966]¹⁵

14 Mosfilm archive 6.100.1969, 122, 142.

15 Mosfilm archive 8.152.1989, 5.

Films requested for *Mirror*

From Russia with Love [dir. Terence Young, 1963]

Goldfinger [dir. Guy Hamilton, 1964]

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly [dir. Sergio Leone, 1966]

A Handful of Dollars More [dir. Sergio Leone, 1965]

Once upon a Time in the West [dir. Sergio Leone, 1968]

Roma [dir. Federico Fellini, 1972]

8½ [dir. Federico Fellini, 1963]

Maddalena. Zero for Poor Behaviour [Maddalena, zero in condotta; dir. Vittorio de Sica, 1940]¹⁶

Clearly, Tarkovsky and his crews were interested in measuring their work not only against great films of the past, but also against contemporary standards, including those of Hollywood. It is intriguing to contemplate the influence of James Bond and spaghetti westerns on *Mirror*. Most likely these films were simply for the crew's entertainment, but Tarkovsky sometimes displayed a surprising knowledge of the American movie scene. He expressed a strong desire for Jill Clayburgh to play the lead female role in *Nostalghia* and *Sacrifice*, in the wake of her Oscar for *An Unmarried Woman* (1978).¹⁷ More perplexing is the choice of the unknown *Fidel Castro in Moscow* (possibly *A Guest from the Island of Freedom* [dir. Roman Karmen, 1963]) in relation to *Andrei Rublev*. Could Tarkovsky have been interested in modelling the swan hunt on Fidel's expedition to a Moscow-area game reserve, or was the attraction rather Fidel's visit to the Bolshoi (together with Khrushchev and Gromyko) to see Maya Plisetskaia dance *Swan Lake*?

A colleague once told me that Tarkovsky made great films, but bad cinema. I take that to mean that, in his desire to create filmic art works, Tarkovsky withheld the signal pleasures of cinema-going. These lists help us to imagine a Tarkovsky immersed in cinema as a medium, willing to relate even his most cerebral works to the splashiest spectacles around.

16 Mosfilm archive 10.519.34, 30.

17 Tarkovskii, *Martirolog*, 272, 279.

Conclusion

Inevitably the extant information about films that Tarkovsky watched and mentioned is far from exhaustive or even representative. Contemporaries attest to Tarkovsky's deep and abiding interest in Jean-Luc Godard, though he avoided mentioning him publicly. In the final analysis the filmmakers who influenced Tarkovsky most may have been those who established and continued the pedagogical tradition at the All-Union State Institute of Cinematography, most notably Sergei Eisenstein, with whom Tarkovsky constantly argues in his published texts, his teacher Mikhail Romm, and his mentor Marlen Khutsiev. But truly to contend with Tarkovsky's cinema means to get beyond the limitations of auteur theory, which draws on a narrow set of aesthetic criteria to propagate a genealogy of great white men. Even the most *sui generis* filmmaker exists only within the global histories of film genre, style, technology and institutions. Too often Andrei Tarkovsky is treated as an exception to film history; but it can be more productive and enlightening to treat Tarkovsky as the rule.

ALESSIA CERVINI

ONE BOOK, SEVERAL BOOKS:
METHOD AND EISENSTEIN'S LIBRARY

In October 1990, an important conference dedicated to Sergei Eisenstein was held in Venice, thanks to the Film and Television section of “La Biennale di Venezia.” The title of the conference, *Sergei Eisenstein. Besides Cinema: Figures, Forms and the Sense of the Image*, declared the will of the curator Pietro Montani to encourage reflection on both Eisenstein’s theoretical and artistic work to go beyond specialized studies on cinema and show the enormous complexity of his thought on a lot of different subjects. The stated goal was to show Eisenstein as a philosopher *tout court*. The contributions of the many scholars participating at the conference confirmed this idea.¹

On that occasion, Naum Kleiman read a paper titled “Grundproblem and the Adventures of Method.” Let us remember that a few decades earlier when Kleiman participated in the editing of a selection of Eisenstein’s works in six volumes (1964–71), they did not include his last incomplete theoretical work, *Method*. More than ten years after that Venetian conference, in 2002, *Method* was published in Russia, edited by Kleiman. In this sense, we can say the work that Kleiman talked about in Venice was still, literally, quite completely unknown.

I strongly believe that one of Kleiman’s most important academic merits from the 1990s on (in addition to being the former manager of the Moscow State Central Cinema Museum and the director of the Eisenstein-Center) is the dissemination of Eisenstein’s last theoretical work. This is the most a-system-

1 All the essays have been collected in *Sergej Eizenstejn: oltre il cinema*, ed. P. Montani (Venice: La Biennale di Venezia, Edizioni Biblioteca dell’immagine, 1991).

atic, fragmentary work of the Russian director, the one which in many ways was incompatible with the soviet regime. Partly because of its difficult inaccessibility and, partly – perhaps above all – because it openly made Eisenstein’s non-orthodox positions emerge, that work has been lying in the archives for decades, unpublished.² Kleiman was *Method’s* custodian and then its brave divulger.

I met Naum Kleiman for the very first time in Moscow in 2002, the year of the publication of Eisenstein’s last work: I owe him my intellectual encounter with *Method*. In recent years, I convinced myself that the “adventures of *Method*,” which the title of the paper at the Venetian conference referred to, had become the adventures that made both the publication of the book and Naum Kleiman’s tenacious work so complicated.

Anyone who knows Eisenstein’s book can understand the kind of complication I am talking about. *Method*, indeed, appears to its reader as a huge construction performing the reciprocal and profitable circuitry of diverse subjects and distinct fields of knowledge. However, thanks to the application of one single method (the dialectical one) they all intertwine in a single multifaceted text. A text made of references and intricate internal paths, which includes past and already published contributions, drafted texts and private notes, drawings and memoirs, as well as, in a virtual way, the director’s film works (those realized and those that only remained projects).

Eisenstein’s idea, as is well known, was that of a “spherical book” in which different sectors and fields of knowledge should have had a common center, settling in the same horizon, guaranteed by the emergence of a unique, universal method. Only in this way can one understand the relations between the single essays contained in the two volumes and the legitimate passage

2 Naum Kleiman himself talks about the editorial adventures of some of the Eisenstein’s later writings that were not included in the edition of the selected works in six volumes (*Izbrannye proizvedeniia v shesti tomakh* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1964–71): N. Kleiman, ‘Do touch Classics!’ in S. M. Eisenstein, *Notes pour une histoire générale du cinéma*, eds. N. Kleiman and A. Somaini, (Paris: AFRHC, 2013), 9–15.

from one to the other, back and forth without rest. This is the interpretative hypothesis that Naum Kleiman advances in his important introduction to *Method*.³ This kind of approach implicates, first of all, in Eisenstein's opinion, the rejection of the "linear logic" of reading and writing that characterized Western culture: a way of thinking characterized by scientific and sequential rationality, where history is visualized as a straight line of actions and reactions. *Method* is instead the transparent sphere of a magician in which the signs of the past are recalled and reused in order to anticipate an image of the future.

One might say that Eisenstein's theoretical effort, especially in the mature phase of his reflection, consisted, not less than that of other thinkers of the twentieth century, in the attempt to deconstruct and then recompose (montage makes exactly this type of operations) the western ideological tradition, which distinguished and placed words and things, verbal and visual culture, conceptual thinking and art in a relationship of mutual contrast. *Method* is a global and universal attempt to reinterpret this "inexhaustible" object, thinking together all different cultural products of humanity from its very beginning to its latest achievements. A sort of re-writing that uses a language that is the same language of emotions, body, images, acquired in their natural dynamism.

It is not my intention to revisit here the contents and the themes of this work. It is sufficient to recall here again at least two of the already mentioned texts written by Kleiman on the theme: the paper at the Venice conference in 1990 and the introduction to the Russian edition of *Method*. Here it is possible to find some valuable suggestions in order to understand the ultimate meaning of the Eisensteinian work. I am particularly interested now to show how the idea of the "spherical book" that Eisenstein had in mind was intimately linked to the work of building his own library, organized on the basis of the same theoretical principles that animate the fragmentary and com-

3 N. Kleiman, "Problema Eisensteina," S. M. Eisenstein, *Metod*, 2 Vols., ed. Naum Kleiman (Moscow: Muzei kino 2002), 1: 5–30.

plex writing of *Method* and of other satellite documents, such as *Notes for a General History of Cinema*. This is the hypothesis that I want to outline here briefly.

The library that Eisenstein had conceived over the years is today only imaginable. There remains only its “material,” the enormous number of books that the director mostly bought during his journeys to America and Europe. Its “form,” the composition that Eisenstein wanted to give to that mass of heterogeneous volumes (among which it is not difficult to trace the interests, passions and obsessions of the director), has been lost. Only one photograph of that library was taken before the demolition of the house where Eisenstein lived during the last years of his life. Naum Kleiman says that the photograph was confiscated by the KGB immediately after being shot.⁴ What was really revolutionary in that library had to be evident to the Soviet authorities: the dissipating and irreverent strength of thought that had been concealed for a long time or reduced to a rigid paradigm.

One could feel the same strength today, as soon as we stop considering Eisenstein’s library as a simple archive and begin to interpret it as a direct and real testimony of a politically and culturally subversive project. The attempt to reverse a fallacious idea of enlightened progress is perhaps the greatest inheritance – still alive and current – that Eisenstein has left us. Naum Kleiman has strenuously defended Eisenstein’s legacy in his twofold role of conservator of the library and editor of the last theoretical works of the director.

The challenge is to protect that legacy from a “fate” that has progressively led all the Western world, including Russia, towards its own “decline.”⁵ a process that today, maybe too read-

4 A photograph of Eisenstein’s apartment and his library is now visible in Eisenstein, *Notes pour une histoire générale du cinéma*, 27.

5 I borrow here the expression from the title of the well-known volume by O. Spengler, *The Decline of the West*. The volume was in his library and Eisenstein made large use of it while writing *Method*.

ily, one wants to interpret as the result of an external attack, as the result of a struggle between different cultures.

Probably I am forcing the terms of the question, but it is Eisenstein himself, in a certain sense, who asks this of the reader. Such a lifelong reflection demands to be taken seriously, considered beyond any possible resistance or reduction. His theory is not just a theory of cinema, but rather a large aesthetic set of ideas that addresses not only “beauty” and “art.” Eisenstein tried to propose something like a new kind of sensibility including thought, and *vice versa*: a sphere of human being where every capability is included.

This kind of thinking revolving around the concept of “omnipotence,” which Eisenstein also traced in the utopia of the absence of classes, in the tendency to *Mutterleibversenkung* (immersion in mother’s womb), and in the elementary forms of life of unicellular organisms, are a sort of metaphor, suggesting freedom and harmony between humans and the reality surrounding them. Something like an ideal opposition to all the circumstances of terror, the limitation of creative force and control exercised over life and conscience. Not by chance, *Method* is a contemporary and satellite of *Ivan the Terrible*.

From this point of view, the style of the book is very significant: the free associations, the refusal of academic rigor that requires consistency of arguments and evidence is the most obvious sign of a freedom of creation and writing, the most intimate action where it is possible to express our own self without any form of censure.

This very idea of freedom is experienced when entering Eisenstein’s library (thanks to the work of preservation made by Naum Kleiman): the unique and spontaneous feeling of being able to throw bridges between different fields of knowledge, one far from the others; the perception of the inebriating and ecstatic power of knowledge.

The simplicity and almost the necessity that suggests Eisenstein’s readers make sudden transitions from philosophy to biology, from psychology to anthropology; these are the evident proofs of the – inevitable and urgent – circumstance that

make the building of a new “system” (or rather a “method”) of knowledge possible. Such a “method” has to overcome the “system” of arts conceived in the eighteenth century, in order to become an enormous encyclopedia where every form of human (or even non-human) expression can find a place. In this “system,” art continues to play the fundamental role of acting as a hub between all the distinct fields of knowledge. In fact, art is conceived as the most functional example of what it means to bring all metaphysical opposites to unity: first of all, intellect and sensitivity, rationality and emotionality.

It is possible to understand what I am saying here simply by reading a book like *Method* and by imagining the enormous encyclopedia of human knowledge that the director had in mind to build starting from his library. That is why – as Eisenstein used to say – movement and books are indissoluble, as body movement is not different from the evolution of history and thought. A movement that is always a journey back and forth, in and out of our self. That is why this kind of movement can never trace a straight line, but rather a whirling spiral. This is the conceptual key that allows Eisenstein to read historical and individual processes, as well as cultural and artistic ones, using the same tools. Emotions are bound together with rational consciousness, primitive phenomena with contemporary ones, unicellular organisms with “formed,” evolved humanity; philosophy with science, religion with psychology. Just as books are next to other books in a library’s shelf.

Every heritage, above all an immaterial heritage like the intellectual one, requires to be kept alive and shared in order to preserve its ability to speak to those – scholars and ordinary readers – who will come to it. To Naum Kleiman and to a large community of scholars must be acknowledged the merit of making Eisenstein’s thought and artistic work a real “inexhaustible object,” able to raise new ideas and new questions.

IAN CHRISTIE

EISENSTEIN'S ENGLAND

The field of Eisenstein studies has expanded dramatically in recent years, notably in terms of newly edited and published writings, and in awareness of and access to his graphic output. In both of these spheres, Naum Kleiman has been a tireless activist – and in relation to making more of the drawings available, I am proud to have played a part in providing Naum with a platform to trace Eisenstein's life from the point of view of his different approaches to drawing.¹ As the mass of Eisensteiniana grows exponentially, there are opportunities to study his life and work from new perspectives – indeed I would argue there is an urgent need to do so, for at least two reasons. One is to revise and correct much that has been repeated over sixty years, often without empirical verification. The other is to provide routes for access to those who find the mass of material daunting.² What follows is a sketch for considering Eisenstein from an “English” perspective, informed by the experience of curating an exhibition at GRAD Gallery in London in 2016.³

1 Naum Kleiman, *Eisenstein on Paper: Graphic Works by the Master of Film* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2017).

2 At the 2017 NECS conference in Paris, I raised the question of providing new teaching resources on Eisenstein, who is certainly featured in every Film Studies syllabus around the world, but often in outmoded and even caricatured terms.

3 *Unexpected Eisenstein* was co-curated with Elena Sudakova, with the support of Kino Klassika. It drew upon materials held by RGA-LI and the Bakhrushin Museum, Moscow; and of course benefited from advice by Naum Kleiman. I published an earlier account of Eisenstein's influence in Britain in the 1930s and 1940s, entitled “Censorship, Culture and Codpieces,” in Al LaValley and Barry P.



A visit to the Eisenstein museum at Smolenskaya in 1984, which laid the groundwork for the 1988 exhibition in Britain, and also provided material for Derek Jarman's *Imagining October*. With Naum Kleiman here: Peter Sainsbury (then head of British Film Institute production), Peter Wollen, Sally Potter and Bella Epstein, who acted as interpreter and guide for this visit. *Photograph: Ian Christie*

“Say *Potemkin* and the whole British Army will collapse like ninepins:” so joked Bryher, founder of Britain’s first serious film journal *Close Up* with her lover, the poet H.D. (Hilda Doolittle), in a 1929 book about the new Soviet cinema.⁴ The reputation of Eisenstein’s 1926 film was still causing as much fear among the politicians and legal authorities of Western nations as it did excitement, mostly frustrated, among film enthusiasts denied the chance to see it. Presumably the prospect of Eisenstein visiting Britain in late 1929 must have caused consternation in some circles, although there is no evidence that he had any difficulty entering the country, probably from Holland.

Scherr, eds., *Eisenstein at 100: A Reconsideration* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 109–20.

4 Bryher, *Film Problems of Soviet Russia* (Territet: Pool, 1929)

The bare facts of his visit are set out in Oksana Bulgakowa's invaluable biography: that Ivor Montagu had invited him to London when they met at the La Sarraz Congress of Independent Cinema in September, and arranged his accommodation and the programme of his visit in November. What Bulgakowa was able to confirm, however, was that Eisenstein actually arrived several days earlier than previously assumed, at least before November 5. This enabled him to plunge directly into the heart of Anglo-British tensions, by attending the House of Commons on that day to hear a historic debate on whether or not Britain should resume diplomatic and trading relations with Soviet Russia, which had been broken off in 1926. Presumably Montagu's establishment connections helped to get the newly-arrived Russian visitor into the Strangers' Gallery of the Commons. At any rate, the debate was long and well-attended by the political elite. We know about this visit because on the following day Eisenstein wrote excitedly to his childhood friend Maxim Strauch (*Maksim Shtraukh*) that he had heard all the great political figures of the era speak, mentioning Chamberlain, Ramsey Macdonald, and Lloyd-George, who was then perhaps the best known of all, as Britain's World War I leader.⁵

It was certainly a dramatic period in British as well as world politics, just a week after "Black Tuesday" on Wall Street had started the financial collapse that would eventually throw millions out of work. Britain was just months into its second-ever Labour government, propped up by an alliance with the Liberals, and one of its policies was to end the diplomatic rift with Russia. Labour's Foreign Secretary, Arthur Henderson, a League of Nations activist and future Nobel Peace Prize winner, put the case for resuming normal relations. What was Britain gaining, after trade with Russia had plummeted, while oth-

5 Bulgakowa reports that Eisenstein wrote few letters from England, probably due to having such a crowded schedule. But it may be worth recalling that he wrote again to Strauch from Mexico in 1931, and that the two published letters are among the most revealing from this period of his travels. See "Letters from Mexico," *October*, 14 (Fall 1980), 55–64.

er countries, especially America, were benefitting from good relations? Their manufacturers had “not been troubled by a Churchill or a Curzon,” urging diehard hostility and generating only ill will. One British industry hit particularly hard by the diplomatic rift was herring fishing – which may seem ironic, in view of John Grierson’s debut documentary *Drifters*, soon to be premiered in the same show as Eisenstein’s *Potemkin*.

The debate was long and passionate, with a stirring speech in favour of resumed relations from Lloyd George, and some remarkably frank exchanges about “propaganda.” Yes, of course there would always be Russian propaganda, which was only to be expected and had been going on since the time of Queen Victoria, while it was suggested that Soviet Russia had some reason to be suspicious of Britain, after misguided attempts to intervene militarily in 1917. The final vote around 10:00 pm saw “these stale old hatreds which have been an electioneering asset of the Tory Party for so long” defeated by 324–199. Eisenstein may well have felt relieved to be starting his visit with Anglo-Russian relations renewed.

The main activities and contacts during his visit to Britain are of course well known, having first been detailed in Marie Seton’s 1952 biography.⁶ Similarly familiar are the elements of his thoroughly Anglophile upbringing in early twentieth-century Riga, having an English governess and first reading many of the classic nursery books when still young. But researching and mounting an exhibition devoted to his life-long fascination with English themes and motifs threw up a number of interesting connections and questions – many not easily answered.

His first West End hotel proved embarrassing for a visitor without money to tip the porters, even though his accommodation was paid for by the Film Society, so he moved to more modest one off Russell Square in Bloomsbury. One of his main goals for the visit to Britain also proved unrealisable. Having brought a copy of his new film *The Old and the New*, he hoped

6 Marie Seton, *Sergei M. Eisenstein. A Biography* (London: Dobson Books, 1952).

to work again with the composer Edmund Meisel, who was then working for British International Pictures, having recently written music for BIP's *The Crimson Circle*, based on a story by Edgar Wallace, and made in both silent and sound versions.⁷ Eisenstein planned that Meisel would help him give the film an experimental soundtrack, using natural sounds as well as music in what would have been a very early kind of "sampled" track. His remarkable notes for this intended asynchronous soundtrack are reproduced in Jay Leyda and Zina Voynow's useful scrapbook, *Eisenstein at Work*.⁸ But with the Talkie revolution under way, there was no interest in updating a Soviet film. Instead, Eisenstein managed finally to hear Meisel's famous music for *Potemkin*, conducted by the composer for a special Film Society screening at the Tivoli, a very large cinema on the Strand.

It appears that he was far from impressed. Not only were parts of this much-censored film missing, but he thought Meisel ran it too slowly, favoring his own music rather than the editing rhythm of the film (the stone lions suffered most apparently, even provoking mirth), and so received more of the applause than he deserved. John Grierson's *Drifters* was premiered first in the programme, and Eisenstein also felt it stole some the thunder of *Potemkin*, which is perhaps not surprising, in view of Grierson's close involvement with "editing" an English version of *Potemkin* (another longstanding rumor, still in need of detailed research). Although this is the received view of that famous event, we should perhaps be cautious in taking it at face value. Above all, *Potemkin* was already an old film, certainly for Eisenstein and no doubt for many of those present, who would have already seen it privately, or in Germany. With his ambitious plans to synchronize *The Old and the New* frustrated, Eisenstein may well have been impatient, and therefore critical

7 *The Crimson Circle/Der Rote Kreis*, dirs. Friedrich Zelnik, Sinclair Hill, and starring Lya Mara and Stewart Rome. Meisel is credited with music and sound effects.

8 Jay Leyda and Zina Voynow, *Eisenstein at Work* (London: Methuen, 1982), 38.

of the performance – after all he had already worked with Meisel on the *October* score.

The number of celebrities who wanted to meet Eisenstein in London was considerably fewer than in Paris or Berlin, but one of the most prominent was George Bernard Shaw, who had already seen *Potemkin* at what must have been several private shows and thought it “one of the very best films in existence.” Shaw offered him permission to film *Arms and the Man*, making this the first of the literary properties that Eisenstein collected while abroad. But we might wonder if he knew, or if they discussed, the production of his *Heartbreak House* that Eisenstein had designed as a student at the Higher State Theatre Workshop (GVYRM) during 1922, while studying with Meyerhold. Eisenstein was assigned to design the sets for this complex satire on the wealthy classes of Europe on the eve of the Great War. His initial spiral Cubo-futurist inspired setting is one of his striking set designs, but was in fact criticised by GVYRM’s design tutor Lyubov Popova, who considered it a merely “decorative solution.” In response, Eisenstein produced an angular collage of mechanical structures and circus equipment, in the then-fashionable Constructivist idiom. However, as with many designs during this impoverished period, the production never took place.

One such, an unexpected discovery at the Bakhrushin Museum, was a set of costume designs for a show entitled *Sherlock Holmes and Nick Carter*, also dating from 1922. Holmes had of course been internationally known since soon after his first appearance, but his stereotypically American counterpart Nick Carter, would also become a popular dime novel character, and first become an equally popular screen figure in a series of thrillers produced by Éclair in 1908. Nothing more seems to be known about this proposed stage encounter between the two characters, although the five exotic costumes (for Holmes, a vice-director, a Fashionable Woman, a Negro and Miss Lolla) point towards Eisenstein’s better-known costumes for *The Mexican* and *The Wiseman*, while also invoking the interest in popular culture and detective fiction that he shared with



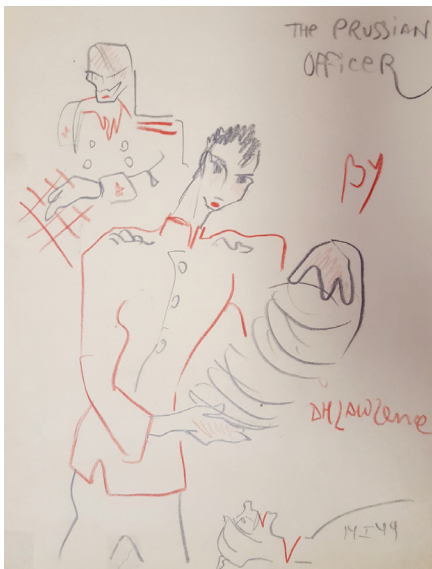
An early stage design by Eisenstein for Ben Jonson's Bartholomew Fair.

the FEKS founders Leonid Trauberg and Grigori Kozintsev. It seems likely that he would have made a touristic pilgrimage to Baker Street while in London; and correspondence with Zwemmer's Bookshop, at which Eisenstein opened an account, shows he ordered a copy of Vincent Starrett's ingenious "biography," *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes*, on its appearance in 1934.

Eisenstein's gargantuan appetite for books has long been an important thread in research, with a collection of essays on his library currently awaiting publication.⁹ London, and specifically Zwemmer's bookshop on Charing Cross Road, seems to have remained an important site for him.¹⁰ It was here that he bought an edition of Ben Jonson, having urged one of the students attending his lectures in London, the future filmmaker

9 Ada Ackerman and Luka Arsenjuk, *Reading with Eisenstein* (Caboose, forthcoming).

10 Zwemmer's Gallery, round the corner from its Charing Cross shop in Litchfield Street, also served as a London office for the journal *Close Up*, which first published Eisenstein's essays in translation. See Nigel Vaux-Halliday, *More Than a Bookshop: Zwemmer's and Art in the Twentieth Century* (London: Philip Wilson Publishers, 1991), 85–7.



Eisenstein confessed a fascination with D. H. Lawrence in several letters, essays, and in his memoirs. Lawrence's early tale of murderous sexual rivalry between men, "The Prussian Officer," is the subject of this 1944 drawing, included in Mark Cousins' 2016 film, made for the exhibition *Unexpected Eisenstein*.

Basil Wright, to re-read *Volpone*, "and to read the other plays."¹¹ And in the Moscow archives there is a stage design for Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*. Another find in Zwemmer's appears to have been Havelock Ellis's *The Philosophy of Conflict* (1919). Although deeply unfashionable today, as a pioneer writer on sexuality and on "inversion," Ellis was important to Eisenstein.¹²

Equally important – indeed something of an obsession for Eisenstein – was the maverick English writer, traveller, and artist, D. H. Lawrence. Eisenstein acquired Lawrence's then-banned *Lady Chatterley's Lover* while crossing the Atlantic in 1930, and made at least one drawing inspired by it. This was featured, along with another based on Lawrence's story *The Prussian Officer*, in a short film that Mark Cousins made especially for our exhibition: *Eisenstein on Lawrence*.¹³ Cous-

11 Seton, *Eisenstein*, 143.

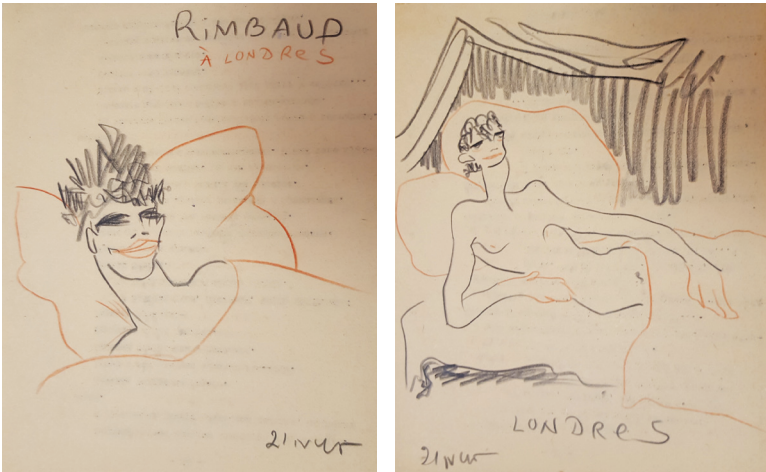
12 For a reference to Eisenstein underlining a passage in Ellis's essay on Elie Faure, see Seton, *Eisenstein*, 290.

13 See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=asI2dzS7vfM&feature=youtu.be>

ins had already made films dealing with Eisenstein in Mexico (*What is this Film Called Love?* in 2012) and D. H. Lawrence in Sardinia (*6 Desires*, 2014). His new film took the form of an imaginary interview, by “an English journalist” in 1946, about Eisenstein’s longstanding fascination with Lawrence, which he admitted had begun “out of snobbery,” when he bought *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* because it, like *Ulysses*, was banned. Then, as he collected more of Lawrence’s writings, and “the best things written about Lawrence,” including Frederick Carter’s *D. H. Lawrence and the Body Mystical*, he realised “the affinity with my views of pre-logic.”¹⁴ Although politically, and in their attitudes to cinema, the two were far apart, we have to recognise that Eisenstein found much to admire in Lawrence’s aspiration toward the “cosmic universal confluence.”

Eisenstein’s travels abroad during 1929–32 gave him many opportunities to investigate forms of sexuality that were heavily condemned in Russia, with Berlin, Paris and Mexico providing important experiences and encounters. And clearly Eisenstein took back to Russia memories which would be activated many years later, as many of his drawings testify. Two examples of this “delayed response” emerged from the archives during our exhibition research. One is a provocative set of drawings entitled “Rimbaud,” which show the poet emerging seductively from bed. Tantalisingly, these are also labelled “Londres,” which must surely refer to the scandalous elopement of Rimbaud with his fellow-poet Paul Verlaine, when they spent several dissolute months together in Soho and Camden Town in 1872–3, after fleeing the public outrage that surrounded their hedonistic lifestyle in Paris. Living first in Bloomsbury and then at 8 Royal College Street, Camden, the two lovers contin-

14 A letter to Kenneth Macpherson requesting works by and about Lawrence, dated October 13, 1932 is quoted in Seton *Eisenstein*, 258–8. Eisenstein’s comments on Lawrence appear throughout the memoirs, and specifically in the chapter “Encounters with books.” where he uses the word “affinity” in English in a chapter that was going to be called “Lawrence, Melville”; see Eisenstein, *Selected Works. Beyond the Stars*, 358.



ued their tempestuous affair. After a series of bitter arguments Verlaine left London, and their brief reunion in Brussels soon after concluded with Verlaine shooting his young lover in the wrist in a drunken rage.¹⁵ This romance seems to have inspired Eisenstein to continue exploring erotic themes in his later drawings, as revealed by the collection that was displayed at Pace Gallery at the same time as *Unexpected Eisenstein*.¹⁶ But why, we may wonder, would Eisenstein be dreaming of Rimbaud in London, when he was in Moscow in 1945, still editing *Ivan the Terrible*? Might it offer some clue to the gay subtext running

15 An episode explored in Christopher Hampton's play *Total Eclipse*, which was filmed in 1995 by Agnieszka Holland with Leonardo DiCaprio as Rimbaud.

16 This collection of drawings, belonging to descendants of the cinematographer Andrei Moskvin, who worked on *Ivan the Terrible*, has since been shown in New York at the Alexander Gray gallery, where it attracted a considerable amount of critical attention. See for instance, Natasha Kurchanova, "Sergei Eisenstein: Drawings, 1931–48," *Studio International*: <http://www.studio-international.co.uk/index.php/sergei-eisenstein-drawings-1931-1948-review-alexander-gray-associates-new-york>



New plaque on the house in Camden where Rimbaud and Verlaine lived together scandalously in 1873, a ménage to which Eisenstein returned in late drawings, identifying it as “Londres”.

through the film, which must have played some part in Stalin’s ban on its release?¹⁷

Less enigmatic, and more overtly political, was the discovery of drawings Eisenstein did for a sequence of *Ivan* that was almost certainly never filmed, but would have linked Ivan’s Muscovy with the court of Queen Elizabeth I. We know from photographs that he screen-tested fellow director Mikhail Romm for the role of the ageing Elizabeth, but less known is that he also hoped to make a comment on Russia’s links with Britain during World War II. A series of drawings made in Alma-Ata during the shooting of *Ivan*, and partly captioned in English as Eisenstein often did, imagines the court of “Queen Bess,” with the Russian ambassador paying court to her on behalf of Ivan. Behind her in one of these, a scene of debauchery is interrupted by the shadow of the approaching queen. Another shows the trade route connecting Moscow with London, picked out in a cartoon-like dotted line that recalls the Elizabethan explorer

17 On the gay subtext running through Eisenstein’s films and drawings, see Mark Rappaport’s recent video essay *Sir Gay* (2017).



A 1941 drawing, of the Russian ambassador courting Queen Elizabeth I, with a map tracing the journey from Northern Russia to England, described in Hakluyt's *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques, and Discoveries of the English Nation* (1598).


and writer Richard Hakluyt's *Voyages*, which also inspired the Russian episode in Virginia Woolf's time- and gender-bending fantasia *Orlando*, published the year before Eisenstein visited England (but surely he couldn't have known *that?*).¹⁸ In November 1941, the Arctic convoys were bringing vital support to a beleaguered USSR after the Nazi invasion, and Eisenstein clearly thought to remind the film's viewers of timely parallels between the Tudor era and the present.

In fact, however, it was his *Alexander Nevsky*, which still lay nearly a decade in the future, that would play its part in linking Britain and Russia, not only when it was widely shown in the early years of the war, but also when it was transformed into a

18 In fact, Eisenstein could have met the Woolfs, through his contact while in London with their Russian-born collaborator Samuel Solomonovich Kotliansky. But there is no record of this within the copious documentation of Woolf and her circle.

ROBERT DONAT in
'ALEXANDER NEVSKY'

The play by Louis MacNeice tonight at 9.20 tells the story of an earlier invasion of Russia. In the year 1242 Prince Alexander Nevsky led the people of Novgorod in victorious battle against the invading Teutonic knights. Stills from the Russian film on which the broadcast is based will be seen on page 3.



Suite : For my L
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' Sam Pig
by David,
Gourley

5.45 Mac
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6.0 Time
National

BBC *Radio Times* notice for the first broadcast of Louis MacNeice's play based on Eisenstein's *Alexander Nevsky*, starring Robert Donat, December 1941.

radio play in 1941. Wartime radio gave us the rare opportunity to hear Eisenstein speaking in English, when he broadcast to "Brother Jews of the World" on July 3, 1941, five months before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour precipitated America's entry into World War Two. But his indirect contribution to the war effort through radio has been largely ignored. On December 8, the BBC broadcast a play based on *Alexander Nevsky*, written by the poet Louis MacNeice and using Prokofiev's music for the film. By extraordinary coincidence, that long-planned live transmission took place on the day after news of Pearl Harbour reached Europe; and just as improbably it was recorded, so that we have the final words of the Soviet ambassador, Ivan Maisky, saying "and now Alexander Nevsky," before the familiar ominous rasp of Prokofiev's score.

The background to this extraordinary conjunction lay in the pioneering enthusiasm of the play's commissioning producer, Dallas Bower. Bower had been an early radio specialist and sound recordist for cinema, working on both of Britain's first "talkies," Hitchcock's *Blackmail* and *Under the Greenwood Tree*, in 1929. He wrote a book about the potential for cinema

to incorporate sound, color and stereoscopy as early as 1934 (*Plan for Cinema*), in terms very similar to Eisenstein's own vision in his 1947 essay "On Stereocinema." Bower worked in the BBC's experimental television service in 1937–8, and as a member of the Film Society managed to see *Alexander Nevsky* when it reached Britain shortly before the war. When he was drafted into radio after the television service was suspended, he proposed the idea of its subject offering "fine material for a feature (one hour)" for the BBC's main Home Service.

Louis MacNeice was already working for the BBC when Bower invited him to write a play based on the film, of which there was only one subtitled copy in Britain; and we know from the production files that there was anxiety about the script being ready in time. Meanwhile, Prokofiev's score had apparently been brought in via the Arctic convoys that were helping to supply Russia, and Sir Adrian Boult was keen to conduct it. Robert Donat, then at the height of his fame as a screen actor, played Nevsky, with Peggy Ashcroft among what the *Radio Times* described as a "star cast" for this account of "a Russian hero of seven hundred years ago who defeated an invasion of his country by the Teutonic knights."

By all accounts, the broadcast was considered a great success, and the play was repeated, with a different cast, at least twice more during the war, with MacNeice and Bower collaborating again on a second radio drama, *Christopher Columbus*, broadcast on October 12, 1942, to commemorate the 450th anniversary of Columbus' arrival in the Americas. Laurence Olivier headed the cast, and this may well have helped Bower progress his next project, which was to produce a British equivalent to Eisenstein's *Nevsky*, which would eventually be the Two Cities production of Shakespeare's *Henry V*, starring and directed by Olivier, released in November 1944.

We still don't know if Eisenstein ever saw Olivier's film, or knew about the radio *Nevsky*, but a 1945 letter to him from Ivor Montagu analysed the debt it owed to *Nevsky*: "the main thing of interest... is that it brilliantly, triumphantly brings off the picturing of a play (and a well-worthwhile classical play at that),

using the lines as instructive basis, and exploiting and inventing all technical means to illuminate and heighten them.” He adds, “I am convinced that the great thing imbibed by Bower is the high standard of research, the delight in costumes, textures, period faces, which is all of a standard of historical realism, not mechanically reproduced but creatively selected, quite outside the tradition of the American or British historical film, which he can only have got from Nevsky.”

There is still much to learn about and from the vast corpus of Eisenstein’s drawings. The sheer quantity and ebullience of the “sex drawings,” as Joan Neuberger has dubbed them, and his remarkable production design sketches for *Ivan*, have tended to distract attention from his other work, although both Kleiman and Bulgakowa have written about the childhood drawings. Our London exhibition included a selection from different periods, including some from the Mexican “Death of Duncan” series, which have already attracted substantial commentary. But two works stand outside these larger categories, and raise interesting questions, or speculations. One is the extraordinary 1916 panorama of 150 characters that exists as a strip nearly a metre long; and the other is a pair of portraits of his mother. These, surely, would be considered of enormous significance from any filmmakers other than Eisenstein.

Kleiman writes of “the hunger queues of the second year of the war stretch out in the great panorama of Petersburg types –



Part of Eisenstein’s 1916 drawing of 150 figures queuing for food in Petrograd.

150 individual beings, characters, social strata of the Empire's capital." True, this queue stretches away from a café offering tea and coffee. But are they displaying poverty or hunger? There's certainly some typical crowd behaviour, with a pick-pocket at work part way along. But it is the extraordinary variety of types that impresses us (especially when looking at this virtuoso work of miniaturization in close-up). Types inevitably flash us forward to Eisenstein's theory of "typage:" "social and personal biography condensed into physical form," irrespective of acting ability, as Eisenstein himself wrote.

We think inevitably of the crowd gathered on shore in Odessa in *Potemkin*, turned out in celebration of the spectacle of mutiny, and later mown down by the advancing troops on the steps, in Eisenstein's most sheerly dramatic use of typage. Audiences around the world over ninety years do indeed know who these individuals are, and the fact that we know nothing extraneous about them has made them both poignant and universal.

But of course there are other such bravura displays of typage in mass action. Think of the bourgeoisie attacking the Bolshevik leafleteers in the July Days episode of *October*, gleefully stabbing at the fallen demonstrator with their parasols and stamping with their elegant shoes. Think also of what seems like the most literal echo of the 1916 queue: the long line of supplicants who stretch into the distance beyond Tsar Ivan's hawk-like profile at the end of *Ivan* Part 1. This has so often been analysed in the terms that Eisenstein proposed, as an adaptation of a Japanese composition, that we have perhaps forgotten it is another queue of diverse individuals, here united in supplication that the Tsar will return from his self-imposed exile.

And the two small portraits of Eisenstein's mother? These are unlike any other drawings by Eisenstein. They have an intensity that seems to speak of complex emotions; and of course we know that Eisenstein had mixed feelings, to put it mildly, about his mother. The day after her death on August 8, 1946, he wrote about being finally liberated from this "absurd woman," who had in fact lived with him throughout his entire adult life. Again, we know from the memoirs Sergei's self-analysis of his



“My mummy.” One of two portraits of his mother, Yulia Ivanovna, in a very different register from his other drawings.

“cruelty” that had not been exorcised by pulling small animals apart as a child; but we know little about the complexity of his relations with the woman who he had once blamed for being “over-sexed” and provoking his parents’ divorce. The strongly worked texture of these drawings seems to speak of very different emotions from those expressed so playfully or scandalously elsewhere.

Bulgakowa has written of the “enormous gap” between Eisenstein’s diaries, which were the basis of her biography, and the memoir, *Yo*, which, for all its tantalising and playful confes-

sions, “turned the real man into a fictional character.”¹⁹ What we can learn from the drawings, considered alongside the films and writings, is perhaps how adept Eisenstein was at living simultaneously in different imaginative places. Whether confined to Moscow or exiled to Alma-Ata, he was still inspired by memories of the historic places he had visited a decade earlier during those three weeks in Britain. Trinity College, Cambridge, Windsor Castle, Hampton Court and even Eton – whose “Tudor arches” were later recalled with particular vividness – had all helped shape his vision of the treacherous court in Ivan, filtered through the lens of memory. And among the incredible cast of characters who mingle in the “immoral memoirs,” there are a surprising number of English themes, characters, and people. But perhaps not surprising after all, for this little boy from Riga who imagined himself as David Copperfield and remained a lifelong devotee of detective stories.



19 Bulgakowa, *Sergei Eisenstein*, 277.

GÉRARD CONIO

LA MÉTHODE DE NAOUM KLEIMAN

En réunissant les « scenarii inédits » d'Eisenstein, Naoum Kleiman a montré que pour chaque projet particulier, celui-ci avait fait usage d'une méthode qu'on pourrait appeler à double fond : un double fondement qui liait la pensée intellectuelle à la pensée sensible.

Cette collusion devait se traduire par le lien entre la synecdoque à la métaphore, la « pars pro toto » n'étant jamais exclusive d'une vision analogique du monde.

C'est ainsi que le projet inachevé de *Glass House*¹ apparaît comme l'allégorie d'un art qu'Eisenstein avait défini comme régressif.²

1 S.M. Eisenstein, *Glass House*, Introduction, notes et commentaires de F. Albéra, Dijon, Les Presses du réel, 2009

2 Dans les notes de son journal rédigées dans la nuit du 31 décembre de l'année 1932, intitulées « Mon Système », Eisenstein définissait la forme « comme un stade du contenu » et il ajoutait :

« La forme est l'idée même exprimée à travers des méthodes et des modes de pensée ataviques. Je l'ai vérifié jusqu'au bout. On ne me pardonne pas ma conception de l'art comme "régression".(...)»

Que l'art soit...synthèse.

La triade complète : la thèse est le bon sens (tellement méprisé par Engels dans son ouvrage *De l'utopie vers la science* !) L'anti-thèse est un pas en arrière sur le chemin de la pensée et la synthèse est le mariage entre la conscience la plus aiguë et la plénitude vitale du primitif.

Ceci est, bien entendu, l'alpha et l'omega de ce que l'on peut dire ou faire de l'art.»

(Naoum Kleiman, *La formule du final*, Centre Eisenstein, 2004, p. 229). Et dans *La Méthode* ou *Grundproblem*, Eisenstein précisait dans ces termes cette conception « régressive » de l'art qui découlait

En transcendant les implications archaïques de la forme, le cinéma d'Eisenstein voulait se projeter vers l'avenir d'une société sans classe.

Glass House devenait alors à la fois l'image dérisoire d'une transparence dangereuse, mais signifiait aussi le rêve d'un monde où toutes les barrières et tous les simulacres seraient abolis.

Dans son commentaire de *Glass House*, Naoum Kleiman a montré qu'Eisenstein était plus grand que ses films :

L'exemple de *Glass House*, écrit-il, nous prouve une fois de plus que pour l'historien du cinéma, les projets non portés à l'écran ne doivent pas être moins importants que les films prestigieux. Et il ne s'agit pas seulement de la genèse de ces films, l'important n'est pas seulement que des mises en scène réalisées soient préparées par des projets inachevés. Ce qui importe c'est que dans les matériaux de ces projets se cachent des découvertes étonnantes qui ne sont pas recouvertes par les films auxquels ils peuvent donner lieu.³

En analysant ce qu'il appelle « la formule du final »,⁴ Naoum Kleiman a mis à jour une dialectique qui tire chaque scena-

de « son expérience pré-natale » ou MLB (Plongée dans le sein maternel) :

« L'art n'est rien d'autre que la régression dans les sphères du psychisme vers les formes d'une pensée primaire, à savoir un phénomène identique aux diverses formes d'hypnose, d'alcolisme, de chamanisme, de religion et autres. La dialectique de l'œuvre d'art est fondée sur un double processus simultané : l'élévation progressive dans les degrés les plus intellectuels de la conscience et en même temps, par la construction de la forme, la plongée dans les couches de la pensée sensible la plus profonde. »

(Eisenstein, *La méthode*, Premier tome, « Grundproblem », Musée du cinéma, Centre Eisenstein, Moscou, 2002, p. 167.)

3 Naoum Kleiman, commentaire de *Glass House*.

4 *La formule du final* est le titre donné par Naoum Kleiman à un recueil de ses essais, articles et entretiens publié par le Centre Eisenstein de Moscou en 2004. Il s'agit d'une « pars pro toto » car « la formule du

rio d'Eisenstein vers un dénouement contradictoire conforme à cette double postulation, pessimiste autant qu'optimiste.⁵

Rarement la poésie en acte a été aussi indissociable d'une recherche philosophique qui, derrière la primauté apparente donnée à la forme n'a cessé de poser la question du sens : sens de la vie, sens de la création, sens de notre rapport au monde.

C'est en appliquant cette méthode que Naoum Kleiman a su rendre Eisenstein à lui-même en définissant son œuvre non comme un résultat, mais comme un problème.

Et la lecture qu'il a donnée des textes d'Eisenstein en les confrontant à ses films a replacé ceux-ci dans le contexte d'un

final » était tout d'abord le titre d'un essai isolé qui a englobé tout le reste de l'ouvrage.

Voici comment Naoum Kleiman a défini « la formule du final » dans le scénario non réalisé de « L'Amour du poète », qui devait raconter l'histoire de l'amour secret de Pouchkine pour Ekaterina Karamzina :

« Comme dans les projets d'*Ivan le Terrible* et de *Nevski*, l'épilogue s'ouvre sur une époque nouvelle et un personnage nouveau qui prennent la relève de ce que l'on a perdu. Le conflit inévitable entre le Poète et le Tsar, l'Art et l'Autocratie, les lois de l'Amour et les lois de la Haine sortent du cadre de la destinée d'un seul homme. Et ce qui pouvait paraître comme un film biographique sur "un amour secret", le mariage et la mort de Pouchkine devait dans l'épilogue devenir le tableau de l'histoire. »

(Naoum Kleiman, *La formule du final*, p. 55)

Dans « la formule du final » des films d'Eisenstein, Naoum Kleiman perçoit la manifestation d'un Idéal à la fois esthétique et éthique. Et bien qu'elle soit conforme à « la triade traditionnelle depuis Pouchkine du Poète, de l'Historien et du Prophète, cette position n'appartient ni à la jurisprudence de l'Etat ni à l'horizontalité historique, mais à cette "verticalité" qui définissait pour Eisenstein la formule du final. »

(Naoum Kleiman, *La formule du final*, p. 82).

5 À propos d'une note d'Eisenstein sur les deux variantes, l'une pessimiste, l'autre optimiste du final d'*Ulysse* de Joyce, Naoum Kleiman remarque qu'« à notre grand étonnement, elles ne se contredisent pas ».

(Naoum Kleiman, « Les secrets du maître, » *La formule du final*, p. 248.)

règlement de compte permanent entre l'art et le pouvoir, l'art et l'histoire.

Naoum Kleiman a poursuivi ce combat avec un système de domination dont on aurait tort cependant de minimiser les mérites.

Comment se fait-il, en effet, que la culture monumentale d'une société totalitaire a produit tant de créateurs de génie, tandis que la liberté tant espérée n'a apporté le plus souvent que des œuvres mort-nées ?

On ne saurait pour autant souhaiter que revienne pour notre gourmandise d'esthète un ordre monstrueusement tout puissant qui suscitait chez ses victimes une réponse à sa mesure.

Sans entrer dans des déductions aussi scandaleuses, Naoum Kleiman a su, par son empathie avec son modèle, éclairer les liens indissolubles entre un artiste et son époque.

Et il est frappant que l'anniversaire de ses quatre-vingt ans coïncide à quelques semaines près avec le centenaire de la révolution d'octobre.

Ce sera l'occasion de revoir à la lumière de ses commentaires la tétralogie de la révolution, à savoir *La Grève*, le *Potemkine*, *Octobre* et *La Ligne générale*.

On comprendra alors que ce ne sont pas les illustrations de propagande d'une geste héroïque et sanglante.

Ces films racontent une histoire parallèle porteuse d'une image du monde qui rattache le passé à l'avenir. Loin d'être l'apologie d'une rupture radicale, cette histoire ouvre sur des prolongements auprès desquels nos événements courants ne sont que des épisodes transitoires.

GEORGES DIDI-HUBERMAN
« ESPRIT DE RÉVOLTE » :
LES VAGUES SE FORMENT
ET SE PROPAGENT

De partout le monde se soulève : puissances. Mais partout, aussi, on construit des digues : pouvoirs. Ou bien on se protège au sommet des falaises, d'où l'on croira dominer la mer. Dignes et falaises semblent dressées pour contenir les mouvements mêmes de ce qui se soulève depuis le bas et menace l'ordre des choses d'en haut. Les soulèvements ressembleraient donc aux vagues de l'océan, chacune d'elles contribuant à faire qu'un jour, tout à coup, la digue sera submergée ou la falaise s'écroulera. Quelque chose entre-temps, fût-ce de manière imperceptible, se sera transformé avec chaque vague. C'est l'« imperceptible » du devenir. C'est la puissance de la vague — dans tous les sens du mot *puissance* —, irrésistible mais latente, inaperçue jusqu'au moment où elle fera tout exploser. Voilà exactement ce que des poèmes, des romans, des livres d'histoire ou de philosophie, des œuvres d'art savent enregistrer en les grossissant, en les dramatisant sous la forme de fictions, d'utopies, de visions, d'images en tous genres. *Images-symptômes* où se consignerait, par traces, par catastrophes morphologiques, que la digue ou la falaise ne sont plus tout à fait les mêmes après le passage de cette vague-ci, puis de cette autre, et ainsi de suite. *Images-souhais*, comme Ernst Bloch les a si bien nommées¹, et qui surgissent ou se soulèvent puissamment pour donner forme à nos désirs de *passer outre*, de franchir la frontière, d'enjamber la digue.

Ce n'est pas un hasard si l'on parle couramment d'une « vague de protestations », d'une « vague d'émeutes » ou d'une

1 E. Bloch, *Le Principe espérance* (1938-1959), trad. F. Wuilmart, Paris, Gallimard, 1976-1991, III, *passim*.

« vague de grèves sauvages ». Pas un hasard, donc, si Victor Hugo décrit longuement l'insurrection parisienne de 1832 en termes de « bouillonnements » météorologiques, de tempêtes soulevant d'immenses vagues et agitant l'atmosphère tout entière : « C'était une sorte d'impétuosité inconnue qui était dans l'air, [un déferlement d']agitations qui remuent le fond... »². Ce n'est pas un hasard, enfin, si *Le Cuirassé Potemkine* d'Eisenstein, film du soulèvement par excellence, s'ouvrait sur l'image d'une mer agitée avec ses vagues qui viennent puissamment submerger une digue (Fig. 1). Dans sa restauration du film, en 2005, Enno Patalas a découvert que la citation de Lénine, lisible sur un carton juste après cette image, avait été substituée, pour les versions officielles du stalinisme, au carton original qui portait, de fait, une citation de Trotsky extraite de son grand livre sur la révolution de 1905 :

L'esprit de révolte planait sur la terre de Russie. Une transformation immense et mystérieuse s'accomplissait en d'innombrables cœurs, les entraves de la crainte se rompaient : l'individu qui avait à peine eu le temps de prendre conscience de lui-même se dissolvait dans la masse et toute la masse se confondait dans un même élan. Affranchie des craintes héréditaires et des obstacles imaginaires, cette masse ne pouvait et ne voulait pas voir les obstacles réels. En cela était sa faiblesse et en cela sa force. Elle allait de l'avant comme une lame poussée par la tempête. Chaque journée découvrait de nouveaux fonds et engendrait de nouvelles possibilités, comme si une force gigantesque brassait la société de fond en comble. [...] Grèves ouvrières, meetings incessants, manifestations dans les rues, dévastation des domaines, grèves de policiers et de garçons de cour se succédaient, et l'on vit finalement les troubles et la révolte gagner les matelots et les soldats. Ce fut la désagrégation totale, ce fut le chaos³.

2 V. Hugo, *Les Misérables* (1845-1862), dans *Œuvres complètes. Roman*, II, éd. A. et G. Rosa, Paris, Robert Laffont, 1985 (éd. 2002), pp. 836-837 et 840.

3 L. Trotsky, *1905* (1909), trad. M. Parijanine, Paris, Les Éditions de Minuit, 1969, p. 177.



Fig. 1

Trotsky reconnaissait, dans ces lignes, que la « puissance » ou *dynamis* de la révolte précédait toute prise de « pouvoir » selon la loi ou *nomos* de la révolution théorisée par Lénine. Voilà pourquoi son texte s'organise tout entier autour de cette image de la vague — « comme une lame de fond poussée par la tempête [...] comme si une force gigantesque brassait la société de fond en comble » —, image qu'Eisenstein aura choisi de prendre tout simplement au mot, si l'on peut dire. Or, le processus de soulèvement décrit par Trotsky, avec ce qu'il implique de « désagrégation totale » et de « chaos », est ici nommé à travers deux substantifs lourds de sens : le premier est l'« élan » (*poriv*), le second est l'« esprit » (*doukh*) dans l'expression « esprit de révolte ». Cela ne semble pas correspondre à la vision purement stratégique adoptée par Lénine, sans doute. Et pourtant il s'agit d'un vocabulaire qui fait retour aux sources mêmes du communisme, dans la mesure où le mot *doukh* servait à traduire en russe la notion de « spectre » (*Gespenst*) dans la fameuse formule d'ouverture du *Manifeste communiste* de

Marx et Engels : « Un spectre hante l'Europe, c'est le spectre du communisme... »⁴.

Il y a quelque chose de lucretien dans ces images de vagues, d'élans ou d'esprits migratoires que savent mettre en œuvre nos désirs d'émancipation. On commence alors de comprendre que les phénomènes de soulèvements répondent à d'authentiques *morphologies dynamiques*, celles que l'on trouve justement à l'œuvre dans l'intérêt précoce de Karl Marx pour les matérialismes de l'Antiquité, ou dans l'entreprise ultérieure de Friedrich Engels pour sa *Dialectique de la nature*⁵. Avant eux, Goethe aura construit la fascinante notion de « phénomène originaire » (*Urphänomen*) dont Walter Benjamin, en bon matérialiste, devait faire un usage extensif jusque dans le domaine de la pensée historique et politique⁶. Les soulèvements seraient-ils alors des *phénomènes originaires* pour un certain type de situations qui concernent la vie historique des sociétés humaines ? Ne sont-ils pas des phénomènes de la puissance, des vagues d'énergie sociale ? Ne sont-ils pas élans du désir, dispersion des choses établies, force du ressac fluide capable de venir à bout de digues ou de falaises — c'est-à-dire d'institutions — si solides en apparence ?

Voilà pourquoi le monde partout se soulève. C'est que les vagues — les vagues de nos désirs d'émancipation — *jaillissent du fond* et viennent, ici et là, sans logique apparente, soulever les surfaces. Peut-être faudrait-il comprendre le fameux slogan de mai 1968 « Sous les pavés, la plage ! » à travers la vision d'une vague de pavés déferlant sur quelque rive océane et agitant, comme chez Hugo, toute l'atmosphère jusqu'au sommet des

4 K. Marx et F. Engels, *Le Manifeste communiste* (1848), trad. M. Rubel et L. Évrard, *Philosophie*, Paris, Gallimard, 1965-1982 (éd. 2014), p. 398.

5 K. Marx, *Différence de la philosophie de la nature chez Démocrite et Épicure* (1841), trad. J. Ponnier, Bordeaux, Éditions Ducros, 1970, *passim*. F. Engels, *Dialectique de la nature* (1873-1895), trad. É. Bottigelli, Paris, Éditions sociales, 1968, *passim*.

6 W. Benjamin, *Origine du drame baroque allemand* (1928), trad. S. Muller et A. Hirt, Paris, Flammarion, 1985, pp. 43-45.

cieux. Ne nous méprenons pas sur le caractère « romantique » de telles images : c'est justement leur attention aux *morphologies affectives* — colère avec la tempête, désir avec la vague — qui donne sa pertinence au moment lucrétien chez Hugo ou à celui du « phénomène originaire » chez Goethe. C'est une véritable analyse morphologique qui aura porté André Gorz, par exemple, à voir le capitalisme aux prises avec sa propre décomposition et, donc, à espérer beaucoup des soulèvements à venir⁷.

Si le monde partout se soulève, n'est-ce pas dû, aujourd'hui plus que jamais, à un immense phénomène morphogénétique — ce que la géométrie dynamique nomme un enchaînement ou à un déchaînement de *catastrophes* — lié au destin même, économique, social et politique, des formes d'oppression désormais « mondialisées », ainsi que l'indiquait en 2012 Yann Moulier Boutang dans le numéro de la revue *Multitudes* consacré aux soulèvements ? « Désormais, écrivait-il, c'est le produit même de trente ans de mondialisation, d'unification européenne, qui se lève de l'intérieur. Contre, mais dedans. Résolument dedans. Global, autrement mondialiste. Et c'est ce qui doit nous rendre immensément optimistes »⁸. On se souvient des 8528 soulèvements recensés par Jean Nicolas : ils auront obstinément fissuré, entre 1661 et 1789, l'édifice monarchique jusqu'à le faire s'écrouler⁹. Aujourd'hui nous pouvons nous référer à la *Bibliothèque des émeutes* et, surtout, à l'entreprise considérable d'Immanuel Ness que représente son *International Encyclopedia of Revolution and Protest* : y sont dressées l'histoire et la cartographie des myriades de soulèvements depuis le XVI^e siècle jusqu'à nos jours¹⁰. Il existe aussi de nombreuses antho-

7 A. Gorz, *Les Chemins du paradis. L'agonie du capital*, Paris, Éditions Galilée, 1983, pp. 19-26.

8 Y. Moulier Boutang, « Des mouvements à la politique », *Multitudes*, n° 50, 2012, p. 31.

9 J. Nicolas, *La Rébellion française. Mouvements populaires et conscience sociale, 1661-1789*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 2002 (rééd. Paris, Gallimard, 2008), p. 45 et *passim*.

10 *Bibliothèque des émeutes*, n° 1-8, 1990-1995, *passim*. I. Ness (dir.),

logies sur les grandes figures de la rébellion et quelques albums iconographiques des soulèvements, tel l'ouvrage *Protest !*, publié en 2011 sous la direction de John Simpson. Il existe même un récent « altermanuel d'histoire contemporaine » intitulé *Les Mondes insurgés*¹¹.

Mais comment se déclenche et se développe une telle « morphogénèse » des soulèvements ? Comment la vague se forme-t-elle et développe-t-elle sa puissance intrinsèque ? S'il y a une loi pour ce phénomène, elle ne saurait être, bien sûr, que *sur-déterminée* : à chaque fois — et à chaque fois différemment — c'est un jeu de causes multiples, hétérogènes en droit mais réunies en fait, qui déchaîne la puissance des soulèvements. Or cela commence souvent, comme le met en scène, entre mille autres exemples possibles, *Le Cuirassé Potemkine* d'Eisenstein, par le sentiment douloureux d'une perte et par la possibilité ouverte aux peuples de *manifestar cette douleur* : d'en faire *exposition*, au double sens de l'expression visible (exposer sa souffrance aux yeux de tous) et de la prise de risque (s'exposer au danger, donc à une nouvelle souffrance, de la répression).

C'est ainsi que, bien souvent, les soulèvements partent de simples *doléances*, mot lié au deuil et à la douleur, exprimant une plainte ou une lamentation, spécialement dans le cas d'une plainte publique : il s'agit alors de *réclamer* au sujet d'un grief, d'un fait d'injustice, d'une situation ressentie comme intolérable. Les doléances n'ont rien d'agressif : sous l'ancien régime, elles étaient adressées à l'autorité du seigneur ou du gouvernement, elles étaient présentées au roi sous la forme de ces fameux « cahiers de doléances », possibilité symbolique

The International Encyclopedia of Revolution and Protest, 1500 to the Present, Oxford-Malden, Wiley-Blackwell, 2009, *passim*.

- 11 M. Löwy (dir.), *Révolutions*, Paris, Hazan, 2000, *passim*. J.-N. Jeanneney et G. Kaufmann (dir.), *Les Rebelles. Une anthologie*, Paris, Le Monde-CNRS Éditions, 2014, *passim*. J. Simpson (dir.), *Protest ! 65 ans de révoltes*, trad. C. Jaquet, Paris, Éditions de La Martinière, 2011, *passim*. B. Bréville et D. Vidal (dir.), *Les Mondes insurgés. Altermanuel d'histoire contemporaine*, Paris, Les Monde diplomatique-Librairie Vuibert, 2014, *passim*.

offerte aux plus démunis d'exprimer publiquement leur détresse. Comme l'a montré, parmi d'autres historiens, Yves-Marie Bercé dans son grand ouvrage *Révoltes et révolutions dans l'Europe moderne*, tout a souvent commencé par la « rédaction de doléances », de « plaintes » ou de « placets » à travers lesquels les plus humbles sujets usaient de leur droit séculaire à s'adresser au souverain en tant que « justicier suprême »¹². Mais ce droit coutumier — la requête légitime de tout sujet envers son seigneur — pouvait être reçu, de la part du gouvernement, comme une prérogative insolente, voire comme un manifeste insurrectionnel, et déclencher, par conséquent, tout le cycle des poursuites judiciaires, des emprisonnements et des répressions en tous genres.

C'est alors, justement, que se forme la vague. C'est une composition de forces : à l'injustice inscrite dans la doléance même se superpose l'injustice ou la douleur liées à sa fin de non-recevoir. Douleur nouvelle sur douleur ancienne : cela donne une *exclamation* d'affects par-dessus la *réclamation* formelle inscrite dans le cahier de doléances. Et cela donne la colère. Puis, des colères réunies, surgiront *proclamations* — une façon désormais autonome de s'exprimer —, clameurs et manifestes : Bercé note alors que « le discours et les écrits foisonnent [dans] une sorte d'explosion de l'imaginaire sociopolitique » bientôt suivi par les actes, les *explosions* de la tempête insurrectionnelle en tant que telle. Or, pour qu'il y ait tempête, il faut bien que les forces puissent se transmettre, s'additionner voir se démultiplier comme les vagues de l'océan. Bercé rappelle que le grand cycle des révoltes et des révolutions de l'Europe moderne à partir des années 1520-1530 — et qui prit alors, dans la sphère politico-religieuse, le nom de Réforme — n'aurait pas pu se propager aussi puissamment sans la *reproduction* des textes et des images que permettait l'invention de l'imprimerie et la diffusion des gravures de propagande (étudiées avec fièvre

12 Y.-M. Bercé, *Révoltes et révolutions dans l'Europe moderne (XVI^e-XVIII^e siècles)*, Paris, PUF, 1980 (rééd. Paris, CNRS Éditions, 2013), pp. 10-17.

par Aby Warburg dans le cadre même de ce qu'il nommait une *Geistespolitik* ou « politique de l'esprit »¹³).

C'est parce que la requête légitime des doléances — légitime car légitimée par une longue tradition, une mémoire attestée dans la relation séculaire des serviteurs à leurs maîtres — subit un refus de la part de l'autorité qu'elle se transforme en refus de l'autorité et en exigence d'autonomie. Elle devient alors « résistance au tyran ». Elle débouche, sans l'avoir prévu au départ, sur un authentique « projet politique » fondé sur un droit au refus comme sur la revendication d'un droit plus fondamental que l'on découvre lui-même, mais quelle évidence !, fondé sur la notion d'égalité devant le droit. Si les soulèvements ne se déclenchent pas à partir des seules situations d'épidémies, de famine ou d'« inquiétude frumentaire », comme disent les historiens, c'est bien parce que leur ressort se situe au creux d'une certaine relation entre *pathos* (de la douleur éprouvée) et *logos* (du droit exercé) : c'est bien parce que la *plainte* non entendue appelle l'acte de *porter plainte*, c'est-à-dire de réclamer justice au nom d'un droit qui se révèle supérieur à l'usage qu'en font, du fait même de leur impunité de statut, les dominants. Et c'est ainsi que, du mouvement contradictoire entre *pathos* et *logos*, se déclenche la *praxis* des soulèvements.

C'est une histoire sans fin. C'est l'histoire, comme s'exprime Sophie Wahnich à propos de la Révolution française, de la « longue patience des peuples » ou de cet interminable cycle du pâtir et de l'agir qui caractérise le flux et le reflux des vagues de soulèvements dans la longue durée¹⁴. À ne prendre pour exemple que les révoltes paysannes, on les voit battre incessamment les digues des pouvoirs seigneuriaux depuis la fin du XIII^e siècle jusqu'au XVIII^e siècle, comme l'ont analysé des ouvrages tels que les *Fureurs paysannes* de Roland Mousnier en 1967 (où il traitait de cas français, mais aussi russes et chinois),

13 A. Warburg, « La divination païenne et antique dans les écrits et les images à l'époque de Luther » (1920), trad. S. Muller, *Essais florentins*, Paris, Klincksieck, 1990, pp. 245-294.

14 S. Wahnich, « Incertitude du temps révolutionnaire », *Socio*, n° 2, 2013, pp. 119-138, *passim*.

Croquants et Nu-pieds d'Yves-Marie Bercé en 1974 ou *Les Révoltes paysannes en Europe* d'Hugues Neveux en 1997 (où l'on constate que chaque année de cette longue histoire apporte sa nouvelle vague insurrectionnelle)¹⁵. C'est une histoire sans fin puisqu'elle traverse les océans comme les époques : partant de l'anarchisme andalou des *campesinos* (depuis les années 1870 jusqu'à la fin de la guerre civile), se retrouvant du côté de la révolution agraire mexicaine (dans les années 1920), puis revenant en Europe, par exemple dans les extraordinaires moments filmés au Portugal par Thomas Harlan en 1975, juste après la Révolution des Œillets.

C'est donc bien une *ida y vuelta*, un formidable aller et retour des vagues de soulèvements paysans, dont le zapatisme mexicain incarne, aujourd'hui encore, toute la puissance et l'inventivité politiques. Je ne m'étonne pas que le « Sous-commandant insurgé Marcos », dans son *Calendrier de la résistance*, en 2003, ait voulu rapporter, à travers la parole du « Vieil Antonio », une légende indienne qui évoque étrangement le récit d'Atlas : c'est « l'histoire de celui qui soutenait le ciel » (le ciel comparé à une toile de tente mal arrimée, qui ne cesse donc de se tendre et de se détendre, de se creuser et de se soulever) tout en « enseignant aux hommes et aux femmes la parole et l'écriture »... C'est aussi l'histoire d'un refus assumé de toute *gravedad* : l'histoire d'un perpétuel désir de *danser l'histoire* en réinventant toute la danse — donc toute l'histoire — à chaque pas effectué¹⁶. Or, on sait bien quel aura été l'effet, la diffusion

15 R. Mousnier, *Fureurs paysannes. Les paysans dans les révoltes du XVII^e siècle (France, Russie, Chine)*, Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1967, *passim*. Y.-M. Bercé, *Croquants et Nu-pieds : les soulèvements paysans en France du XVII^e siècle au XIX^e siècle*, Paris, Gallimard-Juliard, 1974 (rééd. Paris, Gallimard, 1991), *passim*. Id., *Histoire des Croquants. Étude des soulèvements populaires au XVII^e siècle dans le sud-ouest de la France*, Genève-Paris, Droz, 1974 (rééd. abrégée, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1986), *passim*. H. Neveux, *Les Révoltes paysannes en Europe (XIV^e-XVII^e siècle)*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1997, *passim*.

16 Marcos (sous-commandant insurgé), *Mexique : calendrier de la résistance. Suivi de : Chiapas, la treizième stèle* (2003), trad. Á.

en vagues immenses, d'une telle invention : d'une insurrection locale (indienne), la rébellion zapatiste aura donné forme et puissance à quelque chose comme une résistance globale (planétaire), ainsi que Jérôme Baschet l'analyse dans ses ouvrages à travers le mouvement dialectique d'une construction d'« autonomie » et d'une ouverture à la « multiplicité des mondes »¹⁷.

Comme les vagues dont la puissance érode toute falaise, comme l'infini mouvement dont la puissance vient à bout des choses immobiles, cette dynamique aura fait des soulèvements en Amérique latine une expérience tout à la fois spécifique et globale, quand la protestation sociale des villages les plus reculés du Chiapas prenait l'ampleur d'une contestation universelle incarnée dans ce qu'on nomme désormais l'altermondialisme. Telle aura été la « grande révolte indienne » qu'ont étudiée — pour tout le continent américain — Yvon Le Bot ou Alain Touraine, ainsi que bien d'autres historiens, sociologues ou militants qui cherchent, en permanence, à dresser l'état des lieux de la *Mondialisation des résistances*, comme l'ont nommée Samir Amin et François Houtart¹⁸. Or, ce qui caractérise une vague,

Caído, Paris, Rue des Cascades, 2007, pp. 321-323.

- 17 J. Baschet, *La Rébellion zapatiste. Insurrection indienne et résistance planétaire*, Paris, Denoël, 2002 (rééd. Paris, Flammarion, 2005), *passim*. Id., *Adieux au capitalisme. Autonomie, société du bien vivre et multiplicité des mondes*, Paris, La Découverte, 2014, *passim*.
- 18 Y. Le Bot, *La Grande Révolte indienne*, Paris, Robert Laffont, 2009, *passim*. Id., « De la révolution à la mondialisation. Changement de paradigme en Amérique latine », *Socio*, n° 2, 2013, pp. 39-58. A. Touraine, *La Parole et le sang. Politique et société en Amérique latine*, Paris, Éditions Odile Jacob, 1988, *passim*. F. Calderón Gutiérrez (dir.), *La protesta social en América Latina*, Buenos Aires, Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 2012, *passim*. K. Z. Dellacioppa et C. Weber (dir.), *Cultural Politics and Resistance in the 21st Century. Community-Based Social Movements and Global Change in the Americas*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, *passim*. S. Amin et F. Houtart (dir.), *Mondialisation des résistances : l'état des luttes 2002*, Dakar-Louvain-Paris, Forum mondial des Alternatives-L'Harmattan, 2002, *passim*. Id., *Mondialisation des résistances : l'état des luttes 2004*, Dakar-Louvain-Paris, Forum mondial des Alternatives-Éditions Syllepse, 2004, *passim*.

n'est-ce pas qu'elle réponde, comme le vent par exemple — dont on ne peut jamais dire où il s'arrête —, à une dynamique des fluides dont la puissance caractéristique est de se répandre, de changer d'échelle sans avoir rien d'autre à faire qu'à exister et se mouvoir localement, à condition que ce mouvement se réalise et se transmette, comme un roulement de flots, dans toute sa puissance intrinsèque ? Comment s'étonner que Georges Lapierre, ce proche témoin des soulèvements du Chiapas, du Guerrero et de l'Oaxaca, ait retenu et commenté cette extraordinaire formule des Indiens en lutte : « Soyons ouragans ! »¹⁹.

« La dimension géopolitique des mouvements contemporains est indéniable, elle repose sur d'intenses circulations, sur de nouveaux liens transnationaux, sur des imaginaires de contestation ayant une portée mondiale [alors même que] les acteurs sont localisés »... Dans l'introduction au volume de la revue *Socio* intitulé *Révolutions, contestations, indignations*, Michel Wieviorka, Pénélope Larzillière et Boris Petric n'ont pas manqué de souligner ce qu'une telle « vague » emportait avec elle de paradoxes : nul besoin d'assumer un « grand récit » — que ce soit la victoire finale du prolétariat façon Lénine ou le soulèvement du ciel mythique façon Marcos — pour que la puissance des soulèvements se transmette en tout cas ; nul besoin de s'organiser en partis centralisés pour que quelque chose advienne comme un « changement général du rapport au politique », changement qui parviendrait, selon ces auteurs, à « réenchanter le politique » par sa dynamique même plus encore que par sa valeur prescriptive²⁰. Un changement dans lequel, selon un étrange paradoxe, les « devenirs minoritaires » se multiplient et, donc, poussent, progressent, s'accroissent, se fortifient ici quand ils s'émeindrissent ailleurs, remontent vers les surfaces et finissent par agir ou surgir un peu partout.

19 G. Lapierre, *Être ouragans. Écrits de la dissidence*, Montreuil, L'Insomniaque, 2015, *passim*.

20 P. Larzillière, B. Petric et M. Wieviorka, « Révolutions, contestations, indignations », *Socio*, n° 2, 2013, pp. 7-23. J. Ferret, « Des devenirs minoritaires. Retour sur l'expérience politique des "indignés" espagnols », *Mouvements*, III, 2013, n° 75, pp. 86-98.

L'histoire est océane : façon de dire qu'en elle l'agitation ne cesse jamais. Ou plutôt qu'elle *est*, incessamment, *agitation*. Il y a des cycles et des latences, des remuements en tout cas. Il y a des marées hautes et des marées basses, des tempêtes et des calmes plats. Quand Charles Tilly intitule son livre *La France conteste*, la valeur du temps présent indique, de fait, une très longue durée : passé, présent et futur compris²¹. Quand Ted R. Gurr écrit son ouvrage *Why Men Rebel ?* ou s'interroge sur les modèles fondamentaux, les *persisting patterns* de la rébellion, il choisit de s'exprimer selon le concept dynamique de l'*impetus*²². Quand Jack Goldstone cherche à synthétiser l'histoire des soulèvements — que ce soit au début de l'ère moderne ou dans la période contemporaine —, il parle spontanément en termes de « vagues périodiques²³ » (*periodic waves*). Et c'est Mark Katz qui finira par publier, en 1997, un ouvrage intitulé *Revolutions and Revolutionary Waves*²⁴. Bref, l'histoire elle-même serait une histoire de vagues, avec ses *structures* de retours périodiques (premier sens du mot « révolution ») et ses *ruptures* d'équilibre, ses catastrophes temporelles (second sens du mot « révolution »). Il faudra, quoi qu'il en soit, reconnaître dans l'histoire politique et sociale une véritable « tradition révolu-

21 C. Tilly, *La France conteste : de 1600 à nos jours*, trad. E. Diacon, Paris, Fayard, 1986, *passim*.

22 T. R. Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1970 (rééd. Londres-New York, Routledge, 2015), pp. 27-58. Id. (dir.), *Handbook of Political Conflict : Theory and Research*, New York, Free Press, 1980, *passim*. Id., « Persisting Patterns of Repression and Rebellion : Foundations for a General Theory of Political Coercion », *Persistent Patterns and Emergent Structures in a Waning Century*, dir. M. P. Karns, New York-Londres, Praeger, 1986, pp. 149-168.

23 J. A. Goldstone, *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World*, Berkeley-Los Angeles-Oxford, University of California Press, 1991, p. 61. Id., T. R. Gurr et F. Moshiri (dir.), *Revolutions of the Late Twentieth Century*, Boulder-San Francisco-Oxford, Westview Press, 1991, *passim*.

24 M. N. Katz, *Revolutions and Revolutionary Waves*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1997 (éd. 1999), pp. 1-23 et *passim*.

tionnaire » rythmée par le flux des voix exclamées et par le reflux des silences contraints, des contextes qui font loi et des crises qui font exception.

Il n'est certes pas aisé de comprendre ces phénomènes, encore moins de les prédire. Les sociologues — tel Michel Dobry en 1992 — se sont interrogés sur les dynamiques inhérentes aux crises politiques, aux mobilisations sociales ou aux soulèvements²⁵. On découvre alors, selon un terme également en usage dans la modélisation mathématique des processus morphogénétiques en général, que des *bifurcations* sont à l'œuvre, qu'il y a des phénomènes d'amplification continue, puis des « états critiques », des *turning points* qui explosent en ruptures et où, tout à coup, règnent le discontinu et l'imprévisibilité²⁶... Comme le dit bien Sophie Wahnich du « temps révolutionnaire », il y a quelque chose comme une *ouverture du temps* — vers le futur, bien sûr, au cœur même du présent, mais aussi vers un passé tout à coup reconfiguré par ce que le désir « fait » à la mémoire, ou de la mémoire — dans le « précipité » même du moment de crise ou de soulèvement²⁷. *Précipité* est un terme emprunté, pour l'occasion, à Jacques Derrida. On sent bien, à seulement prononcer le mot, qu'il porte en lui tout le paradoxe d'un temps bref, critique ou explosif, advenant au creux d'un temps long, d'un temps où la mémoire *dépose* pour qu'enfin le désir *explose*.

Immense est notre mémoire des soulèvements. Elle s'est, en effet, déposée en nous — même si la seule chose qui compte, dans l'urgence et dans l'état des choses intolérables qui nous oppressent, *revient au soulèvement qui vient*. Mais pour penser

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- 25 M. Dobry, *Sociologie des crises politiques. La dynamique des mobilisations multisectorielles*, Paris, Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1992 (éd. revue et augmentée, 2009), *passim*.
- 26 M. Bessin, C. Bidart et M. Grossetti (dir.), *Bifurcations : les sciences sociales face aux ruptures et à l'événement*, Paris, La Découverte, 2010 *passim*.
- 27 S. Wahnich, « Incertitude du temps révolutionnaire », *Socio*, n° 2, 2013, p. 119-138, pp. 122-123.

« ce qui vient » sans se croire le devin de quoi que ce soit, voilà qui exige de nous, comme le suggère bien Derrida, une *pensée du rythme* qui laisserait sa place aux flux et aux reflux des vagues de l'histoire : « *Penser ce qui vient*, cela signifie au moins gagner du temps là où le temps gagne et nous gagne, car il gagne sur nous, quand l'histoire, ce qu'on appelle encore d'un mot plus tremblant, plus énigmatique que jamais, l'*histoire*, nous devance, nous pré-vient dans l'expérience inéluctable du temps qui vient mais qui vient en venant à manquer. [...] La catégorie de rythme (et donc de transition et/ou de révolution) devrait recevoir une nouvelle dignité dans les analyses historico-politiques... »²⁸.

28 J. Derrida, « Penser ce qui vient », *Derrida pour les temps à venir*, dir. R. Major, Paris, Stock, 2007, p. 17-62, pp. 25-26.

ULRICH UND ERIKA GREGOR

DIE CHRONIK EINER FREUNDSCHAFT

Unsere erste Begegnung fand 1957 statt. Damals war ich (Ulrich Gregor) Student in Berlin. Ich folgte einer Einladung zur Teilnahme an einem internationalen Jugendfestival in Moskau. Man fuhr mit dem Zug von Berlin bis zum Belorussischen Bahnhof. Es gab in Moskau ein vielfältig aufgefächertes Programm mit unzähligen Attraktionen aus allen möglichen Gebieten. Der 20. Parteikongress mit Chruščovs legendärer Rede hatte gerade im Vorjahre stattgefunden und man hoffte auf große Veränderungen.

Ich interessierte mich besonders für Film und für neue Tendenzen im sowjetischen Kino. So landete ich in einer Art Kontaktbüro für Filminteressierte und dort begegnete ich einem jungen Filmstudenten, der aufgeschlossen war und Deutsch sprach - das war Naum Kleemann ! Wir verstanden uns auf Anhieb sehr gut und sprachen stundenlang über den Zustand des Films und des Kinos in unseren Ländern und in der Welt. Ich kam damals aus Paris und hatte dort viel über Dziga Vertov erfahren, nur nicht, dass dieser bedeutende Filmpionier bereits 1954 gestorben war, worüber Naum mich dann aufklärte. Ich wiederum referierte über die soeben in Deutschland gegründete Zeitschrift "Filmkritik", zu deren Mitarbeitern ich gehörte. Diese am Anfang bescheidene, aber sehr profilierte Zeitschrift gefiel Naum und wurde zu einem Erkennungszeichen bei unseren späteren Treffen in Moskau.

Nach dieser ersten Begegnung unterhielten wir in der Folgezeit Kontakt durch den Austausch von Büchern und Zeitschriften, die Freunde überbrachten. Wir trafen uns erst wieder 1965, bei unserem ersten Besuch der Moskauer Filmfestspiele. Jay

Leyda, der amerikanische Filmhistoriker, den wir schon aus Berlin kannten, hatte eine Botschaft für uns : “Naum wartet auf Euch im Dom Kino”. Dorthin begaben wir uns, ausgerüstet mit einem Exemplar der “Filmkritik”.

Beim nächsten Besuch in 1967 ergab es sich sehr schnell, dass wir das Eisenstein-Kabinett in der Ulica Smolenskaja 10, Wohnung 160, kennenlernten – diesen singulären Ort in Moskau, ein Universum, die Welt Eisensteins auf dem kleinem Raum einer bescheidenen Etagen-Wohnung, aber angefüllt mit den Besitztümern Eisensteins, Büchern, Gemälden und Kunstwerken. Und dieser Ort wurde, bedingt durch Naum, zu unserer Heimat in Moskau, wann immer wir dort waren. Sobald wir in Moskau angekommen und im Hotel eingetroffen waren, wählten wir sogleich die Telefonnummer 241 80 30, eine Nummer, die wir bis heute im Kopf behalten haben.

Wir haben viele faszinierende Abende im Eisenstein-Kabinett der Smolenskaja verbracht, mit Gesprächen bis spät in die Nacht, manchmal bis zum Morgengrauen, bei Tee und Gebäck. Unzählige Male habe ich (Erika) Eisensteins Tassen abgewaschen.

Dort haben wir immer wieder Freunde getroffen und neue kennengelernt. Dies war der einzige Ort in Moskau, so schien es uns, wo man frei und offen über alles sprechen konnte, in einer warmen und freundschaftlichen Atmosphäre. Die Smolenskaja war der interessanteste Treffpunkt in Moskau.

Neben den vielen Begegnungen erinnere ich (Erika) mich besonders an eine heftige Debatte über Tarkovskijs *Zerkalo* (*Der Spiegel*, 1975). Wir saßen dort zusammen mit dem polnischen Regisseur Krzysztof Zanussi und der amerikanischen Kritikerin Annette Michelson, einer Verteidigerin der Avantgarde. Der Film war zunächst nur am Rande in einer halb legalen Vorführung im Dom Kino gelaufen. Er galt ja bei vielen Leuten damals als “privatistisch” und wir verteidigten ihn vehement.

Ich erinnere mich auch an viele lange Debatten über die Frage, wie ein Filmmuseum aussehen sollte, was man ausstellen kann und wie man ausstellen soll, wie ein Museum aufgebaut werden sollte, was für Filmprogramme es zeigen soll, was es zeigen kann.

Das Programm der "Freunde der Deutschen Kinemathek", des Vereins, den wir damals betrieben, und unseres Arsenal-Kinos in Berlin diente bei unseren Gesprächen zunächst als Vorbild. Später haben wir uns bei unserer eigenen Arbeit auch an Naums Spielplan in Moskau orientiert, uns an seinen Entdeckungen inspiriert. Überhaupt gab es zwischen uns und Naum einen immerwährenden und höchst lebendigen Austausch von Informationen. Naum informierte uns über neue Filme aus der UdSSR (so wies er uns zuerst auf Paradžanows *Schatten vergessener Ahnen* von 1965 hin). Wir erhielten Anregungen über sowjetische Klassiker, die wichtigsten Filme zeigten wir auf seine Anregung in Berlin. Es waren immer wieder Entdeckungen. Naum stellte Programme für das "Internationale Forum des Jungen Films" zusammen, den von uns verantworteten Teil der Berliner Filmfestspiele. 1990 lief im Forum der Berlinale sein Programm "Der unbekannte sowjetische Film". Später folgte sein umfassendes Programm "Die Schattenlinie". Das sowjetische Filmarchiv "Gosfilmofond", zu dessen Mitarbeitern Naum in seiner Anfangszeit gehörte, unterstützte uns auch und schickte bereits sowjetische Klassiker zum Forum nach Berlin, als die Sowjetunion offiziell noch nicht an der Berlinale teilnahm, sondern dieses Festival boykottierte, weil es in West-Berlin stattfand. Manche Filme, Glanzpunkte der Filmgeschichte, konnten wir durch Tausch oder Kauf aus Moskau erwerben und in unsere Kollektion aufnehmen (so Boris Barnets *Am blauen, blauen Meer*, 1936 – *U samogo sinego morja* – Naums Lieblingsfilm, und viele andere).

Naum unterstützte 1999 auch unser Programm "Amazonen der Avantgarde im Film", das wir im Arsenal zeigten, durch die Vermittlung von Filmen und durch Assistenz bei einer Publikation, für die Maja Turowskaja einen Beitrag schrieb (ihre Retrospektive des "Kinos im Totalitarismus" war eines der für uns wichtigsten Ereignisse).

Es gelang uns schon 1970, Naum in die Akademie der Künste in Berlin mit der ersten Ausstellung von Eisensteins Zeichnungen im Westen einzuladen (betitelt "Das Thema der Revolution und die Synthese der Künste"), verbunden mit einer

Eisenstein-Retrospektive im Kino Arsenal. Wir glaubten an didaktische Ausstellungen. Naum führte Besucher durch die Ausstellung, so konnten wir seinen Aufenthalt immer weiter verlängern. Um die Aufführungen von Eisenstein-Filmen im Arsenal-Kino, die von Naum eingeführt wurden, brauste damals die Berliner Studentenrevolte.

Eine der größten Entdeckungen für uns in Moskau war 1967 Eisensteins *Bežin lug* (*Die Bežin-Wiese*), die Foto-Rekonstruktion dieses verschollenen Films, der gerade von Naum Kleeemann und Sergej Jutkevič fertiggestellt worden war. Naum konnte diesen Film 1968 auf dem Festival von Oberhausen präsentieren, es war seine erste Reise in ein Land des Westens. Hilmar Hoffmann, der Leiter von Oberhausen, hatte Naum auf unsere Empfehlung hin eingeladen. Dort erlebte Naum auch hautnah die Turbulenzen der Studentenbewegung: es ging um den Film "Besonders wertvoll", der auf dem Festival nicht laufen durfte. Wir mussten Naum den Kontext erklären.

Ein anderer Ort, an dem wir uns in Moskau zuhause fühlten, war das kleine Büro der unvergessenen Bela Epstein im Gebäude des Verbands der Filmschaffenden, dem Dom Kino in der Wassilevskaja Ulica 13. Dort erfuhren wir die wichtigsten Informationen. Dort traf man sich zu klandestinen Vorführungen oder im Restaurant, wo selbst während des Alkoholverbots Cognac in Kaffeetassen ausgeschenkt wurde.

Durch Naum haben wir auch unsere Liebe zu Georgien entwickelt, denn Naum war der erste, der uns von der georgischen Kultur erzählte. Er schenkte uns Schallplatten mit den wunderbaren Chorgesängen der Georgier. Er erzählte auch das erste Mal von Otar Iosseliani, dem Menschen und seinen Filmen. Und durch seine Vermittlung sahen wir am Rande des Moskauer Filmfestivals, wo der Film nicht gezeigt werden durfte, in einem Vorstadtkulturhaus, in einem Vorführraum im Keller zusammen mit dem französischen Kritiker Marcel Martin Iosselianis Film *Pastorale* (1975). Es war ein unvergesslicher Eindruck. Iosseliani war anwesend (während der Rest des Festivals sich auf eine Bootsfahrt begab) und wir wurden Freunde.

Und endlich konnte Naum 1989 sich seinen langgehegten Wunsch erfüllen, das Filmmuseum “Muzei Kino” zu eröffnen. Das Museum entwickelte sich zu einer einzigartigen Institution, glänzte mit umfassenden Retrospektiven, vermittelte die Begegnung mit außereuropäischen Kinematographien, besonders mit den großen Meistern des japanischen Kinos, und empfing den Besuch fast aller Größen des zeitgenössischen Films.

Und wir waren auch dort zu Hause. Wir fuhren bis zur Metrostation “Barrikadnaja”, gingen dann zu Fuß und fuhren mit einem kleinen Fahrstuhl bis in den obersten Stock. Dort hatte Naum sein Büro. Nebenan hatte er seine Sammlungen, darunter auch eine Filmsammlung. Am Schneidetisch zeigte er uns frühe sowjetische Animationsfilme, dann auch Ausschnitte aus dem unvollendeten Film *Der Mantel* von Jurij Norštejn.

Wir erinnern uns an das Jahr 1997, als wir 73 Forums-Filme aus den vergangenen 25 Jahren nach Moskau in das “Muzei Kino” brachten (es war die umfassendste Retrospektive des Forums, die es je irgendwo gab), als ein Rahmenprogramm der Moskauer Filmfestspiele. In 5 Sälen, die immer voll waren, liefen alle diese Filme. Wir machten Einführungen, meine (Erikas) waren immer ziemlich kurz. Naums Übersetzungen dagegen immer ziemlich lang, also nehme ich an, dass seine Übersetzung viel schöner war als meine Einleitung. Alle Vorstellungen waren voll. Es gab ein unglaubliches Interesse, sogar auf der Straße sprachen uns Leute an, bedankten sich und stellten Fragen. Es war eine unbeschreiblich lebendige Zeit, und das “Muzei Kino” war der eigentliche Mittelpunkt des Festivals. Die Leute kamen aus anderen Städten in Russland, um diese Filme zu sehen. Ich erinnere mich besonders an einen Menschen aus Saratow. Bis heute werden wir noch von Zuschauern angesprochen, die uns erzählen, was damals die Begegnung mit diesen Filmen für ihre eigene Sozialisation bedeutete.

Das Muzei Kino hatte eine unglaubliche Ausstrahlung. Getragen war sie von Naums Enthusiasmus und seiner unermüdlichen Arbeitskraft. Das gleiche Engagement fanden wir auch bei den Mitarbeitern, die wir kennenlernten, und an seiner Seite bei seiner unermüdlichen, hilfsbereiten, sprachbegabten Tochter

Vera. Und wir fanden, dass die Gruppe mit Naum in der Mitte arbeitete, dass da eine wunderbare Gemeinschaft war, eigentlich sogar ein Mittelpunkt der Welt, unserer Welt.

Wir verfolgten und bewunderten nicht nur Naums Arbeit als Museumsleiter, Sammler und Programmierer von Filmzyklen, als Vermittler von Kenntnissen, als Inspirator, sondern auch seine schriftstellerische, wissenschaftliche und editorische Arbeit im Umgang mit den hinterlassenen Schriften von Sergej Eisenstein, seine unermüdliche Publikationsarbeit. Besonders bewundernswert war und ist die Herausgabe der Zeitschrift "Filmwissenschaftliche Mitteilungen" ("Kinovedčeskie zapiski"), die bis heute fortgesetzt wird (häufig haben die Ausgaben Buchformat) und für die Naum ein internationales Mitarbeiter-team zusammenstellte. Es ist erstaunlich und bewundernswert, dass unter schwierigsten Bedingungen diese Publikation bis heute erscheinen konnte und kann.

Eine Anerkennung von Naums Arbeit, aber auch eine Würdigung unserer engen Zusammenarbeit mit ihm, war 1993 die Verleihung des Europäischen Filmpreises gemeinsam an Naum Kleemann, Ulrich und Erika Gregor durch die Europäische Filmakademie.

Es ist schwer, die Leistungen von Naum Kleemann für die Filmkultur und die Filmwissenschaft umfassend zu beschreiben, denn man findet beim Versuch einer solchen Beschreibung keinen Anfang und kein Ende. Dass er eine Zentralfigur der Filmvermittlung, der Wissenschaft und der Filmkultur ist, daran kann kein Zweifel bestehen. Uns scheint, seine wichtigsten Eigenschaften sind der Universalismus, seine Begeisterungsfähigkeit und sein Mut, die Arbeit fortzusetzen und an seiner Zielsetzung festzuhalten, auch unter schwierigen, wechselnden Bedingungen, ohne Kompromisse mit den Machthabern. Darin ist er uns ein Vorbild, ist seine Arbeit ein Modell.

Und er ist unser Freund, unser Seelenverwandter.

Berlin, 16.7.2017

MIKHAIL IAMPOLSKI

FILM RESISTING THEORY: THE FORMALISTS AND CINEMA

It was a peculiar view of cinema that Viktor Shklovsky formulated in his 1923 book *Literature and Film*: he rejected the ability of the film camera to *see* as opposed to its automated ability to *recognize*.

This is peculiar because the mechanical gaze is believed to be radically free from anthropomorphic perception with its clichés and therefore able to produce estrangement. This is how Osip Brik described the work of the camera. Dziga Vertov also used his “cine-eye” to achieve a similar effect. For Walter Benjamin, one of the most perceptive diagnosticians of his time, cinema possessed explosive power due to its way of seeing things in an unusual, estranged manner.

Clearly, it is another nature which speaks to the camera as compared to the eye. “Other” above all in the sense that a space informed by human consciousness gives way to a space informed by the unconscious.¹

I am quoting this well-known fragment because it contains a quintessential understanding of film and photography as estranging technologies *par excellence*.

As for Shklovsky, he developed his concept of estrangement using literature and language as material, primarily Leo Tolstoy’s poetics. For some reason it was necessary for Shklovsky to transform Tolstoy into a camera, even though cinematography had

1 Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, 4 vols., eds. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 266.

been invented much earlier, not to mention photography. Paradoxically he associated the machine not with the re-awakening of vision but, on the contrary, with the erasure of all freshness in perception. The machine reproduces and automatizes, and by doing so, the machine goes blind. It stops seeing.

This anti-modernist interpretation of technology (*tekhnika*) is the direct outcome of Shklovsky's reading of Bergson's philosophy.² In his critique of cinematography, Shklovsky builds on Bergson: "The continuous world is a world of vision. The discontinuous world is a world of recognition."³ He goes on to say:

The cinema is a child of the discontinuous world. Human thought has created for itself a new non-intuitive world in its own image and likeness. From this perspective, the motion picture is a tremendous modern phenomenon – in its magnitude, perhaps, not third but first.

What makes film discontinuous?

As everyone knows, a movie reel consists of a series of momentary shots succeeding one another with such speed that the human eye merges them; a series of immobile elements creates the illusion of motion. [...] A film does not move; it only appears to move. Pure motion, as such, will never be reproduced in cinematography. Cinematography can only deal with the motion-sign, the semantic motion. It is not just any motion, but motion-action that constitutes the sphere of a motion picture.⁴

The viewer fills in the intervals between photograms by adding abstract and homogenous movement that animates them. This is the reason why cinematography in Shklovsky excludes

2 On Bergson's impact on the OPOIAZ, see James M. Curtis, "Bergson and Russian Formalism," *Comparative Literature*, 28: 2 (Spring 1976): 109–21; J. S. Levchenko, *Drugaiia nauka. Russkie formalisty v poiskakh biografii* (Moscow: Vysshiaia shkola ekonomiki, 2012) 46–58. Both writers discuss Bergson's influence not only on Shklovsky but also on Eikhenbaum. I will have to leave this interesting subject out of the present discussion.

3 Viktor Shklovsky, *Literature and Cinematography* (Champaign and London: Dalkey Archive Press, 2008) 30.

4 *Ibid.*, 30–31.

vision and fully belongs to the domain of recognition. In a peculiar way, memory, as Bergson constructs it (i.e., in a certain sense, also recognition), is part of vision that he associates with the experience of duration. In his early book, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness* (*Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience*, 1889), the French philosopher showed that thinking in terms of individual material objects or separate consecutive phases undermines immediate intuitive experience by transforming the world into a set of points within a homogenous space and a homogenous time modeled after the pattern of such a space.

Vision belongs to the domain of duration, and duration does not presuppose either isolated objects or separate and consecutive psychic states. Yet, in fact, Bergson's understanding of duration is more complex than that. Duration connects perceptions of the present moment with some elements of the past; those moments that are captured by memory and are therefore heterogeneous in relation to the present moment of perception. In *Matter and Memory*, Bergson called perception without memory "pure perception" and described it as a heuristic concept without reality. In reality, however, there exists no perception that would not be saturated by remembrance:

With the immediate and present data of our senses we mingle a thousand details out of our past experience. In most cases these memories supplant our actual perceptions, of which we then retain only a few hints, thus using them merely as "signs" that recall to us former images.⁵

To me, this thesis appears particularly important. It demonstrates that in reality, Bergson's duration (connected by Shklovsky exclusively with vision and opposed to recognition), to a large extent also relies on conventional symbols and simplified configurations of isolated elements that, according to

5 Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1911), 24.

Bergson, “supplant our actual perceptions.”⁶ In *Time and Free Will*, Bergson describes a subject watching how the hand moves on the face of a clock following the swing of the pendulum. He uses this example to demonstrate that our perception of the world consists of two components. One is the “I” that exists in duration and mobilizes recollections, which allows one to perceive a sequence of sways instead of one infinite oscillation. The other is the movement of the pendulum in the outer world external to the “I,” in which the oscillations of the pendulum are not transformed into sequences by the continuity of our own consciousness.

Bergson summed up by postulating an exchange between these “series” (to use a Deleuzian term):

Now, between this succession without externality and this externality without succession, a kind of exchange takes place, very similar to what physicists call the phenomenon of endosmosis. As the successive phases of our conscious life, although interpenetrating, correspond individually to an oscillation of the pendulum which occurs at the same time, and as, moreover, these oscillations are sharply distinguished from one another, we get into the habit of setting up the same distinction between the successive moments of our conscious life...⁷

To put it differently, the vision of the world is not some pure inarticulatedness, nor a heterogeneity of duration. It is a complex dephasing relationship between the external existence of divisible and countable elements (i.e., the cycles of the pendulum) that Bergson connects with differentiation, and their coalescence into an indivisible duration that can be seen as integration. What Bergson describes reminds one of the dephasing reduplication as understood by Gilles Simondon, a useful reference for the clarification of the problem.

6 Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 24.

7 Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1910), 109.

An optic machine like cinematography is not capable of integrating the world aesthetically and subjectively. Such integration needs a duplication of the world that could allow mediation and transformation. Technology differentiates (individuates) itself from a magical relation to the world and acts as a mediator between the human being and the surrounding world. The process of individuation and genesis proceeds through phases. Simondon understands phases not as consecutive stages of development but, specifically, as bifurcations and reduplications of phenomena.

Any technical or quasi-technical device emerges from dephasing and reduplication of the originally integral relationship with the world. Cinematography further complicates and makes more dynamic this relationship of constant dephasing, of uninterrupted translation of the outer into the inner. Cinematography thus appears to be a technological means of mediating reality by slicing it up into component parts. In this sense, cinematography is nothing specific at all. Speech and, of course, writing are also technologies that articulate reality.

So, why did the OPOIAZ give preference to literature instead of the arts of photography? Why, for the formalists, as paradoxical as it might be, did literature and not film and photography demonstrate a closer affinity to vision? Shklovsky wrote:

In the world of art, the world of continuity, the world of the continuous word, a line of verse cannot be broken into stresses; it has no stress points: it has a place where the lines of force fracture.

The traditional theory of verse emphasizes the violation of continuity by discontinuity. The continuous world is a world of vision. The discontinuous world is a world of recognition.⁸

We confront here a strange idea that there exists a *continuous word* but not a *continuous filmic image*. Shklovsky is trying to resolve the relation between the continuous and the discontinuous in terms of *form* and *material*. These terms are unfortu-

8 Shklovsky, *Literature and Cinematography*, 30.

nately too approximate to yield a more profound understanding of the problem, and are used without clear definitions. In my view, the problem with Shklovsky's theory is that it is derived from categorial tools that were not sufficiently elaborated. For Shklovsky, the whole of the outer world together with its characters, actions, and motivations was *material* for the work of the artist, for art to re-distribute and give shape to.⁹ As material, these, by definition, should be continuous and not articulated. Yet in cinematography, "material" becomes an ambiguous term, since the camera itself articulates the spectacle of life (the outer world) mechanically as it replaces continuity with a series of discrete pictures. Thus, the material emerges from the beginning already shaped by "construction." One cannot separate construction from the material.

According to Shklovsky, film differs from painting and literature by virtue of the fact that the apparatus producing the image deforms it in a manner that can be compared to the production of artistic form. The situation becomes more complicated in the secondary formation of the already-formed technological material in the process of editing. The material of painting is visible reality, or colored planes. The material of cinematography is not the visible world but the already-articulated world of recognition.

As is well known, Shklovsky the theoretician tended to interpret artistic form narratologically as a *plot*. But a filmic plot is different from a literary one: "Film took plot from literature, but, in the process, the literary plot underwent profound change."¹⁰ The plot consists in permutations and divisions into parts, i.e., in deformation of the primary material. That makes the plot a particularly important factor in film making, since it reproduces, on the level of the "larger" narrative form, what happens technologically in the production of the photogram. In its essence, cinema *is* the plot. There is nothing else in a film. The plot is first produced technologically, and then a second

9 "For an artist the external world is not the content of a painting but the material for a painting." *Ibid.*, 4.

10 *Ibid.*, 40.

time by means of montage and narrative: “The poetics of the motion picture is a poetics of pure plot. It has been driven to this by the very nature of shooting film...”¹¹

For instance, this is how Shklovsky describes what he calls “the displacement of the plot” (*siuzhetnaia perestanovka*):

In film, plot displacement triumphs. [...] in the case of motivation by a story, it is not the story of an event, as in a novel, but a plot transposition in its purest form (i.e., it’s as if you snipped a piece of film off the beginning and put it at the end).¹²

A literary work contains a narrative (“story,” Russ. *fabula*) that creates duration. In cinematography, on the contrary, even though “motivated by a story,” there is no duration whatsoever, but instead merely mechanical transposition of material, a pure operation of articulation without any duration at all. Moreover, when the continuous material of literature is transposed onto paper, transformed by the plot, and achieves articulatedness, still, the discontinuity thus produced relates to the continuity of the narrative itself and thus appears as pure dephasing. Nothing like this takes place in the cinema. One simply takes a fragment of a previously dismembered series and moves it into a different place. Shklovsky’s cinema suggests *no dephasing*. He insists on this many times:

In a film, those segments which interrupt one another are much shorter; they are truly segments; we usually return to the same moment of the action.¹³

Or, in a different fragment, in greater detail:

An ordinary contemporary stunt film consists of a number of engaging scenes which are connected with each other solely by the unity of the characters.

11 Ibid., 32.

12 Ibid., 53.

13 Ibid., 59.

Nor is any psychological motivation supplied. One part of a film is indispensable, because in it the cameraman shows a view of a city from above; in the next part, a trained monkey performs; the third part of the same film contains a ballet performance, and so on. And we watch all of it with interest. What is a film plot? An artful selection of scenes, a successful chronological transposition, and good juxtapositions.¹⁴

According to Shklovsky, technology in principle cannot bestow duration on its product. It is for this reason that, in spite of all its modernity, cinematography appears to him a modern nightmare from which one can only find rescue in the literary word. Shklovsky declares, emotionally:

Fundamentally, cinematography is extraneous to art. It grieves me to observe the development of cinematography. I want to believe that its triumph is temporary. [...] No, a century will go by, and human thought will overflow the limit erected in front of it by the theory of limits; humankind will learn to think in processes, and we will again behold the world as continuity. Then there will be no motion pictures.¹⁵

In a most detailed and complex manner, Shklovsky's question was addressed by Tynianov in his book *Problems of Verse Language*. Tynianov believed that literary form was *dynamic* and not static. He saw the source of literature's dynamic form in what he called the *constructive principle*:

The unity of the work is not a closed, symmetrical intactness, but an unfolding, dynamic integrity. Between its elements is not the static sign of equality and addition, but the dynamic sign of correlation and integration.

The form of the literary work must be recognized as a dynamic phenomenon.¹⁶

14 Ibid., 61–2.

15 Ibid., 31–2.

16 Yuri Tynianov, *The Problem of Verse Language* (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1981), 12.

The principle of *dynamic deformation* producing a particular form can be found in the relation between meter and rhythm in poetry. Meter is something remotely similar to the mechanical articulation of material by Bergson's cinematic apparatus. However, at the same time, there is a radical difference between cinema and verse. A photogram is the result of the "*material*" articulation of a destroyed duration. And this articulation is mechanical in its essence. Conversely, meter exists in verse on an exclusively virtual basis. Meter does not exist as such, but is given to us as the never realized expectation of mechanical repetition.

In such a case, meter ceases to exist in the shape of a regular system, but it does exist in another way. "Prohibited preparation" is also a feature which creates dynamism. Meter is retained in the shape of a metrical impulse; thus, every "prohibition" results in a metrical regrouping. We have either a coordination of unities (which is accomplished progressively), or a subordination (which is accomplished regressively).¹⁷

The only function of meter is to allow rhythm to break the expectation of absolute regularity and thus to give form its dynamism. Thus, a poetic system uses the same dephasing reduplication in which the mechanical (regular) is virtual and the non-regular (rhythm) is *actual*.¹⁸ The whole "reality" of rhythm however can only realize itself in its interaction with virtual regularity. Cinema, as the formalists understood it, never possessed any virtual or ideal dimension. In film, everything is given to the gaze.

Tynianov insisted that a constructive shift in literature produces a renewed vision and can serve the destruction of recognition. But what is it that gets visible apart from the form itself? In principle, *nothing*. What is visible is to a great extent reduced to the *dynamics of the construction* that in the final analysis

17 Ibid., 50.

18 Of course strictly speaking rhythm is also a purely subjective phenomenon that has no objective existence.

serves to make visible something else. It is not by accident that later on Jakobson would talk of the becoming-visible of the poetic language itself.

This however was not all that Tynianov suggested. He also used the idea of the constructive principle in order to include cultural history in his thinking. He usually referred to it as “evolution,” a term opposed by the formalists to conventional “history” that they called “tradition.” The formalists’ *evolution* never went on as a linear process but always presupposed jumps and shifts.

According to Tynianov, evolution presupposes system changes not affecting tradition. But the change of systems also means that evolution itself has a certain inherent constructive principle. One system becomes virtual, like meter, and against its background, the actual system reveals its potential (functionally comparable with rhythm). To a considerable extent, the evolutionary mechanism follows from the constructive principle that forms the system of the verse. Tynianov commented: “Historical development does not shuffle the cards, nor does it destroy the distinctions between the constructive principle and the material. On the contrary, it emphasizes this distinction.”¹⁹ Evolution penetrates the system and renovates it by replacing the accents and by producing deformations and shifts: “...we renovate meter itself and refresh the new constructive possibilities in it. (Such is the historical role of poetic parody.)”²⁰

In his 1927 essay, *On the Foundations of Cinema*, Tynianov used parallelism between the constructive principle and evolution to revise the role of technology and introduces corrections to the Bergsonian understanding of cinematography in general. Here, he no longer thinks of cinema as the mechanical reproduction of fragments of reality, but as a dynamic structure similar to poetry. A dynamization of static articulation is the product of historical evolution that neither cinema nor any other medi-

19 Ibid., 34.

20 Ibid.

um can escape. Evolution destroys technology's stabilizing and articulating potential.

Thus evolution overcomes the limitations of technology and transforms cinema from a purely mechanical medium of recording into a form of art. It introduces a constructive principle into objects that are alien to it. This becomes possible because there is no significant difference between the constructive principle in art and evolution. Evolution transforms cinema into an art form and simultaneously reverses the relation between technology and form:

Furthermore, cinema as art is no longer concerned with innovation in and of itself, but only with the technical means that develop its intrinsic potentials and that are selected with its basic devices in mind. In the interaction of technology and art, the positions of the two have been reversed as compared to the situation that obtained at the outset: now it is art that dictates the technical devices, it is art that, in its onward march, selects them, changes their application and function, and finally discards them – not the reverse.

The art of cinema has found its material.²¹

Now, technology is fully determined by the formal principle that is responsible for the movement of evolution. Quite simply, technology arises as an evolutionary formal factor, almost like in Simondon's reduplication.

Cinema's emerging ability to reproduce duration – i.e., life – stems from its technological inability to reproduce life. Cinema's "poverty," its colorless and two-dimensional reality is in fact its constructive essence: it requires new artistic devices as compensation for its poverty; poverty creates new artistic devices that evolve out of it as the basis.

The "poverty" of cinema – its planar nature and lack of color – is, in fact, its structural essence. It does not give rise to new

21 Ju. Tynjanov, "On the Foundations of Cinema," *Russian Formalist Film Theory*, ed. Herbert Eagle (Ann Arbor: Michigan Slavic Publications, 1981), 83.

devices fortuitously; rather, it generates them; new devices spring from its soil. The planar nature of cinema – a technical “deficiency,” which does not deprive it of perspective – manifests itself in the art of cinema as a positive constructive principle: the simultaneity (synchronicity) of several series of visual images. This provides the basis for a completely new interpretation of gesture and movement. [...] Clearly, this conjunction of shots is possible only because of their planar nature. Had the shots been three-dimensional, given in relief, their interpenetration, their simultaneity, their synchronicity, would have been unconvincing. Only by taking advantage of this simultaneity is it possible to create a composition that not only reproduces motion, but is itself based on the principles of that motion.²²

At the end of this passage, Tynianov is making his point with utmost clarity. It is only cinema’s mimetic limitations that can provide it with constructive principle, connect it to evolution, and elevate it into an art. Due to such limitations, the new art transcends the level of reproduction of movement – as metric regularity and abstraction – and acquires a flexible dynamism arising from the principles of dephasing, shift, deformation, and evolution.

Cinematography’s technological history itself thus becomes part of its form and constitutes its constructive dynamic principle. In this way, cinema becomes similar to literature.

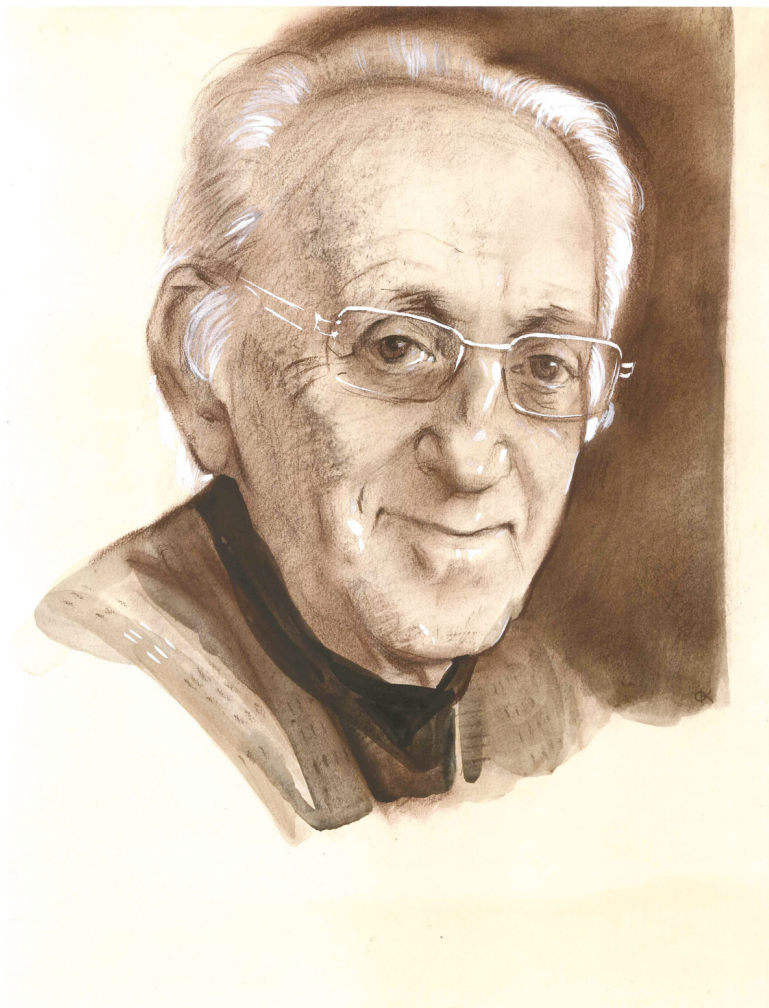
In spite of the modernity of their approach, the formalists failed to overcome a fetishistic attitude towards *art*. Paradoxically, it is the technological nature of film that made it difficult for them to think of cinema outside the framework of aesthetics. The problem lay in the simple fact of the regularity of intervals between photograms. Tynianov was able to integrate the virtual regularity of meter into poetry, but the purely mechanical regularity that constitutes the film image appeared to resist the idea of art as the formalists cultivated it.

Already at the time of the invention of the movies, the regularity of intervals between photograms created difficulties in

22 Ibid., 83.

the measurement and reproduction of movement. In the work of the formalists, cinema developed a new resistance to theory, disrupting theoretical efforts to explain it on artistic principles. This resistance increased with new attempts to integrate mechanical reproduction into the domain of the artistic. The formalists' attempts at such integration were only partially successful. If that was a failure, its history is interesting in itself.

OLGA KATAEVA
DEUX ŒUVRES
POUR NAOUM KLEIMAN



Olga Kataeva, *Portrait de Naoum Kleiman*,
technique mixte, 30x40 cm, 2017



Olga Kataeva, *Le Cabinet Eisenstein à Smolenskaïa*,
technique mixte, 40x50 cm, 2017

ARUN KHOPKAR

THE FLOWER BRIDGE AND
THE ARCHIMEDEAN POINTS

For Naum,
that Old Bird of Wisdom,
of the Eisensteinian Tree,
who has weathered many a storm,
from an Indian fledgling

The year was 1983. I hadn't even seen a photograph of Naum Kleiman. I was looking for him in the delegation of Russian film artists and scholars visiting Bombay. A man with an intense and meditative expression caught my eye. He wore glasses, was of medium height, with a high forehead, a compact body and gentle manner. I observed him, unobtrusively I thought, but he *had* noticed it. We exchanged faint, complicit smiles. He had to be Naum. And so he was! From that point, the thread of wordless understanding runs till today.

If I were to mention only *one* quality of Naum that I find outstanding, it would be neither his vast erudition, nor his fantastic mind, nor his insatiable curiosity, nor his generosity, nor his joie de vivre, nor his capacity to love and connect with people, but to really *listen* to them. His listening is an intense *activity* – an act of almost Yogic concentration. As he listens to you, your thoughts arrange themselves, like iron filings aligning along the magnetic lines of force. Naum can draw the unborn, unthought thoughts out of you, with the love, patience and tenderness of a Socratic midwife.

My Eisenstein studies with Naum lasted for the five intense weeks that he generously gifted to me in 1985, spent mostly in the small Pera Atasheva apartment in Smolenskaya, in Mos-

cow.¹ Every day we began early in the morning and worked up to 4 pm, with a short break for lunch. Since getting the books that I needed for my study was difficult in the USSR, Naum enlisted the help of his friends. By the time I left Moscow, there was a ninety-kilo hillock of rare books on his table; one day, this enchanted hillock flew into my study in Bombay.

I still have the age-yellowed notes of our unending conversations and wonder whether we worked together for five weeks or five months! Evenings given to viewing films, visiting theatre, museums, churches, going to the ballet, listening to music and meeting people like that gentle giant of Mikhail Iampolskii, erudite and affectionate Leonid Kozlov, and those loving *collective mamas* from Naum's office and many others.

A picture of Eisenstein began to emerge for me. It was like looking at a mural in a vast Ajanta cave, in the light of a single fluttering candle, with images coming into light, passing into darkness; an image of the compassionate Buddha appearing and disappearing. It was then that I sensed the presence of an "Archimedean Point" in Eisenstein's writings: a fulcrum outside the seeker's world that would help him turn it upside down. A vague sensation has now grown into a conviction... not just *one* Archimedean Point, but *many*. This essay is a *flâneurie* or *progulka*, through such points.

Eisenstein's first Archimedean Point was the Japanese language. He wrote:

The language was very difficult... the hardest thing was understanding the way of thinking ... by which Oriental turns of phrases, sentences, word formations and word outlines are constructed.

I was later deeply grateful to fate for taking us through my probation and acquainting me with this 'unusual' way of thinking that helped me later to investigate the nature of montage. And then this

1 The same year I met Jay Leyda later. I wanted to discuss some of Eisenstein's writings with him, Jay looked at me, smiled and said, "You have been working with Naum. If he wasn't able to help you, I am afraid only Eisenstein can help you now."

‘way’ was later realised as the law of emotional thought, distinct from our generally accepted ‘logic,’ ... which helped me to investigate the most obscure layers of methods of art... So my first fascination became my first love.²

Eisenstein immersed himself into the Japanese culture. His essays, “The Unexpected Juncture,”³ “Beyond the Shot”⁴ and “The Fourth Dimension in Cinema,”⁵ followed in quick succession. Three of the fundamental concepts of his aesthetics emerged out of this study: *montage*, *montage cell*, and *monistic ensemble*. With these, he built a sensuous-conceptual *hanamichi*, or Flower Bridge,⁶ between Japan and his world.

Such Flower-paths had also reached the Indian shores⁷ and Eisenstein was the most revered artist-thinker for us. In the history of colonial India, our finest artworks were nothing more than *The Much Maligned Monsters*⁸ to the Europeans. Eisen-

2 S. M. Eisenstein, *Selected Works. Writings, 1935–47*, ed. and trans. Richard Taylor (London: BFI Publishing, 1988–96), 3:284.

3 “An Unexpected Juncture,” Eisenstein *Selected Writings*, 1:115–22.

4 “Beyond the Shot,” *Ibid.*, 1:138–50.

5 “The Fourth Dimension in Cinema,” *Ibid.*, 1:181–94.

6 Hanamichi: the Flower Bridge, an extra stage section in Kabuki theater. It is a long, raised platform left of centre, from the back of the theatre, through the audience, to connect with the main stage. Generally used for entrances and exits and asides of the actors or scenes taking place apart from the main action.

7 Some of our most important filmmakers, like Ritwik Ghatak, Mani Kaul and Kumar Shahani used Eisenstein’s films and books in English, as texts in the Film and Television Institute of India, Asia’s leading film school. *Film Form* and *Film Sense* gave us our *raison d’être*, not just through the texts in them, but through the spirit that rose from them and Eisenstein’s films. As India and the USSR were then on the best of terms, we had all Eisenstein’s films, including the colour reels of *Ivan the Terrible* in mint condition.

8 Partha Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters: A History of European Reactions to Indian Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). The title derives from how the Europeans who came into contact with the Indian art used to regard the many-headed Indian deities as monsters. It took centuries before these works could

stein was open to receiving insights from any culture. Though Indian culture did not play a major role in his world-view, each one of his references to it is a penetrating insight. He made us look at our culture anew. He had learnt from many non-European civilisations and in each of them, he found an Archimedean Point, to turn some part of the Eurocentric world upside down.

Eisenstein's writing on Japan was done in a period of his longest break away from the USSR. From 1928, he travelled to Europe, the US, and Mexico, returning only in 1932. This experience provided him the physical and mental space to look within from without. He also met some of his greatest contemporaries and exchanged ideas with them. All this provided him with many significant perspectives on art and the sources and process of creativity.

The tragedy of Eisenstein's Mexican film was a personal tragedy, as well as a tragedy for the world cinema. His epic project in six episodes was equally grand in its stylistic ambition, with episodes dedicated to six artists' visions.⁹ Though Mexican film was lost, the Mexican experience was not. Eisenstein experienced the grandeur and immensity of the Pre-Columbian landscape architecture and *sculpted space*. He had used the wide-angle lenses in *Strike*,¹⁰ *General*

be appreciated in their true significance and grandeur; though, admittedly, some of the British administrators did a lot for their discoveries and preservation.

- 9 Prologue — Siqueiros, Sandunga — Jean Charlot, Calavera — Diego Rivera, Fiesta — Goya, Soldadera — Orozco, and Epilogue — Posada. *The Making and Unmaking of Que Viva Mexico*, eds. Harry Geduld and Ronald Gottesman (London: Thames and Hudson, 1971), 149.
- 10 S. M. Eisenstein, *Le mouvement de l'art*, eds. François Albera and Naum Kleiman (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1986), 104. In the shot of the child being lifted by a member of the gendarme, in a top angle shot, the child on the fourth floor and ground are both in sharp focus. On the same page there are two more examples from *Strike*.

Line,¹¹ and even in *October*, to stretch space, but there was a qualitative shift in what he created in the Mexican footage and thereafter in *Ivan the Terrible*. He used the wide-angle lenses and pan-focus consistently for the *construction* of oneiric, even hallucinatory *visions* not seen before in cinema.

In terms of a kinaesthetic experience of monumentality, Western sculpture does not have much on the scale of Assyrian, Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Pre-Columbian, Buddhist (including the brutishly destroyed Bamiyan Buddhas), Persian (Persepolis), Khmer (Angkor Wat) or the Indian monolithic cave temples of Elephanta and Ellora. Eisenstein's *visions*, shot over a short and emotionally turbulent period, are comparable in spirit and ambition, with these monuments built over centuries.

Just as Eisenstein took from other civilisations, he gave to them generously.

His meetings and his exchanges with the Mexican muralists were mutually enriching and increased awareness about new expressive possibilities of each other's art form.

Siqueiros' friendship with Eisenstein... was of fundamental importance for his approach to the analysis and use of the pictorial form. ... [Sequeiros] ... believed that the technically innovative character of the modern industrial world would require a profound transformation in the methodological and aesthetic practice... innovative procedures were employed in the Chouinard mural, some of which stem from Siqueiros' relationship with Eisenstein... After making our first sketch we used the camera and motion picture to aid us in the elaboration of our first drawing, particularly of the models... To replace the slow and most costly method of pencil tracing and pounce-pattern projection we used the photographic projector, a method of enlarging ... and thereby projecting our drawing

11 The shot of Marfa Lapkina's small figure seen at a distant with the rumps of the animals in the foreground. There are many such examples in Eisenstein's pre-Mexico work.

directly onto the wall.¹²

Eisenstein's Archimedean Points were the entry-points for others into his world.

Eisenstein's essay, "Prometheus" on Orozco,¹³ dated 1935, indicates a qualitative change in his own approach to the close-up, visible in the carefully chosen illustration of the essay¹⁴ and stills from Jay Leyda's *Eisenstein at Work*.¹⁵ When you add an *étude* of Griffith¹⁶ to that of Orozco, the idea of a close-up leaps from cut-in or cut-away close-ups in Griffith, to close-up as volume, like in the murals of Orozco.

The great Indian filmmaker, Ritwik Ghatak was deeply influenced by Eisenstein. Ghatak planted the seeds of Eisenstein's ideas in the rich soil of Indian epics and watered them with his fertile imagination. He used wide-angle lenses for all his films. From film to film, his lens-angles became wider. He used 9.8 mm lens for one his last films, *Teetash Ekti Nadir Naam* (Titash is the name of a river), wherein a river changes its course; its waters take life as easily as they give it. The monumental compositions of the 9.8 mm lens were a perfect vehicle for the epic narrative of the elemental forces getting beyond man's control and his heroic struggle to survive.

In one particular shot, Ghatak framed three heads, the frontal face of a young boy flanked by two profiles of women, evoking the famous three-headed gigantic sculpture of Lord Shiva, in the Elephanta Cave temple near Bombay. André Malraux wrote about this the Shiva image:

12 Desmond Rochfort, *Mexican Muralists. Orozco, Rivera, Siqueiros* (San Francisco: Chronicle Press, 1998), 145–46.

13 S. M. Eisenstein, "Prometheus," *Cinématisme: peinture et cinéma*, trans. Anne Zouboff, ed. François Albera (Brussels: Editions Complexe, 1980), 105–18.

14 Eisenstein, *Cinématisme*, 106, 110 and 111.

15 Jay Leyda and Zina Voynow, *Eisenstein at Work*, intr. Ted Perry (London: Methuen 1985), 60–73.

16 Eisenstein, *Selected Writings*, 3:193.

Photography, and even the cinema, give us no idea of the scale. These heads, ... twenty feet high, are smaller than those of the Bayon in Angkor; but colossal in comparison to the figures around them, they fill the cave as Pantocrator fills the Byzantine cathedrals of Sicily. Like the Pantocrator, this Shiva stops below the shoulders without becoming a bust. Hence its disturbing aspect of severed head and divine apparition. It is not simply a question of its being 'one of the most beautiful statues in India', whatever meaning one may assign to the word 'beautiful.'

Here, recognisable at first glance, is a masterpiece of sculpture. A full face and two monumental profiles, whose planes ... are worthy of the highest work of art ... This figure belongs ... to the domain of the great symbols, and what this symbol expresses, it alone can express.¹⁷

Ecstasy was an experience that Eisenstein was obsessed with. In "El Greco y El Cinema"¹⁸ he shows equal interest in its psychological and physiological aspects like dilation of the pupils causing pan-focus, the contorted bodies and elongated tortuous figures sketched by him.¹⁹ Colour was another of Eisenstein's life-long passions. In the Greco essay, he joins the two passions to analyse the painter's use of colour as a powerful means of expressing ecstasy.²⁰ Eisenstein's detailed analysis of *View of Toledo* establishes its Janus-faced character, a landscape and a portrait of ecstasy. It dovetails with a much broader framework of music of landscape in *Nonindifferent Nature*.

Mexico, with its history and monuments, its medicinal plants with psychedelic properties, was a perfect place to think about

17 André Malraux *Anti-memoirs* (Paris: Gallimard, 1967) cited in *Bombay, meri jaan, writings on Mumbai*, eds. Jerry Pinto and Naresh Fernandes (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2003), 194.

18 Eisenstein, *Cinématisme*, 10.

19 Eisenstein, "El Greco y El Cinema," *Cinématisme*, 74–5.

20 Arun Khopkar, "Riflessioni e rifrazioni. Una visione rifratta delle riflessioni sul colore di S. M. Ejzenštejn" *Riflessioni Sergej Ejzenštejn: Oltre il cinema, a cura de Pietro Montani* (La Biennale de Venezia, Edizioni Biblioteca dell'immagine, 1991), 391.

ecstatic excesses.²¹ Eisenstein's essay on El Greco was completed much later, but Mexico provided the fecund ground for its germination. Whether induced through drugs or sex or self-induced, whether experiential, scientific or speculative, ecstasy is an Archimedean Point, where you stand inside/outside of yourself, on a Möbius surface. Eisenstein was happily outside the ambit of the USSR of the Stalin era and let himself go, as his hallucinatory and superabundant Mexican footage and drawings show us.

Chinese civilisation was also a major influence of Eisenstein. On April 14, 1935, Mei Lan-Fang²² performed for the first time in Moscow. Mei had toured the US in 1930 and had met Charles Chaplin, who had spoken to Eisenstein about Mei,²³ who had a tremendous impact on the avant-garde of the twentieth century.²⁴

21 Masha Salazkina, *In Excess: Sergei Eisenstein's Mexico* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009).

22 Min Tian, *China's Greatest Operatic Male Actor of Female Roles: Documenting the Life and Art of Mei Lanfang, 1894-1961*, (Lewiston NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2010). Min Tian's four-part book, the first major biography of Mei in English, includes Mei's autobiography in its first part. Its fourth part lists articles on him by Bertolt Brecht, Vsevolod Meyerhold, Sergei Eisenstein, Sergei Tretyakov and others.

23 'C'est Charlie Chaplin, dans un flot d'exclamations enthousiastes, qui m'a parlé pour la première foi de Mei Lan-fang; ce sont ses récits qui m'ont introduit à l'art de comédian chinois.' Eisenstein, *Cinématisme*, 137–8.

24 Min Tian, *Mei Lanfang and the Twentieth-Century International Stage*, Min Tian, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012); and *The Poetics of Difference and Displacement: Twentieth-Century Chinese-Western Intercultural Theatre* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2008).

These books by Min Tian deal with the most important intercultural relationships between the Occidental and Chinese theatre. They help us understand better, not only Eisenstein, but also Brecht, Tretyakov and Meyerhold, four giants of the twentieth-century art.

*A l'enchanteur du verger aux poires*²⁵ is Eisenstein's tribute to Mei and his art. In *Kathakali*,²⁶ a great Indian dance-drama, the men perform female roles even today, in a stylised gesture language and manage to convey exquisitely the feminine emotions and actions, even breastfeeding, in the most refined way without pretending to be women. In Maharashtra, *Balgandarva*, a male actor playing female roles, set the template for women, from speech, gestures, gait to hair styles in the early decades of the twentieth century. The Indian dance-form, *Bharatnatyam*, which used to be performed by *Devdasis*, women attached to temples, is considered one of the most sensuous dance forms. Its great *gurus* have been almost exclusively men.

Eisenstein's essay can be taken as a nascent meditation of the androgyne, though it focuses on the codified language of the Peking Opera²⁷ and on *imagicity* against *representation*. Like *cinematic* mentioned earlier, *imagicity* is a key concept for Eisenstein, which he never freezes. Both these concepts have great importance in his exploration of the *Grundproblem*, which Naum Kleiman defines as follows: "this problem may be defined as the correlation of the rationally-logical and the sensuous in art: in a creative act, in the structure of the work and in its perception."²⁸

25 Eisenstein, "A l'enchanteur du verger aux poires," *Cinématisme*, 137–56.

26 Faubion Bowers, *The Dance in India* (New York: AMS Press, 1967), 62; Beryl De Zoete, *The Other Mind: A Study of Dance in South India* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1953), 90.

These two books have excellent essays on the dance-drama. *Kathakali, The Sacred Dance Drama of Malabar* by K. Bharatha Iyer (London, Luzac & Co., 1955) is not only an excellent introduction to the form but one of the best books that I have read on dance.

27 Other theatres of the East also have similar codified languages, like many Indian theatrical forms like Bharatnatyam, Kathakali and the Balinese Theatre, which inspired Artaud to create his *Theatre of Cruelty*.

28 Eisenstein, "On Disney," *The Eisenstein Collection*, ed. Richard Taylor (London and Calcutta: Seagull Books, 2006), 79.

Eisenstein knew that there was much more to the Chinese culture than the Peking Opera. He had begun to feel that it was the source culture from which Japan had learnt a great deal.²⁹ So, he plunged into the studies of the ancient Chinese culture, with Marcel Granet's books,³⁰ Lin Yutang's autobiography *My Country, My People*³¹ among others, and started working on a series of articles on the *cinematic* aspects of Chinese culture.

Eisenstein's concept of "*cinematic*", like his other important concepts, is not a well-defined, logical category, in the sense of giving us either a necessary or sufficient criterion, for deciding what is cinematic. It serves more like a preliminary hypothesis or even a hunch or a game, with which Eisenstein starts an *étude* and with each *étude*, it gets better defined. Along with *cinematic* and *imagicity* Eisenstein speaks of *polysemie* of the Peking Opera, wherein a simple object like a table becomes a staircase, a mountain, to a stool, a bed, etc., depending upon the context in which it is used. I feel that Eisenstein's key concepts, like *cinematic* or *imagicity* are like a table in the Peking Opera, assuming different contents in different contexts; without sensuous contexts, they are only containers.

*Le dédoublement de l'unique*³² is about androgyny, a unity. It splits into *Yin*, the female, and *Yang*, the male principle. Eisenstein shows how these two and their interplay had penetrated into almost every aspect of the life in ancient China, be it the five elements that form the universe, or the seasons and their festivals, or the inert winter and active spring, or day and night, or

29 Eisenstein, *Cinématisme*, 294.

30 Granet was one the greatest sinologues of his day and also a student of Durkheim, adding anthropological insights to his research; see his *Chinese Civilisation* (New York: Meridian Books Ltd., 1958); *Festivals and Songs of Ancient China* (Eastford CT, Martino Fine Books, 2015 [reprint]; *Religion of the Chinese People* (Harper Collins College Div., 1977).

31 Lin Yutang, *My Country, My People* (Benediction Classics, 2010); and *La Pensée Chinoise* (Paris: Éditions Albin Michel, 1999).

32 Eisenstein, *Cinématisme*, 157–82.

labour and leisure, or love and death.³³ Drawing from Engels,³⁴ Eisenstein takes the first *split* into egalitarian human groups to be the division of labour between sexes, possibly due to the long gestation and post-natal care needed for a human child. This is a social unity splitting into *Yin* and *Yang*. If the division between the sexes were the cause of the first division of labour, then how come only in Ancient China it became so important? Eisenstein's answer is that the Chinese civilisation – perhaps through its imagist language? – was closer to the undifferentiated imagist thinking and did not experience the polar tension between the logos and the image for a long time.³⁵

Reading Eisenstein on Chinese civilisation, was, in a sense, *déjà vu* for me. Shiva, mentioned earlier, in an androgyne. He is symbolically represented in union with his consort Shakti (the female force). Their icon is the union of an erect phallus (lingam) penetrating a vagina (yoni). Another form in which they are represented is called *Ardhanaarishwar*, half-man, half-woman God. All classical Indian artistic creation in theatre, dance, painting or sculpture,³⁶ oscillates between the feminine aspect, *lasya*: curvaceous, graceful, gentle and feminine, and *tandava*: the masculine aspect, virile, powerful, muscular and aggressive.³⁷ Even today, almost every theatrical performance begins with a homage to this half-female-Lord-of-the Arts.

One of the paths that leads to this Lord is called *Tantra*. Without going into greater detail here, suffice it to say that the highest aim of this path is ecstasy. Anandwardhan and Abhinavagupta, two of the finest Indian aestheticians, subscribed

33 Mainly relying on Marcel Granet's books, mentioned in note 31.

34 Eisenstein, *Cinématisme*, 165.

35 *Ibid.*, 166.

36 The Tandava-Lasya dyad bears resemblance to the Dionysian and Apollonian tendencies in art. But the Indian female principle, Shakti – literally power or energy – also has its terrible and destructive aspect in *Kali*, the dark Goddess, like the Greek Furies.

37 A. K. Coomaraswamy, *The Dance of Shiva*, (New York: The Sunwise Turn, Inc., 1918).

to *Tantra*.³⁸ Anandawardhan's great treatise on aesthetics is called *Dhwanyalok*, meaning literally *dhwani*, which also means sound – though here it has a technical meaning – and *alok* which means light. He defines the aesthetic bliss as the co-uterine, as the ecstatic bliss *Brahmananda*, the joy of feeling one with the universe.

From *Yin* and *Yang*, in *Pair – Impair*³⁹ we come to their specific application to numbers – odd (*impair*) *Yang* and even (*pair*) *Yin*. Using their interplay as his conceptual tool, Eisenstein analyses several diverse compositions: from geometric figures, masculine and feminine rhymes, prosodic forms, an Utamaro triptych, cartoons, prints, a Krendovsky painting, Andrei Rublev's Trinity, right up to even a metro station! This is the real beauty of Eisenstein's writings. They always reveal something concrete, new and valuable about how a work of art is created and *experienced*.

"Eisenstein on Disney" is one of Eisenstein's most wide-ranging and profound *études*. Eisenstein explores the relationship between the pre-logical and the logical thinking and in the process, discusses magical thinking, animism, sensuous versus logical thought and even histories of philosophy and literature.⁴⁰

While analysing the quasi-evolutionary, quasi-regressive metamorphoses of the early Disney cartoons, Eisenstein asserts an important presupposition of his aesthetics: all growth is more like a spiral than a straight line. Features, considered functional at one stage, recur as expressive at another.⁴¹ The pseudopods of an amoeba encircling a food particle and assimilating it become a loving embrace in the human society. The floating in the prenatal fluid, the freedom from wants in the curved space of the womb, becomes a picture of heavenly

38 Arun Khopkar, "Distnat Echoes," *Notes for a General History of Cinema*, eds. Naum Kleiman and Antonio Somaini (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016) 515.

39 Eisenstein, *Cinématisme*, 183–220.

40 Eisenstein, "On Disney," 79.

41 *Ibid.*, 168.

sphere, where bodily needs are never experienced and gravitational force is nonexistent.

Ancient China, with its pantheistic world view, was the first civilisation to devote centuries to the development of landscape painting. *The Tao of Painting*⁴² has instructions about painting natural phenomenon from rocks to insects. The Chinese painters organised each element of painting, through the conceptual framework of *Yin* and *Yang* and brought astonishing visual unity to their paintings. These were at once the pictures of nature and expressive rhythmic patterns.

Lin Yutang says,

The Chinese... regard painting and calligraphy as sister arts... “calligraphy and painting” forming almost an individual concept... Should there be a question as to which has a wider appeal the answer would undoubtedly in favour of calligraphy... The method of painting lies yet in the “eight fundamental strokes” of writing... In appreciating Chinese calligraphy, the meaning is entirely forgotten, and the lines and forms are appreciated in and for themselves. In this cultivation and appreciation of pure witchery of line and beauty of composition, therefore, the Chinese have an absolute freedom and entire devotion to pure form as such, as apart from content. A painting has to convey an object but a well-written character conveys only its own beauty of line and structure. In this absolutely free field, every variety of rhythm has been experimented upon and every type of structure has been explored.⁴³

This quote also tells us a lot about Eisenstein’s line drawings.⁴⁴ In Chinese painting and calligraphy, Eisenstein saw the

42 Mai-Mai Sze, *The Tao of Painting: A Study of the Ritual Disposition of Chinese Painting With a Translation of the Chieh Tzu Yuan Hua Chuan or Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting 1679–1701*, 2 vols., Bollingen Series XLIX (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1956).

43 Lin Yutang, *My Country and My People* (London and Toronto: William Heinemann Ltd., 1936), 275–6.

44 Rabindranath Tagore, the first non-European Nobel Laureate

tremendous potential of using nature, not as representation, but as free rhythmic expression – like music, which has no responsibility of representation – for evoking the moods and emotions in cinema. Anyone who has gazed at the walls full of calligraphic wonders in Alhambra in Granada, in the great mosques of Persia, Turkey and India, and the manuscripts in the Topkapi, Malik National museum of Iran, the calligraphic scrolls in Peking and Taipei museums will know what man can do without painting figures – he can evoke every conceivable form in the universe through the calligraphic line.

I started my essay with my meeting with Naum in 1983. In 2017, I am about to close it with a salute to him for the five volumes in Russian of Eisenstein's writings that he has put together: two of *Nonindifferent Nature*, two of *Method* and one of *Montage*. They show us the highest peaks of twentieth-century aesthetics achieved by a visionary who sought the science in art and looked for art in science. I await at least one more volume, *Rezhissura*, on the art of direction, in the next few years and many more in the springs to come. Let Naum live a hundred springs and more to fulfil what he alone sees now and what we will all wait to see.

I had a vague picture of Eisenstein decades back. Now this great gift of Naum and his colleagues, lets the world see the thinker-artist emerging like a colossus out of the waters of his creation. His passion, compassion, and wisdom overflow the barriers between forms of life, races, cultures, continents, art-forms, ethics and aesthetics. Non-Anthropocentric world views, like Eisenstein's and Buddha's, ought to be seen in an urgent light in a world threatened by increasing violence, self-destruction, global warming, and the Doomsday. In such times, artists are the antennae of universal conscience. Only love and beauty can save nature and culture.

in literature, a great poet, writer, and musician, led the Indian Renaissance in colonial India. Tagore started painting at sixty-seven, with crossing out words from his poems and joining them with lines in spontaneous forms and shapes.

I'll end here with a tender story full of mad love. I showed *Ajantrik*, a Ritwik Ghatak film in Moscow, with Naum's help, just after the Chernobyl disaster, which had brought into sharp focus the dangers of the exploitative relationship with natural forces. The film is about a taxi-driver and his decrepit taxi, living in a hill-station in close proximity of the animistic tribe of Oraons. The man and his machine are depicted as a couple deeply in love with each other. Ghatak conveys their happiness, flirtations, jealousy, and love-quarrels through a wonderfully expressive soundtrack of the *musique concrète* machine-sounds of the taxi. Her headlights become her expressive eyes, seen through the mist of the valley. When her owner gives a free ride to a beautiful damsel in distress, the taxi refuses to budge and glares furiously with her headlights.

As this old taxi gives up the ghost, the accompanying death-rattle of the mechanical sounds is full of deep sorrow. A resurrection moment comes when, after selling the taxi as junk, the owner hears the sound of her rubber horn. In the distance, veiled in morning mist, is a smiling child honking the old-fashioned rubber horn of the taxi, which sounds like the first cry of a newborn infant. *One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever.* With the damage of Chernobyl still fresh and burning, some members of the audience were wiping their eyes when the film ended.

* * *

What Eisenstein provides us is only a *method*, and not a closed system. Each artist or reader, is free to learn from him, reject parts of his thought and/or add to it, being guided *in his own sphere of experience or culture*. This, I think is what attracts people all over the world to Eisenstein. They listen to him for he listened to the voices of their civilisation. His words, inshallah,⁴⁵ will be reborn, with new lives, on new soils and in new tongues.

Now he is scattered among a hundred cities

45 «Je suis toujours athée, grâce à Dieu.» Luis Buñuel

*And wholly given over to unfamiliar affections,
To find his happiness in another kind of wood
And be punished under a foreign code of conscience.
The words of a dead man
Are modified in the guts of the living.*

LARS KLEBERG

IVAN AKSENOV, SHAKESPEARE
AND BEN JONSON¹

Ivan Aksenov (1884–1935), critic, poet, and translator, was a brilliant representative of the genre-crossing and internationalist spirit of Russian avant-garde art. He was a nobleman and engineer corps officer, born in Ukraine, who fought World War I in the tsarist army and in October 1917 sided with the revolution. At that time he was also known as a radical Futurist poet and author of the first book written in any language about Picasso. After the Civil War, Aksenov joined Meyerhold's theater as its literary advisor and rector of its Higher Directors' Workshop (GVYRM). He was the person who brought Meyerhold and the constructivist artist Lyubov Popova together for the legendary production of Crommelynck's farce *The Magnificent Cuckold*. In 1923 he was removed from his literary functions but remained as a rector and professor at the directors' school until 1926. After that, Aksenov was basically unemployed and had few friends and no money. The latter circumstance had for a long time not been a concern. When his family estate and the income from it disappeared in the smoke of the Revolution, first the army and then government assignments had provided him a living. From his literary activities he earned, of course, nothing. Meyerhold's constantly reorganized theater had supplied a certain salary and had been a kind of home to him when he was not managing the Poets Union's club in Café "Domino" in Moscow.

1 This text is based on Lars Kleberg, *Vid avantgardets korsvägar. Om Ivan Aksionov och den ryska modernismen* (Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 2015). A translation of the book by Charles Rougle, *At the Crossroads of the Avant-Garde. Ivan Aksenov and Russian Modernism*, is forthcoming.



Fig. 1. A rare photo of Aksenov
(provided, of course, by Naum...)

Ivan Aksenov's name appeared less and less frequently in connection with the theater. He published a few articles but the history he wrote to mark the fifth anniversary of the theater in 1926 was banned by the censorship. He ceased teaching at the directors' school in 1927. His lectures on the theory and history of drama were evidently not documented, despite the fact that they were followed attentively by a class of young men and women who would set their stamp on Soviet theater and film for decades. The most prominent student already then was Sergei Eisenstein, who afterwards compared his two instructors' teaching styles:

His [Meyerhold's; L.K.] lectures were mirages and dreams.
Notes were frantically jotted down.

And on awaking, one's notebooks were covered in "goodness only knows."

I can recollect Aksenov's brilliant analysis of *The Merchant of Venice*, his talk on *Bartholomew Fair* and the Elizabethans' triple intrigue down to their smallest details.

But I cannot remember what Meyerhold talked about.
 Flavours, colours, sounds.
 A gold haze over everything.
 Elusive.
 Intangible.
 A secret within a secret.
 A veil behind a veil.²

According to Eisenstein, Aksenov's lectures were so precise that no one needed to take notes, and this may paradoxically be why thus far almost no trace has been found of them. Perhaps one day some student's summary of these legendary lectures will be discovered. Despite the extensive research that has been done on the 1920s in recent decades, there are still many documents in the Russian archives waiting to be read and interpreted. The drama professor's posthumous papers contain only a few brief undated synopses that merely hint at the content of the lectures and indicate nothing about their form.

After his intense years as Meyerhold's constant champion and interpreter, during which time his shaved head and profile with or without his red beard were a distinctive contribution to the Moscow cultural scene, Aksenov disappeared from the public arena. Besides his commemorative speech on Khlebnikov in August 1922, mentioned with respect by Osip Mandelstam³ and a lecture on the poet two years later at the State Academy of Artistic Sciences in Moscow (GAKhN), his most important public undertakings were the articles in connection with Lyubov Popova's death and his work on the retrospective exhibition in her memory.

2 Sergei Eizenshtein, *Memuary*, 2 vols. (Moscow: Trud, 1997), 1:354; Sergei Eisenstein, *Selected Works. Vol. 4. Beyond the Stars: The Memoirs of Sergei Eisenstein*, trans. William Powell (London: BFI 1995), 449.

3 Osip Mandel'shtam, "Literaturnaia Moskva" [1922], *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh*, t. 2 (Washington: Inter-Language Literary Associates, 1971); Osip Mandelstam, *Complete Critical Prose*, ed. Jane Gary Harris, trans. Jane Gary Harris and Constance Link (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1979).

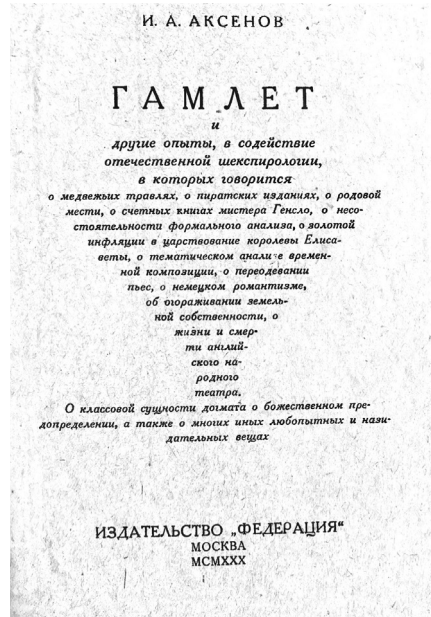
In July 1930, Aksenov hastily left Moscow and traveled to the huge hydroelectric station DneproGES under construction in eastern Ukraine to teach workers and future engineers geometry and physics. He was gone for almost six months. The reason for his sudden departure is unclear – perhaps a careful withdrawal from the virulent atmosphere in Moscow after Mayakovsky's suicide in April, perhaps simply to earn a living. When Aksenov returned to Moscow toward the end of 1930 he resumed contact with the theatrical world. But it involved a surprising volte-face. The former theoretician and polemical defender of Meyerhold's theater suddenly accepted an invitation from its diametrical opposite, the bastion of the realistic and psychological stage, the Moscow Art Theater, which had the wind in its sails in the current cultural-political situation. Aksenov now participated as a member of its repertory board in the discussion about the young Communist playwright Aleksandr Afinogenov's psychological drama *Fear* and Mikhail Bulgakov's dramatization of Nikolai Gogol's *Dead Souls*.⁴ What Walter Benjamin called "the restoration process" could not be any clearer.⁵ The age of the avant-garde and the war was over, and Aksenov had become an expert whose services could be engaged anywhere and nowhere.

Back in Moscow Ivan Aksenov finally witnessed the appearance of the book he had been writing the past few years, and he was even paid a modest fee. It consisted of a summary of several lectures delivered at the State Academy of Artistic Sciences (GAKhN) after he had quit working for Meyerhold. The invitation presumably came on the initiative of the vice-director of the Academy, philosopher Gustav Shpet, an acquaintance of Aksenov's from his Kiev days (and once Anna Akhmatova's teacher at the girls' secondary school in the city). The subject of the lectures – William Shakespeare and *Hamlet* – was in the

4 Aksenov's participation on the repertory board of the Moscow Art Theater is noted in the Chronology in Ivan Aksenov, *Iz tvorcheskogo naslediiia* I–II (Moscow: RA, 2008), II, 334. The edition is further referred to as *ITN* I–II.

5 Walter Benjamin, *Moscow Diary*, trans. Gary Smith (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), 53.

Fig. 2. A scan of the title page of the Hamlet book («goblet»)



spirit of the restoration and its appropriation of the cultural her-itage. Nevertheless, in certain respects the author set his stamp on the new book. Its title, which on the title page was in the form of a typographical baroque goblet, was in its entirety:

HAMLET

and other essays to assist our Shakespeare scholarship on the subjects of bear baiting, pirate editions, blood vendettas, on Mr. Henslowe's account books, on the inadequacy of formal analysis, on gold inflation under Queen Elizabeth, on the thematic analysis of temporal composition, on revamping plays, on German Romanticism, on the enclosure of landed property, on the life and death of the English popular theater. On the class nature of the dogma of divine predestination, and also on many other remarkable and edifying things.⁶

6 Ivan Aksenov, *Gamlet i drugie opyty v soдействие otechestvennoy shekspirologii ...* (Moscow: Federatsiia, 1930).

The book consisted of three separate sections: an introductory survey of the theater in Shakespeare's day, an analysis of *Hamlet*, and an essay on Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* as a model for *Hamlet*. The opening essay is a broad introduction to the Elizabethan age that describes the breakthrough of capitalism in English society and theater world and the emergence of the individual as the focal point in the new drama being created at the time. Shakespeare and his environs – from his predecessor Christopher Marlowe through writers Aksenov had translated, including John Webster, Cyril Tourneur and John Ford – are rapidly sketched in a series of colorful portraits. In the essay on *Hamlet* Aksenov presents a method of his own for analyzing drama that he calls thematic, modeled not on literary theory but on musicology. As his starting point he takes the fact that the Formalists lacked tools for analyzing the theater. Viktor Shklovsky, Yuri Tynyanov and their colleagues had onesidedly directed their attention to the linguistic aspect of poetry and prose, that is, to how literary texts were “made.” The Formalists' mistake, Aksenov says, is that they want nothing to do with themes, rather like “the penmanship instructor, who can be ignorant of grammar.”⁷ Drama is not literature, or not only literature. It can only be analyzed in relation to the stage production. The central notion in theater consists of the situations that are directly or indirectly presented in the text. These situations constitute an overarching *theme*:

By this word we will mean the verbally formulated scenic task that determines the successive actions of the actors over the course of the entire composition (the main theme) or its individual components (derivative and secondary themes). A theme can both be expressed by the words of the script in the form of a maxim and derived from a series of successively uttered word groups, as what comprises the subject they have in common.

This definition of a theme is not entirely like what musicians are familiar with, and it differs significantly from the methods and means by which music combines various dramatic themes. The

7 Aksenov, *Gamlet i drugie opyty*, 133.

basic distinction lies in the fact that different types of dramatic themes (tonalities) can sound simultaneously (a mix of comedy and tragedy) without leading to a common tonality.⁸

Characteristic of the Elizabethan theater, Aksenov explains, is its triple structure. For a play to be popular it needed to contain three levels: a lyrical-erotic level, one of suspense or adventure, and a third that was coarsely comical. The motley audiences of the time demanded different things from the theater and there had to be something for everyone. Shakespeare was a master at tying all the levels together into a single whole. If anything is missing or fragmentary, such as the suspense level in *Twelfth Night*, Aksenov says, it is entirely because the published text is not complete but was recorded after the director's cuts. In *Hamlet* the opposite situation obtains: the suspense level and the theme of revenge have taken over. The plot of the tragedy is thoroughly symmetrical. The protagonist is of course the Danish prince, but he is surrounded by two men in partly similar circumstances, namely Ophelia's brother Laertes and the young Norwegian Prince Fortinbras, who unexpectedly finds himself alone at the end of the play. All three are avengers: Fortinbras's father, also named Fortinbras, was once vanquished by Hamlet Sr. (who appears in the play as a ghost), and his son will avenge him. Laertes will avenge Hamlet's murder of his father Polonius, and Hamlet, of course, will avenge King Claudius's murder of Hamlet Sr. Laertes represents the dying age, Fortinbras the new; Hamlet is torn between them. The reason that Fortinbras's theme is so undeveloped and that the symmetry between the three young men is therefore difficult to see, Aksenov argues, is because – as in the case of *Twelfth Night* – the text that we know is abridged. As proof he submits that the symmetry is imperfect, which is of course what his argument set out to demonstrate. The critic does not seem to be bothered by the circularity of his reasoning.

8 Aksenov, *Gamlet i drugie opyty*, 83.

In conclusion Aksenov asks whether *Hamlet*, a play about the victory of the new bourgeois individualism over the feudal vendetta morality, is a drama for the Soviet theater. His answer is that it is meaningless to attempt to rework the content of the tragedy into the triumph of socialism over bourgeois individualism. The vitality of the play is on a completely different level. What is interesting in Shakespeare is not his ideology but the dynamism of his writing. Against ideology Aksenov posits *agogics*, a musical term referring to phrasing, shifts in tempo – everything that gives a musician’s performance energy and drive:

But there is another approach to the works of world literature, and that is to make use of their agogic rather than ideological aspect. We appreciate and republish Walt Whitman’s poetry not because he is the ideologue of the rapidly developing industrial capitalism of the United States, but because of the fiery passion with which he destroyed the idealistic constructs of the slave-owning planters. From him we take the passion of struggle and passion of criticism of the obsolete, the passion of fearless analysis and his relentless inquiry. And it is possible and even easier than it seems to bring this to the contemporary spectator. There is no need even to dress up the Danish Prince in a worker’s blouse, replace King Claudius’s crown with the top hat of an industrialist or force Ophelia to break down with her father’s blessing and with the complicity of her own brother as he fiddles with his monocle.

We must reject the notion that classic works – the legitimate legacy of centuries of efforts of human thought – are some sort of contraband that can only be disseminated in the Soviet Union on the condition that they be charged some sort of special punitive tariff or stamped with a counterfeit trademark. All the same, it will not be possible to fool precisely those whom such things were intended to fool.⁹

9 Aksenov, *Gamlet i drugie opyty*, 138–9. The chapter in which this passage occurs (“Gamlet, prints datskii”) is available online at <http://www.w-shakespeare.ru/library/gamlet-i-drugie-opiti-v-sodestvie-otechestvennoy-shekspirologii.html>, where, however, “agogicheskii” (“agogic”) has been changed to “pedagogicheskii” (“pedagogic”).

Aksenov's analysis of the structure of the tragedy is brilliant and far more intricate than shown in this brief summary. Its tone, however, differs from that of his earlier writings. Speaking here is no longer the aphoristic critic but a lecturer with informative digressions, references to previous authorities and a moderate measure of entertaining anecdotes and ironic winks to his audience. His breathing is slower and his style lacks the abrupt breaks or cryptic wording of his earlier works. Perhaps these essays provide a hint of his lectures at Meyerhold's directors' school.

What Benjamin called the restoration period meant new job opportunities in the cultural field. One interesting phenomenon typical of the early 1930s was the publishing house Academia (spelled with Latin letters). With its extensively annotated new translations in the Treasury of World Literature series it satisfied the new political demand for living classics at the same time as it provided employment to highly qualified philologists and translators from the prerevolutionary period. Behind its respectable façade the project contained an inner conflict that would eventually become acute between its pedagogical mission and the specialists' demands for scholarly accuracy. The internal discussions on the editorial board about the "correct" translation principles were advanced and at times very harsh. Among Academia's ambitious projects can be noted a complete *Thousand and One Nights*, Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, Dickens' and Balzac's novels, Molière's plays, Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, Heine's collected writings, and an unfinished edition of Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* as the most contemporary work.

In 1933 something of a Shakespeare boom erupted in the Soviet Union. The year before, the centrally placed Marxist theoretician of realism Georg Lukács had written a major article¹⁰ in which he highlighted a letter (that was in fact already known) from Marx to Ferdinand Lasalle recommending that the writer "Shakespeareize" the characters in one of his historical dramas

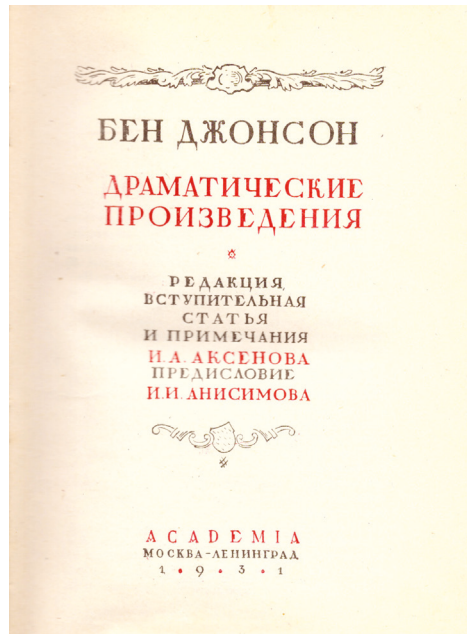
10 Georg Lukács, "Marks i Engel's v polemike s Lasallem po povodu 'Zikingena,' *Literaturnoe nasledstvo*, 3 (1932), 45–74.

by painting them in broad strokes instead of resorting to “Schillerism,” by which he meant making them into “mere mouth-pieces of the spirit of the times.”¹¹ Shakespeare became a tool in the struggle against the now rejected proletarian critics and their demand for ideological explicitness. The opening shot was an article in the March 11, 1933 issue of *Literaturnaia gazeta* entitled “Shakespearize More.”¹² For the next few years scholars and translators specializing in Shakespeare had all they could handle. A top-level initiative had already been taken to produce a complete scholarly edition of the Bard’s works. It might seem that Aksenov’s chance had arrived to step once again into the center of the public arena. After all, he was the author of a book on *Hamlet* and, although critics sensitive to the political climate in 1930 had passed it over with indifference, the wind had now shifted. As so often before, however, Aksenov was in the wrong place. For several years after the *Hamlet* book, except for the time he spent as a physics teacher in Ukraine, he had put all his energy into a major edition of Ben Jonson’s dramas. He wanted this perennial runner-up to Shakespeare to finally get redress. Academia published a collection of translations of Jonson’s works in two thick volumes – the first in 1931 and the second during the Shakespeare boom of 1933.¹³

The publication was a pioneering collection of the dramatist, who was esteemed by his contemporaries just as highly as his friend and rival Shakespeare. Posterity has been less generous toward Ben Jonson, and beyond England’s borders he has hardly ever enjoyed much success. Aksenov’s edition, which is still probably the largest selection of translations of the playwright in any language, contains six plays. The editor’s contribution consisted not only of the selection itself and two annotated

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- 11 Karl Marx, letter of April 19, 1859 to Ferdinand Lassalle, in *Marx & Engels on Literature and Art*, eds. and trans. Lee Baxandall and Stefan Morawski (St. Louis: Telos Press, 1973), 107.
 - 12 S. Dinamov, “Bol’she shekspirizirovat’,” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 11 March 1933.
 - 13 Ben Dzhonson, *Dramaticheskie proizvedeniia*, 2 vols., ed. I. A. Aksenov (Moscow–Leningrad: Academia, 1931, 1933).

Fig. 3. A scan of the title page of part 1 of the Ben Jonson edition



translations of his own, but especially his extensive foreword. In this almost hundred-page introduction to Ben Jonson's life and works he combines a panorama of early seventeenth-century English society, a detailed sociological history of the theater, and an account of the biography of this colossal, encyclopedically autodidactic, choleric and constantly thirsty master of all genres. One recurring theme is an analysis of the basic principles in Ben Jonson's dramaturgy and how they evolved in better and less well known works over the course of forty productive years. All of this is reinforced by a swarm of historical bric-a-brac and glances into interesting events and persons of the time.

Like the essays in Aksenov's book on *Hamlet*, however, what really drives it is a discussion full of original remarks not by an observer who has studied the dramatist as a piece of literary history, but by someone who has brought his own experience of the theater to bear on his readings of the texts. When Aksenov

describes Ben Jonson's violent conflicts with the architect Inigo Jones over the principles for staging his famous masques at the English court, he is immediately led to draw a comparison with the situation in Meyerhold's theater:

One is amazed at the unusual docility he displayed at the beginning of their conflict. He limited himself to a jocular dialogue preceding one of the masques. The author and the architect (set designer and director) discuss plans for implementing the completed text. "First we bring on the giants: we put the figurants on stilts and have them walk around the stage," says the architect. "But in my text there's not a word about any giants," the author tries to protest. "Big deal," the architect instantly responds. "No one has ever had giants on stage before." "But how are we to explain the appearance of the giants? What's the point?" "That's not our problem. Let the audience figure it out. They're clever. They'll surely come up with something." This dispute between the author and the architect has not lost its relevance in our day, any more than the viewpoint developed by the latter. Meyerhold had a predecessor more than three hundred years ago.¹⁴

Although Ivan Aksenov never managed to convince Meyerhold to produce any of Ben Jonson's plays, Eisenstein notes that he spent hours analyzing their masterful structure with his students at the directing school. The author of *Volpone* was sometimes more skillful technically than his rival Shakespeare and that interested the engineer in Aksenov more than the latter's superior imagination. Although the insights into the playwright's life and works must have required many years of study, the introduction completely lacks footnotes or references to other sources. As he is presented in this long essay, Ben Jonson was a man to the author's taste and his portrayal seems to have borrowed certain details from the critic's own self-portrait. The great poet knew himself, says Aksenov – with his usual uncompromising attitude he once declared that he was "incapable of

14 Ben Dzhonson, *Dramaticheskie proizvedeniia*, 1:77–8.

flattering, even under the threat of death,” and would “sooner lose a friend than an opportunity to jest at his expense.”¹⁵

Neither of the two ambitious Ben Jonson volumes seems to have received a single review in the Soviet press.

As a contributor to Academia, Aksenov regularly attended meetings of its editorial committee and was allotted special ration cards. When the second volume of Ben Jonson’s works was completed he was invited to collaborate in the forthcoming Shakespeare project. The proposal came from Gustav Shpet. As the foremost representative of phenomenological philosophy in Russia, Shpet had been accused of “idealism” and in 1930 was dismissed from the leadership of the Academy of Artistic Sciences (GaKhN) where Aksenov had lectured on Shakespeare a couple of years earlier. Now he had found a refuge with Academia. Shpet’s vast erudition (he reportedly knew 17 languages) and extensive experience as a translator were invaluable to the publishing house, but did not save him from being arrested in 1935 and exiled to Siberia, where he was executed in 1937.¹⁶

In a letter dated March 30, 1934 Aksenov writes to his wife Susanna Mar that Shpet has contacted him to ask for his collaboration:

Shpetsy has been here and wagged his tail. The thing is that on the 3rd there will be a public reading and discussion of Shakespeare translations... The old Jesuit proposes that I do both parts of *Henry IV* and *The Wives of Windsor*: prose almost through and through (difficult and poorly paid).

In the next breath Aksenov mentions a person who was prepared to do what he could to prevent him from working on the

15 Ben Dzhonson, *Dramaticheskie proizvedeniia*, 1:42. (A paraphrase of a line in Ben Jonson’s, *The Poetaster*: “He will sooner lose his best friend than his least jest.”)

16 See O.S. Ostroi, “Izdatel’stvo ‘Academia’,” *Kniga. Issledovaniia i materialy*, 18 (Moscow: Kniga, 1969), 155–74; Galin Tihanov, “Multifarousness under Duress: Gustav Špet’s Scattered Lives,” *Russian Literature* 2008 (LXIII):II/III/IV, 259–92

Shakespeare enterprise, namely its editor-in-chief Aleksandr Smirnov: “Shpetsy dropped in again yesterday morning, had a newspaper with Smirnov’s article and asked me to trash it. Don’t know if I will.”¹⁷ It is unclear what article he is referring to. Smirnov was a prominent philologist from Leningrad, actually a specialist in Romance languages and literatures, but also an expert on the Shakespearean age. In the spring of 1934 he had begun publishing a series of articles on Shakespeare’s works and the scientifically correct principles for translating them, all of which was intended to justify his leadership of Academia’s huge project. His 1934 book *The Works of Shakespeare (Tvorchestvo Shekspira)* demonstrated how to adapt the Marxist – or, as it was now known, Marxist-Leninist – interpretation of Shakespeare launched by Lukács. Smirnov does mention Aksenov’s *Hamlet* book but declares peremptorily that it contains “together with a number of very subtle observations, extremely risky and even fantastic assertions.”¹⁸

Why would Gustav Shpet, according to the letter, ask Aksenov to “trash” an article by his own editor-in-chief and close colleague? There were, in fact, grounds for both disagreement and competition between Aksenov and Smirnov. Aksenov had not forgotten Smirnov’s criticism of his idiosyncratic edition of *Elizabethans* in 1916, which had focused on his translation method and declared that it was an unacceptable manifestation of Futurist tendencies. There was also another, more important reason for the conflict between the two men. Aleksandr Smirnov was an ambitious and pedantic philologist who had staked his entire academic prestige on forcing through his own ideas about how Shakespeare should be read and what modern Russian translations of his works should look like. He seems to have scorned translators without academic qualifications,

17 Letter of March 30, 1934 to Susanna Mar, *ITNI*, 180.

18 A. A. Smirnov, *Tvorchestvo Shekspira* (Leningrad: Izd. Gos. bol’shogo dramaticheskogo teatra imeni M. Gor’kogo, 1934), 16, n. 1. An abridged English translation of Smirnov’s book that does not include this foreword is *Shakespeare: A Marxist Interpretation*, trans. Sonia Volochova (New York: Critics Group, 1936).

regarding them as simply suppliers of texts that needed to be constantly checked and corrected. As far as he was concerned, Ivan Aksenov was a savage who lacked a degree – unless one counted the one from the military college – and whose erudition was enormous, but unsystematic and idiosyncratic. True, some of his theoretical ideas about translation were close to Smirnov's – especially with regard to maximum rhythmical correspondence to the original – but in practice his translations, in the Ben Jonson edition as well, were so full of odd stylistic breaches, bizarre word choice, and rhythmical experiments that the professor bristled. For his part, Aksenov must have viewed Smirnov as a bookworm. That his opinion was accurate is apparent if one compares his own magnificent 1931 essay with the professor's correct but dry introduction to a 1960 selection of Ben Jonson's works, in which there is no indication anywhere that these plays were written to be staged (and where of course Aksenov's translations are not used and his edition only mentioned in a footnote).¹⁹

After Shpet's arrest his name was expunged from the Shakespeare edition that was so deeply indebted to him for its planning and editorial principles. When the volume containing *The Merry Wives of Windsor* finally appeared in 1937 with Smirnov as the editor it did not use Aksenov's translation.

During the years of the Shakespeare boom Ivan Aksenov was able to publish a number of articles, which Susanna Mar after his death collected from various journals and had printed in a volume entitled *Shakespeare. Essays (Shekspir. Stat'i)*. Recognition as an expert on Shakespeare, however, also meant that his contribution to the history of the Russian avant-garde was eventually erased together with knowledge about the movement in general. The gradual obliteration of Aksenov's name began while he was still alive. In the fall of 1934 Nikolai Khardzhiev published the following sarcastic item in a journal:

19 Ben Dzhonson, *P'esy*, (Leningrad: Iskusstvo), 1960, 5–22.

Equation with Two Unknowns

Printed in completely normal type in the reference section of volume 1 of the *Literary Encyclopedia* we read: Aksenov, see Oksenov.

According to information we have gathered it turns out that Ivan Aleksandrovich Aksenov lives in Moscow on Bolshoi Kozikhinsky Pereulok and is the author of the poetry collection *Invalid Foundations* (Moscow, 1916), the tragedy *The Corinthians* (Moscow, 1918), books on Picasso (Moscow, 1917) and Shakespeare (Moscow, 1930) and has translated plays by Ford, Webster and Tourneur in *The Elizabethans* (Moscow, 1916), Crommelynck's *Magnificent Cuckold* and dramatic works by Ben Jonson in two volumes (Academia).

It also turns out that his name is spelled with an "A."

Distinct from him there is a critic in Leningrad named Oksenov, written with an "O," whose name is not Ivan but Innokenty.

We are sure that this equation with two unknowns will be solved incorrectly.

Either (in the best case scenario) the author of the entry "Ok-
senov" will provide some information about one of the "O/Ak-
senovs," or he will refer the reader back, i.e., to the first "entry."²⁰

The following year Ivan Aksenov fell ill and died, possibly due to tumors he had downplayed to his wife, although certain sources claim it was "unexpected." He passed away at the age of fifty at the Writers' Union retreat, Maleyevka, west of Moscow on September 3, 1935.

Obituaries emphasized his many-sidedness but devoted almost all their attention to his contributions to the Shakespeare scholarship that was currently so important. As Nikolai Khardzhiev had already pointed out, anyone who wanted to get an overview of Aksenov's production had little help from available reference works. His published books were a not insignificant accomplishment, especially if we add a long series of critical essays and numerous articles and reviews in various professional journals and also take into account his service as

20 "Uravnenie s dvumia neizvestnymi, *Literaturnyi kritik* 7–8 (1934), 266.

an army officer and a member of the leadership of Meyerhold's theater in the 1920s. What few people were aware of when Aksenov died was that the published books were only a minor part of his works. He left behind a number of completed manuscripts that had languished for years with various publishers or were quite simply rejected. Of these works, the Shakespeare articles and the second *Elizabethans* anthology appeared a few years after Aksenov's death (1937 and 1938, respectively). Most of the others had to wait until the major two-volume edition of his works in 2008. The exception was the critic's brilliant essay *Sergei Eisenstein. Portrait of the Artist* (*Sergei Eizenshtein. Portret khudozhnika*), published by Naum Kleiman in Moscow in 1991. As a foreword, Eisenstein's "Essay about an Essayist" – the former student's goodbye to his teacher – was reprinted.

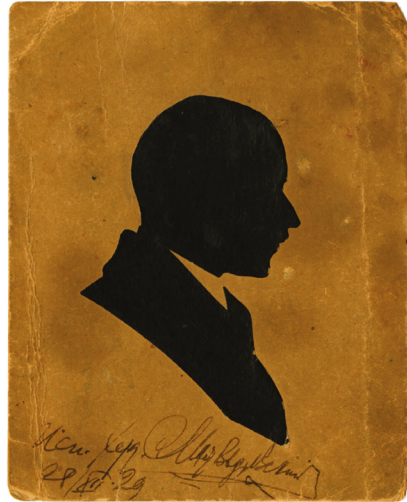


Fig. 4a. A more well known silhouette by the artist S. Medvedevsky, scan from the original

Fig. 4b. The same but a "cleaned" black-and-white version

Ivan Aksenov probably did not write a single uninteresting sentence in his entire life. Every one of his essays contains the

idea for a book, every book a suggestion for a series. But he had no followers. After his death Sergei Eisenstein summarized his teacher and friend's ambiguity and inaccessibility as follows:

He remained an outsider. His humor incomprehensible. Akse-
nov himself, misunderstood. And, as was said earlier, he wasn't
well liked.

I liked Aksenov very much.

For his wicked tongue and his wicked wit, and his disagreea-
bleness...

Aksenov and I were friends.

Rather in Jonson's and Webster's shadow than in the all too
bright sun of Shakespeare.

What was beautiful about the Elizabethans was their inequity.
Their one-sidedness. Disproportion and asymmetry.

Aksenov's face was asymmetrical. In this case his face was, if
not a mirror of the soul, then an analogy of thought. He thought
disproportionately and asymmetrically. What I liked in the Aztecs,
in Picasso, in Webster, was what I liked in Aksenov.

He was one-sided, asymmetrical. And subjective. This made
him programmatically alien.²¹

21 Sergei Eizenshtein, "Esse ob esseiste," *ITN* II, 311.

NIKITA LARY

TRAGIC INTERCONNECTIONS
AND INTERSECTIONS

In *Ivan the Terrible*, with the move to a film focused on a main character, the thoughts Eisenstein had devoted over many years to tragedy acquired a particular focus and relevance. The hero of his film had a mission to unite his country against external enemies and against internal dissent and conspiracy. At the same time, he had to overcome the self-doubts tormenting him and pay the price extorted by a single-minded devotion to his cause. In Eisenstein's work his hero outgrew the confines of a chronicle. He moved in the space of tragedy.

Two interconnected lines of thought played a particular role in Eisenstein's discovery of the tragic dimensions of his film: 1) the new significance of images of the body that was emerging with a film centered on the person of a ruler; and 2) an examination of possible connections between his art based on montage and this ancient dramatic form. Three texts are of particular importance: "Montage in Shakespeare," written by him in 1937 and first published by Naum Kleiman in his edition of Eisenstein's uncompleted book on montage in 2000;¹ the transcripts of his lectures to film students in Alma-Ata in 1942, at the time he was filming *Ivan the Terrible*; and the 1939 article "Pride" extensively quoted by Naum Kleiman in his Introduction to the Russian edition of *Film Form*.²

1 S. M. Eizenshtein, "Montazh u Shekspira," *Montazh* (Moscow: Muzei kino, 2000), 241–50. The chapter can also be translated as "Shakespeare's Use of Montage".

2 Sergei Eizenshtein, *Dramaturgiia Kinoformy* (Moscow: Eizenshtein-Tsentr, 2016). The title "Pride" can be expanded to "Pride in the Supremacy of Film."

In “Montage and Shakespeare” and in his lectures, Eisenstein’s repeatedly cites Caroline Spurgeon’s book *Shakespeare’s Imagery and What It Tells Us* (1935) and quotes her observations on the prevalence of imagery of the body in Shakespeare’s histories and tragedies. (He had read her book with excitement and filled his copy with underlinings). The further development Eisenstein gives Spurgeon’s ideas are of direct relevance for his work in *Ivan the Terrible*. He speaks of:

i) Images of the body as such – connected with the central position of the person in the plays.

ii) The body in motion in space and time, leading to the notion of a life, as in a chronicle or biography, or in Shakespeare’s history plays.

iii) Bodily expressions of mental states and emotions.

iv) The metaphor of the body as the “body of the state” (this is particularly connected with the body in motion).

v) Ultimate images of the body in motion connected with the change of change – as in deformation, disintegration, dismemberment, death, and also in re-assemblage.

All of these images of the body are used in Eisenstein’s film about Ivan’s attempt to unify the Russian state. Moreover, at least one of these senses is of wider significance for the art of film as Eisenstein had been conceiving it: namely, the third sense, to do with the expression of mental and emotional states. This is of course connected with the whole gesture of performance and with *mise-en-scène*. But it is further connected with the structure of film through the construction of what is presented. Both the selection of montage pieces and the rhythms of their succession have direct physiological and emotional effects on the viewer of a film. This is best expressed in the 1939 article “Pride:”

Only film can take as the basis of its dramaturgical aesthetics not just the static human body, and not just the dynamics of its actions and behavior, but the infinitely wider range of the variety of movement and shifts of a person’s feelings and ideas. And this goes not just for the actions and behavior as material for reflection

on the film screen, but as a compositional skeleton to hold conscious and felt reflections of the world.³

The use of the image of the body as a metaphor for the state is particularly powerful in Shakespeare's plays – and provides Eisenstein with material for wider reflections. The state is subject to forces of deformation and disintegration. The unification of the state and the maintenance of unity are never assured. At times the ruler is destroyed by the state or sacrificed for the state. Conversely, the unity and harmony of the state depend on the steadfast will (and survival) of the ruler. The connections of the imagery of the body of the ruler and that of the state are an ongoing theme in Shakespeare's history plays.

I have argued elsewhere⁴ that three of Shakespeare's Histories were of particular relevance to Eisenstein in his work on his last film: *Henry IV*, Parts 1 and 2, and *Henry V*. But Ivan continually breaks out of the mold of a chronicle. Some words from Eisenstein's chapter on "Montage and Shakespeare" are particularly relevant to Eisenstein's work on this character: "The individual historically objective personage is replaced by an artistically generalized type. The chronicle of events is elevated to a cluster of dramatic collisions of generalized tragedy."⁵

Two scenes in particular allow us to observe the intensification that marks the transition from chronicle to tragedy. The scene in *Ivan*, Part One where the Tsar receives the last rites was likely conceived under the influence of the deathbed scene towards the end of *2 Henry IV*. In both scenes the problems of stability and succession are foremost. In the film Ivan lies supine, with an enormous Bible opened over his head. The boyars stand around, waiting to resume their divisive plotting. Not one of them moves to swear allegiance to the legitimate heir, the frail infant Dimitri. Ivan's aunt Evrosinia is pressing them to swear allegiance to her feeble-minded son Vladimir. In the cor-

3 Eizenshtein, *Dramaturgiia Kinoformy*, 20.

4 In the forthcoming *Reading with Eisenstein*, edited by Ada Ackerman and Luka Arsenjuk.

5 Eizenshtein, *Montazh*, 242.

responding scene in the *Henry IV* play, the King is brought into a room in a hostelry to die. His son, Prince Hal, is away hunting; he has given little sign of preparedness for the responsibilities of ruling. The moment is critical – without an adequate ruler the country risks falling apart. The King sinks into a slumber; Hal comes in, and seeing the crown on the bed, he ponders the burden it represents, tries it on and goes out. Suddenly waking up, the King sees the crown is gone and imagines in a moment of panic that it has been stolen; already the country is being pulled apart. Crude striving for power, it appears, is all that governs men. The analogies with the scene in *Ivan* are suggestive – except that Ivan rises from his deathbed in a kind of resurrection.

The intensification in *Ivan* particularly has to do with the rituals surrounding death and the overt plotting of leading figures – and the highly expressive *mise-en-scène* – followed by Ivan's symbolic rebirth and resurrection. Sickness and death are overcome. Ivan is reborn is a more powerful form – on his way to becoming the Terrible or Fearful Tsar. It is a form of Dionysian rebirth. For Eisenstein this had become a major preoccupation. In "Montage and Shakespeare" he said (with specific reference to Shakespeare's imagery of growth and decay): "the creative power inside the imagery... converges with the original image of Dionysius, for which the legend of the tragedy of Dionysius was a prototype... Dionysius was a metaphor for the peripeteia of the changing seasons and thus a god of the plant kingdom and of its inevitable change, growth, and decay."⁶ Eisenstein held that tragedy had its roots in the ancient ceremonial cults in which the ritual dismemberment (*sparagmos*) of a deity or hero (Dionysius, Orpheus, Hippolytus) was followed by theophany: "the apotheosis in which the torn limbs were reunited and the god or demon was resurrected."⁷ Regression – and release – were characteristics of tragedy. As a properly pathetic, ecstatic art, tragedy left one with a "feeling of relief and liberation at

6 Eizenshtein, *Montazh*, 248.

7 S. M. Eizenshtein, *Izbrannyye proizvedeniia v shesti tomakh*, 6 vols. (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1964–71), 4:261.

the highest point of tension of the drama.”⁸ Suffering underwent ecstatic transformation. Elsewhere Eisenstein spoke of the release of “pralogical” forms of consciousness, which he also referred to as “undifferentiated sensuous thought.”

The power of the Dionysian myth was reinforced by its associations with montage. Montage was a form of dismemberment. An art based on montage depended on the re-assembly of montage fragments. In the chapter “Dionysus and Osiris” Eisenstein noted the perpetuation of figures of dismemberment in visual art and in literature (including the works of Maupassant and Flaubert). They were a vestige of the Dionysian myth.⁹ Montage in film depended not only on dismemberment but also re-assembly (in which the viewer participated). His film art depended on a continual reenactment of the Dionysian metaphor of renewal. Arguably, Eisenstein’s film art of montage had a particular affinity for film tragedy.

Eisenstein’s two-flanked exploration of the imagery of the body in Shakespeare’s tragedies and of the connection of montage with the structure of tragedy – at the time of his work on *Ivan the Terrible* – suggests that the hero of his last film inhabited a field of tragic possibilities. This suggestion is reinforced by some more particular references. In lectures delivered to his film students in Alma-Ata (at the very height of his work on *Ivan*), he talked about images of dismemberment of the state from *King Lear*:

In the tragedy *King Lear*... Shakespeare turned to this theme at the very moment when the dismemberment of England was a possibility... From this point of view, *Lear* is opposed to the division of the state, as is shown by the folly of this division here... In *Lear* there is the theme of disastrous partition... In no other tragedy is there so much injury to the body parts and destruction of the human organism as in this piece... Each tiny detail of the work shows the horror of the various things that are occurring. Now recall the theme of *Richard III*, which is based on the destruction

8 Eizenshtein, *Izb. pr.*, 4:259.

9 Eizenshtein, *Montazh*, 221–9, 248.

of the lineage. Which are the image structures there? The images are based on trees. Trees and gardens are shown, symbols of the genealogical tree and of the refusal of one family of trees to be destroyed.¹⁰

In Eisenstein's film the theme transcends the bounds of the chronicle: increasing power goes with the increasing dehumanization and instability of the ruler, while the unified state contains the seeds of its own undoing. (The question arises: if the ruler is a monster, isn't the state he creates a monstrous body too?) The state is susceptible to destruction from within – through deception, jealousy, betrayal, betrayal by a foster son even (Fedor Basmanov in the unfiled Part Three).

The film is of course incomplete. Eisenstein's writings about imagery and montage provide a basis for speculation about the kinds of tragedy it could have produced. A letter to Tynianov written in 1944, concurrently with his work on the film, provides one suggestive line for exploration. In it he speaks of "the tragic inevitability of autocracy and alone-ness... You yourself understand that this is just what in the very first instance *they* are trying to 'replace' in the script and in the film."¹¹ Neither the person of the absolute ruler, nor the body of the state he rules is immune from internal and external disintegration. What regeneration or renewal would mean following this disintegration is an even broader field for speculation.

10 Transcripts of Eisenstein's lectures, February 18–April 22, 1942, VGIK Library, 13–14.

11 Yuri Tynyanov, *Pisatel' i uchenyi* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1966), 177–8.

FELIX LENZ

ORGANIZING PICTURES: *THE MASTER'S HOUSE AND CINEMA: A PUBLIC AFFAIR*

Movies by and about Naum Kleiman

The Birth of the Pictures out of the Spirit of Human Communion

The art of montage becomes apparent in the way stimuli, glances, shots, whole sequences interlock and unfold in a contextual communion. It is in their reaching into one another that they transgress their own limitedness and begin to speak. And it is in this regard that the spectator's creativity is challenged. Eisenstein explains this using metaphors: "What is remarkable about this method? Above all, its dynamism: the very fact that the desired image is not something *ready-made* but *has to arise or be born*."¹ Images come into existence in analogy to the most physical and most fundamental gesture of life: birth. For this process, three forces meet: the filmmakers, the film, and the spectators. Montage is not merely an artistic vehicle but a mode of communitarisation in which the you and the I convene. "The image conceived by the author has become flesh of the flesh of the spectator's image [...] which was created by me, the spectator."² With the communication partners' becoming one in the flesh, Eisenstein evokes topoi of the New Testament. Images of the Last Supper, of communion and transubstantiation become secularized; communities which emerge temporarily in the cinema become sacralised. When Eisenstein finally wrote these words in 1938, after waves of

1 Sergei M. Eisenstein, *Selected Works. Vol. 2. Towards a Theory of Montage*, eds. Michael Glenny and Richard Taylor, trans. Michael Glenny (London: BFI Publishing, 1991), 309.

2 Eisenstein, *Selected Works*, 2:310.

show trials and failed projects, he had already experienced betrayal. His cinema is an interspace before and after the scenarios of the world's disasters, an interspace in which solitude and isolation are overcome by sharing the cinematic experience. The redeeming character of montage in situations like these lies in the fact it crafts tacit agreement. This is because the spectators, by decoding it, decide how and to what extent a film creates not only escapist but also subversive counter-worlds.³ The convening images involved remain but as a silent language and therefore are difficult to censor. After all, no single image ever makes itself speak on its own, separately, but they make each other speak mutually. It is therefore that rulers and others in power tend to ban entire films. Eisenstein though does not limit montage to films and does not limit the material form or the scale of the stimuli involved. With this, he makes an offer which can be accepted in various different ways and can be used in diverse dimensions.

Naum Kleiman – From Aesthetics to Maieutics

Kleiman in all of these dimensions considers Eisenstein his guiding star. As guardian, scientist, editor, and exhibition and film curator, Kleiman collects texts, pictures, and films, with a twofold objective: On the one hand, in preserving the artefacts, he preserves a cultural-historical inheritance; on the other hand, by presenting them together in exhibitions and screenings and thereby grouping and linking them, he creates their communion, and in that their living presence in the present. Kleiman considers himself a maieutic, a midwife for the films and for the spectators. Eisenstein writes: "The image conceived by the author, director, and actor and fixed by them in the separate depictive elements, will finally come into being anew in the perceptions

3 See Eisenstein, *Selected Works*, 2:68–82 and Felix Lenz, *Sergej Eisenstein: Montagezeit. Rhythmus, Formdramaturgie, Pathos* (München: Wilhelm Fink, 2008), 272–5.

of the spectator.”⁴ Kleiman thus operates at the most crucial moment of the montage: the birth of the image. He operates both at the aesthetically speaking most powerful and at the same time the most fragile position in the pictorial process. From this point of view he assembles plastic text compilations and revelatory film programs. Thus he makes the texts and the films comment on one another. It is through this minimally invasive artistic presentation that texts and films begin to speak. Kleiman does not assemble single shots but organizes whole films to create a revelatory friction. In his work, he never loses himself in distracting theories. Instead he uses his enormous historical and theoretical knowledge to ensure that the wonder of the birth of the images is fostered, for the sake of the here and now of contemporary viewing contexts. It is Kleiman’s constant concern to bring to life films and thoughts, so that they can become flesh of our flesh. In this respect, he is akin to Plato’s *Phaedrus*: “Serious discourse [...] is far nobler, when one employs the dialectic method and plants and sows in a fitting soul intelligent words which are able to help themselves and him who planted them, which are not fruitless, but yield seed from which spring up in other minds other words capable of continuing the process for ever.”⁵ Kleiman’s dialogues, based on his immense store of knowledge, are artworks of montage, unfailingly tailored to the needs of his interlocutors. The community effect herein is self-fulfilling. This enables an incarnation in which both interlocutors, if ever so minimally, become others.

Eisenstein uses specific means for aesthetic purposes. Kleiman turns these means into forces of an intersubjective cinema and culture mediation, constituting the profoundly social and artful character of his scholarship. At the onset of modernity, Hegel differentiated philosophy, the arts, and the communion of religions. Kleiman, on the other hand, unites these perspectives into one organ by means of operating artistically, by argu-

4 Eisenstein, *Selected Works*, 2:309.

5 Plato, *Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo, Phaedrus*, trans. Harold North Fowler (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 568–9.

ing philosophically and by aiming to cross borders for the sake of community. As a loving universalist, he herein surmounts the narrow grit of the division of labor that defines our epoch.

Organizing Pictures in The Master's House and Cinema: A Public Affair

A site at which Kleiman's style can be perceived in a condensed form are two films connected with him. *The Master's House* (1997) is a biographical documentary film which came into existence in the context of the festivities for the 100th anniversary of Eisenstein in 1998. The script was written by Kleiman himself and directed for the TV channels ZDF and Arte by Mariana Kirewa and Alexander Iskin. *The Master's House* seeks to build a bridge to Eisenstein for a cultural integration between East and West after the Cold War. Tatiana Brandrup's *Cinema: A Public Affair* (2015), by contrast, commits itself to Kleiman's life for the film. The starting point for *Cinema: A Public Affair* is the cultural-political crisis under Putin, a crisis that up to today has been threatening the cultural inheritance which Kleiman has been protecting throughout his life. At this time, I will not focus on the historical connection between the two works nor will I attempt a comprehensive appraisal of both films. Rather, I will limit myself to sketch, respectively, the image culture radiating from Kleiman.

The Master's House

Eisenstein never again saw his footage for *Que viva Mexico!* (1930–2/1970) after his return to the USSR in 1932. Only a gleam of hope found its way through the mourning over this disappointment: "In my mind's eye I invariably see it as a colour film, as a series of images in colour. [...] Its shots have remained in my memory not as photographic pictures but as [...] they were caught by the lens and as they actually appeared

in front of the camera.”⁶ Eisenstein delights in remembering all the images as being in color and thereby carrying with him a perfect color film. The color brilliance of the things lost increases the nostalgia and lends an eminent photographic character to his field of memory.

The Master's House is almost entirely black and white. Kleiman combines films by Eisenstein, documentary shots of Eisenstein at work and on journeys, as well as scenes from Russian film classics. The latter substitute scenes of a private life with film scenes. Added to film sequences are photographs from all phases of Eisenstein's life, photos from sets, film and theatrical stage designs, as well as Eisenstein's drawings, which provide an insight into his inner life. Almost all of these images are kept in black and white. The rare images in color show the cemetery of Berlin, where Eisenstein's father was buried, Eisenstein's apartment, the house in Alma-Ata where he lived during the shooting of *Ivan the Terrible* (1941–6), the sanatorium for the time period following his heart attack, the hospital at the Kremlin, his dacha, in front of which scrap wood was burnt, and the view of the mountains that Eisenstein was never allowed to cross to behold the beloved cultures of Asia with his own eyes. The film also shows images of the colorful set designs with which Eisenstein began his career as an artist, and the end of *Ivan*, when the assassination attempt on the tsar fails and Ivan's demons finally win. Kleiman characterizes the young and the mature artist by a shift in colors from the fresh blue and yellow of earlier drafts to the hellish red scenario of the last piece of work. Here, he picks up Eisenstein's ideas for a color metamorphosis from his draft of a biopic on Pushkin.⁷ In all other cases, color communicates the photographic aura of transience to the lost places and spaces in which Eisenstein was able to work in union with himself. These spaces show signs

6 Eisenstein, *Selected Works*, 2:266–7.

7 See Sergei M. Eisenstein, *Selected Writings*. Vol. 4. *Beyond the Stars. The Memoirs of Sergei Eisenstein*, ed. Richard Taylor, trans. William Powell (London: BFI Publishing, 1995), 712–24.

of deterioration, be it by aging, the burning of scrap wood, a manifest relatedness to death – sanatorium, hospital, cemetery – or loss of life, as in the shape of the mountains that block the entrance to Asia. It is the montage and communion of these images, especially, that brings forth photographic effects of Bazinesque character. The color images show the presence as it was in 1997, and therein represent our looking back at Eisenstein. The black-and-white images, by contrast, speak to us from the past. The relation between color and black and white links opposing vectors of one and the same necromancy. Yet, no medial means suffices for a direct encounter. Thus, the film – through the variety of these measuring points – makes use of heterogeneous sorts of material in order to achieve – quasi stereoscopically – the greatest possible plasticity. Herein lies a logic of substitution. Every image gains the phantasmatic ability to stand in for something else. Unmistakable proof for this method are sections of Russian silent film melodramas used to evoke the marital crisis and divorce of Eisenstein's parents. So, we are provided simultaneously with emotional insights and a context of cinema history. At the same time, the substitution elucidates that Eisenstein's childhood fate was not only an individual one but one that represents a paradigm of the epoch. Similarly, Kleiman uses Eisenstein's *Strike* (1924) in order to capture the revolutionary context of the early twentieth century. Besides being themselves, all stimuli also point to something different, requesting of the spectator to decode multiple layers. While documentary images in the case of Eisenstein indexically stand for themselves as the outer life, the drawings serve as a commentary and a window to the inner experience. The tension between photography and drawing functions as a model for the film's multi-layered structure because every sort of material overlaps with the others. Together they uncover the segmentation of the various strata of experience.

The structuring of the chapters follows the same motif, namely to point to different spheres of life: "Papa's House," "Mama's House," "The Teacher's House," "The Glass House," "Grand Hotel," "Pyramid," "The Tower," "Valhalla," "The Ca-

thedral,” “The Die Crypt.” These spheres of life and the feelings associated with them are limited stages full of conflicts and movements. The settings evoked create therefore homologies with the screen. Accordingly, all the chapter headings appear in a cinema on the movie screen. This frame is taken from a scene in Vertov’s *The Man with a Movie Camera* (1929). At the same time, the titles form a progression of different stages of life. Eisenstein’s years of freedom outside the USSR constitute the middle position with “Grand Hotel” and “Pyramid.” Here, the ambivalence of the color repeats itself: “Grand Hotel” heralds the vigor of the departure; “Pyramid” tells of a glamorous funeral. A metaphysical tone is set which becomes more pronounced in “Cathedral” and “Crypt,” and which draws a falling line from the pyramid to the crypt. Here, *Ivan the Terrible*, Eisenstein’s last movie, becomes the center of ever more audacious substitutions and overlaps. Ivan’s tyranny and Eisenstein’s martyrdom comment on each other. Both the passion of murdered adversaries of the tsar and the mourning of the metropolitan Philipp in a black crypt filled with coffins merge into images of the scandal involving the actor Solomon Mikhoels. His body was pompously transferred to Moscow while the true circumstances of his death were concealed. The film also shows Eisenstein as one of the mourners. Rumor has it that he was heard mumbling, “I’m next.” Consequently then the images of the Kremlin hospital and an account of Eisenstein’s plan to work himself to death follow. Images in color of his dacha in front of which branches are burnt intersect with the lyrical images of the sea of the mourning of Vakulinchuk in *Battleship Potemkin* (1925). Into this quasi-deposition brought into motion appear photographs of people loved by Eisenstein. Those offering their condolences in the film *Potemkin* are brought into a closer relationship to Eisenstein. Contrasting this hagiography are reflections on how Eisenstein never was able to touch the world. This is accompanied by images from *Alexander Nevsky* (1938) that show Alexander while fishing with his retinue. The verbally invoked Christological image of the fisher of men for Alexander thus also extends itself to Eisenstein. And on the

lowering of Eisenstein's urn into the grave, images follow from the Day of the Dead from the film fragment *Que viva Mexico!* Here laughing children are stepping from behind skull masks to celebrate life.

Instead of offering a narrative from the cradle to the grave, Kleiman prefers to offer resurrection: Eisenstein's spirit remains present to us in the form of his images. In analogy to the passion narratives in *Strike* and *Potemkin*,⁸ Kleiman's film paints a holistic picture starting with Eisenstein's rise as an artist to the open horizon of his travels, on to the descent to narrow hells, to the resurrection in images. This multiplication of overlapping visual motifs highlights two things. On the one hand, the assassinated actor Solomon Mikhoels, the martyrs in *Ivan*, Vakulinchuk in *Potemkin*, *Alexander Nevsky*, and Christ assign attributes of a savior to Eisenstein as the central figure; on the other hand and very much in contrast to this hagiographic characterization, Eisenstein finds himself included in a collective of kinsmen, a collective that cures the isolation of his life.⁹ Kleiman does not elevate Eisenstein to hero status. Rather his martyrdom represents a place of visibility for an epoch that brings forth countless similar cases. The crucial essence is not Eisenstein's own radiance but the potential of the images linked to him. It is not the person but the cinema that becomes the place of resurrection, a space of a collaborative birth of images and of intimacy. This deepens the sense of the film's logic of substitution. In the way that the parents' marital life can be reconstructed by movie quotes taken from Russian film melodramas, so the life of modernity in its entirety is captured in the hall of mirrors of the cinema. Individual artists are of significance, but it is the cinema as an institution that mirrors life in its entirety, Eisenstein's life like everyone's else's life.

8 See Lenz, *Montagezeit*, 56–9, 102.

9 See Sergei M. Eisenstein, *Nonindifferent Nature*, trans. Herbert Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 183.

Cinema: A Public Affair

Kleiman's creative drive dominates *The Master's House; Cinema: A Public Affair* unfolds in a complementary manner. This time, Kleiman is the focus of the gaze of others, especially of director Tatiana Bandrup. She offers a stage to Kleiman on which he creates his images for us. Instead of analyzing the entire film, its political focus, and its ensemble, I will therefore concentrate on two visual moments connected with this very stage.

Kleiman's witty and astute features radiate from a darkened room as he recounts his first cinematic experience. Far from home, fleeing from the German army in World War II, the five-year-old witnessed a film presentation during one of the flight stages. The cinema appeared to him as an un hoped-for inter-space, an oasis in between realities otherwise saturated with feelings of powerlessness. The film shown was *The Thief of Bagdad* (1940). The boy Kleiman was intoxicated by the flying carpet. He stepped on top of the bench, spread his arms to fly too, and enjoyed the freedom of the screen. The cinema reversed the oppressive reality and revealed itself as revolutionary in, of all things, its escapist abilities. Kleiman does not denounce the dream factory as a site of delusion but realizes its images according to his own needs. The elderly man who narrates and the ever young cinematic images both attest the childhood impressions. The exterior and the interior image, both the verbally evoked moment of the past and the Naum Kleiman of the present merge in a complex way. Documentary and phantasmatic images prove to be parts of one identity firmly grounded. The target of the montage, meanwhile, is the biographic body of the spectator, who in turn is referred back to both his or her own childhood and to the cinematic encounter taking place at that moment.

The film's end shows the anniversary celebration for the Cinema Museum in Moscow, which today is still existentially threatened. In a corridor, an endless table is moving towards the spectators. On both sides, young and older staff members are

talking with each other. Kleiman is standing in the vanishing point vis-à-vis the spectators. His ceremonial speech seems to transcend the screen. He addresses not only his friends but also the cinema audience that is invited, so to speak, into the image and to the table, which thus is elongated into the auditorium. The image creates a communion which allows them all to partake in a Last Supper. Here, a sworn community with shared values turns towards a corrupted modernity with dysfunctional governmental institutions. By this, Kleiman receives the mandate of a cultural hero who preserves something endangered in order to reinvent it in the spirit of community. The scene appears like the reenactment of a biblical incident. However, Kleiman does not pick up this iconography for the image's sake but to perform it as a speech act, and to shape reality through it. It is not the making of images that enables life, but the active usage of the images. Kleiman does battle where Hegel locates a conflict zone of modernity: successful governmental institutions maintain law and order and facilitate life, but at the same time rob human beings of the freedom to take action themselves. Failing governmental institutions force human beings back into a heroic condition in which they, in the absence of any security, can only rely on their own, most innate courage.¹⁰ Hence, Kleiman's ceremonial speech addresses hardship and distress on the one hand, and on the other hand, the bliss to hold a mandate of freedom together with comrades-in-arms. Accordingly, Kleiman expresses his gratitude to all his co-workers. They are the proper essence of all endeavors.

Eisenstein writes: "Theatre's basic material derives from the audience."¹¹ "Theatre [...] is linked to cinema by a common (identical) basic material – the audience."¹² In his speech Kleiman transforms early theoretical statements of Eisenstein.

10 See Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik I* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986), 236–61.

11 Sergei M. Eisenstein, *The Eisenstein Reader*, ed. Richard Taylor, trans. Richard Taylor and William Powell (London: BFI Publishing, 1998), 30.

12 Eisenstein, *The Eisenstein Reader*, 35.

His addressees, his co-workers, are essential; all images and all societal formative wishes are harbored and are alive in them. They are the multipliers who justify all hopes. Kleiman does not stand alone; rather, from his sowing of a lifetime, his seedlings have blossomed a hundredfold at the endless table of friends. Once again Kleiman provides a multiplication of overlapping visual motifs. Associations of a Last Supper meet the Parable of the Sower (Mk 4, 1–8), but also Plato: “Serious discourse [...] is far nobler, when one [...] plants and sows in a fitting soul intelligent words [...], which are not fruitless, but yield seed from which spring up in other minds other words capable of continuing the process for ever.”

HÅKAN LÖVGREN
THE ARCHITECTONICS
OF EISENSTEIN'S SIGNATURE

Kinder, seid still - der Vater schreibt seinem Namen!

In his memoirs, *Beyond the Stars*, Sergei Eisenstein referred to himself half-jokingly and half-seriously as “the little boy from Riga.” This self-conception reflected the pride of a man from one of Russia’s European provinces who had managed to become a Soviet and international film celebrity by the time the essay bearing the title “The Little Boy from Riga” was published. The flip side of the coin for Eisenstein was a sense of not quite being able to grow up, to fully assume the responsibilities of adulthood, to rise to the official or non-official occasion, to escape the lingering psychological effects of his father’s intimidating behavior. In a very personal and touching letter to Pera Atasheva, or “Pearl,” as he called her, sent from the ship that took him across the Atlantic in May 1930, he expressed the feeling of being “little” again in connection with his American professional prospects, as if he had to start learning what life was all about once again, uncertain as to whether he would manage or not.¹

Eisenstein’s heart attack in 1946 and the following convalescence seem to have triggered profound experimentation with his own signature. Graphological analysis and speculation were long-time interests of Eisenstein’s and the possibility of making what we could call characterological generalizations from the formal evolution of his signature (as well as from his own art) obviously intrigued him. The regressive aspects of signing your

1 *Kinovedcheskie zapiski* 36/37 (1997–8): 222.

name, i. e., the return to emotions and experiences belonging to a “pre-adult” developmental sphere that Eisenstein would characterize as pre-natal and pre-logical in the ontogenetic and phylogenetic senses, were perceived as important in his own psychobiographical development. The self-conscious and elaborate working and re-working of his own signature, the autographical construction of his name, the attempt to realize a structure that would encompass both birth and death, a mnemonic and projective device that would recover pre-natal experience as well as post-mortem nullity, are under consideration here.

“The little boy from Riga” spent his first fifteen years in this old Latvian city on the river Daugava and the Baltic Sea. Riga had been a fortress up until the mid-nineteenth century, with the old city center surrounded by medieval defense walls. In the 1850s these walls were torn down and the former fortification esplanade was replaced by semicircular boulevards laid out according to a master plan by the chief architect of Riga, Johan Daniel Felsko, and architect Otto Dietze. At the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century this area and the suburbs saw extensive reconstruction and building due to rapid economic expansion and population growth. One of the architects engaged in the design and construction of these buildings was Eisenstein’s father, Mikhail Osipovich, an eclectic but resolute exponent of the flourishing *Jugendstil* or *stil modern*, as it was called in Russia. Young Sergei grew up seeing his father’s distinctive *art nouveau* edifices rise and take shape during the first decade of this century.

Eisenstein bemoaned his bookish childhood, the fact that he learned about the world through books before he had a chance to experience reality himself. To compensate for this sensuous deprivation, for the loss of a more normal and not so well-behaved childhood, he broke with his father by joining the Revolution and becoming an artist and filmmaker. Eisenstein’s autobiographical accounts present his father, with whom he lived for more than five years after his mother moved to St Petersburg in 1909, as a tyrant and dreadful example of misguided architectural artistry. Thus he writes with characteristic irony in

his memoirs, referring to the façade decorations on one of his father's buildings:

Perhaps that was why the strange architectural fantasy of the most bizarre art nouveau, which Papa was so fixated with, raised similar figures, many storeys high, on the facade of the building on the corner opposite Alberta Street in Riga, which Papa had completely covered.

Eight massive maidens made of hollow iron drainpipes lined the facade.

[...]

... The maidens on Papa's facade were sealed top and bottom.

And torrents beat down on the crowns of the heads, unable to force their way inside, to pour through the body and crash into the drainpipes below.

Heavy downpours coursed all over them.

Their rivulets felt the contours of the body, moving over it like a living hand.

Breasts rose proud above the streams like islands.

Dark currents streamed from under the stomach.

Rain.

Its brief encounters left dark pawmarks on the artificial alabaster of the athletic and senselessly posed figures.

The effect was shocking.

And so one fine day these maidens, reduced to a torso, breasts, arms, thighs and feet, ended their dubious existence.

I could perhaps use them for one thing...

It was probably my memory of them that led to my dismembering the giant statue of Alexander III with such mouthwatering excitement, in the opening episode of *October*.

I doubt if I would have seized upon the drama of the toppling statue, captured on film, but for memories of Papa's maidens, somewhere at the back of my mind.

And if I add that the dismembered and overturned, hollow figure of the Tsar served as an image of the overthrow of tsarism in February, then it is clear that this start to the film, recalling the defeat of Papa's creation using the image of the Tsar himself, was about my personal liberation from Papa's authority.²

2 S. M. Eisenstein, *Selected Works, Vol. 4. Beyond the Stars: The*

Eisenstein challenges Papa's authority and ridicules his father's architectural "signature" by making fun of his hollow maidens being reduced to their constituent parts through the relentless forces of nature. By demonstrating the hollowness of the statue of Alexander III in his film *October*, he meant to reveal the emptiness of the tsarist system and indirectly of his father's art nouveau façades. In the film we see people climbing the statue of the Tsar, tying ropes around the head and pulling it off the torso just the way the onion domes of the Russian churches were pulled down by zealous revolutionaries after 1917. Then the statue appears to spontaneously disintegrate, arms and legs falling off, exposing the structural framework upon which it was built. Similarly plaster maidens and other recurring features of Mikhail Eisenstein's architectural handwriting are repeatedly exposed and derided in his son's memoirs. Mikhail Osipovich's buildings were tangible symbols of his son's unhappy upbringing and signs of the pre-revolutionary social system. They obviously had to be denigrated and if not actually, symbolically destroyed. The question that interests me here is: did any of these architectural creations or parts of them somehow survive as forms in Sergei Eisenstein's writing and artistic work?

Before I try to answer this question I would like to dwell on one of Eisenstein's remarkable autobiographical short texts, called "Muzis."³ This text has a self-reflexive character in relation to the autobiographical genre as such since it deals not only with personal memories but with the issue of memory, remembering, mnemonic tools, and what Bergson called involuntary memory, those memories that come to us without an active effort to remember. But it is also a marvelous, though perhaps unjust, rendition of the provincialism of his childhood town, which Eisenstein can afford to make fun of after he has long left the city:

Memoirs of Sergei Eisenstein, ed. Richard Taylor, trans. William Powell (London: BFI Publishing, 1995), 431–3.

3 Ibid., 121–3.

A police superintendent can have a most unusual name.
Particularly if he is in Riga.

Well, who thought a police superintendent could be called...
Muzis.

Nevertheless, he was.

My school friend's father – the police superintendent – was called Muzis.

Muzis was the object of my envy.

Muzis had a fat, grease-stained notebook, crammed full with papers and notes – a notebook, with a rubber-band!

This is probably a hereditary feature for Muzises.

I can picture Muzis's father in my mind's eye, with his grease-stained notebook as he makes an arrest, or is on a search, or "taking down the particulars."⁴

This "taking down the particulars" (*sostavlenie protokola*), or more literally, "drawing up a report" is here presented as a slightly pompous and officious act that Eisenstein longed to emulate. Notebooks did not run in his family, however. His father's life was cluttered with all sorts of tools related to the architect's profession, but no notebooks. It was not because Eisenstein lacked access to these books, he simply could not fill the ones he had with anything:

Essential things I always remember.

Matters of importance are stored as notes in files, but to think up something special for a notebook is beyond me.

Then again, these files will be my horrible death.

They are numerous.

They never end.

And each of them contains some sort of thematic "selection" of material, *Beleg-material* [proof of] some crazy notion or fleeting idea.⁵

4 Ibid., 121.

5 Sergei Mikhailovich Eizenshtein, *Memuary*, 2 vols. (Moscow: Muzei kino, 1997), 90 (my translation).

In a sense Eisenstein's files resemble a mnemonic system with concrete "locations" for notions to be backed up by the material in the files. However, what he in fact seems to be describing with "thematic 'selection' of material" are the texts of his autobiography. His heart attack had allowed him to finally go through his files, the continuous amassing of which threatened to bring about his death. Is writing his autobiography an attempt to escape death, a post scriptum that will keep him alive as long as he keeps on writing? Speaking of his files, Eisenstein concludes: "I should compile an 'inventory' of things I have not thought through to the end, or written up in full. A catalogue, *sui generis*, of my debts to myself."⁶ Are these files his autobiographical texts, full of material, his life, which he has not yet "thought through to the end?" Establishing a catalogue of all the bits and pieces of memory which crop up during convalescence, that is what he owed to himself.

Autobiographies can also be viewed as *Belegmaterial*, as efforts to provide evidence of a life, a significant life in particular, as confirmation of the social value of one's contributions and work. Social confirmation and identity were important to Eisenstein, but writing his autobiography, remembering and putting his past into words after his heart attack, failed to satisfy his quest for the meaning, social or otherwise, of the forty-eight years he had lived.⁷ He objects violently to the desperate piling of autobiographical details he perceived in Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*, saying that you cannot move backwards in time, the trains of life move forward and all you can do is jump from one to the next. What then could unite the past, present, and future of anyone's life, at least symbolically? Writing as such, the act of writing, the never-ending meanderings of your handwriting; the ever repeatable form of your signature perhaps? Eisenstein was extremely preoccupied with graphological speculations about his own signature and with the symbolism of the circle and circular forms toward the end of his

6 Ibid., 123.

7 Eisenstein, *Beyond the Stars*, 6.

Pro domo sua

7.1.1948

Besides everything in my unity craze look at my signature <Помимо всего прочего в моей мании единства — посмотрите на мою подпись>.



Very very long ago <давным-давно>, в эпоху «Кино Малая Дмитровка» М.А.Бойтлер* читал ее как... эмбрио!

A noter: помимо этого предметно-образного чтения —

круг (внизу flattened <сплюснутый>).

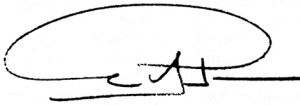
Но круг не абсолютного эгоцентризма, а с outflow <вытеканием> остального.

He:



(Это и как переплыв «кадра» в монтажную скиту. И, вероятно, характерологически: always ready to give one's knowledge away (as opposed, par exemple <всегда готов отдать свои знания (в противоположность, например,> к Мейерхольду).

NB. But why shouldn't I sign this way <А почему бы мне не подписываться таким образом> ?!!



It approaches the Yin-Yang formula
<Это подходит к формуле Инь-Ян>:



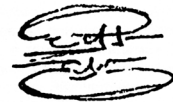
Let's try it out. (Then this page will be the birth-place of this new signature!) <Давай попробуем. (Тогда эта страница станет местом рождения новой подписи!)>



NB. By the way it is a synthesis of two variants which did exist
<Между прочим, это синтез двух вариантов, которые уже существовали>:

one and the same upside down <одна и такая же перевернутая>!

(Mirror <Зеркало>):



Great!!!

Fig. 2

Eisenstein's interest in graphology may go back to pre-revolutionary, even Riga times. At any rate, it would be fairly safe to assume that he was familiar with the idea of determining character traits through graphological analysis, through the interpretation of reoccurring graphical patterns in a person's handwriting, by the early 1920s. Eisenstein composed his first theoretical essay, "Expressive Movement," at Vsevolod Meyerhold's insistence in 1923.⁹ This essay was based mainly on ideas developed by the German philosopher and psychologist Ludwig Klages (1872–1956), who had begun his career in the field of graphology. Around the turn of the nineteenth century the semiotic analysis of handwriting – graphology – had evolved to the point of making claims to explaining complex character traits and personal psychology. The proponent of graphology as an aspect of *Charakterkunde*, characterology, was the German philosopher and critic Ludwig Klages, whose *Lebensphilosophie* or philosophy of life, was at the forefront of radically conservative cultural trends in Germany during the first decades of the twentieth century. Klages' approach was less reductionist than earlier attempts at analyzing longhand that involved the rigid identification of set features with specific psychological traits. In Klages' overriding theory of expression, *Ausdruckskunde*, the original graphological notion of *Formnivo* was a tool intended to articulate the formal qualities of the style in samples of writing in a kind of gestalt fashion, in which the totality of personal expression was more than or different from the sum of individual stylistic characteristics. "Klages employs this concept of 'style value' to examine organic or 'holistic' entities, and his evaluation proceeds from a global perception of the personal expression through to a more detailed scrutiny."¹⁰ Apart

9 Oksana Bulgakowa, "Sergej Eisenstein und die deutschen Psychologen" *Arbeitshefte 41: Herausforderung Eisenstein*, ed. Oksana Bulgakowa (Berlin: Akademie der Künste der DDR, 1989), 80–91.

10 Joe Pryce, "On the Biocentric Metaphysics of Ludwig Klages," https://archive.org/stream/OnTheBiocentricMetaphysicsOfLudwigKlages/OnTheBiocentricMetaphysicsOfKlages_djvu.txt

from their popular appeal, Klages' graphological ideas and lectures on *Lebensphilosophie* also interested many intellectuals and creative individuals, such as Walter Benjamin, Hermann Hesse, Thomas Mann, Wilhelm Furtwangler, and others outside the immediate German cultural sphere. Sergei Eisenstein most likely discovered Klages' thinking via the writings of Klages' disciple, Rudolf Bode, whose concept of *Ausdrucksgymnastik*, expressive gymnastics, played a role in Eisenstein's attempt to formulate his own theories of expressive movement. Although his assessment of Klages and his ideas was largely negative, mainly for political reasons, Eisenstein nevertheless appreciated the German philosopher's graphological system of analysis and thinking around expressive form. Klages wrote several books on the subject including *Die Probleme die Graphologie* (1910) and *Handschrift und Charakter* (1917) and was considered an authority. In 1896 he had founded the German Graphological Society, which published a journal that became extremely popular, especially in Poland and the Baltic countries.¹¹ Eisenstein doubtlessly knew of these books while writing the essay and may have known of the journal of the Graphological Society already during high school days in Riga. When he lectured on film theory in London in 1929, he made appreciative references to Klages' *Handschrift und Charakter*.¹²

The Russian philosopher Valery Podoroga has probed the issue of handwriting as self-revelation in Eisenstein's case by analyzing the director's signature.¹³ Podoroga's psychoanalytically inspired approach is centered on the conflict of subordination under and liberation from the father, the father figure, authority and society and leads him to an interesting distinction between *podpis* and *propis*. These words are not easy to adequately translate into English. The prefix *pod-* (sub-/under) in

11 James Webb, *The Occult Establishment* (La Salle: Open Court Publishing, 1976), 50, 181.

12 Marie Seton, *Sergei M. Eisenstein* (London: Dobson Books, 1978), 483.

13 Valery Podoroga, "S. Eizenshtein: vtoroi ekran," *Iskusstvo kino* 10 (1993): 45–58.

podpis' has no counterpart in the English "signature," but if we think of the word "the undersigned," the relevant meaning here becomes clearer. *Propis* is commonly rendered as "sample of writing" but here it refers to the process of repeating your signature over and over again in slightly varying forms – *autograph as autobiography*.

Is it possible, Podoroga asks in Eisenstein's place, to sign your name without repeating your father's and all the ancestors' names? Is there such a thing as an "original signature" (*pervaia podpis*), that does not underwrite your father's rule and implicitly the authority of society, thus confirming the social identity of the "undersigned?" No, neither the right to such a signature nor the signature itself exists. Your signature is a symbol of pure repetition or pure endorsement. It is a problem of how you inscribe yourself into the social body, according to Podoroga. Signing your name is always in some sense signing away your independence if not your life, because you subordinate yourself to somebody else's text, to someone else's power. When Eisenstein signed onto Lenin's idea of the importance of cinematography, he indirectly subordinated himself to a ruling conception of what part the filmmaker is to play in the building of communism – a law-abiding, well-behaved artist's brief homily:

Of all your art forms – the most important one is film (Lenin).

A reliable formula for the approach to art during the first ten years.

The task of cultural workers in the second ten-year period is to give the proletariat a basis for saying

Of all *our* art forms the most important one is film.

S. M. Eizenshtein¹⁴

There was however a solution for Eisenstein, a way to free himself from the name of the Father: to refuse to sign. Podoroga argues that the writing of his autobiography was Eisenstein's refusal to sign. By converting the act of signing into autobiographical writing, the signature can disappear into a text that

14 *Kinovedcheskie zapiski* 36/37 (1997–8): 252.

no longer underwrites the authority of the Father, the rules and regulations of the Stalinist ritual of socialization, allowing Eisenstein to establish his own inner, independent identity. *Propis* is not the same as *podpis*, it rather represents the inner non-identical forces of the signature, *podpis*, the spontaneous and autonomous movement of the writing that never produces the exact same form, the movement that does not know the name of the Father. The only way out from under these persistent guardians, the Fathers, is the “free flight of the *propis*, the dancing flourish of the body’s figures that symbolizes the regression to a pre-natal experience, to *Mutterleib*.” Podoroga calls the Eisenstein’s signature a “hieroglyphic sign of regression.”¹⁵

This regression or return is, of course, also where Eisenstein’s interesting idea of expressive movement, the “embodied notion” of “body language,” has its origin. The result of a return to the “roots” of the abstract concept, *Ausdrucksbewegung*, is the pure emotion expressed in human physio- or spatio-dynamic terms, the dynamism of the notion (“...and the Word became flesh.”). If this dynamism is projected onto the surrounding space, the human environment, the result is an animated totality, an organic whole, which is permeated in all its parts by a sense of exaltation, ecstasy – a *dancing signature*.

The expressive movement that spills out of the ‘human system’ into space, becomes *mise-en-scène*.

Mise-en-scène is spatial, metaphorical outline, the sense of which must be read by the viewer.

‘Tailing’ someone is expressed spatially by preserving the distance between the spy and the object.

The uniformity of the distance conveys the idea of the ‘linkage’, ‘attachment’ of one to the other, hence the figurative reading that the second is ‘inseparable’ from the first.¹⁶

15 Podoroga, “S. Eizenshtein: vtoroi ekran,” 47. Eisenstein conceived of the signature as an “ideogram”; see S. M. Eisenstein, *Nonindifferent Nature: Film and the Structure of Things*, trans. Herbert Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 341.

16 Eisenstein, *Beyond the Stars*, 497.

In other words, the tailer is inseparable from the tailed, the tailer is the shadow of the tailed, his double, in a sense. If this is correct, Eisenstein's idea of the detective as graphologist or vice versa becomes extremely interesting. There are two distinct types of detectives just as there are kinds of graphologists – one operates in an analytical manner, the other's approach is 'physiognomical' or synthetical. To the first category belong graphologists like Ludwig Klages and the American Jerome S. Meyer, whose book *How to Read Character from Handwriting* (1927) Eisenstein discusses in "The music of landscape" in his volume *Nonindifferent Nature*. It is the second category, the non-Sherlock Holmes type, in Eisenstein's conception, that concerns us here. "Among graphologists," Eisenstein writes, "one example is Ralph Sherman, who has become very famous since 1929, when he foretold the death of Stresemann three days before the catastrophe (by a fragment of a letter one of his colleagues of the German Foreign Department brought to Sherman for analysis)."¹⁷ The linking of graphological analysis with fortune telling in this quote is important and I will return to it later. Sherman's approach is "to extract some general, synthetic, graphic image from the handwriting (essentially from the client's signature, which in many cases is like a person's graphic self-portrait)." Eisenstein had the opportunity of meeting Sherman in Berlin in 1929. His description of this encounter is worth quoting:

When you enter his study, this hypersensitive man of small stature with a pale face and sharp, explosive movements convulsively grabs a pen and begins to write on a piece of paper... *with your handwriting!*

[...]

In this way he captures the basic 'tonality' of a person, which is formed first of all from the *rhythmic characterization* of the whole complex of the person's functions.

But the *rhythmic characterization* is the external imprint of the *characterization of inner relationships and conflicts* in the 'inner system' – in a person's psyche.

17 Eisenstein, *Nonindifferent Nature*, 341.

[...] For it is in the rhythm of the handwriting that the dynamic characterization of a momentary emotional state or habitual emotional state appears so distinctly, that is, the material that provides the possibility of judging character!¹⁸

Let us return for a moment to the “signature” of Eisenstein’s father, his architecture in *Albertovskaya ulitsa* or *Albertstrasse*, the character of which Eisenstein so readily condemned as inauthentic and absurd. In the essay “Muzis” Eisenstein’s memory supplies him with unintentional and inessential material, “rubbish,” as he calls it, which significantly enough leads to Papa who was responsible for Eisenstein’s having to spend his first fifteen years in Riga:

It was because Papa worked as a senior engineer in the roads department of the Livonian provincial government, and was busy with an extensive architecture-cum-construction practice.

I think Papa built as many as fifty-three houses in Riga.

And there was an entire street in the crazy *art nouveau* style, which so transported my dear parent.¹⁹

This street is today named *Alberta iela* and several of the buildings, or at least the façades, signed Mikhail Eisenstein have been restored in recent years. Mikhail Osipovich’s five buildings in a row occupy almost the entire north-eastern side of the street. The art nouveau style championed by Eisenstein Sr. was eclectically enhanced or fortified with geometric forms and elements from the entire history of architecture. It would be rather surprising if some of these shapes had not been permanently imprinted in the young Sergei’s mind from the sheer theatrical weight of these constellations of form. In fact, the richness and characteristic verticality of his father’s art nouveau style may have had something to do with Eisenstein’s subsequent enthusiasm for the architecture of the gothic cathedrals. Today we can again see the impressive lions on top of

18 Ibid., 341, 342.

19 Eisenstein, *Beyond the Stars*, 123.

Alberta iela 4, Lebedinsky's apartment building which Mikhail Osipovich designed in 1904 with un-bobbed tails. That these plaster animals may have inspired Eisenstein when he filmed the marble lions in Alupka on Crimea for *Battleship Potemkin* is a possibility. Similarly, the Medusa-like faces with opened mouths on the façade could have figured in his mind as he conceived of the young mother's facial expression when she was shot on the Odessa steps. What may seem less plausible perhaps is that this façade would have something to do with the various forms of Eisenstein's signature.

During his visit to the US and Hollywood in the early 1930s Eisenstein visited a renowned fortuneteller in order to see what the future had in store for him. We may safely assume that among the *Belegmaterial* submitted by Eisenstein for "proof-reading" was his elaborate signature-cum-architecture, the style of which I would at this point venture to call art nouveau-inspired or in the style of *stil modern*. There is no secret in Eisenstein's being very superstitious, so when he was told that he would only survive his fiftieth birthday, this information had to be seriously considered. Speaking of Chinese banking practices which included the employment of fortunetellers to check customers' credit worthiness, Eisenstein wrote: "The fortuneteller, having looked at the client carefully, reproduces his psychological *habitus* in exactly the same way as Ralph Sherman does, and thus catches his own personal impression of the degree of 'moral trustworthiness' of the one being tested."²⁰

With Eisenstein's strong belief in the determining powers of the formal features of his signature (as well as of his art), it is easy to see him trying to manipulate these features in order to control the perception of his own character and even shape his own destiny. *Pro domo sua* would give some credence to that assumption, since it is a speculation about the characterological implications of the rounded forms in his signature. Eisenstein was intensely preoccupied with the significance of circu-

20 Eisenstein, *Nonindifferent Nature*, 343.

lar, oval and other rounded shapes at this time. In his several texts called *Krug*, "Circle," for instance, we find this peculiar drawing of a Chinese door opening, with distinct similarities to the so-called omega-windows in art nouveau buildings which Mikhail Osipovich used extensively in his façades, especially in the Lebedinsky building.²¹

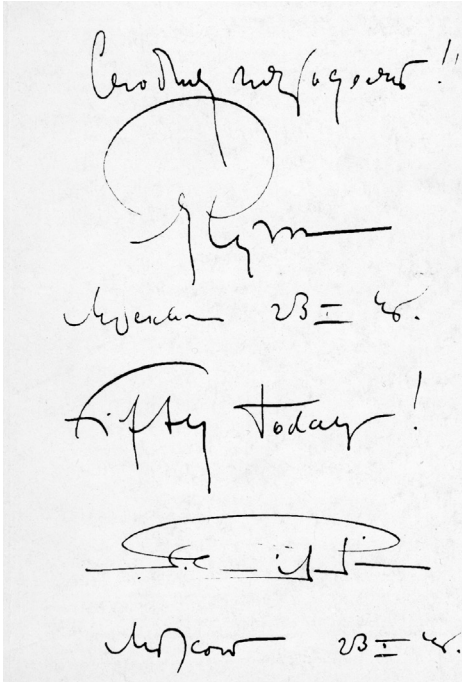


Fig. 3

On his fiftieth birthday, January 23, 1948, Eisenstein wrote this cheerful note, *Pro domo sua*, to himself in Russian and English. The loosely art nouveau or organic style of his signatures and their layout on the page bear a kind of structural resemblance to the façade of the Lebedinsky building, with its omega-windows and balcony door on the top floor and the oval window with a larger balcony door on the level below. To the extent that this similari-

21 Eisenstein, *Metod*, 2:571.

ty is more than a coincidence, we might have to modify or even challenge Podoroga's assertion that Eisenstein's "dancing signature" represents the film director's attempt to liberate himself from the weight of his father's name, to disprove gravitational forces by lifting himself by the hair, levitating, and ultimately returning to the weightless condition of the womb, *Mutterleibs-versenkung*. Instead we seem to have a case of the prodigal son returning home to his father's house or *Vaterleibsversenkung*, to improve upon a notion I believe Naum Kleiman has coined. The symbolism of his signature, as I have tried to argue here, would seem to indicate that there is no escape from the weight of the father's name, since that weight is not in the name itself but in the form as such. Thus, all forms of writing, artistic, autobiographical, and otherwise are burdened by the ties to the Father. "In the beginning was the Word..."



Figs. 4, 5

The experience of *nichto*, nothingness, ecstatic departure into the cosmic void, *Mutterleibs-versenkung*, as opposed to the prodigal son returning home – "*Vaterleibs-versenkung*" – may finally

all be related to another essay from *Beyond the Stars*, “Katerinki,” in which Eisenstein tries to create fiction from his own “tragic romantic experience.” He describes himself as a mute cathedral builder who has become the enslaved guardian of his own work:

As dancers are the slaves of their own feet, girls slaves of their own voices accompanied by the lute and, as those whose expertise lies in plucking the strings of a harp become slaves to their hands, he himself spent some time in the darkness, whispering to himself or writing in the dust with an unsteady finger:

“Who am I? No more than the steward of my thoughts, the resigned servant of my works... A bell-shaped vessel through which the people – my brothers – speak. I myself am nothing.”²²

Who or what is this ‘nothing’? There is a series of line-drawings by Eisenstein’s hand, called “Nothing” (*Nichto*). The drawings show the contours of several human figures gradually merging with, and disappearing into, a great oval, at first an oval disc seemingly pierced by or cutting the limbs of the figures and then absorbing their outlines into its circumference.²³ These drawings are almost hauntingly ambiguous: do they represent the positive merging of the individual with the collective, the “bell-shaped vessel” through which the people speak or are the circular shapes incarnations of the bottomless pit of the social and political collective that devours all individuality and perhaps, in the end, all life? Maybe Eisenstein used them simply as the ultimate expression of that great reversed synthesis, the final diffusion of *Vaterleib*, *Mutterleib* and the fetus, the stylized shape of which was also prominent in some versions of Eisenstein’s signature. *Nichto* is what remains when all has returned to its origin, when all *Versenkungen* are completed and the trains of the future have moved backwards all the way to the beginning of the journey that never was. Judging from Eisenstein’s drawing of *Mutterleibsversenkung*, life seems to have been just such a journey backwards to something that never was, *nichto*.

22 Eisenstein, *Beyond the Stars*, 710.

23 Podoroga, “S. Eizenshtein: vtoroi ekran,” 49.

ANNE NESBET

WHITEWASH AS MASTERY:
EISENSTEIN, LE CORBUSIER,
AND MARIE ANTOINETTE'S BREASTS

When Le Corbusier visited Moscow in the fall of 1928, he was so impressed by what he saw of Eisenstein's films (*The Battleship Potemkin* and four reels' worth of *The General Line*, which was very much still in progress) that he said in a dedication scrawled into a copy of *L'Art décoratif d'aujourd'hui*, "It seems to me that I think like Mr. Eisenstein when he makes cinema (*Il me semble bien que je pense comme M. Eisenstein lorsqu'il fait du cinéma*)."¹ The twists and turns of that resemblance – and of resemblance itself – are what I will be exploring here.

Le Corbusier's dedication continues in an intriguing vein: "The spirit of truth, whitewash, two chapters of this book that also express the same conviction... (*Esprit de vérité, le lait de chaux, deux chapitres de ce livre qui expriment aussi le même conviction*)."² Le Corbusier is referring here to a particular passage from *L'Art décoratif d'aujourd'hui* (the book inscribed with this dedication) in which he sings the praises of whitewash and, in particular, of the glossy, and frequently white, paint known as "Ripolin," after its Dutch inventor, Carl Julius Ferdinand Riep: "THE LAW OF RIPOLIN, OF WHITEWASH. We would make it a moral act: to love purity! (*LA LOI DU RIPOLIN, LE LAIT DE CHAUX. Nous ferions un acte moral: Aimer la pureté! ...*)."³

1 Jean-Louis Cohen, *Le Corbusier et la mystique de l'URSS: Théories et projets pour Moscou, 1928–1936* (Brussels; Liège: Pierre Mardaga, 1987), 72.

2 Ibid., 72.

3 Le Corbusier, *L'Art décoratif d'aujourd'hui* (Paris: Flammarion,

For Le Corbusier there may well have been an echo between “*lait de chaux*” (whitewash) and “*La Chaux-de-fonds*,” the name of the town where the architect spent his childhood and youth, and where in 1912 (still under his birth name of Charles-Édouard Jeanneret) he built his first independent project for his parents: the so-called “*Maison blanche*” (“White House”). If we scratch with good humor at the words, we may even hear a certain counterpoint between the milky theme in “*lait de chaux*” and the origin story suggested by “*Chaux-de-fonds*”: whitewash as mother’s milk.

In *L’Art décoratif d’aujourd’hui*, Le Corbusier makes a forceful case for the virtues of whitewash:

If the house is all white, the outline of things stands out from it without any possibility of mistake; their volume shows clearly; their colour is distinct. The white of whitewash is absolute, everything stands out from it and is recorded absolutely, black on white; it is honest and dependable.⁴

In other words, whitewash becomes a kind of a background, a *fond* (at other points Le Corbusier explicitly says that the way we should be thinking today is “*sur fond blanc*” – against a white background).⁵ Upon such a background all of one’s life can then be reinscribed.

The theme of whitewash as central to remaking the self runs throughout Le Corbusier’s hymn to Ripolin in *L’Art décoratif d’aujourd’hui*, in which whitewash becomes the key to a kind of mastery:

Imagine the results of the Law of Ripolin. Every citizen is required to replace his hangings, his damasks, his wall-papers,

1996 [1925]), 190–1.

4 Le Corbusier, *The Decorative Art of Today*, trans. James Dunnett (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987), 190.

5 Le Corbusier, *L’Art décoratif*, v; 194.

his stencils, with a plain coat of white ripolin. *His home* is made clean. There are no more dirty, dark corners. *Everything is shown as it is*. Then comes *inner* cleanness (*en soi*), for the course adopted leads to refusal to allow anything at all which is not correct, authorised, intended, desired, thought-out: no action before thought. When you are surrounded with shadows and dark corners you are at home only as far as the hazy edges of the darkness your eyes cannot penetrate. You are not master in your own house. Once you have put ripolin on your walls you will be *master of yourself* (*maître de vous*).⁶

Le Corbusier suggests that the whitewashing of the walls can even reshape the interiors of the inhabitants of those walls. Indeed, by whitewashing properly, we can apparently remove interiority itself as a problem, on both an architectural and spiritual level: by cleaning up and expunging all dark corners *in one's home*, one eventually finds that one has done the same *inside himself*. Then man can finally be the “master” of his own space, says Le Corbusier, though we notice his argument is actually that one will have constructed an environment with walls so blank that they infestiously master us, to our benefit.

This way of thinking – of a structure, of walls and images, that can reshape the mind – has resonances with Eisenstein’s hopes for cinema, certainly. It is ironic, however, that it is images from a film by Eisenstein – whose way of thinking (and of writing and creating), was, I think we could argue, quite *cluttered*, with every image packed with other sub-images, references, nods of the head, and so on – that remind Le Corbusier of this hymn to the whitewashed wall. To be precise, the inspiration was the model of a modern experimental farm, a *sovkhos*, constructed by the architect Andrei Burov for *The General Line*. [Fig. 1]

6 Le Corbusier, *Decorative Art*, 188.



Fig. 1

Burov was an enormous fan of Le Corbusier and a gifted mimic. He even liked to dress up as a sort of knock-off of Le Corbusier: there is a photograph of Le Corbusier, Eisenstein, and Burov, in which Eisenstein is sandwiched between a pair of mirror images in round glasses (see page 321 in this volume). Le Corbusier even holds his cigarette in his right hand, Burov in his left. Le Corbusier was amused by the adulation and the imitation: in one of the notebooks in which he scribbled names, telephone numbers, and cryptic notes during his trip to Moscow, we find the comment “Bouroff, whom they call: Bouroff-Le Corbusier (*Bouroff on l’appelle: Bouroff-Le Corbusier*).”⁷

For *The General Line*, Burov constructed a cinematic *sovkhos* out of elements taken right from Le Corbusier’s illustrations in *Vers une architecture*. There are the silos, the straight lines, the

7 Le Corbusier archive, Fondation Le Corbusier, Agenda VII, 26. (F 3–4, Carnet VII, *carnets de notes*).

large windows and flat concrete walls, the suggestion of *pilotis*, Le Corbusier's beloved pier supports, as the upper story overhangs open areas below.⁸ The *sovkhos* set is an unabashed salute to Le Corbusier and Burov must have been thrilled to be able to show the reel containing images of his architectural homage to the man who had inspired its design. An account that appeared in a Soviet journal (and attributed by Jean-Louis Cohen to Eisenstein himself, writing under the pen name, "Rorik") suggested that Le Corbusier was indeed impressed by what he saw in those reels of *The General Line* and that he was "astonished to see a very different utilization here of the architectural principles and forms of the West."⁹

The different way of using buildings that Le Corbusier found in the Soviet Union was a challenge to his argument that a house should be seen as a "*machine à habiter*." This model *sovkhos*, for instance, was not actually inhabitable. It was all surface: a machine for propaganda, a machine for training the mind to see the world differently.

In the typescript for an essay on Moscow written for the journal *L'Intransigent* in December 1928, after his return to France, Le Corbusier described Eisenstein's project in *The General Line* this way:

Armed with [my books], Eisenstein looked in Moscow for an architect capable of realizing constructions in reinforced concrete attesting to the new spirit. And so Eisenstein had them build in plaster... a model farm where his film takes place: cows, pigs, and horses circulate in the middle of scientific lab equipment for pasteurization; the personnel of the farm, male or female, wear white labcoats like the personnel of a clinic. The peasant must be amazed (*Le moujick doit en rester baba*).¹⁰

8 Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture*, trans. Frederick Etchells (New York: Dover, 1986), 29, 31.

9 V. S. (Vladimir Soley), "Novaia klientura arkhitektura Le Korbiuz'e," *Sovetskii Ekran*, 46 (November 13, 1928): 5, as cited in Cohen, *Le Corbusier*, 29, 31. For Cohen's explanation of "Rorik" as a pseudonym see Cohen, *Le Corbusier*, 85.

10 Fondation Le Corbusier (archive), FLC A3-2, *Articles L. C. publiés*, 32 g 37, "Architecture à Moscou," *l'Intransigent*, 1928, typescript,

The birth of the new architectural spirit occurs in a dairy turned into a kind of clinic by the whiteness of the *sovkhos* workers' uniforms. But Le Corbusier's comment that "*le moujick doit en rester baba*" is particularly striking. The simplest translation – that the "peasant must be amazed" – doesn't do credit to the tangle of sexual and gender implications to be found in the phrase. *Moujick* means peasant, certainly, but also "guy" or "man," while in the Slavic world *baba* can refer to an old woman, a woman, or (by extension) to parts of a woman. Thus to say that a *moujick* becomes *baba* when confronted with this new, clinical sort of *sovkhos* has at least a whiff of a cross-linguistic pun, a dirty joke, the sort of BiSex joke that Eisenstein would appreciate.

What exactly, however, is this gaping peasant amazed *by*? Here, too, the question turns out to be more complicated than we might have thought.

Notice what has happened in the course of Le Corbusier's account. Eisenstein went looking for an architect who could handle the new material of modern architecture (reinforced concrete), in accordance with the "new spirit," and what he actually found was a person who could put up an *imitation* of such a structure, made not of concrete, but of plaster. To the camera eye, plaster and reinforced concrete are equivalent surfaces, made identical by their respective coats of whitewash. And, of course, Eisenstein and Burov had come to know Le Corbusier's buildings through images (photographs) of their surfaces. Nevertheless, in the logic of an architect like Corbusier, who valued the integrity of materials, the substitution of a plaster illusion of a model collective farm (Le Corbusier uses the old-fashioned term "*métairie*," which suggests sharecropping) *cannot* be the equivalent of a "*machine à habiter*." A set is a "machine for living" that *doesn't actually work*: the opposite of everything for which Le Corbusier usually campaigned.

In this case Le Corbusier was blinded, perhaps, by the whitewash, the ability of cinema to approach the whiteness of properly

5. Also cited in Cohen, *Le Corbusier*, 74.

“ripolined” surfaces, to create the very picture of truth (though not truth itself). Those are the two qualities for which he praises Eisenstein, we recall: “*esprit de vérité, le lait de chaux...*” But truth and whitewashing can be awkward companions.

What relationship does whitewash have, for instance, to the problem of authentic materials? In the Soviet reception of Le Corbusier, the question of “genuine materials” had a certain prominence. See, for instance, the *Sovremennaia arkhitektura* review of Le Corbusier’s *L’art décoratif* in 1926:

The market is flooded with irons, decorated with acanthus leaves; the average man on the street buys himself furniture made of carved wood “Renaissance style,” or “*Style russe*,” glassworks and china factories produce tumblers à la “Baccarat” and urinals à la “Delft porcelain.” The explanation for this nonsense is very simple: for a manufacturer it’s more profitable to “decorate” an object made out of poor material than to produce a simple object out of good material.¹¹

Stories about searching for “genuine materials” are oddly common even in discussions of film production, perhaps as a kind of compensation for the camera’s ability to whitewash surfaces, thus erasing distinctions between genuine and fake materials – indeed, possibly undermining the very idea of genuineness itself. In an article on *The General Line* that Eisenstein published in Henri Barbusse’s journal, *Monde*, in March 1929, one of the central anecdotes has to do with a kind of whitewashing: the search for a blond boy for the role of a “young communist with straw-colored hair.”¹² In Eisenstein’s telling, the story becomes a kind of Cinderella tale, with truly flaxen hair substituting for Cinderella’s unbelievably dainty foot. Armed with “a list of all the

11 V. G. Kalish, “Le Korbuz’e-Son’e: dekorativnoe iskusstvo sovremennosti,” *Sovremennaia arkhitektura* 2 (1926): 48.

12 S. M. Eisenstein, “*La ligne générale*. Un beau film,” *Monde (Paris)*, March 23, 1929, 10. Scan of article can be found at <http://www.cinematheque.ch/f/documents-de-cinema/complement-de-programme/sm-eisenstein/> Accessed on July 6, 2017.

blonds in the area, compiled by the local soviet,” the film crew drives around, causing understandable panic. Then, as they leave the village, their local driver, “Vasia,” takes off his cap to reveal – blond hair! It’s a “miracle,” but the story doesn’t end there:

We look at him: no, he doesn’t seem quite blond *enough*... Before he can perform, there he is, sitting before us, with a bandaged head, like a wounded soldier. He’s waiting the results of the operation undertaken by our comrade Antonov, who has washed his mane with bleach...¹³

In this variant on the old Cinderella story, we find a striking conflation of genuineness and imitation, of a “Cinderella” whose body naturally conforms to some rare ideal (in this case played by “Vasia,” with the naturally blond hair they could find nowhere else in the village) and of a faking stepsister who must hack at her own insufficiently tiny foot if it’s ever to fit into a glass slipper (also here represented by Vasia, whose poor head is bandaged like that of “a wounded soldier” as his naturally-but-insufficiently blond hair is subjected to bleach). Although genuine materials seem important at the beginning of the story, in the end, bleach is better, partly because it allows the filmmakers to assert their mastery over everything, even “natural blonds.”

As it happens, questions of imitation and mastery haunt Eisenstein’s work at the end of the 1920s, during the period he was finishing *The General Line* and then traveling in Europe. In the fall of 1929, when Eisenstein was invited to give a talk in German at the first meeting of the *Congrès international du cinéma indépendant* (CICI) gathering at La Sarraz, Switzerland, he titled this lecture, “Imitation as Mastery” (*Nachahmung als Beherrschung*). In this talk he explored, with a certain amount of humor, the various ways in which people can consume images or attempt to gain mastery over the world by the use (or “imitation”) of images.¹⁴ He starts

13 Eisenstein, “*La ligne générale*,” 10.

14 We are indebted to Naum Kleiman for the publication of these lecture drafts, as Richard Taylor explains in his introduction to the English translation in *Eisenstein Rediscovered*. See Richard Taylor, “Introduction: Eisenstein at La Sarraz,” *Eisenstein Rediscovered*, eds. Ian Christie and Richard Taylor (London; New York: Routledge, 1993), 64–6.

off his discussion with examples of old superstitious uses of imitation-as-mastery:

Catherine de' Medici has her court magician make wax models of her enemies. Then she pokes out their eyes with needles. Cuts up their bodies and limbs. She does it to make them unhappy... She does it only when she cannot, fortuitously, make these poor people unhappy in any other way!

Nowadays any old tart imitates her!

When her Fritz, Paul or Lude leaves her in the lurch, she cuts his photo across the face with her scissors. And tears his likeness to shreds. [...]

But this mastery, the magic one, is a mere fiction. Because magic imitation copies form.¹⁵

So imitation based on *form* (claims Eisenstein here), though it strikes deep chords in the human psyche, is mere "fiction" or even "magic." The trick, says Eisenstein, is not to reject imitation, but to imitate properly, to imitate not *form*, but *principle*:

Nonetheless imitation is the way to mastery.

But imitation of what?

Of the form that we see? No!

Catherine de' Medici needed a lot more than wax models to defeat her enemies.

[...]

So – away with form as model! What then remains?

Principle remains.

Mastery of principle is real mastery of objects!¹⁶

In his "Imitation as Mastery" lecture Eisenstein brings in architecture at one point, as part of his discussion of cheap forms of imitation (or rather, cheap imitation *of forms*):

Art is already familiar with the same phenomenon. First and foremost the art that is closest to real life: architecture and applied art.

15 Sergei Eisenstein, "Imitation as Mastery," trans. Richard Taylor, *Eisenstein Rediscovered*, 66–71.

16 Eisenstein, "Imitation as Mastery," 66.

In the dreadful era of art nouveau architecture too imitated nature. Houses stretched out like lianas (I almost said like Liane Haid! [an Austrian actress – AN]) Balconies became flowers, lamps fruit, pillars became hunchbacked maidens, and so on. It needed the advent of a Le Corbusier, a Gropius or a Bruno Taut to show the way to imitate nature: to investigate purposiveness [*Zweckmäßigkeit*], the principle of the structure of plants. To grasp the logic of the arrangement of the body, not to ape its proportions but likewise to investigate the logic of its design structure.¹⁷

These pseudo-organic pieces of architecture commit two crimes, according to Eisenstein. They lack functionality and they pretend to be what they are not: houses like lianas, balconies become flowers, lamps fruit, pillars hunchbacked maidens. The unliving parts of a building *imitate* vines, flowers, fruits, maidens, though they are not made of the same materials as actual vines, fruits, or maidens. They misuse ornament and decoration, and they are lying while they do so.¹⁸

However, this bad form of imitation is also very like the kind of pretense that goes into constructing a film set. How different is a non-functioning *sovkhos* made of plaster for the camera's eye from these buildings so derided by Eisenstein in his lecture for their imitation of "natural" forms? But "things pretending to be other things" is an essential aspect of sets and *mise-en-scène*.

Moreover, on closer inspection we see other stories running along under the surface in this sorting of buildings into good and bad. It's interesting, for instance, that the list of things imitated by these pseudo-organic buildings begins and ends with female figures (the lianas reminds us of the Austrian actress Liane Haid; what should be phallic "pillars," become "hunchbacked maidens"); the

17 Eisenstein, "Imitation as Mastery," 68.

18 These are also the sort of architectural crimes Eisenstein believed his father, Mikhail Eisenstein, a major architect in Riga, had committed; see S. M. Eisenstein, *Selected Works, Vol. 4., Beyond the Stars: The Memoirs of Sergei Eisenstein*, ed. Richard Taylor, trans. William Powell (London: BFI Publishing, 1995), 125.

pseudo-organic is gendered female, in contrast to the practical, purpose-driven, masculine buildings of Le Corbusier *et alia*.

Women are linked to the bad forms of imitation. Nowhere is that more noticeable than in Eisenstein's treatment of the doomed French Queen, Marie Antoinette. Into his discussion of "form" and "principle" in art, architecture, and film in his La Sarraz talk, Eisenstein inserts – as he liked to do in lectures and articles – a bawdy example:

The bust of Queen Marie-Antoinette. In its form wonderfully suited to its precise purpose. Shaped in glass and used as a punchbowl, it was probably not the most suitable form for a vessel. Look it up in Ed Fuchs's monumental work on the history of manners. There you will see the nonsense that Frenchmen produced as recently as the eighteenth century: the photo of the famous punchbowl. Nobody will imitate that now! But in film we are still playing Marie-Antoinette.¹⁹

Eduard Fuchs, whom Eisenstein had met in Berlin in 1926, was a prolific producer of books about caricature, about erotic art, and about Daumier, some of which Eisenstein eventually acquired for his own library.²⁰ Writing about the cult of the bosom in the eighteenth century, Eduard Fuchs has this to say about the bowl that legend has associated with the breast of Marie Antoinette:

Here is an object that represents an important document of the Cult of the Bosom as erotic beauty in the Ancien Régime. This is the story of the wonderful fruitbowl that used to decorate the Petit Trianon in Versailles and represented the artistic copy of a perfectly beautiful breast. According to the Goncourt Brothers, in the case of this bowl we were dealing with a direct copy of the breast of Queen Marie Antoinette.²¹ [Fig. 2]

19 Eisenstein, "Imitation as Mastery," 69.

20 According to Ada Ackerman it was Fuchs who convinced Eisenstein there was an important erotic side to Daumier's images. See Ada Ackerman, *Eisenstein et Daumier: Des affinités électives* (Paris: Armand Colin/Recherches, 2013), 185.

21 Eduard Fuchs, *Illustrierte Sittengeschichte vom Mittelalter bis zur*



Fig. 2

Fuchs proceeds to retell the Goncourts' story, that the whole thing was fallout from an "argument" in the Queen's intimate circle over who had the nicest breasts. Obviously the winner of such an argument had to be the Queen, "so Marie Antoinette permitted an *Abguß*, a cast, of her breast to be made as basis for an artistic copy of her beauty."²²

This is quite an interesting analysis, although (as we'll see in a moment), it's based on a number of inaccuracies. First of all, Fuchs's version of the legend has this bowl's origin in an *Abguß*, a casting or moulding taken from Marie Antoinette's actual breast, which provides the resulting object with (as we might want to call it) the scandal of indexicality. Eisenstein's turning of Fuchs's "fruit bowl" into a "punch bowl" ups the ante of the indexical scandal by suggesting that men's lips might touch this object that, via casting, once (even if at a number of removes) *touched* the actual breast of the Queen.

Gegenwart, Vol 2: *Die galante Zeit*. (München: Albert Langen, 1911), 149.

22 Fuchs, *Illustrierte Sittengeschichte*, 149. (Illustration, 126.)

Not that that was in fact the case! The “casting” of Marie Antoinette’s breast is one of those legends with (alas) no historical support. The actual cup exists, however, has a connection to Marie Antoinette, and can be viewed at the Musée National de Céramique in Sèvres, just outside Paris. [Fig. 3] It was actually neither punch bowl nor fruit bowl, but a cup from which Marie Antoinette was to drink milk in the dairy Louis XVI was having constructed for her in Rambouillet (another such dairy had been built at Versailles).²³ The breast-cup was meant, that is, to be a kind of stage prop as the Queen imitated rural life in her gilded imitation dairy. Meredith Martin explains that at Versailles there were actually two dairies, a real one and the “*laiterie d’agrément*” or “pleasure dairy.” The differences between the dairies had to do with functionality and with the kinds of materials used in each place:



Fig. 3

23 See the information provided by Virginie Desrante, curator of the porcelain collection at the Musée National de Céramique in Sèvres: http://www.sevresciteceramique.fr/documents/le_service_de_la_laiterie_de_rambouillet=doc112.pdf. Accessed on July 6, 2017. Desrante cites Selma Schwartz, “Un air d’antiquité, Le service de Sèvres réalisé pour la laiterie de Marie- Antoinette à Rambouillet,” *Versalia* 10 (2007): 154–81.

Marie-Antoinette's servants used the preparation dairy to fabricate milk products that were then brought to the pleasure dairy to be admired and consumed by the queen and her guests. Though the two dairies resembled each other in exterior appearance and interior layout, the pleasure dairy's furnishings were made of sumptuous white marble (rather than a plainer stone), and its interior stone walls were painted to resemble marble... The room was also outfitted with a lavish set of gilded porcelain dairy ware... that imitated the basic stone and tin utensils used in the preparation dairy, including settling pans and milk jugs.²⁴

The "pleasure dairy" used delicate materials ("gilded porcelain") in its imitation of rustic items. The cup shaped like a breast, from which Marie Antoinette was supposed to sip milk, was another such imitation.

Perhaps drinking milk from a cup in the shape of a breast is less nonsensical than eating fruit or drinking punch held in such a vessel, but there is a hint of the cannibalistic, even the auto-cannibalistic, in the image of the French Queen drinking milk almost *as if* from her own breast. That hint of cannibalism resonates nicely with Eisenstein's own reference to a similarly scandalous image in his lecture in La Sarraz:

The idea of cannibalism runs deep as well. How, where and when does a drive like that arise?

'Man is what he eats.' [*Der Mensch ist, was er ißt.*]

We read that every week in all the illustrated magazines! And that, it seems to me, conditions the instinct that drives us to consume our own likeness.

Our deep-seated instinct for self-preservation leads us to use as food what we ourselves consist of.

In instinctive primitive form there is however no distinction between external attribute, internal content and principle. It is all the same, so you eat what you see. If you eat your own likeness, you live forever.

24 Meredith Martin, *Dairy Queens: The Politics of Pastoral Architecture from Catherine de' Medici to Marie-Antoinette*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 3–4.

This atavistic cannibalism is also evident in the highly intellectualised mythology of the Greeks.

Chronos (Saturn). Eternity. Immortality... And Chronos... Devours his own children.

[...]

India has the god Brahma. The god is depicted sucking his own foot. The phallic symbol is crystal clear: Brahma, who is also the god of eternity and immortality, is devouring his own *sperm*.”²⁵

The representation of Brahma “devouring his own sperm” is a nice companion-image for that of Marie Antoinette *drinking milk from her own breast*. Especially when one considers that Eisenstein in the period of his lecture at La Sarraz was promoting his latest film, *The General Line* or *The Old and the New*, in which milk and sperm are conflated with gusto. A dream of a bull brings fecundity and milk raining from the sky; a cream separator ejaculates as the commodity butter is finally created.

In the case of the milk cup that is also Marie Antoinette’s own breast, the apparent cannibalism may be the consumption of the milk, but the deeper cannibalism (Eisenstein suggests here) is the cannibalism of the *form*, consuming the breast *as if* its similarity to a breast meant similarity in essence or principle.

Let’s back up a moment, however, and consider the relationship of this *cannibalism of form* to a particular linguistic device: the pun.

“Der Mensch ist, was er *ißt*.” (“Man is what he eats.”)

A pun makes meaning (often in the form of a joke) out of two words that just happen to resemble each other. Couldn’t we argue that the relationship between *ist* and *ißt* is a kind of cheap *imitation* – as empty as the link between Marie Antoinette’s breast and the milk cup that resembles it? We groan at puns and at arguments based on puns because they are based, as Eisenstein might say, on a kind of imitation of *form* rather than *principle*. But as Eisenstein tells the story in his memoirs, his introduction to the very idea of the pun was related again to

25 Eisenstein, “Imitation as Mastery,” 67–8.

Marie Antoinette, and tied in his memory to a childhood visit to the Musée Grévin, the great Parisian wax museum:

In the ‘Terror’ section [of the Musée Grévin] there was... Marie Antoinette in the Conciergerie. And Louis XVI in a chamber being pursued by the patriots. And in an earlier tableau the ‘Austrian woman/[bitch]’ (‘*L’autrichienne*’ = ‘*L’autre chienne*,’ – one of the first puns I really liked!) swooned as she looked out of the window to see a procession bearing aloft a pike with the head of the *Princesse de Lamballe*.²⁶ [Fig. 4]



Fig. 4

What a taste for puns the child Eisenstein has! They are something of a violent treat. The pun reminds us that Marie Antoinette was routinely hypersexualized and hyper-gendered (“*chienne*”/“*bitch*”), the butt of unending dirty jokes. You could even argue that puns like the one Eisenstein loved so much from childhood proved fatal in her case, being part of

26 Eisenstein, *Beyond the Stars*, 561–2.

Marie Antoinette's burgeoning reputation as a "bad mother."²⁷ The "pleasure dairy" itself and all its gilded imitations of ordinary objects did not help Marie Antoinette's case in any way: "From the time of its creation, Marie Antoinette's pleasure dairy has been an essential site in the development of her bad reputation, both as a thoughtless and extravagant queen and as a historical figure who violated the boundaries of her class and gender."²⁸

It's worth noting that the place and circumstances where Eisenstein made his encounter with Marie Antoinette were themselves replete with echoes, resemblances, and imitations. Let's look at his description of his visit to the Musée Grévin, which was such a formative moment in his development:

At the age of eight (in 1907) I was taken to Paris (after the 1905 revolution it was too dangerous to go to the dacha!). I have only vague memories of Paris and those recollections are what you might expect of a child. Dark wallpaper and the huge feather pillows... And, of course, above all else, more than anything and more powerful than anything, was the Musée Grévin. My impressions of the Musée Grévin are even now as fresh as ever.²⁹

The child Eisenstein looking wide-eyed at the image of Marie Antoinette fainting at the sight of her friend's head is himself (as he describes his journey) part of a family fleeing a revolution. The Eisensteins, at that moment, slightly *resemble* the French royal family displayed in the Musée Grévin, however much Eisenstein will side with Revolution and the guillotine in later life. The very brutality of the pun he wields against Marie Antoinette in the anecdote ("*l'Autrichienne*" / "*l'autre chienne*") may stem partly from a desire to counteract the awkwardness of that other resemblance.

27 See Lynn Hunt's *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

28 Meredith Martin, *Dairy Queens*, 2.

29 Eisenstein, *Beyond the Stars*, 559–60.

For that matter, the whole point of a wax museum is imitation, and the figures in the Musée Grévin acting out this historical nightmare are made of a material that has an oddly ambiguous quality: wax, the substance that is so oddly like flesh that it can be used to deceive tourists—to their own delight. Wax is also used in casting, however – think of the “lost wax” process – and as such it *reminds* us of indexicality, even if it is not functioning indexically at a given moment.

The Revolutionary scene at the Musée Grévin may be all imitation, and yet, as Eisenstein insists, it is incredibly effective, producing what he calls “impressions” that “are even now as fresh as ever.” The question of “effectiveness” brings us back to that other imitation of Marie Antoinette, the image of her breast turned into a punchbowl that Eisenstein cites in his lecture on “Imitation and Mastery” as a *reductio ad absurdum* of the mere imitation of form, the most extreme counter-example to the modern ideal represented, say, by Le Corbusier. Eisenstein might want to take another look at Eduard Fuchs’s analysis, however, because what Fuchs goes on to claim for the breast-cup is that the power of the piece lies not in its accurate or inaccurate imitation of the breasts of Marie Antoinette, but “solely in a glorification of its erotic effect on a man” (“einzig in einer Verherrlichung seiner erotischen Wirkung auf den Mann”).³⁰ Fuchs points to the decorative rams, an old symbol of “horniness,” as he argues that what makes the cup important is its ability to *affect the spectator*. And that *effectiveness* is something Eisenstein was also always seeking.

Marie Antoinette’s appearance in Eisenstein’s lecture of 1929 reminds us that, like Marie Antoinette, Eisenstein, too, had been playing with imitation dairies made of odd materials. These two dairies – the Le Corbusier-inspired *sovkhos* of *The General Line* and Marie Antoinette’s “pleasure dairy” – might seem at first glance to be entirely unlike, and yet they are tied together by these questions of “imitation” and “mastery.”

30 Fuchs, *Illustrierte Sittengeschichte*, 149.

With Marie Antoinette in mind, we can't help but notice that there is something important whitewashed out of the picture in Eisenstein's *sovkhos*: although in *General Line* there is *milk* everywhere, there is very little *milking*, relatively sparse presence of udders, teats, and maternal breasts – or of the feminine in general. (Fig. 4) In *The General Line's* imitation *sovkhos*, reproduction has been turned into a scientific process, largely separated from the forms of female anatomy. The exception that proves the rule is a shot of a nursing sow. That image then has to be expunged by being slaughtered and butchered during the dream sequence (a close look reveals the teats that mark the slaughtered pig as a sow, a sow playing the role in this film, we might say, of Marie Antoinette). The chicks emerge from stainless-steel trays; everything is clean, metallic (if possible), standardized and mechanized. The repression of everything feminine accompanies the right angles of Burov's imitation (if not mastery) of Le Corbusier's architecture. The rejection of the feminine (and of the debris of everyday life) is, however, not merely a formal aspect of Le Corbusier's modern architecture. It is one of its principles.

Le Corbusier includes a "Manual of the Dwelling" [*Manuel de l'habitation*], as a kind of embedded leaflet in *Towards a New Architecture*, in order to argue against furniture, pictures on walls, decorations, and all the clutter produced by the sloppy human beings (especially women and children) whose presence messes up the lines of modern architecture. He calls for this manifesto to be "distributed to mothers of families," and for those mothers to teach their children the value of keeping walls and floors perfectly clear.³¹

A similar attempt to expunge feminine clutter from modern architecture can be seen in the film about the need to modernize abortion, *Misery and Fortune of Woman* (*Frauennot – Frauenglück*) made by Eisenstein's group (Eduard Tisse and Grisha Alexandrov, with some help from Eisenstein himself) in Swit-

31 Le Corbusier, *Vers une architecture* (Flammarion: Paris, 1995 [1923]), 96.

zerland in 1929 for Lazar Wechsler's Praesens-Film company.³² This film was meant as a polemic in favor of abortions performed in modern gynecological clinics over the old-fashioned horror of back-alley operations. To a surprising degree, the film makes its case *architecturally*, and in particular by associating certain kinds of buildings with certain kinds of bodies.

The first shots of the film (the "Misery" section) show old-fashioned buildings and crooked streets. This is the almost *Caligari*-like setting within which unhappy women must turn to other unhygienic women, in cluttered apartments, for abortions. In contrast, the modern gynecological clinic has male doctors, all bodies are draped in pristine white robes, the instruments are shiny, and the spaces are large, boxy, modern, and uncluttered. The message is clear: old buildings and old rooms and women's excessive bodies must be replaced by new buildings, uncluttered rooms, and male doctors (with bodies hygienically draped and concealed).

Like the Le Corbusier-inspired dairy of *The General Line*, the cinematic clinic must do its best to expunge the female from the equation: a home movie exists of Eisenstein pretending to perform an obstetrical procedure on Lazar Wechsler, who's lying on a surgical table. Grisha Alexandrov would later remember this episode differently – that *he* had been the birth mother undergoing a cinematic "Caesarean section" on the operating table.³³ The whole idea of the "Caesarean section," in which a baby's head appears out of a woman's draped belly, brings a whiff of the guillotine into the clinic: heads that seem oddly unrelated to bodies; blades slicing through female bodies.³⁴ In

32 Officially, Eisenstein had offloaded the task onto Tisse and Alexandrov, but from all accounts Eisenstein was pretty actively involved. Eisenstein is visible in the footage that has shown up in Lazar Wechsler's home movies – pretending to perform some sort of obstetric maneuver on Wechsler, who is lying on a surgical bed in the clinic.

33 G. V. Aleksandrov, *Epokha i kino* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1983), 134.

34 See also Anne Nesbet, *Savage Junctures: Sergei Eisenstein and the*

any case what we have in these stories, in these buildings, in these sets, and in these films, is nothing less than “imitation as mastery”: the final triumph over Marie Antoinette’s hyperfeminine body by filmmaking men who can, by imitating women’s function, expunge them from the whitewashed modern world.

This shared rejection of “Marie Antoinette” (or the feminine in general) raises a question: are the similarities between Le Corbusier and Eisenstein a question of “form” or “principle?” To “think like” someone else (Le Corbusier’s claim that he “thinks like Eisenstein when he makes cinema”) would seem to be a resemblance in principle, inasmuch as thinking is a process. In contrast, Andrei Burov’s imitation of Le Corbusier’s architectural tropes (and Le Corbusier’s personal appearance) would seem to be an imitation based on surface appearance, on *form*. But in fact, as we look more closely at these questions, we see that “form” and “principle” can sometimes be very difficult to distinguish, just as, under coats of whitewash or viewed through a camera lens, reinforced concrete and plaster look very much the same.

Whitewash and bleach allow surfaces of different materials to resemble each other. The *sovkhöz*, in its role as a set and in its reliance on non-genuine materials, could be said to be just another “pleasure dairy,” such as the dairy in which Marie Antoinette was supposed to sip milk from a cup that imitated her breast. But we might want to ask what the material of a cinematic *sovkhöz* actually is. In a way, the cinematic turn to surfaces (whitewash) may be a way of achieving mastery over the very idea of the preeminence of materials. After all, in cinema and in thinking, imitation is not all bad. Even the cheapest possible puns – blatant imitation of form – may sometimes produce good ideas. Eisenstein’s own lecture is a kind of extended unfolding of one such pun, “*Der Mensch ist was er ißt.*” Likewise, an imitation dairy – a mere set – may nevertheless shape the psyches of those who encounter it, even if their only experience of that architecture is via whitewashed cinematic surfaces.

JOAN NEUBERGER

ANOTHER DIALECTIC:
EISENSTEIN ON ACTING

At a conference in 1989, Naum Kleiman invited his audience to consider the career of Nikolai Cherkasov: paradoxically, he said, the actor got his start by playing comic roles in “eccentric” FEKS films and ended by playing some of the most important tragic characters of his time in Eisenstein’s *Ivan the Terrible* and Kozintsev’s *Don Quixote*. Kleiman offered Cherkasov’s case to call attention to the overlooked tragic notes lurking beneath the comic innovations of FEKS, and the elements of “high” culture at play alongside the “low.”¹ And, as he noted, Eisenstein’s work had always explored just such juxtapositions – the interdependence of comedy and tragedy, high and low, surface and depth. I want to take this opportunity to expand on Kleiman’s insight and examine the intersection of theory and practice in Eisenstein’s portrait of Ivan the Terrible, his directing of Cherkasov’s performance as Ivan, and Cherkasov’s ability to embody those and other dialectical conflicts central to Eisenstein’s vision.

* * *

Eisenstein has an undeserved reputation for not caring about actors, for treating them like so much furniture. His longtime cameraman, Eduard Tisse once said, “He doesn’t direct, he positions.”² It is true that he required his actors to make unnatural movements and hold uncomfortable poses, often for long stretches of time, but it’s not true that he didn’t care about them

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- 1 Naum Kleiman, “Ekstsentriceskoe i tragicheskoe,” *Formula finala: Stat’i, vystupleniia, besedy* (Moscow: Eizenshtein-tsentr, 2004) 290–3.
 - 2 Vs. Vishnevsky, “Iz dnevnikov, 1944–1948 gg.,” *Kinovedcheskie zapiski* 38 (1998), 68.

or their human and emotional contributions to his films. Nor is it true that he didn't care about the inner, psychological life of his characters, in fact, Eisenstein saw the external physical gesture and internal thought and emotion to be integrally connected. He saw his role as a director not only in purely technical or physical terms but as someone who had to "crawl into" and "crawl out of" the characters' personas, and the actors' individual psyches. He thought that this kind of physical and psychological connection between director and actor was necessary for transforming his ideas and feelings into concrete physical acts.³ Cherkasov famously complained about the difficulties Eisenstein inflicted on him when filming *Ivan the Terrible*, forcing him into contorted positions and movements that tormented his body. But Cherkasov credited Eisenstein with significantly broadening his view of the actor's craft, giving him a better sense of movement in space, and in general enriching his technical abilities as an actor.⁴ He also wrote that Eisenstein, "infected with his own stubborn confidence, compelled us to believe in him, and we often followed along, captivated by his enthusiasm."⁵ In fact, given how seriously Eisenstein took process of acting, how much he wrote about acting and actors, and given how much he liked many of the actors he knew and how much they admired and liked him, it's an odd reputation, and one that Naum Kleiman first challenged in 1968.⁶ Its endurance probably has more to do with one's view of the modernist film style that elevated the roles of set design, objects, lighting, and music – equivalent to the roles of human actors – rather than the acting per se.

Acting figures in almost all of Eisenstein's writing. It was an important component of his proposed course in Directing and

3 S. M. Eisenstein, *Nonindifferent Nature*, trans. Herbert Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 344.

4 Nikolai Cherkasov, *Zapiski sovetskogo aktera* (Moscow: Iskussvto, 1953), 237.

5 Cherkasov, *Zapiski*, 135.

6 Naum Kleiman, "Kak Eizenshtein rabotal s akterami," *Iskusstvo kino* 1 (1968), 125–46.

his teaching. Movement and gesture were central to his evolving ideas about the underlying structures of great art and the ways art works on us. He also wrote about specific actors and they wrote about him. Among his very first written works in the 1920s and very last manuscripts in the 1940s were articles about acting; throughout the 1930s acting appears repeatedly in all his written work and in his teaching. Like sound and color and light, he came to see the actor's movement as a significant component in creating the meaningful experience of viewing dramatic arts, therefore acting holds a prominent place in *Montage, Method, and Nonindifferent Nature*.⁷

Most of what Eisenstein wrote on acting and movement remained unpublished in his lifetime. Several chapters intended for *Vertical Montage* were cut from that manuscript; one of these was placed in the folders for *Method*, and several other fragments or drafts of articles or chapters have only been published recently. His early writing is worth examining to correct misunderstandings and to place acting in the overall trajectory

7 The earliest, written 1923: Sergei Eisenstein and Sergei Tretyakov, "Expressive Movement," *Meyerhold, Eisenstein and Biomechanics: Actor Training in Revolutionary Russia*, eds., Alma Law and Mel Gordon (North Carolina: McFarland, 1996), 173–92; probably the last, written January 1948: "'Mise en jeu' i 'mise en geste,'" *Neravnodushnaia priroda*, ed., Naum Kleiman, 2 vols. (Moscow: Muzei kino, 2004–6), 1:386–440, 1:656–57n; see also Vladimir Nizhny, *Lessons with Eisenstein*, trans. and eds., Ivor Montagu and Jay Leyda (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1962); "Montage of Film Attractions," S. M. Eisenstein, *Selected Works. Vol 1. Writings, 1922–1934*, ed. and trans. Richard Taylor (London: BFI Publishing, 1988), 39–58; "Rezzissura. Iskustvo mizanstseny," *Izbrannyye proizvedeniia v shesti tomakh*, 6 vols. (Moscow: Iskustvo, 1964–71), 4:13–673; "Opredeliaushchii zhest," *Neravnodushnaia priroda*, 1: 164–99; "Vyrazitel'noe dvizhenie," *Metod*, ed. Naum Kleiman, 2 vols. (Moscow: Muzei kino, 2002), 1:169–83; "Wolves and Sheep: The Director and the Actor," and "Teaching Programme for the Theory and Practice of Direction. How to Teach Direction," S. M. Eisenstein, *Selected Writings. Vol 3. Writings, 1934–1947*, ed. Richard Taylor, trans. William Powell (London: BFI Publishing, 1996).

of his theory and practice. Much of this writing on movement and acting was inspired by Eisenstein's early encounter with Jean d'Udine, who was translated into Russian in the 1910s by Sergei Volkonskii, who also popularized the works of Émile-Jaques Dalcroze and François Delsarte, foundational thinkers for the entire Russian performing arts avant-garde.⁸ Writing retrospectively in 1939–40, Eisenstein says that in the 1920s d'Udine gave him two sets of ideas, both of which still interested him: the concept of synesthesia and the idea that all art, in particular the synesthetic in art, derives from gesture. He saw gesture as “that very originary embryo of expressive form, in which emotion is poured,” and in which audiovisual synesthesia could be embodied.⁹

As is well known, approaches to acting in the twentieth century have been divided between those who believe that feeling originates in the body and is best conveyed by movement, contour, and pose and those who believe that feeling is rooted in the psyche, and therefore a character is best inhabited by an actor who can tap into relevant memories, experience, and other psychological resources. In Russia, these positions were associated with Vsevolod Meyerhold and Konstantin Stanislavsky, respectively, and Stanislavsky's psychological model has been far more influential in mainstream theater and film acting ever since. Eisenstein, however, like much of the 1920s avant-garde, fell firmly in the Meyerhold camp, with his emphasis on the

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- 8 Mikhail Iampolski, “Kuleshov's Experiments and the Anthropology of the Actor,” *Inside the Film Factory*, eds. Richard Taylor and Ian Christie (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 31–50; Ana Hedberg Olenina, “Psychomotor Aesthetics: Conceptions of Gesture and Affect in Russian and American Modernity, 1910's–1920's,” dissertation, Department of Comparative Literature, Harvard University, 2012; Emma Widdis, *Socialist Senses: Film, Feeling, and the Soviet Subject* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017).
- 9 Eisenstein, “Opredel'aiushchii zhest,” *Neravnodushnaia priroda*, 1:174. I thank Irina Schutzki for sharing her unpublished study, “*From Sensation to Synesthesia: The Aesthetic Experience and Synesthesia in Film and New Media*,” which partially addresses Eisenstein on the subject of gesture.

body moving in space. He was one of a group of film and stage artists thinking about the ways feeling is realized in the body, but unlike many of his Constructivist contemporaries, he never dismissed feeling. This is an important corrective: Eisenstein did not discover emotions in 1929 amid the general rise of interest in *pathos*, nor in 1935 or 1941; feeling was there at the beginning. The body is a machine, but its actions are stimulated by instincts and emotions. He wrote that “the question here is one of approach. Just as there is a back door and front door, one can reach the unity of psychological and motor phenomena by one staircase, or one can come at it from the other side.”¹⁰ In practice, though, the body came first. Eisenstein didn’t ignore the emotional and psychological but he was known to mock efforts by Stanislavsky trained actors who sought their characters’ interior emotional core (*zerno*). As Pavel Kadochnikov (who played Vladimir Staritsky and several other roles in *Ivan the Terrible*), told Naum Kleiman, Eisenstein would have lengthy conversations with the actors about the intellectual and emotional profile of their characters, but he would elicit the psychologically meaningful through physical pose and body movement.¹¹ In this, Eisenstein anticipated much of the best current work on affect and embodied emotion. Monique Scheer, for instance, argues that we should view “the involvement of the body as the *conditio sine qua non* for the definition of an act of consciousness as ‘emotion.’”¹² He was not alone in his effort to understand the intersection of body, mind, feeling and sensation in Russia in the 1920s. As Emma Widdis demonstrates in

10 “Lecture on Biomechanics,” Law and Gordon, 207.

11 Naum Kleiman, “Kak Eizenshtein rabotal s akterami,” 129–30; see also Jay Leyda, *Kino* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 327–34, on the contrast in acting styles incorporated in *Bezhin Meadow*.

12 Monique Scheer, “Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (and is that what makes them have a history)? A Bourdieuan Approach to Understanding Emotion,” *History and Theory* 51 (2012), 198; cited in Valerie Kivelson, “Expressive Gestures/Situational Emotions: Affect and Hierarchy in the Litsevoi letopisnyi svod,” *forthcoming*.

her new book, *Socialist Senses*: “the relationship between body, mind, and world was a major preoccupation in early film theory.”¹³ But Eisenstein took these ideas further than anyone else and they remained a major preoccupation for him, throughout his career, even when, as Widdis shows, Soviet socialist realist cultural ideology shifted its valorization of the body to prioritizing the psychological.¹⁴

In 1923 Meyerhold asked Eisenstein to write an article explaining his school of “expressive movement.” The article, co-authored with Sergei Tretyakov, was unpublished at the time, but part of it found its way into the 1924 “Montage of Film Attractions,” (also unpublished at the time) and many of its precepts found their way into his teaching and writing in the mid-1930s. He introduced his 1940 chapter on expressive movement in *Method*, with a survey of his ideas of the 1920s. Like everyone else in the theatrical avant-garde, Eisenstein studied Delsarte and Dalcroze,¹⁵ but it was Rudolph Bode and Ludwig Klages who provided him with a typology of physical movements and a set of psychological ideas that launched his life long excursion into acting. In the 1923 essay, the authors adapted Klages’ and Bode’s theories of movement, which were physiological and psychological, to theatrical performance.

Bode believed that each body movement was the result of both unconscious and conscious impulses. Instincts and reflexes were as important in producing movement as consciousness and will.¹⁶ Eisenstein and Tretyakov were attracted to Bode’s understanding of fundamental physical conflicts be-

13 Emma Widdis, *Socialist Senses: Film, Feeling, and the Soviet Subject* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017), 40.

14 Widdis, *Socialist Senses*, 19–20.

15 Iampolsky, “Kuleshov’s experiments,” 31–35; Julie Hubbert, Eisenstein’s Film Music Theory Revisited: Silent and Early Sound Antecedents,” *Composing for the Screen in Germany and the USSR: Cultural Politics and Propaganda*, eds. Robynn Stilwell and Phil Powrie (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 125–47.

16 Sergei Eisenstein and Sergei Tretyakov, “Expressive Movement,” Law and Gordon, *Meyerhold, Eisenstein*, 173, 175, 185.

tween, for example, the pull of gravity and the body's resistance to gravity, and the tension between the body's center of gravity and its extremities. Like Meyerhold and many others writing about movement and performance in Russia in the 1920s, their primary goal was understanding and reproducing movements that would arouse reflexological, sensory-emotional responses in their spectators. Their view of acting as linking feeling and physiology was also based in part on their reading of William James' counter-intuitive thoughts about the primacy of the body, often paraphrased as: we do not cry because we are sad, we're sad because we cry. But they saw that arousal was possible only when actors fully embodied the tensions between conscious motivation and unconscious impulse.¹⁷ For Eisenstein, the tension between opposing impulses was key. This underlying dualism that Eisenstein discovered in his work on acting would evolve into the dialectic of the pre-logical (non-verbal, instinctive, undifferentiated, sensory-emotional) and logical (rational, intellectual, segmented) that explained for him the power of great art that he ultimately explored in detail in *Method*.¹⁸

In the 1930s, while teaching at VGIK and beginning work on the pre-logical (and through contact with psychologists Lev Vygotskii and Aleksandr Luria, as Julia Vassileva shows in this volume) Eisenstein expanded and complicated his understanding of the reflexological process of communicating with and stimulating audience response by giving it dialectical form. He

17 Sergei Eisenstein, "Notes on Biomechanics," and "Lecture on Biomechanics, March 28, 1935," Law and Gordon, *Meyerhold, Eisenstein*, 164–5 and 207–9. See also Ana Hedberg Olenina, "Engineering Performance: Lev Kuleshov, Soviet Reflexology, and Labor Efficiency Studies," *Discourse: Journal for Theoretical Studies in Media and Culture*, 35:3 (2013), 297–336.

18 Oksana Bulgakowa, "From Expressive Movement to the Basic Problem: The Vygotsky–Luria–Eisensteinian Theory of Art," *The Cambridge Handbook of Cultural-Historical Psychology*, eds. Anton Yasnitsky, René van der Veer, and Michel Ferrari (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 432 and *passim*.

revised James to say that, for the actor, it doesn't matter whether we are sad because we cry or cry because we are sad: "we are not at all concerned with the primacy of one or the other of them. In the complex as a whole, you have an indivisible unity."¹⁹ The actor, however, must fully embody the *tension* between these and other opposites in order to create that "indivisible unity" necessary to generate truly *expressive* movement that then can have a Jamesian impact on the audience, who reproduce in their own bodies the movement they see in order to "enter into that emotional state which the actor is demonstrating to it."²⁰

Several texts Eisenstein wrote in 1939–40 expound on the foundational role of gesture and movement in creating the synesthetic and pre-logical.²¹ "Expressive Movement," in *Method* is the first of a series of chapters on the ways the pre-logical is experienced in the body and on the specific dialectical form that inner conflict takes in body movement. He begins with a typically historical-autobiographical return to his 1923 discussion of Bode and Klages in order to revise his earliest ideas about the relationship between conscious and unconscious impulses. Bode and Klages understood the tension between conscious and unconscious motives underlying movement as nothing more than the will inhibiting the instinct: consciousness acts as a brake on the unconscious. Biomechanics made the same mistake, Eisenstein argued, by treating the two as cancelling each other out rather than forming a productive dialectic. In this chapter, he rejected a similar aspect of Freud's understanding of the unconscious, which saw competing drives only as interfering with one another, rather than interacting dialectically and generatively.²² Only

19 Law and Gordon, *Meyerhold, Eisenstein*, 207.

20 Law and Gordon, *Meyerhold, Eisenstein*, 208.

21 "Vyzritel'noe dvizhenie," *Metod*, 1:160–83, 468n; and "Opredel'iaushchii zhest," *Neravnodushnaia priroda* 1:164–99, 633n; He apparently intended to publish another version of the chapter in 1945, updated after making *Ivan*; On the text history, see *Metod*, 468n.

22 Eizenshtein, *Metod*, 1:178–80.

when movement embodies internal contradictions working interactively with one another, can an actor powerfully and accurately convey feelings and ideas. The whole body, from the core to the tips of the fingers, must function as a “unity of opposites.” He was at pains to distinguish between the false “totality” of expressive movement in the body, understood as the representation of one impulse inhibiting another, and his own dialectical “unity of opposites,” in which the poles of interior conflict are in constant interplay with one another, their roles and degrees of power constantly shifting in a dynamic dialectical process that ultimately leads to synthesis (or interpenetration) and transformation. When actors can master the gestures of dialectical conflict they can arouse the proper feelings in their spectators.²³ The rest of this section of *Method* explores the international and historical rituals that successfully move people into states of pre-logical receptiveness through coordinating the conflicts taking place within body movement, such as involuntary bodily functions like heart-beat and breathing, with external stimuli like sound, color, and spatial organization. The correct “totality” is the complex, unified organization of multiple dialectical oppositions occurring within the body to produce the correct effect on feeling, sensation, and thinking.

In “The Determining Gesture,” another essay written in 1939–40, Eisenstein claimed a central role for gesture as a “mediality” capable of conveying more than mere language. Gesture is both the “originary, determining impulse towards the construction of the image” and “the key for the construction of synesthetic unity between depiction and sound.”²⁴ The gesture is the first organizing element to project the author’s intentions on the screen and everything else is determined by it. The visible contour of movement “the geometric trace of the gesture,”

23 Eizenshtein, *Metod*, 1:170, 174, 177.

24 Eizenshtein, “Opredel’iaushchii zhest,” 1: 175, 179; also 177, where he attributes the idea to Jean D’Udine. See also 1:633, on the essay’s dating and provenance.

makes all the other elements, like melody, rhythm, and setting, more tangible to the audience, initiating dialectical synesthesia and making the unified, generalizable image available for viewers to sense.

Eisenstein argued that, because the gesture is the initial, “determining,” element in a scene, the director must begin with specific, carefully thought-out movements when constructing a scene. The gesture in this case can be almost anything positioned in space – on a stage or in a film frame – as long as it is in motion. Eisenstein gives examples that range from the flourish of an actor’s limb to an opening door or the shifting arrangement of groups of actors. But, harking back to the question he raised about *Macbeth* in 1935, he asked, how does a filmmaker decide what those initial gestures should be? Or as he put it in “The Psychology of Composition,” in 1940, “What constitutes the process of this transformation from a fact of life into a fact of art?”²⁵ How does an artist turn an ambitious prince or a wounded, abandoned child-tsar into something immortal and universal? Or, perhaps more to the point, how can an artist explore power hunger, murder, magic, history, agency, and remorse by putting specific individuals and their actions on stage? In one of his last texts, the 1948, “‘Mise en Jeu’ and ‘Mise en Geste,’” Eisenstein turned to focus on the practical steps that led to choosing the “determining gesture.” First comes the transmutation of the film maker’s idea into specific actions demanded by the plot – *mise en jeu* – and then come the specific gestures or movements characters perform – *mise en geste*. In both cases, the director must devise movement, actions, and gestures that make the characters’ inner conflicts “tangible,” and “palpable,” for the audience.²⁶ Eisenstein’s prescriptions, always introduced with great fanfare, can sound simplistic or naive or purely theoretical and impossible to put into practice.

25 Sergei Eisenstein “The Psychology of Composition,” *The Eisenstein Collection*, ed. Richard Taylor (London: Seagull, 2006), 211.

26 “‘Mise en jeu,’” 391.

But these are the methods that he used in *Ivan the Terrible* – with unforgettable results.

Among his favorite gestures are his version of the Hegelian-Marxian “negation of a negation” and especially, its subset, the “reverse movement,” another topic that he wrote about at both the beginning of his career and at the end.²⁷ When an actor makes a small, barely perceptible movement in the direction opposite to that dictated by narrative or logic, it exposes the inner conflict of the character or situation and intensifies the sensory-emotional impact of the main movement. Eisenstein traced the uses of this dramatic gesture to numerous historical and international theatrical traditions and used it widely in his own work. The reverse movement was particularly important to him for making ideas tangible because it exemplified his belief that all processes of change (individual, social, historical) and all artistic structures contained some version of the dialectical collision of opposites, often represented by simultaneous psychological movement backward and forward. In *Method*, he showed the structural similarities he found in stage movement across time and cultures: in early modern European, Japanese, Chinese, and Native American performance arts. All of these showed him that logical, rational, common sense ideas about linear movement forward are limited, even false, unless they contain some element of non-logical, sensory-emotional thinking, a combination that is translated into gesture as the counter-intuitive reverse movement. In Dostoevsky’s *Idiot*, for instance, when Rogozhin threatens Prince Myshkin with a knife, Eisenstein would not have Myshkin draw back in fear. He would direct

27 “Otkaznoe dvizhenie,” *Metod*, 1:200–5 (also 129–39); *Izbrannye proizvedeniia v shesti tomakh*, 6 vols. (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1964–71), 4:81–90; “Recoil Movement,” Law and Gordon, 192–204; “Mise en jeu,” 389–90 and *passim*; “Once Again on the Structure of Things,” *Nonindifferent Nature*, 200–15. *Otkaznoe dvizhenie* is usually translated as “recoil movement,” but since it is often an initiating, rather than a reactive move, I use the more neutral, descriptive “reverse movement.”

an actor to lean in to Rogozhin, a counter move that expresses the contradiction inherent in what he says in the novel: “You wouldn’t,” or literally, “I don’t believe.” The lean in, along with some equally dialectical zig-zag gestures involving the knife in Rogozhin’s hand, bring the two men in ever closer proximity immediately preceding the moment when Myshkin falls backwards, down a flight of stairs, in an epileptic fit.²⁸

Gesture in Eisenstein is never meant to be merely symbolic. Movement enacted on the screen must enable spectators to reproduce in their own bodies the sensations of physical act they see. In *Nonindifferent Nature*, Eisenstein shows a similar principle at work in the theatrical tradition least associated with him – and yet prominent in *Ivan the Terrible* – melodrama. A long passage on the great nineteenth-century actor Frédéric Lemaître focuses on the actor’s use of whispering to intensify the impact of events that would make anyone want to cry out to express strong emotions.²⁹ Similarly, comedy is often used in tragedy to reinforce the effect of tragic despair and hubristic acts that lead to tragic outcomes. Eisenstein admired Shakespeare’s use of comic flourishes that preceded tragic acts in *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*, and he would use such gestures himself in *Ivan*.³⁰

In his discussion of *The Idiot* in “‘Mise en Jeu’ and ‘Mise en Geste,’” Eisenstein linked the actor’s gesture to another fundamental concept developed in the montage essays of the late 1930s, the transition from “depiction” (*izobrazhenie*) to “image” (*obraz*). The depiction (or sometimes the picture) of the leaning in, the zig-zag, and the fall back is more than an intellectual-sensory-emotional exercise. When the various, multilayered dialectical conflicts were tangibly felt and embodied by the audience, and when the various, multilayered centrifugal forces pulling an actor’s body in contradictory directions begin

28 Eizenshtein, “Kompozitsiia i izobrazitel’nost’,” *Kinovedcheskie zapiski* 36/37 (1998); and Eisenstein, “‘Mise en jeu,’” 1: 392–410.

29 Eisenstein, *Nonindifferent Nature*, 92–102.

30 Eisenstein, *Nonindifferent Nature*, 102, 104, 357–9, 360.

to come back together, spectators would be able to synthesize all these contradictory cues, experience a synthetic, transformative moment of *ekstasis*, and access the higher, more abstract, generalized understanding of the subject at hand; they would perceive what Eisenstein called “image,” the bigger picture that the author intended.³¹

There is one more relevant conceptual framework to discuss before turning to Cherkasov’s performance itself. Elsewhere in this volume, Nikita Lary has discussed Eisenstein’s writing on Shakespeare, especially his fondness for Caroline Spurgeon’s work on Shakespeare and his adaptation of the body imagery Spurgeon found in Shakespeare to the tragedy of Ivan the Terrible.³² Here I want to draw attention to what Eisenstein had to say about montage and dramatic composition in Shakespeare and in Shakespeare’s contemporaries, Ben Jonson, in particular. It is a commonplace, of course, to see Shakespeare as introducing modern, dialectical complexity to the early modern stage with psychologically nuanced portraits of characters struggling with inner conflicts.³³ And of course Eisenstein constructed Ivan as a “unity of opposites” similar to this conception of Hamlet and other tragic Shakespearean protagonists. In comparison, the

31 On depiction and image, see “Montage 1938,” *Selected Writings*, vol 2; updated and expanded in January 1944: *Metod*, 2:415; Leonid Kozlov, *Izobrazhenie i obraz* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1980); David Bordwell, *The Cinema of Eisenstein* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 172–6; “Mise en jeu,” *Neravnodushnaia priroda*: 1:408–10. On the centrifugal forces tearing at the state and its ruler represented as bodies, see *Selected Writings*, 2:187ff.

32 On images of dismemberment and reassembly as a metaphor for montage, and for the centrifugal forces tearing at the state and its ruler represented as body, see Tsivian, *Ivan the Terrible*, (London: British Film Institute, 2002), 47–51; *Selected Writings*, 2:187ff; and Nikita Lary in this volume.

33 On the psychologism of Shakespeare’s characters and the problems with this view see Emma Smith, “Character in Shakespearean Tragedy,” *The Oxford Handbook of Shakespearean Tragedy*, eds., Michael Neill and David Schalkwyk (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 89–103.

works of Shakespeare's predecessors and contemporaries can seem simplistic and crude, but Eisenstein considered the more blunt conflicts between fixed types identified with single characteristics in plays by Marlowe, Webster, Jonson, Kyd, and others to be ideal models for conveying both the world in which Ivan operated and ways to construct that world in the film. He saw the collisions among multiple one-note characters to be "characteristic for the construction of *pathos* effects by the direct charging of elements ecstatically exploding into each other with constantly increasing intensity."³⁴ Emma Smith reminds us that Shakespeare's innovations didn't negate the merits (or the popularity) of these other works, and that subtlety wasn't necessarily better or more sophisticated than unsubtlety. The reflexive sililoquys in *Hamlet* may have no greater power to move us, she argues, than the rougher conflicts we see dramatized in *The Spanish Tragedy*, "a bold, big-scale play about bold and big-scale action." Heronimo's "traumatized, almost unbearable, mood swings and unpredictability may be designated crude but they actually have the power to affect an audience potentially numbed by witnessing the play's horrific cruelties."³⁵

Another way to look at Eisenstein's direction of actors was provided by the great animator, Yuri Norshtein in a series of lectures he gave in Japan in 2002. Norshtein argued that the acting in *Ivan the Terrible* is modeled on animation. In animated films, persona is revealed by distilling it into a single conventional gesture or "look," and often that gesture is zoological. This is very similar to the types of early modern drama or the masks used in *commedia dell'arte* or the conventions used in *kabuki*, all of which Eisenstein knew, studied and admired. This

34 *Nonindifferent Nature*, 105–6; the discussion of masking, change, and comparison with Shakespeare: 103–6.

35 *The Spanish Tragedy: Thomas Kyd* by Emma Smith at <http://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/> via <http://writersinspire.org/content/spanish-tragedy-thomas-kyd>. Accessed on Wednesday, July 26, 2017; and Emma Smith, "Shakespeare and Early Modern Tragedy," *The Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance Tragedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 132–49.

use of conventional gestures accounts for what is often called the “theatricality” of the performances in *Ivan*.

Eisenstein found uses for both the internalized, binary psychological conflicts Shakespeare introduced and the interplay of multiple externalized physical conflicts that made Kyd’s *Spanish Tragedy* the most popular play of its time. In *Ivan the Terrible*, Ivan’s character struggles with an ever evolving set of “inner conflicts” and those conflicts are projected onto his confrontations with the characters around him as in one of his favorite early modern plays, Ben Jonson’s *Volpone*.³⁶ Relevant here is that he showed Ivan’s transformation from vulnerable child to bloodthirsty tyrant through a succession of *individual* dialectical conflicts within himself and between the other characters and that is plotted *structurally* as a dialectic between Shakespearean individual inner conflict and a *Volpone*-like collision of multiple characters “ecstatically exploding into each other.” This “double dialectic” is meant to evoke *pathos*, high tension and, most important, synthetic moments of transformation. Often overlooked in discussions of Ivan’s “inner conflicts” is that the “unity of opposites” is not a static condition but an on-going struggle between sets of contradictory impulses that lead to incremental changes in Ivan’s life. Both Shakespeare and Jonson used dramatic structures to enact processes of division, fracture, and re-assembly. In Eisenstein, that re-assembling produces a leap to a new, higher, more complex set of ideas or the “generalizable image.”³⁷ Eisenstein concludes a major passage on montage in Shakespeare with just this kind of transformation:

We could say that perception of the phenomenon of any movement consists in the continual break up of a certain static form and the *reordering* of the fragments of *that* static form into a *new* form.³⁸

36 RGALI, f. 1923, op. 1, ed. khr. 552, l. 37; On Jonson, see Vera Rummyantseva, “Ne darom ia bredil Jonson’om. . .,” *Kinovedcheskie zapiski*, 234–41; and Eisenstein, *Selected Works*, 2:185–93.

37 Eisenstein, *Selected Works*, 2: 192–3.

38 Eisenstein, *Selected Works*, 2: 192.

Then in the passage in *Nonindifferent Nature* on Frédéric Lemaître, Eisenstein connects Shakespearean bifurcated, and Jonsonian multifaceted, fracture and reassembly with specific processes of transformation. He elaborated three kinds of dialectical antithesis not as simple contrasts but as dynamic processes of unity, fusion, transition, and interpenetration, and he specifically linked these dynamics to Ivan the Terrible. The fusion of opposites becomes an organic whole, the instantaneous transition or switching of these opposites becomes organic unity, and the merging or interpenetration of opposites becomes unity as they transition into each other. Then by adding Jonson to his discussion of acting, Shakespeare, and the “generalizable image,” he connected Ivan’s evolution with dialectical processes of transition to a new, higher, more complex version of the unity of opposites.³⁹ Then, as Eisenstein often did, he provided this process with a historical framework. Every phenomenon in the present retains traces of the past: there is no Stanislavsky realism without a trace of melodrama, no rational logic devoid of instinctive pre-logic, and no Shakespearean interiority without Elizabethan exteriority. This is a kind of expanding structural double dialectic. At one pole, there is the character who is internally divided – dynamically, dialectically – who is positioned in dialectic conflict with the other pole: the fragmented “multifaceted play of vivid colors” where each side has the trace of its opposite. Eisenstein is sketching here a process in which a clear cut inner contradiction (thesis and antithesis) gives way to a fractured or dismembered multiplicity of elements colliding with each other and producing a new dialectic but at a higher more complex level where each side has “dabs of complementary tones from opposite palettes.”⁴⁰ We see Ivan change through scenes in which this double dialectic is enacted. What makes Nikolai Cherkasov’s performance as Ivan the Terrible so remarkable is that he manages to embody,

39 Eisenstein, *Nonindifferent Nature*, 102.

40 Eisenstein, *Nonindifferent Nature*, 102, 106.

repeatedly, this very complicated three-part dialectical process of transformation.

* * *

Cherkasov had the uncanny ability to visibly convey Ivan the Terrible's inner conflicts – as fusion, as multifaceted collision, and as merger or interpenetration – through movement and gesture as well as the more conventional facial expressions. Sometimes, he conveys Ivan's various clear cut "inner conflicts" fused within himself into an "organic whole."⁴¹ He stretches out while cringing inside, as when imploring the boyars to support him. He reaches up to new heights while recoiling from the implications of his actions, as when he asks "Who has the right to judge?" He leans back or crouches over when making his most powerful pronouncements, such as "Too few." He whispers, like Lemaître, in response to explosive revelations, as when he discovers that Vladimir Staritskii "likes it," dressed in the tsar's royal garments. At other times Cherkasov swiftly transitions between conflicting moods. With Maliuta and Fedka he is friendly *and* angry; at his Coronation, Ivan was defiant *and* vulnerable; with Kurbsky and Filipp he switches from sentimental to strategic. He doubles down on this kind of unity of opposites by shifting between poses that both correspond to his words and undermine them, as when dealing with Maliuta and the rabble who break into the palace during his wedding.

There is a short but remarkable scene in *Ivan* Part II – Ivan's confrontation with Filipp in the Golden Hall – that illustrates Cherkasov's development of such gestures of contradiction into Eisenstein's three-part dialectic. With precise gestures Cherkasov enacts the bipartite inner struggle, the fracturing into a multitude of colliding possibilities, and the ultimate transformation of interpenetration and a leap to a higher, more complex image of Ivan. The scene takes place just as Ivan is beginning to understand the terrible things he will have to do and the person-

41 On the three kinds of "unity of opposites" discussed here and below, see *Nonindifferent Nature*, 102.

al price he will have to pay in order to achieve his goal of establishing the Great Russian State. In fact, the confrontation with Filipp articulates the terms of Ivan's "inner contradictions," that have been brewing all along in Part I before transforming them into something more convoluted and dangerous.

Just after returning to Moscow from his self-imposed retreat at Aleksandrov, he has the boyars and the oprichniki lined up on opposite sides of the Golden Hall to listen to his explanation of the founding of the oprichnina and the division of the realm. Suddenly, his old friend Fedor Kolychev, now the priest Filipp (played by Andrei Abrikosov), returns from his own self-imposed exile. Filipp sweeps dramatically into the hall, robes flying and crozier aloft, to proclaim that Ivan's reforms are a desecration: not God-given as Ivan claimed but "from the Devil!" Ivan brushes that off with the wave of a hand and greets Filipp like the old friend he is, or was, leading him away from the realm of official state business to talk in private. Ivan is divided: he is determined to retain Filipp's friendship despite their political differences – Filipp's commitment to tradition boyar power – but he is equally determined to seize power from the boyars and establish the centralized autocracy he needs to build the Great Russian State that Filipp has just denounced. Until the very end of the scene, Filipp refuses to allow Ivan's appeal to his feelings to override his principles and his opposition. Ivan takes this as a personal rejection. It elicits his sense of loneliness and revives painful memories of childhood abandonment. Ivan tries to sway Filipp to choose Ivan over the boyars by showing him the story of his childhood – here Eisenstein inserts the Prologue, *Ivan's Childhood*, that was cut from Part I. He thinks that if he shows Filipp that the boyars murdered his mother and sold Russia's wealth to foreigners, Filipp will understand why Ivan must usurp the boyars' power. That fails. He tries immobilizing Filipp by grabbing his clothes and appealing to him as a friend: "Devastated by the burden of power. Don't forsake me in my loneliness." That fails too; Filipp remains steadfast. But even when he wants to, Ivan can never separate the personal from the political. He

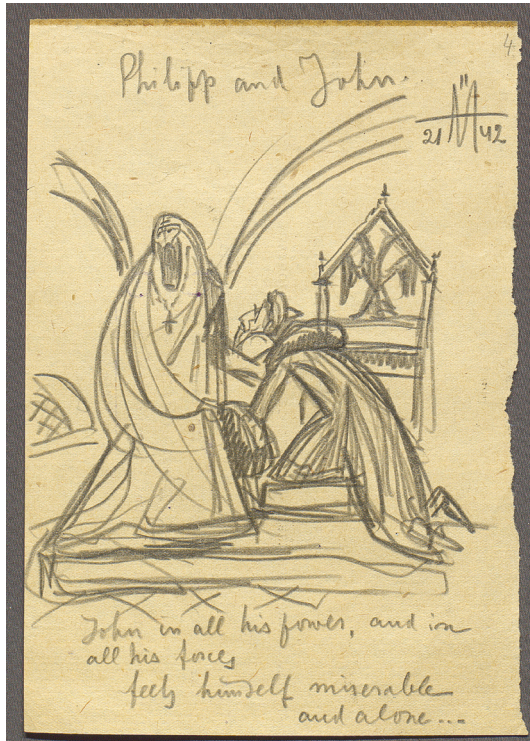
follows this appeal by imploring Filipp to help build the Great Russian State (which Filipp has unequivocally damned). Aching to retain Filipp's friendship but also to win his support to continue his great mission, Ivan sinks to the nadir of despair and realizes that he cannot have both: if he wants his friend he will have to give up the Great Cause; if he wants to pursue the Great Cause, he will have to give up his friends. But Ivan also knows that everyone is corruptible. So he offers Filipp a bribe: Ivan offers to promote him to Metropolitan if Filipp will drop his opposition to Ivan's plans. Filipp takes the bait with no more than a moment's hesitation, but adds, now that he has some leverage, that he wants the right to defend the boyars Ivan is erroneously persecuting. Ivan momentarily lashes out ("no one is innocent!") but quickly concedes. The stalemate ends in compromise, the very last time Ivan would try to balance the personal and the political, the last time he will make a concession to anyone. They kiss and walk out arm in arm. Filipp joyous and Ivan subdued with their mixed victories.

There are 30 shots in the scene, excluding the flashbacks to the Prologue, for just under five minutes of screen time.⁴² How does Cherkasov's performance add to what we learn from the dialogue summarized above? Eisenstein wanted the scene to be psychologically authentic. Ivan was to feel "very emotional. I am alone, alone."⁴³ But the loneliness was only half the equation here: he wanted to show Ivan's dawning recognition of the tradeoff between the personal and the political, the emotional and the rational: "*John in all his power, and in all his forces feels himself miserable and alone...*" [English in the original].⁴⁴ [Fig. 1] Cherkasov gives an astonishingly nuanced, meticulous performance of Ivan's inner divisions, from

42 The shot list can be found in Sergei Eisenstein, *Ivan the Terrible*, eds. Ivor Montagu and Herbert Marshall, trans. A. E. Ellis (London: Faber and Faber, 1989), 135–53; time codes are based on the Mosfil'm Youtube version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XEfDe4fvfFA&t=744s>. Accessed July 23, 2017.

43 RGALI, f. 1923, op. 1, ed. khr. 556, l. 41 [February 21, 1942].

44 RGALI, f. 1923, op. 2, ed. khr. 1680, l. 4 [February 21, 1942].



fusion to transition to interpenetration. Let's look at three moments that correspond to Eisenstein's "double dialectic" process of transformation: inner conflict, multiple collisions, and interpenetration at a higher level.

In the first four shots, Cherkasov enacts inner division with gestures: he sits back then leans forward (123); leans back, throwing up his hands, and moves forward to greet Filipp (124); there's a little up and down business with Filipp's crozier – Filipp raises it (in anger), Ivan lowers it back down, while telling him to quiet down (125); and then while Ivan leads Filipp out of the hall off screen right, he turns and looks back left at Maliuta (126), who returns his look in the next shot, when Ivan is off screen (127). Cherkasov's voice in these shots begins in anger (at the interruption of his speech) and switches first to a stagey, hearty greeting

– “Fedor Kolychev!” – and then to a warm, almost conspiratorial, whisper as if to say, let’s take this inside and chat like friends. In the next shot (128) Filipp, instead of accepting Ivan’s friendly invitation, turns and steps away, standing resolutely looking away from Ivan, with his robes dramatically but statically draped (on the cusp of the “break up of a certain static form and the reordering of the fragments.”) Here Ivan drops all signs of his official role, circles around behind Filipp and informally, almost anachronistically, looks him up and down. This is the first time Ivan has seen his friend since he went off and entered the church and he’s sizing him up. Their eyes meet briefly – almost imperceptibly – and Filipp immediately turns away, slightly startling Ivan who becomes thoughtful. That interaction takes all of five seconds. Ivan backs up and turns to sit on the throne, but the cut keeps us from seeing his reaction to this unfamiliar stiff-backed, priest Filipp, to whatever he saw in Filipp’s eyes.

In all these first shots we see binaries: Ivan moves back and forth or switches between roles: tsar making a speech, tsar managing the sudden appearance of political opponent. After the cut we see two sequences that show a multiplicity of feelings all competing with each other. Ivan moves backwards into the throne, slouching, not very tsar-ish and his face shifts several times: from perplexed (mouth slightly open, eyebrows slightly raised, eyes focused on Filipp), to fatigued (eyes lowered, body a little slumped), then a harsher look (with eyes focused), then introspective (face soft and eyes staring in a way that suggests reflection). His voice also switches but with more nuances, and words don’t always synchronize with tone of voice. Softly, genuinely, he asks “Why are you so severe with me Fedor Kolychev,” a political question still with a trace of the personal, then switching to resolving something, still appraising Filipp, and in a louder, harder voice, “Why are you so cruel?” Through all this, and through most of the scene, Filipp remains stiff as a mannequin, unchanging as a mask, and now reminds Ivan of the stakes here: I’m not your friend, I serve God not the Tsar. Ivan gives this short shrift because now he’s ready with a plan. He leans forward and raises his hand in a gesture that signifies

the Great Cause, and he takes us into the Prologue, to his childhood fear and suffering.

Two sequential structures of thought and feeling are being enacted here. On the one hand there is Ivan's inner conflict coming to the surface with Filipp's reappearance: Ivan has to realize that he is in danger of losing his last old friend by establishing the oprichnina, alienating the boyars, and moving ahead with his Great Cause. He is at first a bundle of binary contradictions – he wants his personal and his political life – these desires are fused within him. The determining gestures of these first shots – back and forth, up and down movements – establish that dynamic. But then when Ivan begins to realize that he can't have the personal and the political lives he wants, the range of Ivan's responses to Filipp, registered in a variety of facial expressions – naturalistic and masked – exhibit the many different centrifugal directions that are pulling at Ivan. Thoughts, feelings, memories – Ivan tries on each fragment like a mask.

We see this overlapping of the dialectic inner conflict and centrifugal multifaceted conflict in the weird, extreme close-up shot (147) that separates the two parts of the flashback (the murder of Ivan's mother and the selling of Russia to foreigners that leads the young Ivan to assert his power as tsar for the first time). Yuri Tsivian describes the way the lighting here and the sudden turn of Ivan's head create a transition from the sympathetic to the diabolical,⁴⁵ but in between those poles, Cherkasov conveys a wide range of responses with multiple, conventional, facial expressions. First in the grip of memory as he emerges from the flashback, he looks resigned and sad, (head lowered, eyes unfocused), he moves away from memory to anger (I was orphaned). Then he turns his head as if startled, though the only cause of surprise here is the direction and intensity of the lighting. His face registers, first surprise and fear, and then anger, when his memory shifts from his vulnerability to anger at the boyars' treason and greed. At the same time his voice shifts

45 Tsivian, *Ivan the Terrible*, 37–8.

from a kind of sing-song tone of the far-off to louder, harsher tone of present-felt anger. Cherkasov's tone of voice here lags behind the meaning of his words and the expression on his face, as if he's stuck in the past and only slowly coming out of his reverie to register what he's feeling. The harsh, diabolical lighting clashes with the soft tone of voice, the woe-is-me memory of childhood suffering. The score reinforces the complexity of these divisions with the lyrical version of the tsar's leitmotif, which was played in Part I on another occasion when he is meditating on the conflict between personal desire and political ambition: at the end of the scene in his stateroom, just before Anastasia is killed. This temporal displacement and trace of the past is a central theme of Eisenstein's work during this period: the ever-present past. In this case it is a kind of complex "reverse movement," a multifaceted collision of multiple possibilities, just before a major transition to a new, more complex dialectic inner conflict. After the second flashback, the action – and the argument – is repeated until Ivan/Cherkasov falls to his knees in utter despair. Often in Eisenstein, change is preceded by absolute despair or a reduction to nothing, re-birth preceded by a kind of death. And then all those complicated feelings that surfaced with Filipp's return and the resurrection of memory, are again reduced to the conflict between friendship and duty, but now with a twist.

Cherkasov does three things here in succession. In this final sequence the shots are all medium shots, so we register body movement more than facial expression. First, with a melodramatic gesture of defeat "devastated by the burden of being tsar," he begs Filipp once more to be his friend. Filipp pulls as hard as he can to get away from Ivan, and inadvertently pulls Ivan back to himself. Ivan sits up and with a stronger voice, his head thrown back with the far-away stare he uses for important, transitional pronouncements, again asks Filipp, despite everything, to join him in building the Great Russian State. When that doesn't work, he puts his hand on his heart and offers Filipp the Metropolitanship. Filipp, for the first time, drops his own mask. Ivan, though, has lost for winning. Cherkasov

crumples: shoulders rounded over, he curves his back and falls to the floor. Filipp lifts him, embraces him, kisses him, and they walk off together. Filipp thinks he has won, but he signed his own death warrant. This is an impossible compromise: Ivan won't be willing to do what he must do to retain Filipp's friendship and Filipp won't be willing to do what he must do to support Ivan as metropolitan. Now both Ivan and Filipp struggle with inner divisions but at a higher, more complex level than at the beginning of the scene, when Filipp was single-minded in his opposition and Ivan hoped he could have his cake and eat it too. Now each has "dabs of complementary tones from opposite palettes": Filipp has given in to ambition with the false hope of being able to continue to challenge Ivan's assault on the boyars and Ivan has traded (only temporarily as it turns out) his full commitment to his political Great Cause to hang on to his last friend.

In this double dialectic, Ivan's inner struggle is articulated, fractured, and reassembled at a higher, more confounding, level of generalization. The fracturing and reassembly occur through his interaction with Filipp, who here is typed as "friend" and "priest." He plays the role of putting "principle above friendship," which helps Ivan articulate and then test this particular conflict at this particular stage. It ends with Ivan, seemingly weakened by the success of his bribe, and leads to the next scene where his newly defined inner struggle, his compromise with Filipp, will be tested – articulated, fractured, and, reassembled with even greater tension, corruption, violence, resolve and doubt.

*

As Kleiman observed so long ago, Cherkasov's performance drew on a career's worth of roles; far less often noted is that Eisenstein's direction did as well.

KARLA OELER
OF CATS AND MEN:
EISENSTEIN, ART, AND THINKING

Would you tell me please, which way I ought to go from here?
“That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,” said the Cat.

“I don’t much care where –” said Alice.

“Then it doesn’t matter which way you go,” said the Cat.

“– so long as I get somewhere,” Alice added as an explanation.

“Oh, you’re sure to do that,” said the Cat, “if you only walk long enough.”

Alice felt that this could not be denied, so she tried another question. “What sort of people live about here?”

“In that direction,” the Cat said, waving its right paw round,

“lives a Hatter: and in that direction,” waving the other paw,

“lives a March Hare. Visit either you like: they’re both mad.”

“But I don’t want to go among mad people,” Alice remarked.

“Oh, you can’t help that,” said the Cat: “we’re all mad here. I’m mad. You’re mad.”

“How do you know I’m mad?” said Alice.

“You must be,” said the Cat, “or you wouldn’t have come here.”

At key moments in twentieth-century film culture, filmmakers and critics claim to rediscover, onscreen, techniques from literature that were designed to show interiority: soliloquy (Vachel Lindsay, Béla Balázs), free-indirect discourse (Pier Paolo Pasolini, Gilles Deleuze), and interior monologue (Sergei Eisenstein). The roots of these forms lie in prayer and lamentation, desire and regret, the wish for the world to be a certain way and the surprise that it isn’t. For cinema, each of these literary devices is at once a resource, an inheritance, and a foil; and in negotiating them, film grapples with both its own liter-

ariness and its medium specificity, as well as with the very nature of thinking. What happens when we imagine thinking to be like these techniques? What aspects of thinking, imagined thus, come forward, and what potentials are closed off? Cinema, in the act of adapting, or claiming to adapt, these devices, is making an argument, or revealing assumptions, about what thinking is and about what it looks, sounds, and feels like.

Eisenstein, in his theoretical writing and in his filmmaking, claimed interior monologue (a technique developed in the novel) for film, but how do we know something is interior monologue – especially in film? Eisenstein’s unfinished book *Method*, edited by Naum Kleiman and first published in 2002, demands a more capacious and radical idea of “monologue,” located in Eisenstein’s idea of an art that would realize and provoke what it feels like to think.

Method argues that art affects us by activating parts of the brain and modes of thinking that belong not to abstract and efficient reasoning, but retain connections to earlier human beliefs, rituals, and stages of consciousness, and even to earlier life forms. The foundational relations that characterize these primal modes of thinking are metaphor, metonymy, *pars pro toto*, and rhythm. For Eisenstein, these are not merely Shklovskian “devices” or “techniques,” nor simply figures of speech. They structure instinctive, sensory, and emotional thinking (as opposed to logical thought). They operate within art and around it.

Art, for Eisenstein, can make us aware of the programmed, instinctive pathways of thinking as we involuntarily move to go down them. It’s in catching the mind’s impulse that we feel ourselves thinking. Eisenstein describes this experience, in and out of art, as a “tickling” of consciousness.¹ He compares this

1 Sergei Mikhailovich Eizenshtein, *Metod*, 2 vols., ed. Naum Kleiman (Moscow: Muzei kino, 2002), 1:213. From here on, for this primary, two-volume text, I will give the volume and page numbers parenthetically in the main body of the text. Unless otherwise noted, all translations from *Method* are mine. Here is the whole sentence: “The rhythmic swaying and slipping from one kind [of consciousness] to another produce that tickling mind play, which,

mental effect to a physical tickle while elaborating a passage from the linguist Joseph Vandryès's book, *Language*.² Vandryès compares early human belief in the magical power of naming to the comfort we sometimes take when a doctor names the cause of our symptoms, making our illness seem more controllable. For Eisenstein, the reasoning part of the mind derives relief as it sways toward this primal habit of thought where to name something is to assert power over it.

Such relief may seem to align easily with art that, with tested formulas, lulls us, leaving us less alert, less questioning, or less anxious about our ills. Eisenstein emphasizes, however, the movement between instinctive and conceptual thinking, which in both directions can free the mind of stale associations and open the possibility for change. If naming provides relief by tagging the unknown with a discrete and familiar label, we also gain relief, or a sense of freedom, when the familiarity ebbs, making way for change. Effective art at once relies on, and departs from expected forms; it taps and resists ways of thinking that may be instinctive, or primal, or encultured, or otherwise habitual. In this double movement, art enables the mind to catch itself in the act of being a brain.

For Eisenstein, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* offers an influential instance where art's effect hinges on the way it hovers, oscillating, between "more atavistic" and "more advanced" "layers of consciousness" (1:87).³ Eisenstein emphasized the difference between *Hamlet* and one of its source texts, Thomas Kyd's *The*

like a physical tickle, equally calls forth laughter mixed with pleasure." [Это ритмическое колебание и перескальзывание из разряда в разряд дают ту щекоющую сознание игру, которая, подобно щекотке физической, в равной мере вызывает смех, смешанный с приятностью.]

2 Joseph Vandryès, *Le Langage* (Paris: La Renaissance du livre, 1921). In a footnote, Kleiman adds that Vandryès's book was translated into Russian in 1937 (1:474).

3 "In Kyd and in Shakespeare, the conflict occurs between different layers of consciousness; more atavistic and more advanced." [И у киды, и у шекспира – «конфликт» происходит между разными слоями сознания: более атавистической и более передовой.]

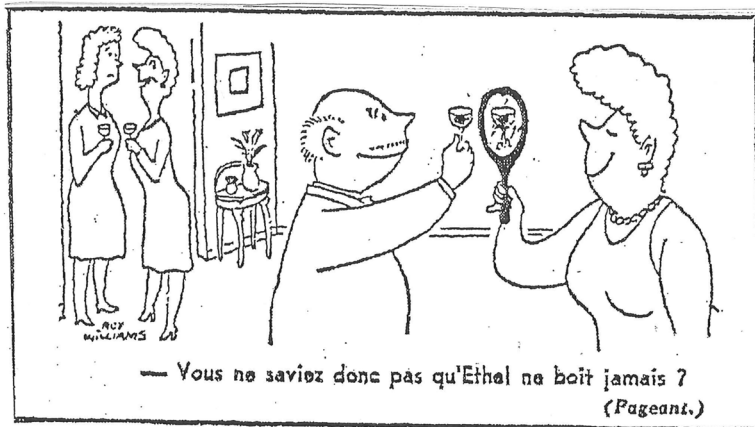
Spanish Tragedy. Eisenstein contrasts Shakespeare with Kyd: In Kyd, blood vengeance is an accepted tradition that serves to preserve a bloodline. In *Hamlet*, thinking moves from this atavistic tradition of the necessary vendetta toward “newer, different moral principles” (1:87). It’s this “‘movement’ of thinking”⁴ that interests Eisenstein. Thought moves away from, and back toward, the older, ingrained response (blood vengeance). (Eisenstein wrote this section of *Method* in 1943 while he was making *Ivan the Terrible*, which Stalin criticized in 1946 for portraying Ivan as too Hamlet-like, meaning indecisive, about the purges he carried out to unite the Russian state.)

Method, which takes into account art made throughout history and around the world, considers not only canonical texts such as *Hamlet*, but also popular forms such as ornament, riddles, detective fiction, and cartoons. Eisenstein, for instance, takes up a cartoon from a November 14, 1947 issue of the French newspaper, “Les Lettres françaises.” [Fig. 1] Here he claims to see “the materialization of one of the earliest states of human psychology” (2:402). He writes:

It’s known that in the early stage of development the person does not differentiate between real appearances and their reflection in his consciousness. Regressively, this takes place in hallucinations when... imagined appearances are, in a powerfully affected state, taken for reality. The dreams of the savage have for him the reality of fact, just as with concrete phenomena. (2:402)

Eisenstein observes that the cartoon signals the equality of the thing and its reflection [Между отражением и явлением поставлен знак равенства (2: 402)]. The man’s glass is reflected in the mirror held by the woman. This reflected appearance is treated as if it were the real object. The man raises his hand to clink his reflected glass as if it were another, three-dimensional glass. Eisenstein sees this as “a return to the stage where the reflection and the real phenomenon are still undifferenti-

4 “The ‘movement’ of thinking” [«движение» мышления] is Kleiman’s subtitle for this section of *Method* (1:82–98)



ated” (a return to an earlier stage of consciousness since we know to differentiate). Recognizing, visually and kinetically, the conventional gesture of toasting portrayed in the drawing, we’re slipped back into that less-developed state of perception. Partially tempted to identify the mirror reflection with the thing itself, even as we know better, we are “tickled.”

Eisenstein writes that this is a “basic condition of comical composition” (2:402), which he describes as a formal realization of the dialectical principle, the unity of opposites: through the gesture of toasting, reflected appearance and reality are “forcibly (against nature) equalized and assimilated to each other” (2:402). Observing that “the equalization of opposites,” which “belongs to the norms of early thinking” (2:402) produces ambiguity, Eisenstein gives examples here and elsewhere in *Method* of opposites signified by a single term that covers both opposing phenomena (wearing a horn can mean you’re both virile and cuckold; Kadesh can imply both holiness and sin) (2:402).

In the cartoon, there is also a moment of literalization [момент буквализации] (2:402): in place of figurative, mental reflection, we have a literal, mirror reflection. (The foregrounded woman also renders literal Plato’s figure of holding

a mirror up to nature.) Eisenstein concludes that the cartoon's problematic equalization of the glass's reflection and the glass itself indicates "the primacy of subjectivity: the intensity of the experience – experience as a token of reality – is decisive. The objectivity (is it fact or imagination) of an appearance is not taken into account." [В основе (первого)⁵ лежит примат субъективности: решает интенсивность переживания – переживаемость [как] признак реальности. Объективность (то есть «факт» или «воображение») явления не принимается в расчет] (2:403).

The women in the background recognize that the foregrounded woman is holding a mirror, not a drink, but what the man is thinking, and toasting, remains ambiguous: is he toasting his reflected self, which appropriately raises a glass back at him; or is he toasting the woman who faces him and makes the right gesture with the wrong thing? Is he politely responding to a gesture he recognizes as absurd, or mindlessly following social and gestural convention?

Eisenstein breaks off his analysis of the cartoon and concludes this fragment of writing with the following:

Thus the lioness in the cage carries her cub along so many versts of a trodden path, as if she were free: she takes as many steps, but, moving in circles around the cage, as if she were crossing from one place to another. For her what is decisive is the quantity of distance covered, and not the objective distance between where she starts and where she stops. (2:403)

The lioness is both the toasting man who doesn't see, or doesn't care, that he's drinking alone; and the toasting woman, who knows her performance can compensate for the missing substance. Eisenstein's lioness finds its mirror reflection in a caged tiger who appears in Theodor Adorno's *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, written in roughly the same

5 "Pervogo" refers back to Eisenstein's first, numbered, point about the cartoon: "Between the reflection and the phenomenon is placed a sign of equality." His second point concerns literalization.

time period (1945 for Adorno, 1947 for Eisenstein). In #74, "Mammoth," Adorno writes of Carl Hagenbeck's modern zoo design, which features un-crossable trenches rather than cages:

The tiger endlessly pacing back and forth in his cage reflects back negatively, through his bewilderment, something of humanity, but not the one frolicking behind the pit too wide to leap... The fact, however, that animals really suffer more in cages than in the open range, that Hagenbeck does in fact represent a step forward in humanity, reflects on the inescapability of imprisonment. It is a consequence of history. The zoological gardens in their authentic form are products of nineteenth-century colonial imperialism... Only in the irrationality of civilization itself, in the nooks and crannies of the cities, to which the walls, towers and bastions of the zoos wedged among them are merely an addition, can nature be conserved. The rationalization of culture, in opening its doors to nature, thereby completely absorbs it, and eliminates with difference the principle of culture, the possibility of reconciliation.⁶

Eisenstein's lioness seems strangely unbothered by the limits placed on her by the bars, while Adorno's caged tiger is "bewildered," and it's the tiger that "frolics" on the other side of the trench that is akin to her. For the lioness and the frolicking tiger, it's possible to mistake the feel of movement for the actual thing. Eisenstein foregrounds the animal, while Adorno focuses on the culture that absorbs and restricts it, but a similar structure underlies both examples. In absorbing nature, culture erases the difference between nature and itself and thus destroys its own foundational principle, which is to reconcile, not eliminate, difference. In taking in the world, the mind forgets the difference between its experience of the world and the world itself; it thus destroys thinking's fundamental principle, which is to mark that difference.

6 Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, trans. E.F.N. Jephcott (London: Verso, 2005), 122–4.

These cats are to be taken literally, and they also tread on the cusp of the figurative.⁷ We can associate the lions' imprisonment with the imprisonments of Nazism, Stalinism, and capitalist mass culture, which form the historical context of this writing and pull the behavior of the caged lioness and the history of the European zoo toward the pole of metaphor. Eisenstein's focus on the animal that is restricted and Adorno's attention to the culture that restricts meet at the point where the mind fails to recognize its own instinctive bent.

Thinking that proceeds through sensory qualities that the mind easily associates with disparate objects (raising a mirror as if it were a glass, the feel of walking, whether it's in a circle or actually going somewhere) is so powerful that it can erase difference and override awareness of real conditions. According to Eisenstein, it is precisely this power that art taps. Interior monologue, for Eisenstein, is an artistic strategy for realizing and reflecting on this kind of thinking, which he called sensory, emotional thinking [чувственное мышление]. This thinking feels its way along associative paths generated by similarity, contiguity, synecdoche, and rhythm.

For Eisenstein, the work of James Joyce marked a crucial instance in realizing sensory and emotional thinking as "inner speech, which each of us speaks in a special way" (1:94). (Eisenstein obtained an English edition of *Ulysses* in 1927, and met Joyce in November 1929.) Joyce's originality, for Eisenstein, consists in risking misunderstanding and incomprehension in order to render the inner speech of his characters in language that does not conform to the conventions of standard speech. Emphasizing the idiosyncrasy of an individual's inner speech he writes, "only the genius of Joyce guesses at [it] as the foundation for a literary method" (1:94). The work of Lev Vygotsky⁸ informed Eisenstein's apprecia-

7 They are also hypotheticals: no person can say what a cat's experience is.

8 Kleiman notes that Eisenstein possessed an authorized typescript of

tion of Joyce. Vygotsky argued that, developmentally, inner speech arises only when a child has acquired the ability to speak, comprehensibly, to others. Inner speech thus comes into being only through a speaker's ability to distinguish it from speech used to communicate with others.

The "mutual penetration of outer and inner... worlds" as Leopold Bloom walks through Dublin draws Eisenstein's creative interest. He defines the inner world as a "complex of previous reflections of the external" [комплекс прежних отражений внешнево] (2: 355). Joyce retains the "roughness" [шершавость] of inner speech (1:112). Of all creators of interior monologues, he is distinct because only he touches not merely on the contents, but also on the method of inner speech, which involves breaking the rules of conventionally understandable language (1:114–6), drawing attention to it as language in its deformed, no longer easily recognizable, immediately comprehensible state.

With an image worthy of Disney, Eisenstein describes a succession of writers, the Surrealists, Proust, and Joyce, who "gave their attention to the inner stream of thoughts, feelings and perceptions" [отдавали свое внимание внутреннему току мысли, чувств и сознания] (2:353). He complains that literary scholarship tends to lump them all together even though the Surrealists were "floundering... in the dark bed of the stream," Proust, like Moses, was floating in his reed basket of remembrance wherever the stream took him, and Joyce was steering a steamship, going down and up the flood, with and against the current. (2:353). Joyce's nimble movement between instinct (involuntary stream of consciousness) and more deliberate compositional control distinguishes him. For Eisenstein, making art, as well as encountering it, involves the mind's ability to observe itself being a brain: "[Molly] Bloom is in bed and half asleep," he writes, "(the famous chapter without punctuation marks).

Vygotsky's *Psychology of Art*, written in 1925, but only published in 1965 (1:465–6).

But in the structure of the chapter, there is less involuntary irrationalism on the part of the author himself than we might find in his predecessors. The doctor understands syphillis – he does not have it!” (2:355).

Eisenstein writes that only sound film is able fully to capture stream of consciousness, and he singles out as exemplary his own montage lists for the scene where Clyde, the protagonist of *An American Tragedy*, finds himself deciding whether to kill his working-class girlfriend Roberta so that he can be free to marry a wealthy woman, Sonya. Intending to drown her and make it look like an accident, Clyde takes Roberta boating. On the water, his interior monologue leads to a change of heart and he decides not to commit murder, but Roberta drowns anyway, by accident. By establishing the accidental nature of her death through interior monologue, Eisenstein is able to shift guilt from Clyde to the capitalist state, which unjustly executes him. The irony of Roberta’s death despite Clyde’s decision not to kill her enables Eisenstein to make his theoretical point about the state with affective force. Her unintended death taps an instinctive belief in the omnipotence of thought – the belief that our innermost, intensely felt desires can come true, and we are accountable for them, even if we have not acted on them. (Belief in the omnipotence of thought is another way of losing sight of the difference between our intense experience of the world, and the world itself.) Our protest that Clyde’s punishment is unjust then aligns with our protest that thoughts are not, in fact, omnipotent; even as our sense of reproach toward Clyde – he did, after all, plan on killing her – perhaps draws life from our weakened but lingering adherence to this atavistic credence. Our response unites our disbelief with our belief. Such combinations of instinct and critical thinking are Eisenstein’s aim and, according to him, the “method” of art itself.⁹

9 For more about irony, fate, and the omnipotence of thought in literary works see “Chapter on Dostoevsky (Metonymy and Metaphor in

Eisenstein describes his “montage lists” for this scene as entailing “visual images, with sound, synchronic or asynchronic” (1:108):

sometimes like sounds, formless or formed as representational sound images...

now suddenly in the coinage of intellectually formed words, as ‘intellectual’ and dispassionate as words that are spoken, with a blank screen, a rushing imageless visuality... (1:108)¹⁰

These interjections of asynchronicity, “formlessness,” “a blank screen,” and “imageless visuality” suggest “pulverization” similar to that which Eisenstein locates in Joyce, and they distinguish this stream of consciousness, or flow of thinking, as “a medium of previously reflected exteriority.” Forms emerge tectonically, to borrow Alexei Gan’s constructivist principle, out of the “formlessness” and the “imageless visuality” of the mind just like the form of the giant baby arises out of the amorphous sea of the brain-planet, Solaris, to startle and transfix the astronaut who recognizes it as, and as not, human. Solaris’s giant baby is not unlike the giant book of matches in the child’s drawing of lighting a stove that Alexander Luria showed Eisenstein circa 1929 when Eisenstein was writing “Beyond the Shot.” Things swell in the mind and art, like the “disproportional” noses and chins of eighteenth-century artist Tōshūsai Sharaku’s portraits of kabuki actors.¹¹ The human brain, like that of the engaged lioness, instinctively expands, minimizes, and filters. Art, for Eisenstein, mimics such deformation, and also draws attention to it.

Plot)” (1: 396–420), which I write about in more detail in “Eisenstein and Horror,” *Journal of Visual Culture* 14:3 (2015), 317–331.

10 Here I use Richard Taylor’s translation. Sergei Eisenstein, *Selected Works Vol. 1 Writings 1922–1934*, ed. and trans. Richard Taylor (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 235.

11 Eisenstein, “Beyond the Shot” (1929), *Selected Works Vol. 1 Writings 1922–1934*, ed. and trans. Richard Taylor (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 141–2.

If, for Eisenstein, interiority develops from “previous reflections of the external” and cinema is the medium supremely capable of showing these “previous reflections,” then how does cinema show the mental registration of exterior features – noses, chins, babies, matches – as distinguished from the actual features themselves? What would constitute a realism, or illusionism, in the representation of such “inner speech”? Is every instance of enlarging, cutting, illuminating or enshadowing meant to respond to the mind as it aims to reflect and remember accurately, and inevitably changes that which it reflects? What constitutes the cinematic apparatus for Eisenstein and to what extent has this apparatus shaped what Eisenstein’s cinema imagines thinking to be? The rest of this essay will sketch a few ways in which *Ivan the Terrible* can suggest how, and how far, this apparatus infiltrates the task of making a likeness of thinking, a reflection of a reflection.

In *Ivan the Terrible*, space and time seem to bend to Ivan’s (Nikolai Cherkasov’s) mind when his aide Maliuta (Mikhail Zharov) proposes to execute his enemies. Less than a minute later Maliuta leaves the room, just as Ivan asks himself by what right he wields the sword of retribution, we hear a cry, as of the first victim. Despite his Hamlet-like self-questioning, Ivan does not stop Maliuta and his unchecked desire to punish produces a weirdly instantaneous consequence. Thinking seems omnipotent.

Important analyses of the film by Kristin Thompson, Joan Neuberger, and Anne Nesbet point up precisely such intricate temporal and spatial improbabilities. Neuberger, for instance, notes the expressionistically unlikely height of Anastasia’s coffin, which works with the “disorienting” editing of the scene “to coordinate the visual with the thematic and the psychological.”¹² Nesbet highlights the contrast between the giant shadow cast by Ivan and the tiny mouse holes through which he must pass “as the figure must always be remolding its contours to fit its impossible environment.” She connects this with “Eisenstein’s

12 Joan Neuberger, *Ivan the Terrible* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003), 114.

ongoing interest in the effect of context on human life and activity,”¹³ or, in Eisenstein’s words, “the mutual penetration of outer and inner worlds” [взаимное проникание внешнего и внутреннево... миров] (2:355). And Thompson thoroughly catalogs the many ways the film departs from the conventions of continuity editing as she develops her influential theory of cinematic excess.¹⁴ The aesthetics of disproportionality noted by all three critics arises out of Eisenstein’s grappling with thought and cinematic representation.

Yuri Tsivian has discussed a theatrical predecessor to *Ivan’s* “inner speech.” He cites Nikolai Evreinov’s influence on Eisenstein to show that “Eisenstein conceived of *Ivan the Terrible* as a monodrama which means that characters around Ivan are kinds of proxies, or avatars, which behave, mutate, exchange functions according to what is going on in the main hero’s mind (his ‘inner monologue’...)”¹⁵ This inner monologue is emphatically embodied. Eisenstein thought of the film’s body as a structural counterpart of the hero’s body, Tsivian writes. The body of the hero and that of the film were “ecstatic” or “torn-apart” structures, and the actor’s ecstatic body interacted dynamically with the film’s montage structure such that “Ivan is not just a character in the film – the man is the film.”¹⁶ Ivan’s self-division hinges on his lust for vengeance against political opponents and his aim to create a united and strong Russian state. He acts like a bloody tyrant and believes himself to be a visionary statesman. When the discrepancy disturbs his conscience, he soliloquizes, asking: “By what right do you set yourself as judge, Tsar Ivan? By what right do you

13 Anne Nesbet, *Savage Junctures: Sergei Eisenstein and the Shape of Thinking* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003), 190, 244.

14 Kristin Thompson, *Ivan the Terrible: A Neoformalist Analysis* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1981).

15 Yuri Tsivian, *Ivan the Terrible* (London: British Film Institute, 2002), 68. See also “Cinema and Theater. Nikolai Evreinov” in *Method* (1:116-129).

16 Tsivian, *Ivan the Terrible*, 51.

wield the sword of justice?"¹⁷ Eisenstein emphasizes the indecision, aligning his screenplay with Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and his filmic version of Dreiser's *Clyde*.

Self-questioning and conscience fit Eisenstein's broader concept of an art that activates associative pathways established by instinct and habit only to surprise with a "reverse movement," that can help us catch associative impulses at work. Importantly, he valorizes neither the impulse, nor its reversal. "Regress" and "progress" are both crucial to thinking through art.¹⁸

Eisenstein imagined the ambiguity of Ivan's character partly through his memory of reading Charles Darwin's *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872). He emphasizes the way a cat "grins" both when it is about to move away from conflict, and when it is about to attack:

What happens in the moment of the grin? One and the same external object provokes a double reaction in the tiger. One reaction is to pounce. And the other is not to pounce. One is immediate. And the other is tempered by experience ("and what if the enemy is strong"). Hamlet also has two reactions to the object of his hatred. [Что происходит в момент «оскала»? Один и тот же внешний объект вызывает в тигре – двойную реакцию. Одну – броситься. И другую – не броситься. Одну непосредственную. И другую – умудренную опытом ("а вдруг враг силен"). У Гамлета тоже две реакции на объект ненависти (1:87).]

A series of gestures as ambiguous as a cat's grin (in addition to Darwin, Eisenstein drew inspiration from Lewis Carroll) occurs when Ivan inspects the bodies whose heads Maliuta has severed. Ivan removes his hat, walks toward the corpses slightly bowed, and makes the sign of the cross – all gestures we might automatically associate with penitence. But instead of completing the gesture by touching his fingers to his left shoulder, he rears back, points his finger and hisses, "Too few!" The

17 Sergei Eisenstein, *Ivan the Terrible* (London: Faber and Faber, 1985), 157.

18 See, "Regress—Progress" (2: 352–8).

surprise hiss turns the mind back upon the gestures that preceded it. If, following convention, we associated the bowed head and religious gesture with contrition, now we wonder whether the gesture signaled humility before God, or awe at the expediency of autocratic force. Ivan is the cat who grins, signaling, unhelpfully, that he's either going to attack, or repent for attacking. Just when we think he's legible, he's not. As with Schrödinger's cat, we have to wait until we can observe further.

Here Eisenstein goads us to read, and immediately to question our reading of, Ivan's gestures. This spectatorial re-reading and reversal, where we question our immediate reaction also rehearses in miniature Eisenstein's own practice of imagining and composing film images, and then reviewing them to write theory. In his films Eisenstein aims to sway his audiences physiologically, emotionally; in his theory he aims to make them aware of how his films prey so effectively on their feelings. Theory and practice, for Eisenstein, are like the recto and verso of a sheet of paper: they necessitate and rely on each other. Alarmed by art's autocratic force (he recounts an apocryphal story from his early days in theater about an usher's child transformed into a conduit of every emotion rehearsed on stage) (1:51–2), he responds by developing a method for making and encountering art that relies on Socratic questions.¹⁹ “At its root, the Greek word ‘irony’ (eironeia) means ‘question,’” Eisenstein writes. [Греческое слово «ирония» (eironeia) дословно означает «вопрос»] (1:214). Eisenstein proceeds to remind his

19 Kleiman writes in his introduction to *Method*, “The Problem of Eisenstein”: It is imperative, in Eisenstein's opinion, to wield not a system of techniques... but a method, the wielding of which should provide the skill “to pose a question” and resolve it in the creation of “things” that exert influence profoundly, widely, and for a long time, if not forever. Необходимо, по мнению Эйзенштейна, владеть не системой приемов... но методом, овладение которым должно обеспечить «умение ставить вопрос» и разрешать его в создании «вещи», воздействующей глубоко, широко и долго, если не всегда.

Naum Kleiman, “Problema Eizenshteina,” *Metod*, 1:8.

readers how Socrates' interlocutors confidently followed their trains of thought to the point of absurdity, when they had to reverse course. Eisensteinian inner monologue, like Socratic dialogue, is a deeply ironic art.

Eisenstein's monologue, then, isn't necessarily the same kind of monologue Mikhail Bakhtin would contrast with Dostoevsky's dialogism. Kleiman notes Eisenstein was abroad when Bakhtin's *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* came out in 1929. He speculates that although the title of Bakhtin's book is in Eisenstein's notes, Eisenstein's failure to mention it when writing specifically about a change in literature from the author's monologue to a polylogue [перехода от «одноточечного» авторского сказа к многоголосому изложению темы, переход от авторского «монолога» к... «полилогу» (1:122) suggests Eisenstein never got around to actually reading Bakhtin (1:463).

Interior monologue, like the free indirect, can create the pleasurable illusion of knowing what someone else is thinking. In showing what characters are thinking, authors, and auteurs, risk overriding difference – like culture overriding the difference of nature, the mind forgetting the difference between its reflections of the world and the world itself, or like tyrants violently transforming citizens into subjects. Eisenstein's monologues evade this imposition of certainty by making the interrogative the dominant mood for thinking in and through art.

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MASSIMO OLIVERO

LA MUSIQUE DU PAYSAGE OU DE LA NON-INDIFFÉRENCE DE LA NATURE

Dans le chapitre « La Non-Indifférente Nature » du livre homonyme, Sergueï Eisenstein traite des qualités extatiques de la *musique du paysage*. Il s'occupe du caractère émotionnel du paysage et de sa capacité à jouer un rôle pathétique tout comme la composante musicale d'un film. Le cinéaste affronte tout d'abord le cas de la représentation du paysage dans le cinéma muet, qui se transformait en une sorte de "paysage sonore" grâce à un travail particulier sur la forme filmique. Le "paysage sonore" de la période du cinéma muet était constitué d'éléments visuels qui se chargeaient de restituer la *matérialité sonore* du réel. À travers un travail formel sur les composantes plastiques de l'image et le rythme du montage, des analogies se créaient avec la fluidité du mouvement musical. La recherche d'Eisenstein s'inscrit donc dans un courant théorique qui a essayé d'explorer, à partir des années 1910, le rapport entre cinéma et musique à l'époque du muet. En effet, les théoriciens du cinéma ont tout de suite remarqué le caractère musical inné du muet. Par exemple en 1920, Élie Faure écrivait que « la cinéplastique tend et tendra chaque jour davantage à se rapprocher de la musique. [...] L'interpénétration, le croisement, l'association des mouvements et des cadences nous donnent déjà l'impression que les films les plus médiocres eux-mêmes se déroulent dans un espace musical »¹. Et Ricciotto Canudo ajoutait que, au cinéma « la vision plastique doit seule suffire à tout suggérer [...] De même que dans la musique et dans la poésie [...] on ne

1 Élie Faure, *De la cinéplastique*, in Daniel Banda et José Moure, *Le cinéma : naissance d'un art 1895-1920*, Paris, Flammarion, 2008, p. 497.

cherche que l'expression de l'essentiel par le sensible »². Encore récemment, Noël Burch a constaté qu'« avec sa partition musicale ininterrompue, le film muet est une sorte de spectacle lyrique, où la voix figure en tant que gestuelle, la parole en tant que graphie »³.

Cependant le rapport entre cinéma et musique a souvent été considéré sous son aspect "extérieur", c'est-à-dire selon l'angle exclusif de l'analogie entre le rythme musical et le montage. Les premiers théoriciens se sont surtout concentrés sur ce point, sans trop s'intéresser aux aspects les plus "intérieurs" aux films comme la représentation du mouvement et de la vibration des affects, tandis qu'Eisenstein est l'un des premiers à se concentrer sur ces aspects et à mettre en relation plasticité et musicalité dans une optique plus générale de production des émotions. Il recherche dans les éléments plastiques la musicalité, l'évocation d'un sentiment qui s'incarne dans les images, plus que la simple restitution sonore de la réalité. C'est justement pour cela qu'il s'intéresse aux problèmes de la représentation du paysage, car à l'époque du muet l'expression des émotions passait surtout par la mise en scène du paysage. D'après lui, le paysage était l'élément figuratif le plus adéquat pour dépasser ses limites, et celui le plus à même de produire des vibrations pathétiques qui devaient ensuite résonner dans toutes les autres images. Le choix du paysage était donc étroitement lié à la musicalité recherchée et à ce propos Eisenstein affirmait que « le paysage est l'élément le plus libre du film, le moins chargé de tâches narratives et le plus docile lorsqu'il s'agit de transmettre les émotions, les sentiments, les états d'âme. En un mot *tout* ce qui, dans sa figuration fluide, floue, confusément saisissable ne peut être pleinement restitué que par la seule musique »⁴. Le paysage devait donc se charger

2 Ricciotto Canudo, *La leçon du cinéma*, in Daniel Banda et José Moure, *Le cinéma : naissance d'un art 1895-1920*, op. cit., p. 494.

3 Noël Burch, *Du muet, le parlant*, in Christian Belaygue (dir.), *Du Muet au parlant*, Cinémathèque de Toulouse, Éditions Milan, 1988, p. 51.

4 Sergueï M. Eisenstein, *La Non-Indifférente Nature 2*, Paris, UGE,

de communiquer tout ce qui était par définition indicible et de rendre visible l'invisible, finissant par avoir ainsi les mêmes traits caractéristiques que la musique. Afin de pouvoir produire cet effet expressif, le paysage devait dépasser son rôle secondaire d'élément purement "géographique", de simple repère spatial, et devenir un vrai protagoniste, une figure expressive indispensable dans la construction de la tonalité émotive dominante de l'œuvre. Les films muets utilisaient souvent des

"préludes" de paysage-musique, dont les éléments rythmiques, après avoir créé l'état émotionnel et l'atmosphère désirés, se glissaient dans le développement ultérieur de la scène, dont le sujet avait la même tonalité de résonance : l'introduction dévoilait cette tonalité à l'état pur et tout au long de la scène, bâtie selon la même structure rythmique et visuellement mélodique, cette musique intérieure continuait à résonner dans les sentiments du spectateur⁵.

Selon sa conception, un cinéaste devait donc travailler tous les éléments naturels – du paysage – et artificiels – du cinéma – afin de réaliser un système formel capable de rendre l'image "sonore". L'exemple qui correspond le mieux à ce genre de paysage sonore est celui des "brumes d'Odessa" du *Cuirassé Potemkine*. Il s'agit là d'une scène qui ne joue aucun rôle du point de vue narratif, mais qui manifeste de fortes vibrations émotionnelles, qui doivent ensuite se propager dans le reste du film, et en particulier dans la scène suivante, où la communauté porte le deuil de la mort de Vakoulintchouk. Du paysage du port d'Odessa émane une atmosphère lugubre et mortifère. Des éléments simples comme l'eau grisâtre de la mer, les brumes opaques de l'aube ou les silhouettes noires des navires, combinés rythmiquement et plastiquement entre eux, produisent la même tonalité émotive, celle de la mort. Eisenstein utilise au maximum le caractère indéfini des matériaux employés, pour se rapprocher le plus possible du mouvement fluide de la musique. Cette atmosphère de tristesse se forme grâce à l'oscillation

coll. « 10/18 », 1978, p. 48.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 50.

mélodique et aux variations tonales des facteurs en jeu, qu'Eisenstein définit comme « l'élément gris-trouble, spongieux du brouillard, le gris-argent miroitant de la surface de l'eau, les parois veloutées des masses noires des détails matériels »⁶. Les objets filmés dans cette scène, insaisissables et indistincts, se métamorphosent dans la scène suivante en d'autres éléments plus concrets, comme par exemple la bougie posée entre les mains du cadavre, et leur transformation se charge d'une résonance émotionnelle. Le brouillard est pour Eisenstein le matériel idéal pour la transmission et la résonance d'une musique plastique, le « flou des contours des éléments représentés » est la manifestation plastique d'un son qui se perd « dans les lointains »⁷. L'atmosphère ainsi créée se poursuit dans la scène du deuil de Vakoulintchouk, établissant un écho audio-visuel entre des matériaux qui évoquent seulement l'idée et le sentiment de la tristesse, et d'autres qui incarnent concrètement le sens de la mort et du deuil. Eisenstein a décrit en ces termes cette métamorphose :

De l'impondérabilité des brumes, passant par les contours imprécis des objets, l'accord des motifs mélodiques progresse – à travers le gris plombé de l'eau et les voiles grises – vers le noir velouté des coques de navires et la terre ferme des quais. La composition dynamique des lignes distinctes de ces éléments se fond en un ultime accord statique. Ces éléments se joignent dans le plan immobile où la voile grise est devenue tente, les étraves noires – nœuds de crêpe de deuil, l'eau – larmes de femmes aux têtes courbées⁸.

Cet exemple montre bien les résultats obtenus par Eisenstein dans son projet de réaliser un "paysage sonore" avec les simples moyens expressifs de la plasticité de l'image muette et du rythme de montage. Pourtant, ces procédés n'ont pas été abandonnés avec l'introduction du sonore. Ce qui nous inté-

6 *Ibid.*, p. 70.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 87.

8 *Ibid.*, pp. 68-69.

resse ici, c'est justement de montrer le travail formel décrit par Eisenstein, sa recherche des péripéties du "paysage sonore" en tant que construction esthétique, dans d'autres films et chez d'autres cinéastes. Nous verrons, à travers l'analyse de trois cas différents, comment certains films de la première époque du cinéma sonore ont poursuivi, jusqu'à l'enrichir, la tradition du "paysage sonore" du cinéma muet. Les trois cas en question, *L'Or des mers* d'Epstein, *Ivan* de Dovjénko, tous deux de 1932, et *Au bord de la mer bleue* de Barnet de 1936, ne sont pas cités par Eisenstein dans *La Non-Indifférente Nature*, mais confirment sous plusieurs aspects son discours sur la musicalité du paysage et deux cas, ceux qui appartiennent à la cinématographie soviétique, développent aussi la théorie de la fusion organique du son avec l'image. Ce qui est intéressant dans ces films, ce sont surtout leur dimension synesthésique, c'est-à-dire l'idée de renvoyer au son à travers l'image, et les effets d'*interpénétration* d'éléments opposés comme la création d'une superposition, en vertical, des matériaux expressifs. Nous vérifierons que ces deux principes formels produisent un changement qualitatif, un passage d'un état à un autre, un « passage des contraires »⁹, qui est en effet le devenir propre de l'*extase de la représentation filmique*.

1. *L'Or des mers de Jean Epstein*

L'Or des mers a été tourné selon les mêmes procédés que les autres chefs-d'œuvres muets d'Epstein comme *Finis Terrae* (1928) et *Mor Vran* (1930), mais ici le réalisateur accepta d'y introduire une bande sonore, sous la pression de la production. « J'ai été amené à étendre le dialogue un peu plus que je ne le pensais tout d'abord »¹⁰, avoue le cinéaste, qui regrette aussi le choix de la langue française à la place du breton et l'adoption

9 *Ibid.*, p. 96.

10 Jean Epstein, *Écrits sur le cinéma*, tome 1, Paris, Seghers, 1974, p. 224.

d'un accompagnement musical assez lourd. Pourtant, malgré l'introduction du son, le film est construit selon les règles de l'esthétique du cinéma muet. L'image est encore travaillée par le flou, le ralenti, les surimpressions et les fondu-enchaînés, tout un travail plastique qui produit un espace-temps doté d'une musicalité propre.

Dans *L'Or des mers*, la description du paysage naturel de l'île d'Hoedick et de la mer qui l'entoure crée un rythme interne à chaque élément, suivant les principes formels établis par Epstein dans ses textes théoriques où il affirme que le talent du cinéaste est « de comprendre choses, phénomènes, gens, non comme ils sont, mais comme ils se meuvent »¹¹. Il considère ainsi que le rôle du cinéma visuel est « d'opposer, de réunir de très simples images selon des rythmes, des recoupements, des répétitions, des chevauchements qui signifient »¹². Epstein, quand il filme les différents personnages et les paysages terrestres ou maritimes qui les entourent, crée toujours une double dynamique temporelle. D'une part, les éléments acquièrent, grâce au montage, une dimension rythmique extérieure, et d'autre part la plasticité des corps et de leurs masses crée un mouvement intérieur aux êtres et aux choses où les émotions affleurent.

La scène finale du film montre parfaitement cette idée de "chevauchements" de différents rythmes visuels, à travers la correspondance des éléments plastiques et du rythme du montage. Dans cette scène, le sauvetage accompli par le fiancé de la jeune Soisic, bloquée dans les sables mouvants, alterne avec un moment de la fête du village. La lenteur des corps qui s'effondrent dans les sables mouvants, lenteur accentuée par le ralenti, s'oppose au dynamisme de la fête où plusieurs éléments se mélangent, dans une surimpression qui lie ensemble le mouvement des vagues de la mer, les cloches qui se balancent, et la foule qui, sortant de l'église, fait une ronde et danse joyeusement. Les deux moments, éloignés sur les plans spatiaux et temporels, montrent des personnages qui entrent en rapport

11 *Ibid.*, p. 204.

12 *Ibid.*

direct avec les éléments naturels. Tandis que les villageois se noient, grâce aux surimpressions, dans les vagues de la mer, le visage de la jeune fille, parsemé de sable, se fait littéralement paysage. Les temps de la tragédie et de la fête se fondent et se superposent, dans un tempo musical multiple et stratifié, produisant différentes tonalités émotionnelles. Dans ce film la mise en scène emprunte à la musique « sa part la plus mystérieuse, parce que moins spécifique à cet art en tant que forme codifiée : la perception, le sentiment, la vibration qui est autant du côté du spectateur (ou de l'auditeur) que de l'œuvre elle-même »¹³.

2. Au bord de la mer bleue de Boris Barnet

Un autre exemple de paysage capable de transmettre une dimension émotive et musicale est montré dans *Au bord de la mer bleue*, film soviétique de Barnet de 1936. Ce film présente encore plusieurs caractéristiques typiques de l'esthétique du muet, qui a presque désormais disparu du fait de l'introduction du sonore, ce qui est encore plus étonnant car il a été réalisé en pleine esthétique du réalisme socialiste, une poétique fondée sur de longs discours à caractère idéologique, sur la logorrhée de ses personnages et tendant à réprimer la force ambiguë des images. *Au bord de la mer bleue* exploite pourtant toute la puissance plastique et musicale du paysage maritime; la mer devient l'un des personnages principaux de l'histoire, figure capable, avec son mouvement à la fois incessant et chaotique, de créer un rythme visible et concret. L'eau est l'une des rares matières capable de montrer explicitement son mouvement et d'exprimer le paradoxe du « fracas silencieux »¹⁴. C'est un élément instable et mobile, musical par excellence, qui marque rythmiquement ses mouvements selon des crescendos et des diminuendos.

13 Éric Thouvenel, *Les images de l'eau dans le cinéma français des années 20*, Rennes, PUR, 2010, p. 215.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 237.

Le début du film montre bien cette force visuelle et sonore de la mer. Dans cette scène, les images de la mer déchaînée par la tempête sont accompagnées d'une musique extradiégétique qui souligne avec emphase la situation dramatique. Mais la force sonore de ce paysage s'appuie sur la représentation d'une mer démontée et de ses vagues, extraordinairement plastiques, à la fois rigides comme des sculptures en pierre, mais aussi malléables comme de la pâte, capables de s'écraser les unes sur les autres et de se reconstruire immédiatement après. Ces rythmes différents, que Barnet amplifie à travers une sélection d'une série de gros plans, confluent finalement dans une image globale de la mer, avec son mouvement « unique, puissant, qui englobe tout et qui, pareil au thème musical, fait fusionner en une commune unité cet infini d'alternances de phénomènes isolés »¹⁵. Comme *L'Or des mers*, cette scène exploite aussi le ralenti, afin d'exalter la nature rythmique du mouvement des vagues, et implicitement la dimension temporelle de l'espace cinématographique, soulignée encore plus par le travail de manipulation sur le représenté effectué par le montage.

Un autre moment où le paysage joue un rôle décisif dans la construction d'une tonalité émotive est celui qui succède à une tempête où Macha, chef du *kolkhoze*, tombée à l'eau, disparaît dans les vagues. Toute la communauté croit la femme morte noyée et célèbre ses funérailles. La vision de la mer alterne alors avec les plans qui montrent le deuil de la communauté au village et les images des deux protagonistes, amis de la jeune disparue, qui pleurent sa perte sur la plage. La structure formelle de cette scène semble suivre les mêmes lois qu'une partition musicale où les différents éléments confluent pour former une tonalité globale, qui exprime la douleur déchirante de la perte d'un être cher. La mer, en particulier, sert comme élément de ponctuation, qui donne à la scène, avec son mouvement cyclique, son rythme interne. Utilisée par Barnet comme un *leitmotiv* visuel, la mer assume sur le plan symbolique la fonction d'interprète des tourments intérieurs et du *pathos* des personnages. La mer

15 Sergueï M. Eisenstein, *La Non-Indifférente Nature 2*, op. cit., p. 75.

incarne alors plastiquement leurs émotions, comme un sismographe qui enregistre les pulsions souterraines et invisibles et les montre en surface. Barnet exploite la puissance visuelle et la magnificence du paysage à travers la présence en arrière-plan du soleil couchant traversé par les nuages et un premier plan où les vagues envahissent le cadre et obscurcissent notre vision. La musique extradiégétique ne fait que reproduire, de façon redondante, le ton dramatique du moment. Quand elle s'arrête pour laisser la place au seul bruit des vagues, la mer, symbole de mort et d'absence, reprend soudainement son rôle d'élément vital et restitue vivante la jeune fille au *kolkhoze*. Barnet exploite ainsi les possibilités du sonore pour renverser le ton mortifère dominant la scène. Les deux protagonistes masculins, après avoir aperçu la jeune fille au milieu des vagues, presque déposée sur la plage, reculent comme s'ils étaient pris par le mouvement du vent ou du reflux de l'onde.

La mer n'est pas ici un simple élément du décor, mais assume un rôle de protagoniste qui imprime une tonalité émotive au récit, donnant un rythme interne aux images. Au lieu d'appliquer la ligne esthétique dominante du cinéma réaliste socialiste, qui cherchait le contrôle absolu sur l'image à travers une totale absence d'ambiguïté dans la représentation de l'espace soviétique, Barnet propose ici l'un des derniers exemples de paysage expressif et musical. Ce traitement de l'espace renvoie plutôt à l'esthétique du sublime¹⁶, qui exalte le désordre et le chaos des lieux infinis, inaccessibles et mystérieux, et pourrait se comprendre comme une forme particulière de résistance à l'aplatissement de la représentation de l'espace.

3. *Ivan de Dovjenko*

Le film soviétique, *Ivan de Dovjenko*, présente également un travail de construction audiovisuelle du paysage, qui lie images

16 Voir à ce propos Gian Piero Piretto, *Il radioso avvenire. Mitologie culturali sovietiche*, Turin, Einaudi, 2001.

et sons. Cette fois, tous les éléments ont la même importance sur le plan de la production du sens. Dovjenko a été l'un des plus grands réalisateurs de paysages sonores à l'époque du muet, notamment dans son film *La Terre* (1930). Pourtant dans *Ivan*, son premier film sonore, il donne autant de valeur au son qu'à la composition des images, rendant totalement organique le tissu audiovisuel. Dovjenko comprend en effet l'utilité pour son cinéma, caractérisé par une forte tension pathétique, d'une collaboration active entre les images et les sons. Ce film montre la construction d'une centrale hydroélectrique sur le Dniepr, qui fait partie des grands travaux du premier plan quinquennal. C'est un paysage qui est en train d'être vaincu, maîtrisé par l'homme, donc artificiel, mais qui contient encore plusieurs éléments naturels – l'eau en particulier – puisque comme Dovjenko le rappelle, le paysage peut seulement exister grâce aux moyens donnés par la nature. Ce paysage trouve sa musicalité non seulement à travers les qualités plastiques des éléments naturels, mais aussi grâce à la sophistication de sa construction rythmique. Une tonalité dominante émerge à partir de l'enchaînement de plusieurs facteurs visuels et sonores, des machines et des instruments du chantier jusqu'aux bruits, aux voix des ouvriers et à la musique extradiégétique, qui concourent tous à signifier l'enthousiasme du travail collectif. Le montage unit les bruits et une musique très emphatique liée à des images de travail collectif de construction montrant des grues qui déplacent des bennes avec du béton, des ouvriers qui frappent le fer de leurs marteaux, en contrepoint avec le montage. Cette construction polyphonique est dirigée par les ouvriers eux-mêmes qui, par des gestes rappelant les mouvements d'un chef d'orchestre, dirigent les objets dans l'espace. Pour utiliser le langage d'Eisenstein « on dirait que les différences de facture des divers éléments, de même [que leur union] composent un ensemble pareil à ce qu'est un orchestre qui unit instruments à vents et instruments à cordes, bois et cuivres dans la simultanéité et la continuité »¹⁷. Cette construction polyphonique audiovisuelle

17 Sergueï M. Eisenstein, *La Non-Indifférente Nature 2*, op. cit., p. 71.

du film *Ivan* fait penser inévitablement à l'idée eisensteinienne du « montage vertical » où tous les éléments du texte audiovisuel se superposent et collaborent à la construction d'une tonalité dominante. Même si chez Dovjenco il n'y a pas le degré de sophistication théorisé par Eisenstein, nous pouvons en tout cas retrouver un même effet de synchronie interne à chaque plan, afin d'avoir un flux d'images et de sons qui se superposent verticalement aussi bien qu'horizontalement – dans la simultanéité comme dans la continuité – exactement comme dans une composition harmonique.

Les exemples analysés montrent à l'œuvre l'union organique et la pénétration mutuelle, qui leur confèrent un impact pathétique, des figures humaines et des éléments plastiques qui composent le paysage. L'esthétique du paysage sonore, conçue à l'époque du muet et condamnée à l'anachronisme et à la désuétude à l'époque du cinéma sonore, a en réalité ouvert la voie à une conception différente du sonore par rapport à celle proposée par le cinéma commercial, qui acceptait l'introduction du parlé de manière irréfléchie. Cela signifie que l'introduction du sonore n'a pas effacé les possibilités de cette construction formelle, mais les a, au contraire, élargies.

Ces mêmes principes esthétiques persistent donc au cours des années trente et seront à la base du montage polyphonique audiovisuel d'*Alexandre Nevski* et d'*Ivan le Terrible*, mais aussi de *Citizen Kane* (1941) d'Orson Welles. De plus, pour Eisenstein les principes formels qui déterminent le « son caché »¹⁸ dans les éléments plastiques de l'image de la scène des brumes d'Odessa seront plus efficaces encore dans le cinéma audio-visuel d'*Ivan le Terrible* que dans le montage rapide et fragmentaire du muet. Et cela parce que « dans la scène des brumes, nous trouvons l'exemple d'une structure contrapuntique "liée" et non mise à nu, contrairement au "nerf dénudé" du montage dans les autres "scènes-choc" du film »¹⁹ de l'âge

18 *Ibid.*, p. 184.

19 *Ibid.*, p. 184.

du muet. La structure contrapuntique et polyphonique qui est déjà présente dans *le Cuirassé Potemkine* sera donc reprise et potentialisée grâce à l'introduction des sons et de la musique dans la construction formelle d'*Ivan le Terrible*.

DOMINIQUE PAÏNI

NOTES POUR PROLONGER
LA RENCONTRE FUGITIVE D'EISENSTEIN
ET DE COCTEAU À PARIS

Les années 1970 de la cinéphilie française furent agitées par une actualité Eisenstein. Le cinéaste soviétique offrait sans doute aux intellectuels occidentaux une figure idéalement révolutionnaire et héroïque, artistique et savante qui correspondait aux tumultes étudiants et ouvriers de la fin des années 1960.

La publication par les éditions UGE 10/18 des traductions de textes inédits du cinéaste et les études eisensteiniennes au sein des *Cahiers du cinéma* permirent aux cinéphiles d'associer l'amour du cinéma et l'engagement idéologique.

Le nouveau cinéma avait pourtant imposé des nouveaux maîtres soviétiques (Alexeï Guerman, Kira Mouratova, Andreï Tarkovsky). Mais c'est Eisenstein qui nous faisait toujours et encore vibrer intellectuellement, plastiquement et dramaturgiquement à cette époque. Les deux premiers numéros de la revue *Change* incluaient dans leurs sommaires des textes consacrés au montage, la revue *Tel quel* faisait découvrir les formalistes russes. Les *Cahiers du cinéma* invitaient Roland Barthes à commenter le pathos eisensteinien. Les années 1970 passant, l'intérêt cinéphile pour Eisenstein s'é moussa jusqu'à disparaître, correspondant probablement au retour au « calme idéologique ». Les années 1980, du tout visuel, arrivèrent. C'est la vidéo manipulatrice qui s'empara des escaliers d'Odessa pour des visées publicitaires ou, dans le meilleur des cas (?), muséales (*Steps*, Z. Rybczynski, 1987).

Peu d'historiens et de critiques entretinrent la flamme contre le sentiment qu'il n'y avait plus rien à découvrir et à ressentir chez le cinéaste. Il avait pourtant laissé dans la mémoire de plusieurs générations le souvenir d'un film qui ébranla le monde.

Les partis communistes internationaux et le mouvement des ciné-clubs avaient considéré le *Cuirassé Potemkine* comme l'équivalent de la *Liberté guidant le peuple* de Delacroix pour des grandes révoltes des opprimés du 20^{ème} siècle.

Mais depuis les années 2000, Eisenstein a été progressivement réinscrit dans la généalogie d'une anthropologie culturelle des images liant Aby Warburg, Walter Benjamin, Siegfried Kracauer, Theodor Adorno, André Malraux (celui du *Musée imaginaire*)... Ceux-ci ont eu fréquemment recours à une pensée des images empruntant aux théories du montage pratiqué par les cinéastes des années 1920 dont Eisenstein est le héros...

Très longtemps, je suis resté indifférent à l'œuvre de Jean Cocteau – de l'écrivain, du poète, du dramaturge, y compris du cinéaste, et plus encore du dessinateur. Nombreux sont ceux de ma génération qui nourrirent à son égard un certain dédain. Ses apparitions à la télévision n'arrangeaient rien. De surcroît, depuis les années 1920 le surréalisme lui menait la vie dure. Dès 1919, André Breton le considéra comme l'être le plus haïssable de ce temps. Je fus sensible jusqu'au début des années 1980 à cette influence. Cependant, l'intérêt majeur que lui portaient les cinéastes de l'underground américain des années 1950 (Markopoulos, Anger, Mekas) et ceux de la Nouvelle vague française des années 1960 (Truffaut, Rivette, Godard et Demy...) me rendaient de plus en plus perplexe. Et c'est finalement la proximité amicale de ces derniers et le souvenir de leur compagnonnage avec le dessinateur-cinéaste qui m'encouragèrent à pallier ma méconnaissance de sa production des années 1910 aux années 1930, soit la période la plus multidisciplinaire de son œuvre.

En 2003, dans la perspective de l'exposition « Jean Cocteau, sur le fil du siècle », je relus les divers témoignages relatant les agitations qui entourèrent la présentation de la *Voix humaine* interprétée par Berthe Bovy, seule en scène, à la Comédie française, en 1930.

Je finis par retrouver Eisenstein dans l'enchaînement des récits de cette soirée dont il fut témoin. Dans un chapitre de ses *Mémoires*, écrit en 1946, il montre une très grande précision

dans ses souvenirs du « brouhaha » (c'est un des mots français qu'il emprunte et dont il s'amuse de l'assonance) qui envahit la salle de théâtre lors de la générale à laquelle il avait invité Paul Eluard. Cocteau lui avait probablement offert quatre places lors d'un dîner préalable auquel Aragon était également convié. Eisenstein portait peu de sympathie à André Breton, et en général, à l'éthique et l'esthétique des surréalistes, dont il connaissait les exactions de tous genres et les violences scandaleuses dans le Paris des « folles années 1920 ». Néanmoins, il est stupéfait par le scandale que déclenche Eluard (je renvoie le lecteur à sa description dans les *Mémoires*) et la bataille physique qui clôt la soirée. Il tente d'éviter Cocteau paradoxalement décontracté au terme de cette soirée orageuse. Comme Valentine Hugo, il a le sentiment que Cocteau tire avantage de la furie dévastatrice des surréalistes, estimant qu'il a désiré et obtenu son scandale. Sans culpabiliser d'avoir entraîné Eluard avec lui, il se suggère à lui-même : « Je ne sais si les applaudissements auraient été aussi chaleureux sans le scandale ?! Si les ovations auraient été aussi enflammées sans l'incident. En fin de compte, peut-être que Cocteau n'a pas tellement de raisons que ça de se fâcher ? Peut-être même a-t-il des raisons de me remercier ? ! » (En effet c'était Eisenstein qui avait invité Eluard à cette soirée d'avant-première...)¹.

Eisenstein avait croisé Cocteau plusieurs fois auparavant. Ce dernier l'avait reçu et s'était enquis de ses difficultés de renouvellement de visa, aggravées par l'interdiction policière de la projection à Paris de son film *La ligne générale*. Malgré cette attention généreuse, le cinéaste soviétique lui conservait une légère condescendance, mais dénuée de tout mépris. Il avait lu *Opium*, publié précisément en 1930 et garda quelques temps un portrait de Jean Cocteau accroché dans son bureau, en hommage aux *Mariés de la Tour Eiffel*. Il ne cache pas dans ses *Mémoires* qu'il s'en inspira pour des idées de costumes d'une de ses mises en scène.

1 Sergei M. Eisenstein, *Mémoires*, préface de Jacques Aumont, postface de Bernard Eisenschitz, Paris, Julliard, 1989, p. 268.

Ma curiosité aiguisée, je repris *Opium*, dédaigneusement abandonné plusieurs années plus tôt. Je fus emporté cette fois par la lecture de ce journal d'une cure de désintoxication où écriture et dessins sont inséparables et justifient pleinement cette remarque célèbre de Cocteau : « écrire pour moi, c'est dessiner, nouer les lignes de telle sorte qu'elles fassent écrire ou les dénouer de telle sorte que l'écriture devienne dessin »².

Aujourd'hui encore *Opium* me frappe pour sa célébration de la vitesse dont Cocteau a l'obsession, probablement accentuée par le manque du désintoxiqué : l'urgence de réduire la durée de la douleur autrement dit. Le montage généralisé d'*Opium* lui confère son intemporalité littéraire et plastique. En premier lieu, ce qui lie et oppose les textes – fragments introspectifs – et les dessins. En second lieu, l'apparence aléatoire de l'enchaînement de textes encourage l'emballement de la lecture dans une sorte de « synchronisme accidentel », suggérant un rythme effréné qui fait écho au thème de la vitesse. Le passage d'un fragment à un autre défie toute continuité thématique. Rien ne paraît conduire leur succession. Le désordre semble au poste de commande mais quelque chose du montage cinématographique moderniste émane du mouvement de ce livre.

Au terme de la lecture, une certaine musicalité se dépose dans la mémoire avec des variations de notes tenues plus longuement que d'autres et, parfois, quelques « basses continues » qui insistent sur les effets de la douleur ou sur des personnalités auxquelles Cocteau rend hommage comme à des « amis philosophiques ».

C'est ainsi qu'Eisenstein occupe une place de choix de la page 164 à la page 171 :

– « (...) Je n'ai vu que trois grands films : *Sherlock Holmes Junior* de Buster Keaton, *La ruée vers l'or* de Chaplin, le *Potemkine* d'Eisenstein (...) où un peuple s'exprime par un homme. »

(Il y ajoute un an plus tard *Le chien andalou* de Buñuel).

2 Jean Cocteau, *Opium. Journal d'une désintoxication*, Paris, Stock, 1972, p.86.

– « *Le Cuirassé Potemkine*, d'Eisenstein, illustre cette phrase de Goethe : *le contraire de la réalité pour obtenir le comble de la vérité.* »

– « Une des nombreuses réussites du *Potemkine* est de n'avoir l'air tourné par personne, joué par personne. »

– « (1930). J'ai connu Eisenstein. J'avais vu juste. Il inventa l'escalier des meurtres à la dernière minute. Cet escalier entre dans l'histoire russe. Alexandre Dumas, Michelet, Eisenstein, seuls vrais historiens. »³

Bien des portes théoriques s'ouvrent sur l'œuvre d'Eisenstein depuis ces quatre assertions : la pertinence de la dialectique réalité et vérité via Goethe, l'intuition sur l'*absence* d'auteur du *Cuirassé Potemkine* qui trouve bien des échos dans la pensée même d'Eisenstein et dans sa polémique avec Vertov. Enfin, la trinité Dumas-Michelet-Eisenstein qui me paraît lumineuse : fiction, documentaire, essai. Pour faire *de* l'histoire.

Cette parenté cinématographique et intellectuelle entre les deux géniaux « touche-à-tout » me fit alors découvrir la proximité de leur activité graphique. Isabelle Monot-Fontaine dans le catalogue de l'exposition « Cocteau » du Centre Pompidou note les « emboîtages, déboîtages, à l'infini selon un principe de proliférations automatiques » qui caractérisent ses dessins. La formule pourrait convenir aux dessins d'Eisenstein.

Les deux cinéastes-dessinateurs – les seuls probablement de l'histoire du cinéma qui ont accordé autant d'importance à l'articulation des deux pratiques figuratives – ont en commun la pulsion et le projet conceptuel d'inventer un cinéma graphique et, en contrepoint, un dessin traversé par le mouvement. Au-delà de leur goût pour les figures d'un seul trait, tracées sans lever l'outil – pratique en vogue à l'époque, chez les plus grands, de Picasso à Matisse –, Eisenstein et Cocteau partagent le tourment dialectique continuité/discontinuité, unité de soi/extase déchirante, monumentalité érectile/convulsions du temps. Que

3 Jean Cocteau, *Opium*, cit., pp.164-171.

dire encore de leurs dessins de corps en transe, douloureusement enlacés, compénétrés, démembrés et extatiquement castrés ?

Ces deux-là avaient bien des raisons d'emprunter une même *voie* humaine.

MARIE REBECCHI

CINEMA AS ARCHITECTURAL ART
Eisenstein, Ragghianti, and Le Corbusier

*Ragghianti and Eisenstein: From Critofilm to Cinema as
“Architectural Art”*

Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti, Italian historian and art critic influenced by Benedetto Croce’s ideas, was one of the first to explore the relationship between visual arts and cinema. He published *Cinematografo e teatro* and *Cinematografo rigoroso* in 1933, and became interested in the work of Sergei M. Eisenstein from the point of view of the interconnections between the theory of cinema and the arts. His interest in cinematographic techniques in relation to architecture and the relation between art and architecture led him to Le Corbusier, and he curated the 1963 exhibition at Palazzo Strozzi in Florence on the Swiss architect and urban planner.¹

From 1954 to 1964, through the “seleARTE” publishing initiative, financed in 1952 by Adriano Olivetti, Ragghianti shot nineteen *critofilms*. A key element of the originality of these films is that they were “documents conceived and created by an art historian who, as such, adopted cinematography within the sphere of a project which is both critical and instructive.”² In applying the language of cinema to art criticism, the author demonstrates how exemplary film is in this sense, a medium capable of supplying critical thought with a new visual alphabet.

1 C. L. Ragghianti, “Le Corbusier a Firenze,” *L’opera di Le Corbusier* (Florence: Giuntina, 1963), XIX–XXXII.

2 A. Costa, “Cinema, arte della visione,” *Carlo L. Ragghianti. I critofilm d’arte*, ed. A. Costa (Udine: Campanotto Editore, 1995), 9.

Ragghianti used film to trigger an original critical and visual process that saw *cinema* as a *figurative art* capable of lending three-dimensionality to a work thanks to the dynamic reconfiguring power of the camera. *Critofilm* was thus proposed as a new model of scientific art documentary, a dynamic and exacting form of art criticism that drew its instruments from cinema while maintaining its own thematic and expressive autonomy. Among the *critofilms* Ragghianti made over the course of a decade, those focusing on architecture and urban design stand out in terms of originality of composition and technical daring.³ Before making them, Ragghianti consulted with technicians and scholars, as in the case of *Lucca città comunale* (1955), for which he benefited from the expertise of Eugenio Luporini (professor of architecture history at the University of Pisa) as a consultant on Lucca's urban-design situation.⁴ Following a screenplay planned out down to the smallest detail, and taking advantage of a series of technical virtuositities (the use of 360° panoramic shots, bold angles, *plongée* and *contre-plongée*, aerial shots and rising cameras), Ragghianti let viewers survey the urban structure of the medieval city in a completely new way. *Lucca città comunale* (1955) burst onto the art documentary scene, breaking away from the canonical model of depiction of architectural space and thus contributing to a radical change in the perception of the space framed in shots on film.

Pushing critical intuitions on art beyond the frame of the painting and thus entering the "Dynamic Square"⁵ – the mobile

3 The architecture and urban design *critofilms* Ragghianti made include, in addition to *Lucca città comunale* (1955): *Pompei urbanistica* (1958), *Storia di una piazza (La piazza di Pisa)* (1955), *Certosa di Pavia* (1961), *Terre alte di Toscana* (1961), *Tempio malatestiano* (1962), *Canal Gande*, 1963, *Antelami: Battistero di Parma* (1963). *Terre alte di Toscana* (1961), *Tempio malatestiano* (1962), *Canal Gande*, 1963, *Antelami: Battistero di Parma* (1963).

4 P. Scremin, "Teoria e pratica del critofilm," *Carlo L. Ragghianti. I critofilm d'arte*, 113.

5 Sergei M. Eisenstein, "The Dynamic Square," *Film Essays and*

surface that contains the cinema screen –, Ragghianti was able to distance himself from the scrupulously critical approach of his films on painting and deal with problems concerning the visual organization of vast natural spaces and complex architectural and urban networks.⁶ On the one hand, the dynamic possibilities of cinema allowed Ragghianti to explore the variety and variability of the urban fabric; on the other, the compositional principles of architecture were perfectly suited to Ragghianti's desire to create a form of *dynamic art criticism* through cinema. In fact, *critofilm* lets the filmmaker show the *constructive elements* that come together in the creative, mental process, and thus to “penetrate the space, to almost become enmeshed in it, to guide the viewer on unusual architectural tours, illustrating the genesis, development and stratification of organisms with an *ancient human quality*.”⁷

With his *critofilms*, Ragghianti sought to highlight cinema's capacity for “dynamic figurativeness,” the plastic potential of which allowed one to follow the dynamic process of the birth and development of a painting, a statue, or a work of architecture. This aspect of Ragghianti's theoretical thought and cinematographic practice clearly invites comparison with the reflections and films of Sergei M. Eisenstein. We can recognize the stimulating potential generated by the juxtaposition of these two figures, and some have underscored the idea that it is precisely the fecundity of the dialectic relationship between visual arts and cinema that sets Ragghianti and Eisenstein in the same thought constellation: “The critic himself, in a lengthy review of the Italian translation of the essays collected in *Film Sense*, relishes having discerned a common interpretive effort aimed at a unifying comprehension of

a Lecture, ed. Jay Leyda (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 48–65; see also Antonio Somaini, *Ejzenštejn. Il cinema, le arti, il montaggio* (Turin: Einaudi, 2011), 411–22.

6 P. Scremin, “Teoria e pratica del critofilm”, in *Carlo L. Ragghianti*, 114–5.

7 M. Bertozzi, “La città “bella” e lo schermo. Visioni dai critofilm d'urbanistica,” in *Carlo L. Ragghianti*, 131.

the artistic phenomenon in the close connection between the methodology of figurative arts and cinema.”⁸ In a 1962 essay entitled *Ejzenštejn, cinema e arte*, Ragghianti re-proposes in its entirety, without the cuts that had been made when it was printed, the article published in the magazine “Espresso” on April 15, 1962 on the translation from English of *Film Sense* (1955) (translated with the title *Tecnica del cinema*). Here Ragghianti expresses his utmost appreciation for and his intellectual proximity to Eisenstein’s theoretical work:

Eisenstein, in this sense, is the only cinema writer who, albeit with other motives and aims, stands (as we shall see, in terms of clear correlations) on the same line as my *Cinema arte figurativa*. [...] How could I not wish to express my deep satisfaction in realizing that Eisenstein – no doubt in the utmost autonomy and independence, as on my part as well, – came to the same conclusions in 1940 that I had reached in 1932, and based on the same sort of experience and the same method of observation?⁹

The “same conclusions” Ragghianti refers to in this passage clearly allude to the dialectical relationship that links the experiences of cinema and art. The power of the encounter that binds these two modes of artistic experience into a shared artistic “action” is such that “without one, the other cannot be understood in all its authenticity.”¹⁰ Ragghianti finds the conditions that make this encounter possible in what Eisenstein calls the “line of movement.” If, as Eisenstein stresses, every artist’s work contains some trace of movement, then he can construct a “line of movement” with any means of expression, whether plastic or dramatic or thematic: “Thus it is no longer a matter of a segue or a succession or a distribution of images or episodes upon a surface, which obviously implies a movement of

8 A. Costa, “Cinema, arte della visione,” *Carlo L. Ragghianti*, 22.

9 C. L. Ragghianti, *Ejzenštejn, cinema e arte*, in “Critica d’Arte”, nn. 53–54, 1962, reprinted in Id., *Arti della visione. Cinema I* (Turin: Einaudi, 1975), 197, 201.

10 *Ibid*, 198.

the eye, but is something purely translatory and mechanical. This movement factor is intrinsic to artistic expression itself.”¹¹ The “movement factor” Ragghianti speaks of is thus present in cinema as well as in painting, but in the latter is clearly made material by other means. Ragghianti and Eisenstein converge first and foremost in recognizing a form of homogeneity in the compositional criteria that pertain to both cinema and painting,¹² and also in considering an architectural and constructive approach to the image as the potential font of that dynamic impulse towards movement imparted by the principle of montage already present within the framed shot. From this perspective, with regard to Ragghianti’s *critofilms*, “through editing and the movement of the camera, cinema becomes a method of ‘simulation’ of ways of viewing a work, of the interior processes that its organization induces, stimulates and requires.”¹³

In his reflections on the *theory of montage*, Eisenstein offers one of the most incisive examples of the plastic presence of movement in painting: the portrait of the theater actress Ermolova by Valentin Serov (a painter also mentioned by Ragghianti in his article dedicated to Eisenstein). The painting is presented as a sort of potentially cinematographic example. It consists of a montage of four different views with which the painter in turn frames and isolates four portraits within the picture; each portrait has a different point of view. The montage of these four parts conveys neither their succession, nor their contemporaneity; the sensation produced in the viewer by the *non-correlation* of the individual images generates a *dynamic impulse towards movement* – from the basic perception of physical movement to the complex one of conceptual movement – resulting from a montage that shows the “*simultaneous conjoint presence on one canvas of elements which are, in essence, the successive phases of a whole process.*”¹⁴ The individual elements of Se-

11 *Ibid*, 200.

12 C. L. Ragghianti, *Cinematografo rigoroso*, 1932, reprinted in Id., *Arti della visione. Cinema I* (Turin: Einaudi, 1975), 5–37.

13 A. Costa, “Cinema, arte della visione”, 22

14 S. M. Eisenstein, *Selected Works. Vol. 2. Towards a Theory of Mon-*

rov's painting must be considered simultaneously as autonomous parts and parts inseparable from a whole. So this unity of contemporaneity and succession is the basis on which to verify the efficacy of *comparative montage*, which in fact shows the individual parts of the painting in the dynamics of their movement. The sequential system of levels or planes of the painting described by Eisenstein is predisposed towards a general re-composition "as a unity of *simultaneity* and *sequence* proves," and also as a unity of opposites within the principle of composition itself. If a pictorial representation has a meaning, and if it effectively impacts the viewer, then this must be the result of montage, and the work in question is presented not as an imitation of reality but as its *dynamic reconfiguration*.

The principle of montage acts on the individual cell or frame until it achieves the compositional totality of a cinematographic work. Along these lines, Eisenstein's ideas on montage can be traced to other forms of artistic representation as well, including painting, in which static images lend themselves to analysis using the method of "invisible montage" of discrete moments of a single event.¹⁵ But if montage is already present in the painting – as demonstrated by the example of Serov's portrait of Ermolova – then what is the peculiarity of cinematographic montage, and more generally, what is the specific nature of cinema as compared to painting? Eisenstein observed that only cinema is capable of involving an extremely large

tage, eds. Michael Glenny and Richard Taylor, trans. Michael Glenny (London: BFI Publishing, 1994), 86.

- 15 Jacques Aumont speaks of an *invisible collage* with regard to the use of the principle of montage as a method for analyzing a painting. In particular, Aumont refers to one of Eisenstein's favorite examples, used several times in his *theory of montage*: Watteau's *Embarkation for Cythera*. Drawing on an observation by Auguste Rodin, Eisenstein read the painting as a cinematographic montage. In this case, Aumont observes, montage proves to be an extremely efficacious method of analyzing temporality in painting. See J. Aumont, *Rileggere Ejzenštejn: Il teorico, lo scrittore*, in S. M. Ejzenštejn, *Il Montaggio*, ed. Pietro Montani (Venice: Marsilio, 1998), X–XXXVII; Eisenstein, *Selected Works*, 2:154.

number of heterogeneous elements (sounds, images, colors) through methods of montage that convert the representative datum into a meaningful image. Thus the task of montage is encapsulated in the concept of “imagicity,” a far more complete solution than the principle of the unity of form and content. Any deviation from this principle entails a suspension of the dynamic character of the image (*obraz*) and a plunge “into the immobilism of the symbol” in which the individual elements participating in its composition remain inevitably unrelated, since their unification takes place in a static way.

Eisenstein and Ragghianti thus concur on three points: cinema and painting come together along a line of “anachronic continuity” within the same *general history of vision*;¹⁶ the problem of temporality and the dynamic impulse toward movement is common to both painting and cinema; and one of the forms of temporality that can be found in both painting and cinema coincides with an “architectural” model of duration of the work, “a temporality activated by the viewer, by the *path* and *duration* of his gaze,”¹⁷ a duration that corresponds to the time the observer/viewer’s gaze takes to pass through the different planes that make up and structure the work. To confirm this third point, Ragghianti picks up Eisenstein’s own words, bringing them into the context of his reflection on the homogeneity between the methods of painting and cinema: “The art of plastic composition lies in guiding the viewer’s attention along a specific path in the exact order desired by the work’s author. This involves the movement of the eye over the surface of a canvas, if the composition is expressed in painting, or the surface of a screen, if we are looking at a frame of film.”¹⁸

While the search for a structural homology between painting and cinema led both Ragghianti and Eisenstein to consider

16 See S. M. Eisenstein, *Notes for a General History of Cinema*, eds. Naum Kleiman and Antonio Somaini (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016).

17 A. Costa, “Cinema, arte della visione,” 22.

18 C. L. Ragghianti, *Arti della visione. Cinema I*, 204.

the principles of composition of the individual frame, once we begin comparing the experiences of cinema and architecture, we must explore the composition of the *sequencing of multiple frames*. Eisenstein saw in architecture the model on which cinema must draw in constructing – through the unfolding of events distant from one another in time and space – a multiplicity of “imaginary lines of sight,” which impose themselves on the gaze of an immobile viewer.

Moscow 1928. Eisenstein, Le Corbusier, and l'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui

In trying to conceive of cinema and architecture as two modes of expression and plastic production of shapes and forms that reveal their shifting path to the viewer, Eisenstein comes very close to Le Corbusier's idea of *promenade architecturale*: an “architectural stroll” in which the eye – in the technologized form of the film camera – traverses a space to construct *visual paths*, representations of *virtual roads* along which the elements that the artist wishes to place there and show to the viewer are arranged. The fact that both Eisenstein and Le Corbusier, in their interpretation of the “sequenced” arrangement of the buildings of the Acropolis, made reference to the illustrations in Choisy's *Histoire de l'architecture*¹⁹ is a clear sign of their like-mindedness in conceiving of cinema as “architectural art” and architecture as potentially “cinematographic art.”

In 1928, during his trip to Moscow to design the *Centrsoiuz* building, Le Corbusier was escorted everywhere by the architect Andrei Burov, a pupil of Alexander Vesnin. Through Burov, who had designed the sets for the film *General Line* (1926–9), Le Corbusier met with Eisenstein. The encounter had a significant impact on Le Corbusier's stay in Moscow, to the point that Eisenstein's film was renamed “*La ligne droite*,” an ironic and

19 A. Somaini, *Ejzenštejn. Il cinema, le arti, il montaggio* (Turin: Einaudi, 2011), 336.

subtle pun also found in the dedication to Eisenstein of his *L'Art décoratif d'aujourd'hui*: "To M. Eisenstein this dedication after *Potemkin* and *The Straight Line*. I seem to think as M. Eisenstein does when he makes films. Spirit of truth, calcimine, two chapters of this book that express the same conviction. With my deepest sympathy and highest regard."²⁰



Le Corbusier, Eisenstein and Burov, Moscow 1928

On October 16, 1928 Le Corbusier attended the screening organized by VOKS of *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) and four reels of *The General Line*, which would be released the following year. The weekly *Sovetskii Ekran* noted Le Corbusier's reaction to the initial sequences of the film: "Very satisfied with the

20 Our translation; the original French text reads: "A M. Eisenstein cette dédicace après le *Potemkine* et après *La ligne droite*. Il me semble bien que je pense comme M. Eisenstein lorsqu'il fait du cinéma. Esprit de vérité, le lait de chaux, deux chapitres de ce livre qui expriment aussi la même conviction. En très grande sympathie et avec toute mon admiration." The dedication is dated: Moscow, 25 October 1928. (Le Corbusier (1928), in J.-L. Cohen, *Le Corbusier et la mystique de l'URSS: théories et projets pour Moscou, 1928-1936* (Brussels: Éditions Mardaga, 1988), 72.

architectural form of the “sovkhos,” Le Corbusier admitted his great surprise at seeing us put Western architectural principles and forms to very different use.” In an interview included in the article – the only one published during his first trip to Moscow – Le Corbusier underscored the commonalities between his work and Eisenstein’s.

Le cinéma et l’architecture sont les deux seuls arts de l’époque contemporaine. Il me semble que dans mon travail je pense de la même manière que S. Eisenstein, quand il élabore son propre cinéma. Ses travaux sont pénétrés du sens de la vérité. Témoignant exclusivement de la réalité. Ils sont proches par leur pensée de ce que je m’efforce de faire dans mes travaux. Je profite de cette occasion pour dire toute mon admiration devant son principe de libération des événements de tout ce qu’ils ont de non caractéristique et d’insignifiant. L’ancrage dans l’essentiel n’élève pas seulement son travail au-dessus de la chronique, mais il élève sur l’écran tous les événements ordinaires qui échappent à notre attention superficielle (qu’il s’agit du lait qui coule, des femmes fauchant ou des porcelets) au niveau d’image monumentale. Par exemple, la procession de *La Ligne Générale*, avec ses “portiques dynamiques” des icônes qui avancent et le modelé sculptural des figures n’est comparable qu’avec l’acuité des figures caractéristiques de Donatello.²¹

The same *esprit de vérité* that Le Corbusier attributes to Eisenstein’s film work in the book dedication characterizes the construction material (calcimine) used in his own architectural works.²² Le Corbusier was inevitably drawn to Eisenstein’s ideas on the principle of montage, particularly the concept of film as a construction process in which montage serves to coordinate the composition of the various gears of the “cinematographic machine” – a machine for “signifying” – given that he consid-

21 Le Corbusier (1928), in J.-L. Cohen, *Le Corbusier et la mystique de l’URSS: théories et projets pour Moscou, 1928–1936*, 72.

22 For his part, Eisenstein declared: “I confess that I used to be a great adherent of the architectural aesthetics of Le Corbusier and Gropius.” Eisenstein, *Selected Works*, 2:289.

ered the product of his architectural efforts as “machines for living” (*machine à habiter*).²³

In 1930, after his return from Moscow and having met Eisenstein, Le Corbusier began work on the creation of three films for the magazine *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui: Bâtir, Architecture d'aujourd'hui* and *Trois chantiers*. The soundtracks, now lost, were composed by Le Corbusier's brother Albert Jeanneret, and added in 1931. Le Corbusier made the films with Pierre Chenal, but was the sole author of the screenplays.²⁴ The films had a dual purpose: to publicize the magazine, founded that same year, and to promote modern French architecture through cinema.

In *Architecture d'aujourd'hui*, the viewer looks into the rational “machines for living” that Le Corbusier designed and built: Villa Stein-De Monzie, Villa Church and Villa Savoye. The camera incessantly emphasizes “the dynamic action of traversing space,”²⁵ first in exterior shots, and then moving into the residences (without the use of artificial light), and finally showing the roof terrace with skillfully-executed rising camera movements.

The architectural composition of the shots, as in the case of Raghianti's urban and architectural *critofilms*, presupposes the *moving gaze* of a viewer traversing the spaces designed by an “architect of images.” Not coincidentally, Eisenstein spoke of cinema as an “imaginary line of sight.”²⁶ Cinema, that is, as “architectural art.” While painting has in fact proven incapable of fixing on a complete picture of events in all their multiform plasticity, “only the film camera has solved the problem of doing this on a flat surface. But its undoubted ancestor in this capacity is ... architecture.”²⁷

23 T. Aglieri Rinella, “Le Corbusier,” *Il cinema degli architetti*, ed. V. Trione (Milan: Johan & Levi, 2014), 130.

24 A. Redivo, *Batir, L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui. Costruire l'architettura moderna. Il contributo di due film di Pierre Chenal* (Venice: IUAV, 2001).

25 T. Aglieri Rinella, “Le Corbusier,” *Il cinema degli architetti*, 130.

26 A. Somaini, *Ejzenštejn. Il cinema, le arti, il montaggio*, 336.

27 Eisenstein, *Selected Works*, 2:60.

NATALIE RYABCHIKOVA

2 SERGEI MIKHAILOVICH 2: TRETYAKOV AND EISENSTEIN AS A DOUBLE ACT¹

As we work on making sense of the life and legacy of Sergei Eisenstein, of his aspirations and achievements, we find the need to put him against another figure – be it one of his inspirations (like Honoré Daumier) or parallels unknown to him (like Aby Warburg), one of his friends (like Viktor Shklovsky) or one of the tantalizing “non-meetings” (like Walter Benjamin). The constellation I would like to take up in this piece is at once more substantial and more nebulous than most. This duo actually existed for several years: Eisenstein and Sergei Mikhailovich Tretyakov shared a friendship and a working partnership in theory, stage, and film. However, because of his arrest in July 1937 and swift execution in September of that year, very little of Tretyakov’s archive survives – and little trace of him is left in Eisenstein’s voluminous collection. Tretyakov’s plays were the first ones to return to the stage and the scholarly pages.² His critical and theoretical writings have enjoyed a recent resurgence, first in English and now, much more slowly, in Russian.³

1 One can argue whether Sergei Tret’iakov has by now deserved the simplified spelling of Tretiakov or Tretyakov (like his namesake, the founder of the State Tretyakov Gallery). *October*, in a special volume dedicated to him in 2006, was disinclined to allow it. The books published in English during his lifetime, carried the name Tretiakov. The 1995 translation of his play *I Want a Baby* used Tretyakov, as does the English-language Wikipedia page. For the space of this article, I would like to grant him this sign of recognition.

2 See, for instance, Natasha Kolchevska, “From Agitation to Factography: The Plays of Sergej Tret’jakov,” *The Slavic and East European Journal* 31: 3 (Autumn 1987): 388–403.

3 Respectively, *October* 118 (Fall 2006); Sergei Ushakin, ed.,

His role in Eisenstein's career and thinking has been discussed only sporadically. The full appreciation of the Eisenstein-Tretyakov connection is still in the future. I would like to use this opportunity to describe a few segments of this connection and to hypothesize about one other, perhaps forever obscured by the lack of documents or, perhaps, one that never existed: a false clue, a glitch in the historical record.

I take as my point of departure a conversation reported by the American writer and journalist Joseph Freeman in his 1936 memoir, *An American Testament: A Narrative of Rebels and Romanticism*. Freeman had gone to Soviet Russia in 1926 and spent almost a year there, which allowed him to compile the volume, *Voices of October*, together with Louis Lozowick and Joshua Kunitz.⁴ It was initially planned as a collection of articles written by prominent Soviet artistic personalities, with Meyerhold giving a description of Russian theater from 1917 to 1928 and Eisenstein providing a corresponding account of cinema. Eventually, Eisenstein was the only one to fulfill his obligation (or at least three-fourths of it, in his own estimation),⁵ and his article, written in 1928, was published within the chapter "The Soviet Cinema" authored by Freeman.

In *An American Testament*, Freeman goes back to his meetings with Eisenstein a decade earlier, records Eisenstein's fascination with da Vinci and Freud, and provides almost an aside. During one visit to Eisenstein that can be dated summer of fall of 1927, he writes, Eisenstein met him with the following words: "I was just talking to the author of *Roar, China*. Tretyakov is writing a biography of me and I am telling him a few

Formal'nyi metod. Antologiya russkogo modernizma, vol. 2 (Ekaterinburg and Moscow: Kabinetnyi uchenyi, 2016).

- 4 Joseph Freeman, Joshua Kunitz, Louis Lozowick, *Voices of October* (New York: The Vanguard Press, 1930).
- 5 Eisenstein's letter to Freeman (September 27, 1928), quoted in Lazar' Fleishman, "Epizody iz istorii amerikano-sovetskikh kul'turnykh otnoshenii," *Materialy po istorii russkoi i sovetskoi kul'tury. Iz Arkhiva Guverovskogo Instituta* (Stanford: Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, 1992), 221.

truths about myself.”⁶ Perhaps, the quote from Eisenstein that Freeman gives in this context: “Had it not been for Leonardo da Vinci, Marx, Lenin, Freud and the movies, I would in all probability have been another Oscar Wilde... without Freud, no sublimation; without sublimation, a mere aesthete like Oscar Wilde,” – was among those “few truths.” If such a project existed, however, there is no known trace of it left except for Freeman’s testimony.

I have found it productive, however, to imagine what Tretyakov could have written and why. By the end of 1927 Tretyakov and Eisenstein had known each other for about five years. They had things in common: first name and patronymic, for a start. Place of birth as well: the north-western end of the Russian Empire, Riga for Eisenstein and, six years earlier, the neighboring Courland province for Tretyakov, who went to school in Riga and wrote once that his first language had actually been Latvian. They had a common interest in theater – Meyerhold in particular – and in the new revolutionary art on the whole.

Even though Tretyakov was older (he turned 30 in 1922), he, like Eisenstein, was at the beginning of his career in Moscow. For the former futurist poet, just like for the former student engineer, Moscow represented a new beginning. Their meeting was evocatively described by actor Maksim Shtraukh 40 years later: “One has come from the Far East – that was Tretyakov. The other one, as they say, on the contrary, came from the West. That was Eisenstein... These two Sergei Mikhailovichs became friends and made a great team.”⁷ This must have been in the fall of 1922, very soon after Tretyakov’s arrival from the Soviet Far East.

In his reminiscences, Shtraukh suggested that the years of collaboration with Tretyakov were crucial for the subsequent creation of Eisenstein’s masterpiece *Battleship Potemkin*

6 Joseph Freeman, *An American Testament: A Narrative of Rebels and Romantics* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1936), 589.

7 Maksim Shtraukh, “Dva Sergeia Mikhailovicha,” in Sergei Tret’iakov, *Slyshish’, Moskva?! Protivogazy. Rychi, Kitai!* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1966), 176.

(1925): just like the winning jump of a world champion, *Potemkin* had to be preceded by an approach run, and Eisenstein's work with Tretyakov in theater was precisely this "extraordinary purposeful, energetic, fast run."⁸

Tretyakov became Eisenstein's main collaborator during 1923–24. In 1922, perhaps even before Tretyakov arrived in Moscow, Eisenstein named him as a potential teacher in the Proletkult Theater Classes (*teatral'nye masterskie*). He was to teach elocution; this subject was planned for the spring semester of 1922–23 academic year.⁹ That, it seems, did not happen, but Tretyakov became an indispensable figure in the Proletkult theater. Over the course of two seasons "or even less than that, three extremely interesting theater productions were created."¹⁰

In late April 1923, *Enough Simplicity for Every Wise Man* (or simply *Wise Man*) premiered. Eisenstein and Tretyakov were both listed as the authors of this irreverent adaptation of Alexander Ostrovsky. Tretyakov was the author of the new play's dialogues, while Eisenstein was the author of the settings, the costumes, and the staging in general. They met almost every day during the production and the run of *Wise Man*. The Tretyakovs lived at the time in the Proletkult dorm across from the building of the theater and decades later, Tretyakov's adopted daughter, Tat'iana Gomolitskaia, could reproduce the parodic songs from the performance.¹¹

In the fall of 1923 (on the sixth anniversary of the October revolt, in fact) they premiered the agit-guignol *Moscow, Do You Hear?! Finally*, at the very end of February, 1924, *Gas Masks*, the "most melodramatic melodrama," in Eisenstein's estimation, premiered at the premises of the Moscow Gasworks near the Kursk Railway station. All three productions were "protean" and needed Tretyakov and his acute sense of the topical to

8 Shtraukh, "Dva Sergeia," 178.

9 Vladimir Zabrodin, *Eizenshtein: popytka teatra* (Moscow: Eizenshtein-tsent, 2005), 121.

10 Shtraukh, "Dva Sergeia," 178.

11 "'Mudrets' S.M. Eizenshteina. Opyt slovesnoi rekonstruktsii spektaklia," *Kinovedcheskie zapiski* 39 (1998): 56.

constantly acquire new lines and jokes and otherwise change with each new performance. Perhaps, *Gas Masks* proved to be the least successful of the three because Tretyakov had gone to China. On February 14, 1924, he wrote on a photo of himself: “To Sergei Mikhailovich Aisenstein <sic!>, the man with whom I have grown together in work and refuse to get unglued... The Shakehandy [*Zhmurukii*] S. Tretyakov.”¹²

During their work together in 1923, Eisenstein also asked for the older friend’s assistance in writing a theoretical exposition on expressive movement, allegedly because Tretyakov’s knowledge of German was stronger while his style was more evolved, honed by several years of journalistic work in the Far East.¹³

Eisenstein in this partnership was an eager and very diligent student. This close collaboration coincided with the publication of Eisenstein’s first published manifesto, “The Montage of Attractions,” in *LEF* in May 1923. Tretyakov at the time was as adamant as Eisenstein in defending attractions as the building blocks of stage productions and they were both enamored of the term. Tretyakov’s own article on the subject, “The Theater of Attractions,” appeared in the first issue of the journal *October of Thought (Oktiabr’ mysl’)* for 1924.¹⁴

At the beginning of 1924, Tretyakov went to China – and Eisenstein went into cinema. While the older Sergei Mikhailovich taught Russian literature in Beijing and traveled, the younger one finished and released *Strike* and received a new commission: *1905*. In the early fall of 1925, when Tretyakov came back, he was hired as a consultant and script doctor by Goskino – the

12 Russian State Archive for Literature and Art, f. 2886, op. 1, ed. khr. 21, l. 7 verso.

13 For the English-language publication of “Expressive Movement,” see Alma Law and Mel Gordon, *Meyerhold, Eisenstein and Biomechanics: Actor Training in Revolutionary Russia* (Jefferson: McFarland, 1996), 173–92. It was published in Russian only in 2006.

14 Sergei Tret’iakov, “The Theater of Attractions,” *October* 118 (Fall 2006): 19–26.

studio at which Eisenstein was based. Immediately, it seems, he was also in Odessa where Eisenstein's crew was struggling to salvage something of the mammoth project of 1905. In fact, on September 2, 1925 Tretyakov was already giving an interview about *Potemkin* in his role as the Deputy Chair of the Artistic Council of the 1st Moscow State Film Factory, announcing that the scenes to be shot in Odessa would include the death of Vakulinchuk and "the notorious shooting of the street crowd on the stairs leading to the harbour."¹⁵

Although the film's credits do not attest to this, Tretyakov (and not Nikolai Aseev, as is sometimes claimed) wrote the iconic intertitles for *Battleship Potemkin* and also helped with reworking the script.¹⁶ The influence was mutual: Lars Kleberg traced similarities between *Potemkin* and Tretyakov's play *Roar, China*, which was staged by Meyerhold and premiered in January 1923, a month after *Potemkin*.¹⁷ Scholars have noted in particular the motif of the ship's guns directed at the audience that connects the two.¹⁸

Around this time, Eisenstein and Tretyakov must have already started talking about a 3-part film project in and about China, *Dzhungo*, the country that Tretyakov knew well and Eisenstein wanted to get to know. Shtraukh later said that Eisenstein "had been actively (*usilenno*) preparing to make a

15 Quoted in Naum Kleiman and K.B. Levina, eds., *Bronenosets Potemkin* (Moscow: Iskuststvo, 1969), 61.

16 Kleiman and Levina, *Bronenosets*, 363. This volume, however, also does not mention Tretyakov's name. One of the primary sources for this information is Grigorii Aleksandrov's letter of 1954 supporting Tretyakov's rehabilitation: "The intertitles by S. M. Tretyakov, which defined the content of *Battleship Potemkin* in textual form, have up to the present moment constituted its integral part" ("Pis'mo G. Aleksandrova" in Vladimir Koliazin, ed., "*Vernite mne svobodu!*": *Deiateli literatury i iskusstva Rossii i Germanii—zhertyy stalinskogo terrora* (Moscow: Medium, 1997), 67

17 Lars Kleberg, "Ėjzenštejn's *Potemkin* and Tretyakov's *Ryči, Kitaj!*," *Scando-Slavica* 23, no. 1 (1977): 29–37.

18 Sergei Eizenshtein, *Neravnodushnaia priroda*, ed. Naum Kleiman, 2 vols. (Moscow: Muzei kino, Eizenshtein-tsentr, 2006), 2:549.

film about China.”¹⁹ In early 1926 Tretyakov and Eisenstein submitted to Goskino their proposal, which for both political and organizational reasons was not greenlighted.²⁰ It viewed China chronologically, from the class oppression to the struggle against it, the way Eisenstein would later view Mexico. The last part of the libretto was almost eponymous with Tretyakov’s Chinese play (“China Roars”), and three years later Il’ia Trauberg, who had apprenticed on the set of *October* in the fall of 1927, directed a film whose name was taken from the libretto’s second part, “The Blue Express.”

More generally, in the mid-1920s the two Sergeis were connected to LEF – both the journal and the collective; Tretyakov much more closely, perhaps drawing the younger friend into the fold. The famous group photo of the members of LEF with the Japanese writer Tamiji Naito was taken in April 1924, when Tretyakov had already gone to China, but Eisenstein stands in it between Boris Pasternak and Ol’ga Tretyakova. Since 1925, Tretyakov became one of the habitual reviewers of Eisenstein’s work; a mediator between the director and his viewers and even between him and LEF itself, since Eisenstein’s thinking soon began to diverge from the position of the group’s critics.

One of Eisenstein’s most visible “transgressions” against the *New LEF* orthodoxy is presenting Lenin on the screen in *October*. Later Eisenstein qualified it as his disruption of “the purity of genre,”²¹ but that was, of course, only a symptom of his “re-constructive” method. Tretyakov did not discount this method out of hand, unlike some of his more militant colleagues, in particular, Osip Brik or Vladimir Mayakovsky, with the latter

19 Shtraukh, “Dva Sergeia,” 185.

20 Naum Kleiman, “Neosushchestvlennye zamysly Eizenshteina,” *Iskusstvo kino* 6 (June 1992): 10–11. Most recently, this collaboration was discussed by Edward Tyerman at the 2016 ASEES Convention in his paper “The Unmade Epic of Soviet Internationalism: Eisenstein and Tretyakov’s *Chzhungo*.”

21 Sergei Eizenshtein, *Memuary*, ed. Naum Kleiman, 2 vols. (Moscow: Trud and Musei kino, 1997), 2:309.

personally promising to boo and throw rotten eggs at the screen the moment he saw Nikandrov impersonating Lenin.

In the fall of 1927 *Novyi LEF* conducted a major “colloquium,” “LEF and Cinema.” Tretyakov declared that LEF’s ultimate goal would be Vertovian “kino-eye” and “life caught unawares” but in the interest of producing emotional response in viewers through the method of montage of attractions (which he deemed necessary), the cinematic New LEF would have to perhaps still use Eisenstein’s methods, meaning staged material.²²

Unlike other LEF critics, Tretyakov saw Eisenstein’s departures from LEF orthodoxy, his impurity of genre, or style to be his trademark. In the well-known article “Eisenstein—Director-Engineer,” published at the beginning of 1926, he warned against trying to emulate Eisenstein or trying to find his own particular style:

there can be no talk about style where every element of the material is bent, squeezed, formed one way or another not because an innate artistic convulsion jerks the director’s hand but because his engineer’s consciousness dictates to him to produce this bend or twist. ... There is no style, there is the expediency of constructions. There is also no holding onto the once-found forms... One cannot copy Eisenstein because he has no style. One should study Eisenstein to learn to transpose the social-engineer approach and rational methods of development and handling of material into cinema.²³

Later, in the mid-1930s, giving lectures for future directors at the Institute of Cinematography, Eisenstein echoed this early assessment, emphasizing again and again that he could not give students a blueprint for taking any creative decision that might face them in the future; he could give them no solutions – only the method for reaching them.

22 *Novyi LEF* 11–12 (1927), 53–4.

23 Sergei Tret’iakov, “Eizenshtein – rezhisser-inzhener,” *Sovetskii ekran* 1 (1926), 6, quoted in Sergei Tret’iakov, *Kinematograficheskoe nasledie*, ed. Irina Ratiani (Moscow: Nestor-Istoriia, 2010), 48–9.

It seems that Eisenstein needed Tretyakov in 1925–27 for precisely that: for telling him what it is exactly that he was accomplishing and why, and how he differed from others. It helped that Tretyakov was able to see all of his films in the process of their making, in unedited form, or in preliminary editing. During one of the LEF discussions of the four “anniversary” films (in addition to Eisenstein’s, they were *The End of St. Petersburg*, *Moscow in October*, and *The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty*), Tretyakov compared the respective methods of the four directors. Shub, in this account, produces a restoration of the “mammoth” of October from the surviving parts of the skeleton, connecting them with the “iron rods of intertitles.” Pudovkin stages the existence of a mammoth by showing us an actor who plays a mammoth hunter. Barnet (who gets the least of Tretyakov’s sympathy) simply buys “33 tons of raw meat, 6 poods of brains, 2 tons of bones, a ton of hoofs, 20 pounds of tails and stitches it all together with white thread [=in a transparent manner].” Eisenstein, in this paleontological scenario, reconstructs. “He studies the information about the mammoth for a long time, then makes the best tusks out of the best palm tree wood, orders the best vertebrae (in the form of the best porcelain insulators for power transmission), covers it with skin, tousles its fur in a scary way and demonstrates the mammoth as he understands it. And since, for instance, archeology does not say anything about the mammoth’s tail, Eisenstein films this tail out of focus, ironically, at night.”²⁴ Eisenstein might have well taken the comparison as a compliment.

Right before the release of *The Old and the New*, Tretyakov compared Eisenstein himself to a he-goat. Or, rather, he divided all directors into two classes: sheep and goats: “The task of the goats is to make the first jump where sheep stop in fear. Eisenstein is a typical he-goat.”²⁵

24 Sergei Tret’iakov, “Kino k iubileiu,” *Novyi LEF* 10 (1927), 30–1, quoted in Tret’iakov, *Nasledie*, 104.

25 Sergei Tret’iakov, “Perevoploshcheniia odnoi fil’my,” *Literaturnaia gazeta* 11 (1929), quoted in Tret’iakov, *Nasledie*, 52.

In the summer of 1926 Tretyakov was present at the shooting of *The Old and the New* at the sovkhos near Gorki. He also, at some point, took part in the film as one of Eisenstein's "types," along with other members of LEF (Rodchenko and Stepanova, for instance, played foreign tourists; Brik appeared as well). These episodes did not make it into the film.

Subsequently, the European travels of Eisenstein and Tretyakov at the turn of the decade did not coincide. The dramatist went to Germany, Denmark, and Austria in late 1930, when Eisenstein, who had left Moscow in the summer of 1929, had already gone to the US and then Mexico. They met again in Moscow in May 1932. During the shooting of *Bezhin Meadow*, in October 1935, Eisenstein again shared his current ideas with Tretyakov, using him as a sounding board and going back, as always, to the question of "pathetic" composition:

Today I have correctly defined for Tretyakov the difference between Bach and the others. Perhaps, it is not completely correct for Bach, but true for me. ... Bach and the fugue is like instantaneity, slowed down for the duration of a musical work.

Hence the feeling of supra-temporality. And the progression here is present just as an *élément voulu et non indispensable*. ... The utmost pathos belongs to this type, since it reproduces the scheme of becoming of everything living and being.²⁶

In the mid-1930s, we also see Tretyakov in the photos with Eisenstein and Mei Lang Fan and Meyerhold. We know that he had been behind the camera in the famous double portrait of Eisenstein and Brecht taken in May 1932 when they both arrived in Moscow from Berlin. Brecht wrote a poem about Tretyakov:

My teacher
Tall and kindly

26 Quoted in Naum Kleiman, "Pafos Eizenshteina," introduction to Sergei Eizenshtein, *Neravnodushnaia priroda*, 2 vols. (Moscow: Muzei kino, Eizenshtein-tsentr, 2004), 1:12–13; italics denote Eisenstein's own French.

Has been shot, condemned by a people's court
 As a spy. His name is damned.
 His books are destroyed. Talk about him
 Is suspect and suppressed.
 Suppose he is innocent?²⁷

No wonder it is difficult to find mentions of Tretyakov in Eisenstein's later writings. In April 1940, he wrote a memoir article about Mayakovsky that he intended for *Pravda* on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the poet's death. In his diary he notes that the article, "of course," was not accepted: "To tell the truth, it is, of course, more of a memoir about... myself!"²⁸ In fact, the article mentions two people without whom any reminiscence about Mayakovsky – or Eisenstein – in the 1920s is impossible, and yet their names by 1940 are excised from print and their very presence – from official history. Eisenstein, however, includes both of these men in his memoir and that perhaps, even unnamed, made it unpublishable at the time. One, the director at a rehearsal of Mayakovsky's *Mystery-Bouffe* in 1921, easily recognizable with his "shaved skull, covered by a high red Turkish fez" was Meyerhold, arrested in June 1939, dead in February 1940. The other – "one of the LEF crowd," whose reworking of Ostrovsky's text, according to Eisenstein, Mayakovsky criticized but then, afterwards, "would feel sorry that he himself did not take up the text of this rather biting and joyful agit-parade of the Proletkult," was Tretyakov, arrested in July 1937, and dead two months later.²⁹ Naum Kleiman, in the notes to the full publication of this memoir article, notes as significant that Eisenstein, "who could have easily evaded mention of the arrested associates, does not want the total silence that was common at the time in relation to 'the

27 Bertold Brecht, "Four Poems by Bertold Brecht," *New Left Review* I/40 (November–December 1966), <https://newleftreview.org/I/40/bertolt-brecht-four-poems-by-bertolt-brecht>.

28 Eizenshtein, *Memuary*, 2: 481.

29 Eizenshtein, *Memuary*, 2: 307.

disappeared,' and reminds the reader of them at least through an allusion."³⁰

What could Tretyakov have been writing about Eisenstein in 1927? Could he be writing anything at all? And what might his thoughts on Eisenstein's biography have been like? In the second half of 1927, Eisenstein was desperately trying to finish *October* while Tretyakov was busy with his book of bio-interviews with a Chinese student, Tan Shih-hua (Den Shi Khua). Did they find the time for Tretyakov to conduct lengthy conversations with Eisenstein as well? It seems doubtful. They definitely continued talking – sometimes in the presence of guests, like Alfred J. Barr who recorded one such meeting in his Moscow diary in December 1927. Barr and his companion Jere Abbott quizzed the Moscow artists on their preference for the collective hero and type over the individual. What they saw was the discrepancy between theoretical proclamations of artists such as Meyerhold and their works. The individual hero refused to disappear under the guise of a type.³¹

Irina Ratiani, in her overview of Tretyakov's various involvements in cinema, quotes a newspaper announcement from February 2, 1926 that states that "Director S.M. Eisenstein, assistant director G.V. Aleksandrov, and S.M. Tretyakov are developing a script for a new production at the First State Film Factory."³² It would be logical to assume that at this point in time the announcement would refer to the development of the Chinese film script. Still, decades later Aleksandrov told theater historian Aleksandr Fevral'skii, who was quizzing him on the matter, that it might have referred to the script *Karl Marx*, which Tretyakov, Eisenstein, and Aleksandrov had planned to write

30 Eizenshtein, *Memuary*, 2: 482.

31 Alfred H. Barr, Jr., "Russian Diary 1927–28," *October* 7 (Winter 1978): 10–51; Jere Abbott, "Russian Diary, 1927–1928," *October* 145 (Summer 2013): 125–223. For the meeting with Eisenstein at Tretyakov's see, respectively, 13–14 and 128–130.

32 Irina Ratiani, "S.M. Tret'iakov i kinematograf" in Tret'iakov, *Nasledie*, 12–13.

but did not manage to finish.³³ Perhaps, what we have here, in garbled form, is a memory of Tretyakov's involvement with Eisenstein's project of adapting *Capital* for the screen, which he started developing in earnest in the fall of 1927. It was announced in newspapers and known among his colleagues (Brik, for one, expressed disapproval).

That Eisenstein's project on *Capital* can be read in light of LEF theories of narrative is suggested by his mention of Boris Kushner's book *103 Days in the West*, in a note from April 7, 1928. The LEF collection *Literatura fakta*, published in 1929, includes a review of this book by Viktor Shklovsky; it is also mentioned in Nikolai Chuzhak's "Instructions for a Writer" ("*Pisatel'skaia pamiatka*"). *Literatura fakta* includes several pieces by Tretyakov, which show that in their common search for new narratives and new heroes the two Sergeis were still following the same direction. Most significantly, in "The Biography of the Thing" Tretyakov argues for a new, "expedient method for narrative construction that fights against the idealism of the novel."³⁴ He tries once again to overcome individual psychology and individual hero, which he still retained in his biography of Tan Shih Hua:

The compositional structure of the "biography of the object" is a conveyor belt along which a unit of raw material is moved and transformed into a useful product through human effort. ... Every segment introduces a new group of people. Quantitatively, it can track the development of a large number of people without disrupting the narrative's proportions. They come into contact with the object through their social aspects and production skills. The moment of consumption occupies only the final part of the entire conveyor belt. People's individual and distinctive characteristics are no longer relevant here. The tics and epilepsies of the individual go unperceived. Instead, social neuroses and the professional diseases of a given group are foregrounded... Thus: not the individual

33 Tret'iakov, *Nasledie*, 13.

34 Sergei Tret'iakov, "The Biography of the Object," *October* 118 (Fall 2006): 60.

person moving through a system of objects, but the object proceeding through the system of people... We urgently need books about our economic resources, about objects made by people, and about people that make objects. Our politics grow out of economics, and there is not a single second in a person's day uninvolved in economics or politics. Books such as *The Forest, Bread, Coal, Iron, Flax, Cotton, Paper, The Locomotive*, and *The Factory* have not been written. We need them, and it is only through the "biography of the object" that they can be adequately realized.³⁵

One of Eisenstein's solutions for presenting the ideas of *Capital* on the screen is very close to Tretyakov's prescriptions.

"An analysis of a centimeter of silk stocking" ... Woman's stocking full of holes and a silk one in a newspaper advertisement. It starts with a jerky movement, to multiply into 50 pairs of legs – Revue. Silk. Art. The fight for the centimeter of silk stocking. The aesthetes are for it. The Bishops and morality are against. *Mais ces pantins* dance on strings pulled by the silk manufacturers and the garment peddlers who fight each other. Art. Holy art. Morality. Holy morality. ...

On this level [of repetition in the service of dialectical demonstration], one could solve:

Ein Paar seidene Strumpfe – art.

Ein Paar seidene Strumpfe – morality.

Ein Paar seidene Strumpfe – commerce and competition.

Ein Paar seidene Strumpfe – Indian women forced to incubate the silk cocoon by carrying them in their armpits.³⁶

35 Tret'iakov, "Object," 61–62.

36 Sergei Eisenstein, "Notes for a Film of *Capital*," *October* 2 (Summer 1976): 10, 17, 25 (Notes from April 4, 7, and 11, 1928). *Capital* remained one of Eisenstein's unrealized projects and the narrative form, for which Tretyakov argued in "The Biography of the Thing," has perhaps begun to be realized only recently, in something like Peter Ackroyd's *Thames. The Biography* (New York: Anchor Books, 2009) or in Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing's anthropological study *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins* (Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2015).

In March 1928, Tretyakov finished an overview of the Soviet film scene for a brochure that the Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries published in German, French, and English for the exhibition of Soviet cinema at the International Film Exhibition in The Hague (the text in the brochure is dated 30 March 1928). The first half of this text was also published in Russian in *Novyi LEF* 5 (1928). The remaining text, which includes overviews of the work of the major filmmakers concluding, of course, with Eisenstein, was not published in Russian at the time and had to be translated back into Russian and also re-translated into English from German.³⁷ It did not, of course, include any special “truths,” with which Eisenstein had teased Freeman: “Based upon his education, Eisenstein is something of an expert on Japan and something of an architect. From the latter derives his experience with drawing, which is also useful for directors.”³⁸ The text rather synthesizes Tretyakov’s previous insights into Eisenstein’s method and themes: montage of attractions, interest in stage movement, absence of a single style, and the combination of pathos and humor/parody/the comic that the critic finds essential for Eisenstein’s work:

All of Eisenstein’s work is characterized by two patterns: that of eccentric parody and that of heroic pathos. The pattern of eccentric parody is the part of the film that serves Eisenstein as a laboratory for the preparation of a new device. The pathetic-heroic pattern created his fame as the most powerful stimulator of audiences in our time. ... In addition to the montage system of pathos-laden attractions, Eisenstein’s last film also developed the system of ironic generalization and that of the intellectual system.³⁹

In 1931 Eisenstein writes down a similar assessment in one of his plans for a theory book: he juxtaposes his pathos and

37 Tret’iakov, *Nasledie*, 106–111; Sergei Tret’iakov, “Our Cinema,” *October* 118 (Fall 2006): 27–44.

38 Tret’iakov, “Our Cinema,” 42.

39 Tret’iakov, “Our Cinema,” 42–43.

“counter-pathos: [*one step further & jumps in the opposite*] laughter.”⁴⁰

Tret'yakov also predicts something that Eisenstein develops in his treatment of *An American Tragedy* and its experiments in internal monologue: “Someday, when the findings of the human organs – the glands, hearts, and nerves – have been studied, we will perhaps be able to watch the drama of a humankind moved by hate, love, and blackmail. It will be a stunning film that will incorporate reality in a new way”⁴¹

For all of both Tret'yakov's and Eisenstein's efforts to work with mass as a hero, by the early 1930s they were again searching for various ways to present individual consciousness, individual destiny in their works, even if only as an example of a “type.” In his brochure, Tret'yakov imagines Eisenstein's future evolution: “Conceiving of things as processes; the birth, degeneration, and death of concepts; the transformation of the film's frame into a philosophical machine – assembled here are the most interesting problems that Eisenstein is solving”⁴² This is perfectly in line with “The Biography of the Thing,” which concludes with transposing the structure from inanimate objects onto living beings: “...once we run a human along the narrative conveyer belt like an object, he will appear before us in a new light and in his full worth.”⁴³ Eisenstein's evocation of Bach in a conversation with Tret'yakov in 1935 – the reproduction “of the scheme of becoming of everything living and being” – is then part of the same trajectory.

For Tret'yakov, his own ideas on biography evolved and culminated in a book of biographical essays that built upon impressions of European (mostly German) artistic figures and Europe on the eve of Fascism. Even though he talks about Hanns Eisler or Bertold Brecht, some of these words could have been easily said about Eisenstein as well. His heroes are searching

40 RGALI, f. 1923, op. 2, ed. khr. 1123, l. 193; italics denote English in the original.

41 Tret'iakov, “Our Cinema,” 43.

42 Tret'iakov, “Our Cinema,” 44.

43 Tret'iakov, “Object,” 62.

for the modern epic, perhaps the “lyrical epic,” which “means that the command given to reality can be fully persuasive only if it is imbued with the deepest personal interest of the author, by his great subjective intensity; if the question of truth or untruth is double-checked on such scales as human biography, the one and only.”⁴⁴ In the chapter “Johnny,” Tretyakov finds something in the art of John Heartfield that is structurally similar to his view of Eisenstein: “*Satire-laden* photomontage and *pathos-laden* photomontage are the two poles between which Heartfield’s work is constructed.”⁴⁵ Biography here almost becomes autobiography, including the author himself in his typology of the modern political artist: “Undoubtedly, many of the biographies that I describe here resonate with my own biography, establishing the uniformity of the type of situations and the similarity of paths for people situated at different points of our planet but carried by the same social currents.”⁴⁶

In its ideal form (whether Tretyakov’s essays fulfill this ideal or not), his is a creative biography where works of art are treated as biographical events and, vice versa, life is treated as another art form; where the private fuses with the public and individual becomes typical. The biography of the thing and the biography of the thing’s creator are treated as one: “At first glance, the thing is far removed from the biography, but listen carefully and you will feel the sound of biographical overtones behind the lines.”⁴⁷ The reverberating space behind the lines is what this article has attempted to open up.

44 Sergei Tret’iakov, *Strana-perekrestok. Dokumental’naia proza* (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel’, 1991), 317.

45 Tret’iakov, *Strana-perekrestok*, 325; emphasis in the original.

46 Tret’iakov, *Strana-perekrestok*, 315.

47 Tret’iakov, *Strana-perekrestok*, 314–5.

MASHA SALAZKINA
EISENSTEIN IN LATIN AMERICA

This essay gives a very brief overview of Eisenstein's legacy in Latin America and the role his films and writings played in the development of Latin American cinematic cultures in the 1920s–1970s. While his films never had wide commercial exhibition there, Eisenstein acquired iconic status among the cultural elites and political activists and his films were a foundational part of the repertoire in alternative film exhibition circles. Alongside only a handful of other figures in the history of cinema (Chaplin perhaps comes to mind foremost here), Eisenstein became a cultural symbol. His artistic and intellectual work served as a constant point of reference, highlighting and refracting many of the key issues facing local and national cinephiles, artists, activists, and intellectuals. The symbolic weight Eisenstein held in Latin America's film culture throughout much of the twentieth century (as, indeed, elsewhere in the world) cannot be underestimated. Both his creations and his persona were not only a great source of inspiration but also a powerful weapon in political and aesthetic struggles in many historical contexts throughout his life and long after his death – something that would have made the Master himself proud.

An episode from Brazil, concerning the iconic 1930 film, *Limite*, directed by Mário Peixoto, can illustrate this. The film was briefly screened in Brazil and in Europe in the early 1930s, but rarely seen in the following decades; it was famously referred to by Georges Sadoul as an “unknown masterpiece.” What greatly contributed to the quasi-mythical status of the film from the 1960s on was the lavish praise supposedly bestowed on the film by Eisenstein. Peixoto claimed to have a French

translation of an English article Eisenstein supposedly published in *Tatler Magazine* in 1931. The text of the review was even included in published dossiers on the film and was widely referred to as evidence of the film's international reputation (in fact, "Eisenstein's review" is still mentioned in the Wikipedia page on *Limite* as of today)¹. After an extensive search by many Latin American scholars, in the 1990s it became evident that the review was written by the Brazilian director himself in an attempt to add international prestige to his film.² As Sarah Ann Wells noted in an excellent article on the reception of Soviet cinema in Latin America in the 1920s, "Intellectuals and filmmakers thus sought out Eisenstein as a stamp of approval for the health of their respective national film industries."³

The connection between *Limite* and Eisenstein in Brazil – and by extension between Latin American and Soviet avant-gardes – proved to be enduring in unexpected ways. In 1966, during the military dictatorship, the only surviving print of *Limite* was confiscated from the university collection by the police alongside a print of *Battleship Potemkin*.⁴ And while

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- 1 "Limite (film)," [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Limite_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Limite_(film)). Accessed July 2, 2017.
 - 2 Saulo Pereira de Mello, "Peixoto escreveu artigo que atribuiu a Eisenstein," *Folha de São Paulo*, May 17, 1993, 3. See also Pereira de Mello, "Introdução," in *Mário Peixoto: Escritos sobre cinema*, ed. Saulo Pereira de Mello (Rio de Janeiro: Aeroplano Editora, 2000), 11–41; Pereira de Mello, "Um filme da América do Sul," in *ibid.*, 155–203; quoted in Sarah Anne Wells, "Parallel Modernities?: The First Reception of Soviet Cinema in Latin America," *Cosmopolitan Film Cultures in Latin America, 1896–1960*, eds. Rielle Navitski and Nicolas Poppe (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017), 175.
 - 3 Wells, "Parallel Modernities?," 168–9.
 - 4 Fábio Andrade, "Limite: Memory in the Present Tense", https://www.criterion.com/current/posts/4627-limite-memory-in-the-present-tense?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+TheCriterionCollection-TheCurrent+%28The+Current%29.

the Brazilian film was eventually retrieved later that year, *Potemkin* remained prohibited in Brazil throughout much of the 1960s, when its screening constituted a political crime, for the first time in Brazil's legal history, and throughout the 1970s, for the full duration of the military dictatorship, with only clandestine screenings taking place through underground film clubs and militant film gathering.⁵ Similarly, the first films officially banned from exhibition in Argentina by government censorship in 1967 were Eisenstein's *Strike* and *October*.⁶ In Peru it took the distribution company Libertad seventeen years to get permission from the government's censorship bureau to exhibit *Potemkin* – it was only in 1968 that the film was finally shown in that country for the first time.⁷

The ban on Eisenstein's films by numerous military dictatorships in Latin America in the 1950s–1970s could appear anachronistic when compared to Eisenstein's reception in Europe and North America, where during the same period Eisenstein's films and writings certainly played a role in further radicalizing generations of artists and theorists, but were hardly seen anymore as dangerous. And yet in much of Latin America at that time Eisenstein's work was perceived as relevant and potentially truly subversive. It is in this context that we must understand the claim by José Carlos Avellar, one of the period's most important Brazilian film critics and scholars, that in the 1970s in Brazil “the cinemas of Sergei Eisenstein and of Dziga Vertov act as living forces. As living forces, as acting influences on contemporary cinema, and not as examples of a classical culture to be examined in film

5 At the same time, inexplicably, in the midst of the dictatorship, Brazil hosted an exhibition of Eisenstein's drawings, which also included screenings of *Nevsky* and *Ivan*. See Fabiola Bastos Notari, “A Recepção Do Cinema De Serguêi M. Eisenstein No Barsil: Um Estudo De Caso, Os 115 Desenhos De Serguêi M. Eisenstein (1973-1974),” XV Encontro Regional de Historia, Curitiba, 26–29 July, 2016.

6 *Cine Cubano* 93 (1977): 63.

7 *Cine Cubano* 93 (1977): 58.

archives,”⁸ thus affirming the vitality and power of Eisenstein’s aesthetics and thought in the region.

Giving an exhaustive account of such a rich history for the whole continent in one essay is, of course, impossible. In what follows I would like to identify some of its key protagonists and consider the factors that shaped the particularities of the cultural reception of Eisenstein in Latin America. I will draw on examples from Cuba, Brazil, and Argentina, but in doing so I hope to demonstrate a certain regional coherence, at least at certain moments of this particular cinematic history. This history extends from the establishment of journalistic film discourse in Latin America in the 1920s, through the institutional development of the non-commercial film cultures, including criticism and education, to the emergence of the so-called New Latin American Cinema by the late 1970s.

Early Reception: Eisenstein as a Cosmopolitan Modernist Artist

The Soviet avant-garde and Eisenstein in particular served as important reference points for the Latin American culture in the late 1920s–1930s, associated with the discussions of alternative modernity and national identity. Because of its “belated” modernization and resulting discourse of underdevelopment, the view of cinema as the art that both represented and promoted modernity and modernization had particular power in Latin America.⁹ While both cinema and modernization were linked to Hollywood and the US, the possibilities represented by the Soviet film industry for creating cultural and political alternatives had great appeal for liberal cultural elites as well as for more political leftist artists and intellectuals, many of whom were

8 José Carlos Avellar, “Le cinéma soviétique muet et le nouveau cinéma brésilien,” *Influence du Cinéma Soviétique*, FIAF Symposium, Varna, 1977, no page numbers.

9 Wells, “Parallel Modernities”; Ana López, “Early Cinema and Modernity in Latin America,” *Cinema Journal* 40: 1 (2000): 48–78.

explicitly committed to creating a shared internationalist and cosmopolitan modernist culture. In addition to the considerable international impact and prestige of Eisenstein's films (and eventually his writings), his cosmopolitan persona was also important in making him a highly relevant point of reference. His knowledge of languages and broad erudition, his ties to revered artists and writers around the world, and his experience in Mexico further facilitated the sense of connection and provided enduring interest all over Latin America. Some of the most important Latin American writers, artists, and cultural figures, at times representing quite different positions on the political spectrum, would seek contact with and promote Eisenstein as a model of the modern(ist) cosmopolitan artist.

One of Eisenstein's very first Latin American interlocutors was Alejo Carpentier, who was to become one of the greatest Cuban modernist writers. In the 1920s Carpentier was a member of The Minorista group, which brought together young leftist Cuban intellectuals who sought artistic, literary, and social renovation. They considered film criticism an important part of this mission by elevating cinema to the level of a "high" art capable of exceptional expressive powers and took a critical and theoretical stance similar to the French surrealist and impressionist film theories of *cinema pur*.¹⁰ The young Carpentier met Eisenstein in Paris in 1930 through common acquaintances in Parisian surrealist circles. Carpentier described walking around Paris with Eisenstein and the surrealist writer Robert Desnos, while also giving an account of Eisenstein's creative biography. Man Ray was asked to take photos to commemorate the encounter.¹¹ The publication of the Carpentier's interview

10 "Declaración del Grupo Minorista," first published in *Carteles* 21 (May 22, 1927): 16 and 25; http://www.cubaliteraria.com/monografia/grupo_minorista/declaracion.html. See also Ana Cairo Ballester, *El Grupo Minorista y su tiempo* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1978); Jason Borges, "High Anxiety: Guillermo Cabrera Infante and Prerevolutionary Film Criticism in Cuba" *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos* 40 (2006): 341–60.

11 Alejo Carpentier, "Con el creador de 'El Acorozado Potemkin,'"

foregrounded the Minoristas' cosmopolitan connections and ambitions, but it also established an explicit dialogue between Latin American modernism, of which Carpentier was already a strong representative, and the Soviet filmmaker, suggesting artistic and cultural continuities (in this case, via the shared affinities with French surrealist vision in particular).

The same year, across the Atlantic, Eisenstein met another key figure of Latin American modernism, the Argentine Victoria Ocampo. Ocampo was a major cultural entrepreneur, the founder of *El Sur*, one of Argentina's, and arguably all of Latin America's, most important literary magazines. Ocampo was in New York with her friend and collaborator Waldo Frank, when she met Eisenstein at a party of the millionaire Otto Kahn, where both Ocampo and Eisenstein were trying to find funding for their projects. This meeting would lead to decades of warm correspondence between the two and a series of failed plans to bring the Soviet director to Argentina to make a film.¹²

In fact, Eisenstein was much better known in Argentina than in Mexico. Argentina was the first Latin American country to screen Soviet films and the country where they were screened most frequently. The Soviet Union opened a distribution center, URSS Films, in Buenos Aires, and *Potemkin* was its first big success. Fiercely debated, *Potemkin* was screened widely and in all kinds of cinemas (especially in the capital), and *October* was screened in Buenos Aires "in practically uncut form," unlike in many other places. All of Eisenstein's films of the period became regular repertoire of one of Latin America's very first cine-clubs, *Amigos del Arte*.¹³

Ocampo's persistent attempts to bring Eisenstein to Buenos Aires evidence not only her "global" vision for Argentina, but also her shrewd understanding of the need for international connections to further the reputation of her emerging cultural em-

reprinted in *Cine cubano*, 9 (1969): 92–5.

12 Victoria Ocampo, *Autobiografía III* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Fundación Victoria Ocampo, 2006), 191–8, and *Sur: Testimonios, 1920–1934* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Fundación Sur).

13 Wells, "Parallel Modernities," 151–3.

pire, and of the role that cinema could play in this new cosmopolitan culture. As a result, she greatly advanced Eisenstein's reputation all over Latin America with articles on his Mexican project, including film stills, which Eisenstein regularly sent to her from Mexico. Within a few years she was eager to promote *Alexander Nevsky*, which she considered one of Eisenstein's greatest artistic achievements (in contrast to *Ivan the Terrible*, which she saw as political propaganda).¹⁴

Ocampo's celebration of Eisenstein in the early 1930s was typical in its representation of the director as part of the international avant-garde and a great artist in spite of his political ideology, enabling his success among a broad range of intellectuals in Latin America. Moreover, as Wells underscores, the emphasis on the advances of the Soviet film industry as an alternative model for the emerging Latin American national cinemas was a strong driving force that was shared across the political spectrum. Carpentier reflects this same sentiment in his earliest writings on Eisenstein. In 1928 Carpentier wrote of *Potemkin's* first screenings that, "It was surprising to see emerging from the new Russian film industry – an industry without tradition, one which encountered every imaginable difficulty – a production so perfect, a film which, in a flash, situated itself among the twenty master works that the art of moving shadows has given us since the beginning of the century."¹⁵ The fate of *Que Viva Mexico* added to the broad sympathies towards the Soviet director, further fomenting strong anti-US sentiments among Latin American cultural elites, as the story of the film demonstrated quite literally the way that Hollywood absorbs and consumes artistic work. The outrage over the failure to return the Mexican footage back to Eisenstein united many cultural figures regardless of their political sympathies.

14 David Oubiña, "El noble experimento" in *Estudios Curatoriales* a.3 no.4. http://untref.edu.ar/rec/num4_dossier_3.php

15 Alejo Carpentier, *Carteles* (Havana), October 7, 1928; repr. in Alejo Carpentier, *El cine, décima musa* in Arias 2011, 22–23, quoted in Wells, "Parallel Modernities," 163.

As the decade continued, however, and certainly by the 1940s,¹⁶ Eisenstein was championed in Latin America only by people who openly aligned themselves with leftist – and in the 1940s–1950s, specifically Communist Party – politics. Thus while in the earlier period we can talk about the equal importance of Eisenstein’s cultural reception in both liberal and leftist circles, with the intensification of Cold War politics, Eisenstein gradually became associated primarily with “militant” film criticism, theory, filmmaking, and activism. The separation between the liberal cultural realms and the militant ones in Latin America as late as the 1950s–1960s, however, remained somewhat fluid, and in film circles Marxism was the lingua franca for the most influential international critics and historians from Georges Sadoul and Leon Moussinac to Umberto Barbaro and Guido Aristarco.

Early Political Reception in Cuba

The celebration of Eisenstein and his films by the Communist Left in Latin America – especially in places where their political efforts were met with massive forces of state repression – certainly contributed to his notoriety. Here Cuba provides the most compelling example with long-lasting consequences. The first presentation of a Soviet film in Cuba was the screening of *Potemkin* held in the *Nacional* (now the *García Lorca*) Theatre in 1927. Cuba’s leading newspaper *Diario de la Marina* advertised it as “a bloodcurdling photodrama of Tsarist Russia: *Potemkin*, recognized by Douglas Fairbanks, Emil Jannings, Max Reinhart and other celebrities as the most grandiose spectacle produced in cinema to date.”¹⁷ Such sensationalist presentation and emphasis on the international prestige and spectacle is entirely consistent with film advertisement of the period, and did little to prepare the audience, including critics, for what was to follow. As Smith Mesa affirms, the screening of *Potemkin* marked a watershed in

16 For more on this point, see Oubiña, “El noble experimento.”

17 *Diario de la Marina*, September 1, 1927, 9, translation mine.

the history of Cuban film culture.¹⁸ It brought about a new discourse on cinema's political potential and its ability to arouse "dangerous passions" (as the article in *Diario* claimed), not in one's personal life, as has so often been the concern over cinematic melodrama, but in a collective.¹⁹ Consequently, while *Potemkin* was acknowledged to be potentially subversive by the state (leading to its immediate ban), it was also quickly recognized and appropriated by political radicals.

One of the very first Cuban reviews of Eisenstein's films was written by Julio Antonio Mella, the co-founder of the first Communist Party in Cuba, leader of the student movement, and an enthusiast of the October Revolution.²⁰ While in exile in Mexico in 1928, where he knew many of the people Eisenstein would get to know a few years later, Mella wrote a review of *October* in a Trotskyite newspaper, *Tren blindado*. His review followed the familiar pattern of contrasting Eisenstein's style with that of Hollywood. As other commentators focused on an explicitly political understanding of the film, Mella emphasized the collective protagonist of the revolutionary masses in opposition to the "cine yanqui" of individuals and isolated characters. "October is a film of the revolution... The movie doesn't have heroes. It's life, it's the multitude."²¹ He also highlighted the issue that would haunt revolutionary cinema for decades to come: spectatorship.

The public, accustomed to the bourgeois style of yanqui film, will not be able to fully appreciate the value of this effort of Sovkino. It doesn't matter. It would be asking too much of them to comprehend the proletarian revolution after hearing about it through the cables of United Press, or the revolutionary movement of our own coun-

18 Vladimir Alexander Smith Mesa, *Kinocuban: The Significance of Soviet and Eastern European Cinemas for the Cuban Moving Image*, PhD thesis, University College London, November 2011, 54.

19 *Diario de la Marina*, p. 14.

20 Felipe Pérez Cruz, *Mella y la Revolución de Octubre* (La Habana: Editorial Gente Nueva, 1980).

21 Julio Antonio Mella, "Octubre," *Cine cubano* 9 (1969): 111–12; first published in *Tren blindado* (1928).

try and our national characteristics through the interpretation given them by Hollywood. However, here the ideological vanguards have the opportunity to enjoy one of the most intense pleasures the present epoch can offer in the terrain of art, through the youngest and the most expressive of the modern arts: motion photography.²²

The potential of Soviet cinema – and Eisenstein’s films specifically – for the creation of a new kind of a spectator, and a new kind of film education understood in cultural and political terms, will shape much of its reception in the subsequent decades, when such efforts will be taken up by film activists, critics, and cineastes, as part of the larger project of the institutionalization of film culture.

The Growth of Film Institutions and Eisenstein’s Role in the New Canon Formation, 1940s–1950s

The period of the 1940s–1950s is important to the history of Eisenstein’s reception all over Latin America for two distinct but interconnected reasons. First, in many countries (Uruguay, Peru, Chile, and to some extent Brazil and Mexico), early Soviet films began to be shown considerably later than their original release. Thus in much of Latin America the delayed public reception of Eisenstein’s films meant that many of the critical and political polemics surrounding his films continued during the period when in Europe and North America they had lost their vitality, at least for the general public. In many parts of Latin America, audiences discovered Eisenstein after having heard about his fame and importance for decades.

The second factor that shaped this period in Eisenstein’s critical reception was the availability of his writings. If Eisenstein’s films were not easily available, his writings, along with the work of other early Soviet filmmaker-theorists such as Lev Kuleshov and Vsevolod Pudovkin, began to be translat-

22 Ibid.

ed and regularly published in journals all over Latin America as early as the 1920s, and starting from the early 1950s, they began to appear as edited volumes.²³ These materials traveled around the continent from one cinephile to another, playing a key role in the formation of several generations of filmmakers and critics. This point is repeatedly underscored in interviews. When asked about the influence of Soviet cinema, virtually all the Latin American filmmakers emphasized the key role Eisenstein's writings played in their understanding of cinema and their formation as filmmakers generally, and political cineastes in particular.²⁴ Uruguay represents a particularly interesting case where screenings of Soviet films were extremely rare, but in the 1950s several collections of Eisenstein's writings were published. These circulated all through the region, contributing to the strong formation of the canon for film education in the broadest terms and playing a role in the institutionalization of cinema.

It is worth noting that the critical reception of Eisenstein in Latin America was mediated through European and US criticism and scholarship, both in the very early period and later. Especially key were the discussions of Eisenstein in the works by Moussinac, Sadoul, Barbaro, and later, Guido Aristarco. The

23 Vsevolod Pudovkin, *El Actor En El Film* (Buenos Aires: Losange, 1955); *Montaje: Bases De Un Film*, (Buenos Aires: Editorial Futuro, 1956); Sergei Eisenstein, G. Kosintsev, and M. Bleiman, *El Arte De Charles Chaplin* (Buenos Aires: Losange, 1956); Eisenstein, et al., *El Oficio Cinematografico* (Buenos Aires: Futuro, 1957); Sergei Eisenstein, *La Forma En El Cine* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Losange, 1958); Vsevolod Pudovkin, *El Actor De Cine Y El Sistema De Stanislavsky* (Montevideo: Pueblos Unidos, 1957); Sergei Eisenstein, *Problemas De La Composición Cinematográfica* (Montevideo: Ediciones Pueblos Unidos, 1957); Vsevolod Pudovkin, *La Técnica Del Cine Y El Actor En El Film* (México: Centro Universitario de Estudios Cinematográficos, 1960) Vladimir Nizhny, et al, *Lecciones De Cine De Eisenstein* (Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1964).

24 See the interviews in *Cine Cubano* 93 (1977): 44–65, or the interventions by the Latin American contributors to *Influence du Cinema Sovietique*, FIAF Symposium, Varna, 1977.

other obvious sources were of course Jay Leyda, Marie Seton, and Ivor Montagu. Other than books published in the Soviet Union itself, virtually all the Eisenstein translations into Spanish circulating in Latin America were from English or French (rather than directly from Russian), which, on the one hand, limited the complexity of Eisenstein's theoretical corpus and, on the other hand, created a shared canon for dialogue between Europe and Latin America, where the same (mostly, early) texts had predominance.

Film criticism in Latin America, together with film collections at art museums and film sections of various cultural societies also came into their own in the 1950s helping to elevate the prestige of film education and film culture.²⁵ Both the bourgeois and militant forms of this alternative film culture, and the status of Eisenstein as both a cosmopolitan modernist and a communist militant, were crucial for this process. Brazil and Cuba in the late 1950s and early 1960s emerged as paradigmatic examples of these developments. Achievements in both the film cultural sector and film production in these two countries stand out in scale and importance, foreshadowing broader developments elsewhere on the continent, where the promise of radical political reorganization vacillated with clampdowns of totalitarianism.

Brazil: Vinicius de Moraes, Alex Viary, and Paulo Emílio Salles Gomes

A figure who exemplifies a bridge between the reception of "modernist" and "radical" Eisenstein is the renowned Brazilian writer, poet, and musician Vinicius de Moraes. A foundational figure in the Brazilian bossa nova music scene and a well known cosmopolitan bohemian, De Moraes is less well-known for his political commitment and his writing on cinema, which

25 Ismail Xavier, *Sétima arte: Um culto moderno* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Perspectiva, 1978), 125–30; 207.

together found a perfect focus in Eisenstein. Eisenstein's films were banned in Brazil in the 1920s and early 1930s, and would be again in the 1960s and 1970s, but despite the unavailability of the films themselves, Eisenstein's ideas on the montage and sound were widely debated in the film publications. In the 1940s and 1950s, when his films were screened in film societies and universities, Brazil's most important critics would make Eisenstein's films part of the canon for the emerging school of Brazilian film criticism and theory, culminating in the 1960s with the triumph of Cinema Novo as a film movement and a new way to think about cinema. Although not widely recognized for this, de Moraes contributed to this process through his reviews and articles.²⁶ De Moraes' admiration for Eisenstein stemmed as much from the director's aesthetics and theory, as from the political commitment at the core of his work. De Moraes fully shared this commitment, as an active member of the Communist Party. In 1946, during a prolonged stay in Los Angeles, where he served as a Vice Consul, de Moraes started a new film journal, *Film*, together with Alex Viany, then an emerging film critic and communist militant (to whom we will turn shortly). Although only two issues were published, the idea of a journal with an explicitly political conception of cinema was an important starting point for the development of Brazilian film culture.²⁷ Vinicius de Moraes' most famous contribution to Eisenstein's legacy is a triptych of sonnets he wrote on Eisenstein's death, dated just one day after the tragic news, "Triptico na morte de Sergei Mikhailovitch Eisenstein."²⁸ The triptych is

26 See "Cortes de Câmara," *A Manhã* (Rio de Janeiro), July 14, 1945, 6; July 18, 1946, 9; November 24, 1946, 6; and July 27, 1947, 6, and <http://www.viniciusdemoraes.com.br/pt-br/cinema/eisenstein-e-teoria-do-cinema>

27 Alexei Bueno, "Vinicius de Moraes e Cinema," *Cadernos de Literatura Comparada* 6 (2015): 34–35.

28 "Triptico na morte de Sergei Mikhailovitch Eisenstein," <http://www.viniciusdemoraes.com.br/pt-br/poesia/poesias-avulsas/triptico-na-morte-de-sergei-mikhailovitch-eisenstein>. Accessed July 11, 2017.

a moving tribute to the Soviet master as well as a meditation on his cinematic and theoretical motifs and a melancholic contemplation on the immortality of cinema.

As elsewhere, in Brazil in the 1940s and 1950s Soviet film and Eisenstein in particular played an important role in both the institutionalization and the subsequent radicalization of the film culture. Alex Viány and Paulo Emílio Salles Gomes, the country's two most important film critics and activists of the time, were particularly important during this phase in shaping cinematic culture in Brazil, which in turn resulted in the veritable explosion of a new form of cinema starting from the early 1960s.

Alex Viány's sustained engagement with Eisenstein goes back to his stay in Los Angeles with Vinicius de Moraes in 1946–8. He was initially a big fan of Hollywood cinema, but his experience in California and his growing political awareness led him to prefer B-movies, documentaries, and Italian realism, and Soviet cinema. As part of their work on the journal *Film*, Viány and de Moraes planned a special issue on Eisenstein (intended to be released in 1949). Although never realized, the preparation for this issue involved extensive research by both Viány and de Moraes, putting them in contact with the wider international network of Eisenstein's friends, supporters, and enthusiasts. Heavily involved in the Brazilian cultural politics of the pro-Communist Left and the initiatives of what will become known as Cinema Novo, Viány continued to promote Eisenstein's films and writings in Brazil. In the 1960s, in addition to writing reviews of the films for *Jornal do Cinema* and *Shopping News*,²⁹ Viány corresponded with Ivor Montagu and Jay Leyda, consulting with them on what turned out to be another unrealized project, a book on Eisenstein in the series *Biblioteca Básica de Cinema*, which he edited. He also made notes for a book on *Potemkin*, on the history of *Que Viva Mexico*, and he hoped to publish a series of translations that included Leyda's *Kino* (which was just then being translated into Span-

29 ACERVO PESSOAL ALEX VIANY - MAM-RJ), a6gdi18.17

ish in Argentina), as well as of Eisenstein's own writing. Most of these plans never came to be realized. He also tried to verify the source of the review of *Limite* attributed to Eisenstein, discussed in the beginning of this essay.³⁰

While Viany was known as a communist militant throughout his life, Paulo Emílio Salles Gomes was more moderate. By the 1950s, despite his earlier association with the communist party and while still generally sharing Marxist views, Salles Gomes had become hostile to what he perceived as the ideological and intellectual rigidity of the communist militants such as Viany. And yet this most important Brazilian critic was also a big promoter of Eisenstein. His own early attempts at filmmaking were influenced by Eisenstein's films and ideas.³¹ More importantly, in the course of the 1940s, Paulo Emílio became the leading film critic in Brazil, writing first for the influential cultural journal *Clima* and, in the 1950s and 1960s, *Suplemento Literário d'O Estado de S. Paulo*. Eisenstein is one of the key protagonists in his writings along with Wells and Ford. His work, including a series of articles on Eisenstein published between 1956–65, marks a definitive shift in Brazilian film criticism. While his analysis of Eisenstein's work is visibly mediated through earlier French critics, Sadoul, Moussinac, Jean Mitry, and André Bazin, it is worth noting as Mendes does, that the influence of Bazin has more to do with his approach to criticism and the "militant cinephilia" tradition than Bazin's famous critical take on Eisenstein. And unlike Mitry and

30 See Viany's correspondence collected in the Personal Archive of Alex Viany, Modern Art Museum of Rio de Janeiro (ACERVO PESSOAL ALEX VIANY - MAM-RJ), especially cx004-0187. For more on Viany, see Arthur Autran, *Alex Viany: crítico e historiador* (São Paulo: Perspectiva, 2003).

31 Vinícius de Moraes, *Em sua crônica de hoje Vinicius de Moraes comenta uma exibição privada a que assistiu na sala de projeção do Serviço de Divulgação da Prefeitura*. In: *A Manhã*. Rio de Janeiro, 25.03.1943, p. 5, quoted in Adilson Inacio Mendes, *A crítica viva de Paulo Emilio*, PhD thesis, department of cinema, University of Sao Paolo, February, 2012, 63.

Marie Seton, whose writings on Eisenstein influenced Salles Gomes, his approach is mediated through stronger intellectual investment in understanding the social and political context of Soviet realities, filtered through his own experiences with the Brazilian communist militants and later alignment with the anti-Stalinist left.³² Salles Gomes' work provided the basis for academic film criticism and scholarship in Brazil and the discussions of Eisenstein served as a springboard for discussions of the renovation and transformation of the national cinema, political engagement, and the responsibility of the artist and critic. These discussions provided engagement with the Soviet cinema for new generation of Brazilian artists and intellectuals including Glauber Rocha and other filmmakers and critics of Cinema Novo. Salles Gomes was also a highly effective cinema promoter and a key institutional figure. In the 1940s he founded the cine-club in Sao Paulo that eventually evolved into the Brazilian Cinemateca in the 1950s. Rocha underscores his influence when he says (somewhat bitterly) that for his generation "the Sao Paulo Cinemateca was the Cathedral, Paulo Emílio Salles Gomes the Pope, while the cardinals and priests played in the provincial bars and cinema-clubs."³³

The opening of modern art museums in Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro facilitated the development of film collection and film programming. These institutional developments made a large scale exhibition of early Soviet cinema possible. When the VI Art Biennale in Sao Paulo included the Soviet avant-garde in its program, a collaboration between the Cinemateca Brasileira and Gosfil'mofond ran the first retrospective of Russo-Soviet cinema, screening 41 films, including a whole "Eisenstein cycle," that included five of his films. The series was seen by a total of 35,000 spectators overall, with *Battleship Potemkin* being the most popular screening attended by 2,350 people, fol-

32 Ibid, 88.

33 Eduardo Escorel, O silêncio de Paulo Emílio, *questões cinematográficas. Folha de S. Paulo*, March 24, 2014; <http://piaui.folha.uol.com.br/questoes-cinematograficas/o-silencio-de-paulo-emilio/>. Accessed July 11, 2017.

lowed by *Strike* with 1,800 spectators, *October* with 1,700, and *Alexander Nevsky* with 1,100 viewers.³⁴ Another retrospective of Russian and Soviet film took place that same year in the Museum of Modern Art in Rio de Janeiro, which opened on November 24, 1961, in the Caruso-Copacabana Theater with the projection of *Battleship Potemkin*. The other 50 screenings took place in the Cinemateca in the Museum of Modern Art, making it the largest screening of Soviet cinema in Latin America to that date and a real cultural event.³⁵ It was all the more memorable considering the prohibition on screening *Potemkin* just a few years later with the arrival of the dictatorship.

Cuba: José Manuel Valdés-Rodríguez

The only events comparable in scale to the Brazilian reception of Eisenstein and early Soviet cinema in the 1960s, took place, of course, in post-revolutionary Cuba. The figure most responsible for the continuing interest in Eisenstein there was Cuban film historian and educator, José Manuel Valdés-Rodríguez, whose activities shaped not only the reception of Soviet cinema but much of film culture on the island. Perhaps no other figure in Latin American cultural history did as much for the dissemination of Eisenstein's ideas as he did, with activities spanning many decades, from the 1920s through the 1960s. In the late 1920s he began working as a newspaper film critic and, like Carpentier, he was close the Minorista group, sharing among other things their enthusiasm for cinema. During the same period he started running a cineclub from his home, looking for films that did not have commercial exhibi-

34 *O Estado de São Paulo*, January 2, 1962 quoted in Fabiola Bastos Notari, A RECEPÇÃO DO CINEMA DE SERGUEI M. EISENSTEIN NO BRASIL: UM ESTUDO DE CASO, A VI BIENAL DE SÃO PAULO (1961), VII Simpósio Nacional de História Cultural HISTÓRIA CULTURAL: ESCRITAS, CIRCULAÇÃO, LEITURAS E RECEPÇÕES, 8.

35 *Ibid.*, 10–11.

tion and yet were available through other channels. In this connection he became a champion of Soviet cinema in general, and of Eisenstein in particular. In 1929, in *Revista de Avance* he reviewed *Rusia a los doce años*, by the Spanish writer Julio Álvarez del Vayo, which had a chapter of cinema and which, alongside Moussinac's monograph, *Le Cinéma Soviétique*, became an important source of information on Soviet film in Latin America during that period. Valdés-Rodríguez immediately showed great enthusiasm for Eisenstein.³⁶ In 1932 he began regularly contributing to the US journal, *Experimental Cinema*, and subsequently became actively involved in the campaign mounted by the journal to save Eisenstein's Mexican picture. In the same year, in an article published in the Cuban journal *Social*, Valdés-Rodríguez made his first attempt at summarizing Eisenstein's ideas of dialectical montage, which he referred to as "*cinodialéctica*."³⁷ Two years later he traveled to the Soviet Union as a correspondent for *Bohemia* and *Ahora* to cover the 1934 Soviet Writers Congress. There he met with Eisenstein on several occasions and had an opportunity to discuss the plans Eisenstein was developing for the curriculum at the Moscow film school, GIK (later VGIK).³⁸

Starting in 1942 Valdés-Rodríguez was able to implement what he learned from Eisenstein and others, when he began teaching "Cinema: the Industry and Art of Our Times" at the University of Havana's Summer School.³⁹ Like Eisenstein,

36 José Manuel Valdés-Rodríguez, "Letras: Rusia a los doce años," *Revista de Avance* (Havana), January 15, 1929, 152. Quoted in Wells, 155.

37 José Manuel Valdés-Rodríguez, "El montaje cinematográfico y Eisenstein," *Social* (Havana), May 1932; repr. in *Avances de Hollywood: Crítica cinematográfica en América Latina, 1915–1945*, ed. Jason Borge (Rosario: Beatriz Viterbo, 2005).

38 José Manuel Valdés-Rodríguez, "El hombre, el creador, el técnico: Sergei Mijailovich Eisenstein," *Lunes de Revolución*, February 6, 1961, 24–6.

39 Irene Rozsa, "Film Culture and Education in Republican Cuba: The Legacy of José Manuel Valdés-Rodríguez," *Cosmopolitan Film Cultures*, 298–323.

Valdés-Rodríguez based his teaching on the idea that cinema was the highest manifestation of human artistic activity, incorporating techniques from other media in unique ways and capable of revealing complex sociological and psychological dynamics more fully than any other art. To support his arguments, Valdés-Rodríguez made extensive reference to literature and theater, ranging from the modernist literature of James Joyce and Marcel Proust to the classics and, while insisting on the open potentiality of cinema as a medium, Eisenstein served as an exceptional example of the best of what cinema could be. Eisenstein's films (along with Chaplin's) were the most frequently screened over the years and were the cornerstones of the newly created university film archive. The decorative panels in the university's screening room included quotations from Horace, Dante, Baudelaire, and Eisenstein.⁴⁰

Valdés-Rodríguez's course and the university screening sessions created an environment where many friendships and collaborations began. Germán Puig, Ricardo Vigón, Néstor Almen-dros, and Cabrera Infante, who formed the influential *Cineclub de la Habana* in 1948 and later numbered among Cuba's most famous liberal critics and cineastes (and all to be exiled from Cuba in the 1960s), met through Valdés-Rodríguez's course. Similarly, the film section of the cultural society, *Nuestro Tiempo*, which would later form the core of the *Instituto Cubano de Arte e Industria Cinematográficos* (ICAIC), the most important cultural institution of post-revolutionary Cuba, was also formed under Valdés-Rodríguez's direct influence. His former students, Alfredo Guevara and Julio García Espinosa made up the core of ICAIC and were responsible for its ideological and aesthetic programme. Effectively, the cinematic canon promoted by Valdés-Rodríguez, with Eisenstein at its center, would set the cultural agenda of post-revolutionary Cuba. Although Valdés-Rodríguez himself did not occupy any official position

40 Ibid., 309, 312-3; José Manuel Valdés-Rodríguez, *El cine en la Universidad de La Habana (1942-1965)* (La Habana: Empresa de Publicaciones Mined, 1966), 372-80, 393-429, 456-85.

at ICAIC after the revolution, he collaborated with his former students among the ICAIC leaders in their film publications and educational initiatives, as well as representing Cuba at festivals abroad. Importantly, the film collection he put together at the university was used as a foundation for the first official Cinemateca in Cuba founded by ICAIC, thus allowing for the early exhibition of Soviet cinema (and Eisenstein's films in particular) in the immediate post-revolutionary years.⁴¹

In Place of Conclusion: 1960s–1970s, Eisenstein, and the New Latin American Cinema

In the decade following the Cuban revolution in 1959, Eisenstein's influence helped form what became known as the New Latin American Cinema – the explicitly political and often experimental movement whose best known representatives are Nelson Perreira, Glauber Rocha, Fernando Birri, Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, Tomas Gutierrez Alea, Santiago Alvarez, Patricio Guzman, and Jorge Sanjines. To varying degrees, their films as well as their writings were indebted to Eisenstein's theory and practice of dialectical montage. The filmmakers both embraced and rejected that influence. As expressed with the greatest urgency by Glauber Rocha in 1970s: "Fox, Paramount and Metro are our enemies. But Eisenstein, Rossellini, and Godard are also our enemies. They crush us."⁴²

Eisenstein emerged as an important point of reference in the radical film culture of the 1960s in Latin America for many of the same reasons as in Europe and the US, but made more urgent by the explosive political situation and the proximity of the Cuban revolution as a possibility for the rest of the continent. In their search for the new – political – Latin American cinema, which

41 Rozsa, "Film Culture and Education," 314–317.

42 Robert Stam with Richard Porton and Leo Goldsmith, *Keywords in Subversive Film/Media Aesthetics* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015), 88.

would speak to this revolutionary emancipatory spirit, many filmmakers turn to the 1920s avant-gardes, both in their own countries and internationally, for roots and inspiration. As in that earlier moment, this search was guided by strong anti-Hollywood, anti-imperialist sentiments, and early Soviet cinema provided an alternative that could be seen as revolutionary and anti-hegemonic. By the late 1960s and early 1970s the search for new cinematic models was particularly pressing. Italian neo-realism, which earlier had served as a powerful inspiration, lost its political radicalism and was largely seen as conservative. Even the European New Waves, while offering an important point of reference aesthetically and formally, were seen as politically conformist and irrelevant to the specific conditions of Latin America. Montage, however, still seemed a powerful aesthetic and political tool and, while at that point Eisenstein was far from the only practitioner of montage, he remained its main theoretician. The 1977 special issue of the journal *Cine Cubano* commemorating the Russian revolution included questions to a group of Latin American filmmakers about the influence of Soviet cinema. Practically all of them (from Fernando Birri to Jorge Sanjines) affirmed that they learned about Soviet cinema through Eisenstein's writings, and it was his conceptions and discussion of dialectical montage that impacted their own.⁴³ This emphasis on Eisenstein's writings was more than merely a result of the unavailability of films. Instead, it is a reflection of the particular conception of a filmmaker as theorist, which was shared by the 1960s generation of Latin American political artists. The praxis of theory and artistic production was, of course, a key feature of the global 1960s film culture, but perhaps nowhere as much as in Latin America, and nowhere did it have such long-lasting effects.

Most of the key film theorists in this period in Latin America were also filmmakers and, conversely, practically all of the directors who formed the core of the New Latin American Cinema

43 *Cine Cubano* 93 (1977): 44–65.

wrote about cinema. Fernando Birri, Glauber Rocha, Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, Julio García Espinosa, Jorge Sanjinés, and Tomás Gutiérrez Alea were all, like Eisenstein, filmmakers and theorists.⁴⁴ Their writings serve as the only contribution by Latin American theorists recognized as canonical in the English and French language Academy. And yet their own shared rejection of by the professionalization and academization of film theory was more than a flippant rhetorical gesture (so typical for the radical manifestos of the day). Instead, it was rooted in a commitment to greater political and social engagement and to film education in the broadest sense – including criticism and theory – as integral parts of praxis. Such criticism and theory, in turn, was itself more attuned to investigating the material conditions of film production and exhibition and of artistic and intellectual labor. These concerns contributed to these intellectuals' rejection of the English and French-language film theory as exclusively invested in textual analysis. This attitude added to the comparatively slow academic institutionalization of cinema studies (except in Brazil) divorced from specific institutions of film training as well as film preservation, all the while placing great emphasis on film pedagogy at large. Eisenstein's own writings rarely deal with questions of labor and the formalist elements of his theory has contributed to – or at least sat comfortably with – semiotic and structuralist developments in European film theory. However, the figure of Eisenstein as a filmmaker-theorist and as an educator was always central to the impact he had in Latin America. Eisenstein's extensive work at (V)GIK in the 1930s and 1940s provided an inspiration to many who were similarly engaged in political and cultural activism, conceived of as “film education” in the broadest sense,

44 Fernando Birri, *Brevísima teoría del documental social en Latinoamérica* (1962), Glauber Rocha, *Estética da fome*, 1965, e *Estética do sonho* (1971), David Neves, *Poética do Cinema Novo* (1965), Fernando Solanas e Octavio Getino, *Hacia un tercer cine* (1969), Julio García Espinosa, *Por un cine imperfecto* (1970), Jorge Sanjinés, *Teoría y práctica de un cine junto al pueblo*, (1979), and Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, *Dialéctica del espectador* (1982).

as well as the training of the future filmmakers more specifically. Thus Eisenstein's theories in Latin America – as they were being studied by the filmmakers and critics and used as models for their own artistic and intellectual production – were, in effect, participating in the very praxis of art and theory, as well as the praxis of art and politics the Soviet master himself conceptualized. In this, his legacy deviates from and exceeds its role in European and North American film culture, providing another interesting example not only of the longevity but of the unexpected ways in which Eisenstein continues to live in film cultures around the world, further demonstrating the value of the study and preservation of his legacy.

OKSANA SARKISOVA

A HISTORY OF ONE FRIENDSHIP

Vladimir Erofeev and Nikolai Lebedev,
From Associates to Rivals

You will be explained by others.
Those who want to understand your path
will follow your trail. But by their own route.
Viktor Shklovsky¹

“Alone (without you) it’s difficult to run around and get a big project rolling [*krutit’sia i zakrutit’ bol’shoe delo*]. I don’t see anyone with whom I could make a close alliance,” – thus wrote the 25 year old journalist Vladimir Erofeev to Nikolai Lebedev in Berlin in 1923.² The two friends had big plans indeed. In the coming year, they founded the Association of Revolutionary Cinematography (ARK), started a film newspaper, *Kino-Gazeta*, took an active part in debates on reforming the film industry, and engaged in discussions on the Soviet newsreel and non-fiction. Their friendship – or rather professional partnership – lasted for a decade during which they joined forces not only for launching new institutions but also for transferring ideas and practices from the German film industry to the receptive Soviet cine-soil.

The history of this friendship is patchy, and its end dramatic. By the beginning of the 1930s, both had substantial traction in Soviet filmmaking; both aspired to develop a theory for the nascent genre of Soviet documentary; both were among the pi-

1 Viktor Shklovskii, *Za 60 let* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1985), 6.

2 Archiv Muzei Kino (hereafter AMK), f. 26, op. 2, d. 106, sent from Moscow, September 30, 1923. All letters quoted in this article are from Lebedev’s papers in AMK, f. 26, op. 2. [unpaginated].

oneers of expedition filmmaking in the Soviet Union. I came across their early correspondence in the Moscow Muzei Kino archive in the second half of the 1990s, while researching the history of early Soviet *kulturfilms*. This space, holding precious historical materials was instantly charming with its open and friendly atmosphere, very different from all the other archives I have worked in. Located at that time in the building known as “Kinotsentr,” it ran extensive public programs of archival rarities and cinematic classics. The Moscow Muzei Kino was not only a magnet for cinephiles, but also an initiation space for neophytes, offering familiarity with the world film heritage in an engaging way. Its archive occupied two floors of the building and was a labyrinth-like structure of rooms, corridors, and back staircases, connecting the fourth and the fifth floors. It was in these corridors, where the researchers were sometimes seated for the lack of a proper reading hall, that the most interesting conversations were initiated, long-term friendships sparked, and, once the documents were safely stored away, countless cups of tea were shared.

Lebedev’s fond includes 37 letters from Erofeev to Lebedev written between 1921 and 1926.³ Reviewing the full corpus of letters allows us not only to fill some gaps in biographical details of the two correspondents but to expand our understanding of the 1920s cultural politics and expose the dialectics of individual agency and institutional dynamics. All of the letters were written when either the author or the addressee was abroad or on vacation all the while remaining engaged with film affairs in Moscow. In this essay, I focus on three periods from Erofeev’s and Lebedev’s entangled careers. The first part of the essay touches on their early journalistic and administrative work, the second – on the expedition films and, finally, the third act, rather than offering a resolution, exposes the moment of conflict and alienation in the course of the so-called anti-documen-

3 Three of them, sent by Vladimir Erofeev from Berlin in 1925–6, have been published in *Kinovedcheskie zapiski* 40 (1998): 248–56 with Vladimir Zabrodin’s commentary.

talist campaign, which worked out new epistemic principles of using “fact” and “document” and had a lasting impact on Soviet documentary cinema. Exploring private sources complements and complicates official narratives. We can see how careers that begin similarly pan out in very different directions and we can see power relations in the cinematic field in a new light. With letters crossing international borders, an additional, transnational perspective on the history of Soviet cinema is also strengthened. All of this productively expands “the other history” of Soviet cinema beyond the established canon of names, films, and narratives.⁴

With or Without You: Building Institutions

Nikolai Lebedev and Vladimir Erofeev were born just a year apart, in 1897 and 1898 respectively, but their early careers can be reconstructed with different degrees of precision. Born in Artemovsk, in the Donbas, Lebedev was the oldest of four siblings in the family of a railway machinist. His studies at the Petrograd Polytechnic Institute were interrupted by World War I, during which he shifted political alliances, entered the Bolshevik party, and later embarked on a career as a journalist, first working for *Izvestia* as editorial secretary and then moving to the Sovnarkom Press Department. “The Revolution needed propagandists, and I became a journalist,” Lebedev recalled in 1962.⁵ It was around this time when he first saw cinema as a promising direction for his own career:

In 1921, [...] I worked for some time in the People’s Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. I have been in two, at that time, bourgeois countries: Georgia and Latvia. In both countries I was fascinated with the degree of cinema’s popularity and the variety of film genres. [...] The films were so exciting that on Sundays

4 Naum Kleiman, “Drugaiia istoria sovetskogo kino,” *Kinovedcheskie zapiski* 50 (2001).

5 AMK, f. 26, op. 2 d. 106, n.p.

our young Embassy workers attended several shows in a row to see three or four episodes of *The Headless Horseman* or *The Big Adventure*. Here for the first time I had an idea – why not use these adventure plots to show revolutionary struggle? [...] Having returned to Moscow, I decided to write about this in our press.

Little is known about Erofeev's family and early years. He was born in Moscow and, according to Lebedev's memoirs, in 1918 they both worked for the Russian Telegraph Agency (ROSTA) and then for the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs (NKID).⁶ In 1921, Lebedev was briefly sent to Riga where he helped to run *Novyi Put'* (New Way), the Soviet Embassy's newspaper that was to shape a favorable image of the new regime. He also engaged Erofeev to write for *Novyi Put'* and another pro-Soviet periodical, *Novyi Mir*, published in Berlin in January 1921–April 1922:

[August 5, 1921? Moscow]

Following your suggestion, I'm beginning to work for N.P. [Novyi Put']. I don't have much time as I have to spend 8 hours in the information department, otherwise, according to their stupid rules, they won't feed me. [...] I hope to reach N.M. [*Novyi Mir*] going, like you, through N.P. [Novyi Put']. Write me if it's possible [...] Is there a representative of the newspaper in Moscow? Through whom shall I send the material so that it arrives faster? Do you need other contributors and what can be offered to them?

Both *Novyi Put'* and *Novyi Mir* proved to be short-lived propaganda enterprises and, after a short stay in Latvia, Lebedev returned to Moscow determined to join the still nascent Soviet film infrastructure. He started with an ideological statement in *Pravda*, arguing for increasing Bolshevik control over cinema.⁷ In a short while he became a "controller of the All-Russian Photo and Film Organization (VFKO) production department"

6 Nikolai Lebedev, "Boevye dvadtsatye gody," *Iskusstvo kino* 8 (1971): 134.

7 Nikolai Lebedev, "Vnimanie kinematografu" *Pravda*, July 14, 1922.

and started to lobby for the removal of the management and for radical structural studio reform.⁸ He was also among the founders of the Proletkino film studio, an organization created for creating, distributing, and promoting films for working class audiences.⁹

In 1923, Erofeev and Lebedev joined forces in establishing the first professional film organization, the Association of Revolutionary Cinematography (ARK), which became, in Valerii Fomin's words, "the intellectual headquarters of Soviet cinema."¹⁰ Yet already at the first meeting the Board approved the membership of some GPU (secret police) workers, which helps us understand why two young journalists with little previous experience in cinema received official support and encouragement for founding the association.¹¹ ARK (*Assotsiatsiia revoliutsionnoi kinematografii* (after 1928: ARRK, *Assotsiatsiia rabotnikov revoliutsionnoi kinematografii*) was an organisation of Soviet filmmakers and film industry professionals from 1924 to 1935, that included Lev Kuleshov, Sergei Eisenstein, Nikolai Lebedev, Vladimir Erofeev, Vsevolod Pudovkin, and others. AR(R)K organised regular film screenings and professional discussions, published *Kinozhurnal ARK* (1925–6) and *Kinofront* (1926–8).¹² Along with ARK, a new journal *Kinozhurnal ARK*

8 "Zapiska Nikolaia Lebedeva Bubnovy o sostoianii kinodela," July 9, 1922. RGASPI f. 17, op. 60, d. 259; and Natalia Riabchikova, "Proletkino" ot Goskino do Sovkino," *Kinovedcheskie zapiski* 94/95 (2010), 91–2.

9 Riabchikova, "Proletkino," 91–2.

10 *Istoriia Rossiiskoi Kinematografii (1896-1940): upravlenie, obshchestvennye organizatsii, repertuarnaia politika, kinoproizvodstvo, kinofikatsiia, kinoprokat, kinotekhnika, zarubezhnye sviazi, kadry*, eds. Irina Grashchenkova and Valerii Fomin (Moscow: Kanon+, 2016), 220.

11 *Kino-Gazeta*, February 26, 1924, quoted in *Ibid.*, 221.

12 For more on ARK/ARRK, see Oksana Sarkisova, "Cine-Proletariat or Cine-Intellectuals: Ideological Allegiances and Professional Identities in early Soviet Cinema," in *Words, Deeds and Values: the Intelligentsias in Russia and Poland during the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. Edited by Fiona Björling and Alexander Pe-

was created with an editorial board including Erofeev, Khrisanf Khersonskii, Kirill Shutko, and Sergei Eisenstein. Erofeev and Lebedev also continued publishing on film matters in various other periodicals, including *Pravda* and *Izvestia*. In September 1923, Erofeev confided to Lebedev, “it is hard to walk alone in this swamp (and I am literally alone).¹³ And in October he promised to take up new editorial work for Proletkino on one condition: “I will work there if you also join the editorial board. Otherwise ... to hell with them.”¹⁴

With the opening of the film market during the NEP years, the Soviet film industry’s relations with the leading European film industry of the 1920s, Germany, intensified. Both Lebedev and Erofeev spent time in Berlin, which was decisive for their future careers. Lebedev first visited Berlin in August–October 1923. He described his exposure to German cinema in the brochure *On German Cinema* (1924)¹⁵ and also prepared a lengthy manuscript advocating for the increased production of *kulturfilms* in the Soviet Union which, however, remained unpublished. In it he defined *kulturfilm* as “not fiction, not newsreel and not advertisement” but “any film which aims at organizing our thoughts, irrespective of the methods it uses – scientific, pedagogical, popularizing, or many others.”¹⁶ Writing on the popularity of German *kulturfilms*, Lebedev emphasized the special value of “picturesque ethno-

reswetoff-Morath (Lund: Lund University, 2005), 253–68; Natalia Riabchikova, “ARRK and the Soviet Transition to Sound,” *Sound, Speech, Music in Soviet and Post-Soviet Cinema*, eds. Lilya Kaganovsky and Masha Salazkina (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), 81–99.

13 AMK, f. 26 op. 2 d. 106, Letter from September 30, 1923.

14 AMK, f. 26 op. 2 d. 106, Letter from October 21, 1923.

15 Nikolai Lebedev, *Po germanskoi kinematografii* (Moscow, 1924). Marina Karaseva, “Ot aziatskikh proizvodstvennykh agitok k nauchno-populiarnoi i uchebnoi fil’m!,” *Kinovedcheskie zapiski* 58 (2002).

16 AMK, f. 26, op. 2, d. 3; Nikolai Lebedev, “Tipy kul’turfil’m,” *Kino-Front* 1 (1927): 4 and *Kino-Front* 2 (1927): 5–7.

graphic films, showing the inhabitants of European cities an unknown, exotic everyday life.”¹⁷

During Lebedev’s stay abroad, Erofeev regularly updated his associate on the situation of film affairs in Moscow, where he was actively engaged with *Kino-Gazeta* and the ARK and closely followed the Goskino reform. In April–June 1925, Erofeev makes first visit to Berlin during which he is mainly occupied with purchasing technical equipment, ordering film literature for ARK, visiting the Neubabelsberg and other studios, and hoping to “also give birth to some light book (if I find the time).”¹⁸ His correspondence also sheds some light on the financial situation of ARK and its members:

[May 8, 1925, Berlin]

By the way, I have left the publishing house in good condition. I absolutely don’t understand why there is no money (not even for honorariums!). This puzzles me. Regarding the sum that I have taken there should be no commotion [*shum podniali naprasno*] [...] I have taken only an advance on my salary and 500 rubles for extra expenses. [...] Actually, I have taken very little, since even the 600 rubles that I have saved in the past years (I was planning to spend it on clothes, etc.) I have to spend for the trip. [...] Altogether I will have enough money just for representative expenses and for some film literature and postcards (which I am buying quite cheap, for less than 2 kopeks per piece for a regular size and $\frac{3}{4}$ kopeks for a small one). I have already written to [Kirill] Shutko to send 600 rubles (300 for literature and 300 for the postcards). If the money is not sent – I am not going to buy anything and we will even lose the advance. If the money is sent – in a month we’ll return it and will even gain on the postcards.

Shortly after Erofeev’s return, Lebedev again went abroad, this time to try his hand at filmmaking. Lebedev arrived in Berlin on July 26, 1925 and then traveled around Germany and

17 AMK, f. 26, op. 2, d. 3. See also his later account of the visit in Lebedev, “Berlin, 1923 god,” *Iskusstvo kino*, 10 (1973): 125–40.

18 Letter from May 6, 1925.

Italy in the guise of a tourist to make a travelogue, *Across Europe* (1926), which was commissioned by Kul'tkino.¹⁹ He was helped by the Torgpredstvo's head Maria Andreeva who not only assigned one of her employees, Alexander Lagorio, to be Lebedev's cameraman and translator but also recommended an assistant, Vladimir Al'per, a young photographer who escaped from the Soviet Union and entered the German Communist Party passing himself for Swedish communist named Nielsen. Under this name, he eventually returned to the Soviet Union and made a stellar career as a cameraman working with Eisenstein and Alexandrov until his life was destroyed during the Great Terror. In Italy, Lebedev also commissioned local cameramen. The episodes were shot swiftly to avoid questions from the police and the fascist vigilantes who were increasingly disturbed by the Soviet man with a movie camera.²⁰

The disguised nature of filming, the pressing schedule, and a limited budget resulted in a patchy and indeed "amateur" type of film. Various scandals during filming, along with a conflict with Dziga Vertov over the footage for the film, resulted in a less than favorable reception of Lebedev's debut. While Lebedev was traveling in Europe, Erofeev's letters outline new troubles with ARK and urge him to return to Moscow. Confiding in his correspondent, Erofeev described the managers as knuckleheads [*golovotiapy*] and squabblers and writes about challenges that ARK faces:

[October 7, 1925, Moscow]

ARK is in a deep financial crisis – there is not a kopek. The subsidy question was moving slowly. Recently the Narkompros commission supported it. However, there are also unexpected obstacles. As a result of your negotiations, ARK is going to enter ODSK²¹ as a section. And as a consequence it loses the right

19 Nikolai Lebedev, "Po Evrope" (publication by Marina Karaseva), *Kinograf* 9 (2000): 133–49.

20 "Nikolai Lebedev" *Kinograf* 9 (2000), 152–3.

21 ODSK – Obshchestvo druzei sovetskogo kino (Society of the Friends of Soviet Cinema), a network of local cells established in 1925

to subsidies. According to the charters and Kurs's interpretation there is no ARK, there is ODSK. So this possibility will probably fade as well. But actually ODSK is basically nonexistent. This shitty [*ublyudochnaia*] organization also has no money (they are waiting for our subsidies) [but it] will eat up ARK and the common denominator will be equal to 0.

[...] There are so many things which are hard to describe but which all point to the fact that our plans are on the verge of total destruction.²²

Frustrated by the ongoing institutional disorders, Erofeev undertakes a new job and in November 1925 moves to Berlin where he stays until April 1926. There he, like Lebedev, becomes increasingly interested in *kulturfilm*, which he promotes as the "correct" mix of education and entertainment.²³ Jokingly addressing Lebedev as "Colin Ross," – a token of shared ironic appreciation of the German traveler as the role model for expedition cinema – he repeatedly inquires about the situation with the ARK journal and other film affairs.

The time Erofeev spent in Berlin was the zenith of the Weimar "roaring twenties." Yet despite the burgeoning cultural life, little of it was reflected in his letters: we don't learn much about Erofeev's everyday activities, the life at Torpredstvo, nor of his circle of friends. Only in passing does he mention his feelings of confusion and intimidation upon arrival in bustling Berlin. His accounts contain no references to the activities of the film sector or the film life of Berlin more generally. Even

with the task of enhancing the efficiency of cinema's agitation and propaganda impact on the audience; its first chairman was Feliks Dzerzhinskii, the head of Soviet secret police.

22 Original emphasis.

23 Vladimir Erofeev, "Ob ekspeditsiakh voobshche i v chastnosti," *Sovetskii ekran* 25 (1926): 8–9; Erofeev, *Kinoindustriia Germanii* (Moscow, 1926); Erofeev, "Chemu uchit nas Germaniia," *Sovetskii ekran* 23 (1925): n.p. On the reception of German film culture and industry in Soviet Russia, see Aleksandr Deriabin, "'Tam ia uvidel neobychainye veshchi.' Sovetskie kinomatografisty o svoikh poezd-kakh v Germaniiu," *Kinovedcheskie zapiski* 58 (2002): 239–85.

the turbulent story of the censoring of *Battleship Potemkin* and its triumphant screening on April 29, 1926 does not make it into Erofeev's surviving letters to Lebedev. Of course it is not impossible that some letters went missing or got destroyed and perhaps Erofeev was cautious about his personal life which, knowing his experience with the state organs, can be expected, but what remains is devoted first and foremost to the Moscow "business."²⁴ Eisenstein and Tisse's visit is only referenced in a postscript that describes Eisenstein as having "the smartest and most talented head."²⁵

Yet glimpses of the local atmosphere and the correspondents' relationship can be caught through an incident with the negatives of Lebedev's film, which triggered a conflict between Lagorio and Lebedev over the payment for and shipment of the filmed material that he expected, with increasing impatience, to receive from Germany:

[December 27, 1925, Berlin]

You don't restrain yourself at all and behave completely wildly [*doshel do kakogo-to beshenstva*]. You mention the secret police every other word, but the matter, of course, has nothing to do with this organization. I am convinced that Lagorio would have never thought that you could say such things. Perhaps Lagorio is to blame, but why do you threaten Al'per as if he were a criminal – he's doing a lot for you just out of friendly feelings and not because he is at your service.

Given the permanent intervention of GPU in Torgpredstvo's activities, Lebedev's threats were probably not taken too lightly, although the situation was successfully resolved and the film was finally released and accepted by the film studio in 1926.²⁶

24 The "purge" of the first editorial board of the *Kinozhurnal ARK* and its replacement by the loyal functionaries under the leadership of Konstantin Yukov, as well as renaming the journal to *Kinofront* demonstrates that the concerns had real grounds; see Vladimir Zabrodin, "Tri pis'ma iz Berlina," 256.

25 Zabrodin, "Tri pis'ma iz Berlina," 256.

26 Rashit Yangirov, "Ja Charlyu, ty Charlish', on Charlit, my Char-

In mid-1926, Erofeev left Berlin without much regret but with new ideas and some hesitation as to how to continue his career in film. Increasingly disappointed with the dynamics in ARK and the journal, he distances himself from these organizations and at the same time becomes increasingly attracted to the production side despite his worries about a lack of formal training. From Moscow, he continues to write to Lebedev, and these letters help us understand the transition that both eventually made towards film production.

On the Road Again: New Career Prospects

Lebedev spent the summer of 1926 in Izyum, a town in the Kharkov area not far from his birthplace. There, he received the news of Erofeev's new job and new plans:

[August 9, 1926, Moscow]

Already for three days I am in GIZ [state publishing company] in "reserve." In the coming days I am promised some work, but otherwise no one is interested in me and in the fact that I'm getting paid without doing anything. In a word, "everything is as usual" [*vse "v poriadke veshei"*].

[...] There is a project we need to start. I am talking about a Film Almanac. *Kino-front* has already died ideologically, and financially it is also collapsing (Yukov is still struggling with issue 5 and does not know how to make it). We have to take over the initiative in this. Three months ago Pertsov offered me (via Kurs) to publish such almanacs, but Uspenskii refused, and then Kurs disappeared. Now the idea of an almanac is in the air and I am afraid that someone will use it without us. At the same time, without a serious publication it will be difficult to work, especially in the field of *kulturfilm*. I have already spoken about it with K.I. [Shutko] and he supports the idea (under his, yours, and my editorship). [...] In my opinion we have to give little place to "the public" and other meaningless topics [*nevesomym nyne vesham*], but to orient ourselves on

lim...' O zabytom kinematograficheskom nasledii Viktora Shklovkogo," *Kinovedcheskie zapiski* 61 (2000): 116–24.

Glavnauka, and wherever possible organize a Society of Film Technique [kino-tekhnikeskoe obshchestvo]. More space shall be given to *kulturfilm* and to documentary film altogether (K.I. says that this concept is already used in France), and also to the technological and organizational issues of production (in the narrow sense, without “high politics”). [...] By the way, lately I am increasingly leaning towards working in the field of *kulturfilm* and documentary cinema in general. The possibilities there are inexhaustible.

Erofeev’s letters sent to Izyum expose both his uncertainty about the future but at the same time demonstrate that he still sees Lebedev as a partner for future projects: “I am waiting for you to start working on the almanacs. There are so few people with whom I would like to talk.”²⁷ Within a month, interest in *kulturfilm* wins over and Erofeev changes his workplace for Sovkino, where he makes efforts to recover Lebedev’s first film from oblivion:

[September 12, 1926 Moscow]

I have been working for ten days at Sovkino. Officially I am Head of the Press Bureau (oh, this press!), but in fact [I work] primarily on *kulturfilm*. I am immensely interested in *kulturfilm* and it will be a pity if I can’t do anything “for objective reasons.” I would like to edit myself, but I am not sure if I will have a chance and time for it. I have unearthed your film. We watched it in the Art Department [*Khudsovet*] and found it quite acceptable [*vpolne godnoi*]. The photography is at times bad, there’s little material from workers’ everyday life but altogether it’s interesting. The intertitles are well done, and so is the editing (though I don’t understand what took you so long?) In a day, on my insistence, the film will be shown to the Sovkino Board. I don’t know if they would like it (I might be biased since I like newsreels). Cherkasov suggested cutting the film in two parts (to show “before the program”). I will protest.

[September 19, 1926 Moscow]

Unfortunately, *kulturfilm* and its development interest me very

27 Letter from September 19, 1926 from Moscow to Izyum.

much, and this can lead to trouble. For example, I will certainly clash with Trainin, who is confusing and disrupting the work, but does not want to lose control over the whole apparatus. As if he had little to do at the “fiction film” factories. [...] Your film was watched by the Board. No changes required. Now they’ll print the copies and send it to distribution. The time is just right as there’s strong film hunger. As for the possibilities to work, there is currently only reediting of the old films. The work is very interesting and useful but not well-paid. In the future I plan to include several expeditions (together with the Academy of Sciences and other organizations). Whether that will happen – I don’t know. I would like to do the reediting and expedition travels myself, but as soon as you leave the unpleasant administrative work – you lose the possibility to do things that most interest you (experience with the publishing house). So for some time I have to “bear the cross.”

However, the temptation to test himself in film practice was stronger than all his worries, and in 1927 Erofeev teamed up with an experienced editor, Vera Popova, to make the compilation film, *Beyond the Arctic Circle* (1927) using Fyodor Bremer’s 1913 footage originally from the Khanzhonkov studio. Erofeev finally had a hands-on opportunity to demonstrate that expedition films could be a sustainable and ideologically fit genre in the Soviet Union.²⁸ Erofeev and Popova produced a holistic image of the North, which preserved the editing pace of the early travelogues but invested the landscapes with new meanings.²⁹

The first compilation film experiment was followed by a film made on location: *The Roof of the World* (1928). This was the first Soviet film crew that had crossed a border area close to Afghanistan, India, and China where the underlying tension between political allegiance and cultural plurality remained

28 Erofeev, “Ob ekspeditsiakh voobshche i v chastnosti,” *Sovetskii ekran* 25 (1926): 8–9.

29 For more on Erofeev’s and Lebedev’s expedition films see Oksana Sarkisova, *Screening Soviet Nationalities: Kulturfilms from the Far North to Central Asia* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2017).

tangible.³⁰ The film combined the motif of spatial exploration with attentive observation of cultural practices and used cartographic authority to secure territorial rights, orientate the audience, and emphasize the documentary status of the footage. Erofeev's later expedition films also used the observational mode and were made in areas of heightened Soviet geopolitical interest: in Afghanistan (*The Heart of Asia*, 1929), in Germany torn by economic crisis and increasing social tensions (*Towards a Safe Haven*, 1930), again in the remote parts of Central Asia (*Far in Asia*, 1933), and in Iran (*Country of Lion and the Sun*, 1935). Despite mounting professional frustrations topped by the increasing rigidity of film censorship, he continued to make films in the second half of the 1930s both as director and editor, preparing several newsreels on the Spanish Civil War, making a film on the Moscow-Volga Canal (*The Way is Open*, 1937), and chronicling the Stalinist parade on the Red Square (*Stalin's Breed*, 1937).

Lebedev also continued making expedition *kulturfilms*, and the original imprint of *Across Europe's* "tourist gaze" was later applied to several other of his films. The travelogue *Travel in the North* (1930), for example, also reproduced the visitor's view on the "vast, rich, and empty land" and finished with the appeal to "transform the backward North to the socialist forest Donbas [*lesnoi Donbass*]!"³¹ Another traveling destination for Lebedev was the Caucasus, where he made *Oil* (1928, with Alexander Litvinov), *Gates of Caucasus*, and *Land of Nakhcho* (both 1929).

Land of the Nakhcho attempted to overcome the tourist optics by speaking to viewers in the first person through the voice of a local "guide" who is introduced as a "real Chechen" and who promises the viewers a ride across the "authentic" Chechnya. Lebedev combined an ethnographic perspective with primordial rhetoric and elements of constructivist visual aesthet-

30 Peter Hopkirk, *The Great Game: The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia* (New York: Kodansha International, 1992).

31 Gosfil'mofond, f. 6 op. 1, d. 53, unpaginated.

ics along with the staple imagery of Soviet achievements. *Gate of the Caucasus* again returned to the touristic perspective.³² Changing the film's point of view from that of a local to that of a tourist, Lebedev promotes and ironizes on the evolving tourist infrastructure, mocks and reproduces the tourist gaze appropriating the mountainous landscape as an attractive tourist site. Finding little satisfaction in expeditions and the lukewarm reception of his films, Lebedev quit filmmaking; in 1930–3 he studied in the Institute of Red Professors, and already in 1934 was appointed the director of the State Film Institute (GIK). Despite the parallel evolution of film interests, the filmmaking credo of Erofeev and Lebedev increasingly diverged, albeit both actively professed their Bolshevik convictions and saw the film as a powerful tool for shaping a particular worldview. Their different credos came to the fore in the increasingly aggressive atmosphere of public campaigns of the 1930s, received a political framing.

A Bitter End: The Anti-Documentarist Campaign and Professional as Political

Expedition filmmaking sharpened Erofeev's and Lebedev's views on nonfiction cinema, and those views proved to be increasingly divergent. Their positions openly clashed during the so-called "anti-documentarist" campaign, which was an extension of the anti-formalist campaign and focused primarily on Erofeev, Dziga Vertov, and Esfir' Shub.³³ Discussing the use of "facts" in cinema, Sergei Tretiakov, *LEF* editor and an active participant in the debate on photography and film, argued for a utilitarian approach to footage, focusing on its emotional potential:

32 Nikolai Lebedev, "Po tropam Kavkaza," *Sovetskii ekran* 52 (1928), 12.

33 Graham Roberts, *Forward, Soviet! History and Non-fiction Film in the USSR*. (London: I.B.Tauris, 1999), 92–107.

agitational film [...] appeals not so much to the intellect as to the emotional side of human personality, it creates peaks and slumps of excitement, it organizes our emotions around one pole and condenses antipathy around the other. An agitation film targets us [*pritselivaet*], as if with a rifle, producing words, feelings, and deeds, so, that we will then use those words and deeds to shoot in an effective class-conscious direction. Cinema that stimulates us to think and feel [*kino kak intellektualizator i kino kak emotsionalizator*] – these are the two sides with which cinema serves the active construction of our new reality.³⁴

A sensitive filmmaker, Eisenstein's responded to the unfolding debate on the relationship of fiction and nonfiction by using his experience with the revolutionary jubilee film, *October* (1928). His polemical article argued for moving "beyond fiction and nonfiction" towards a new, hybrid, "beyond fiction" [*vneigrovaia*] genre.³⁵ At the same time, Eisenstein insisted that his statement on the material "should be understood in a formally cinematic way, and not as historical or factual [material]," however, these fine distinctions were lost on the campaigners victimizing the so-called "fetishizers" of facts.

In preparation for the 1931 ARRK conference, Erofeev wrote "Technological Innovation of Documentary Cinema," where he insisted on distinguishing between documentary cinema, fiction, and newsreel. At the same time, Erofeev asserted that the concept of documentary does not imply an "objective" film – since "every frame which records a separate fact is also tendentious, since already in the choice of this (and not another) fact for recording, and in the perspective of the camera, there is

34 Tretiakov, "Chem zhivo kino. Nashe kino," *Novyi LEF* 5 (1928): 23–8, quoted from Sergei Tretiakov, *Kinematograficheskoe nasledie: Stat'i, ocherki, stenogrammy vystuplenii, doklady, stsensarii*. (St. Petersburg, 2010), 111.

35 Sergei Eisenstein, "Nash Oktiabr'. Po tu storony igrovoi i neigrovoi," Eisenstein, *Izbrannye proizvedenia*, (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1968), vol. 5: 33. See also Vladimir Zabrodin, "Po tu storony, ili 70 let spustia. Neizvestnaia stat'ia S. M. Eisenshteina" *Kinovedcheskie zapiski* 44 (1999).

an attitude of the cameraman (and director-organizer) towards this fact.”³⁶ He opposed the use of re-enactment, arguing that “technical innovation in film production [...] allowed us to replace the re-enactment of life events, as performed in fiction film [...] with the recording of authentic reality [*podlinnoi deistvitel’nosti*].”³⁷

Erofeev further proposed to enhance the specificity of documentary cinema by creating a proper institutional infrastructure for its production. Yet the concept of “documentary cinema” was not unanimously supported. To contain the cinematic interpretation of reality, Soviet ideologues advanced the concept of “agitational cinema,” which was used in the early 1930s as a conceptual alternative to the elusive notion of *kulturfilm* as well as to the “technocratic” notion of documentary. The critics lumped Erofeev’s arguments with Dziga Vertov’s filming method and the proponents of so-called “factography,” and aggressively attacked them all for the so-called “fetishization of facts.” For example, in his article “Documentarists in Sound Cinema,” Al. Borisov discussed the work of Vertov, Erofeev, and Posel’skii, arguing that

... the fetishization of facts inevitably leads to the situation when the artist, despite all his striving to show the reality, will be limited by the events which are easy to record, while excluding more complex and deep processes from his [sic] field of view. [...]

If every fact is meaningful because it is a fact – here the dogma of documentarism is triumphant and does not allow the author to separate meaningful [events] and to grasp the process actively and deeply. [...] ...the documentarist method, fetishizing facts for the sake of facts, denying the artful approach to reality, contradicts the artists’ intentions to create things that profoundly uncover reality and agitate for socialism.³⁸

36 AMK f. 26, op. 2, d. 73, ll. 136–7.

37 AMK f. 26, op. 2, d. 73, l. 134; Vladimir Erofeev, “Tekhnicheskoe novatorstvo dokumental’noi fil’mi,” *Proletarskoe kino* 2–3 (1931): 4–13.

38 Al Borisov, “Dokumentalisty v zvukovom kino,” *Proletarskoe kino* 5 (1931): 32–5.

In this increasingly emotional polemic, Lebedev carefully sought to distance himself from the “fetishizers’ camp”:

We are not fetishists of fact, not admirers of just any fact [taken] without its role and meaning from the perspective of our proletarian, party viewpoint. For us a fact alone holds no interest, as long as it is isolated, not connected to other facts. We do not need a singular [fact] as such, only in its relationship to the general – to the class struggle and socialist construction, as reflecting the victory and difficulty of the struggle of the working class, as a drop of water which reflects the sun. [...] The selection of newsreel facts from real life shall be done from this angle.³⁹

It might appear surprising that Lebedev emerged as one of the loudest voices in this cinematographic *kulturkampf*. He returned to the aggressive rhetoric of his early years of journalism, using the pages of *Proletarian Cinema* for political indictments that bore no trace of his earlier collegial relationships:

Today there is no documentarism as an art movement – it decomposed from ideological decay [*razlozhiilos’ zazhivo ot ideinogo zagnivania*]. It is a corpse. But this corpse is still not thrown away into the garbage dump of history. And the reader can still sense its “flavor” on the earlier pages, in the articles by Vertov and Erofeev. There is no one to discuss the former “documentarism” with. But it needs however to be disavowed.⁴⁰

But the attack in this case was a form of self-defense, as the same issue also contains Erofeev’s article “Spineless Journalism,” which not only blamed Lebedev for holding an “openly bourgeois position,” but contained even more compromising political accusations:

Nikolai Lebedev, former journalist and filmmaker, today features himself as the “theoretician of newsreel.” [...] As a result

39 Nikolai Lebedev, “Dva ‘Dokumenta’ (po povodu statei Vertova i Erofeeva)” *Proletarskoe kino* 5 (1932): 23.

40 Lebedev, “Dva ‘Dokumenta’,” 24.

of inattention of the film workers to theory, instead of real theory which “gives to the practitioners the orientation force, clarity of perspective, and confidence in their work,” there appear wrong theories, disorganizing the industry workers. [...]

In order to understand the roots of Lebedev’s “theory” we have to follow this “theoretician” over the course of the last six years. N. Lebedev is the author of the only substantial book about cinema published after the revolution: *Cinema. Its Short History, Its Possibilities and Its Development in the Soviet State* (Moscow: Krasnaia Nov’, 1924). This book is fully built on the Trotskyist concept of cinema.⁴¹

With the beginning of the political purges, an accusation of an affiliation with Trotsky was heavy artillery. At the same time the damning political accusations framed a profoundly different understanding of the nature of fact and realism in cinema. In Lebedev’s opinion, facts were “flexible” entities that had to be “adjusted” depending on the select audience:

It is thus obvious that periodicals for export shall not only be edited but even filmed in a different way compared to the editions that are produced for distribution inside the USSR. [...] If we want to achieve the maximum impact of our newsreels abroad, we have to differentiate our work, [...] editing newsreel differently for general commercial distribution with bourgeois and petty-bourgeois viewers’ worldview in mind, differently – for a friendly audience of communist and sympathizing working masses, and differently – for the peoples of colonial countries. [...] Finally yet another type of audience shall be considered when working on the newsreels – the audience of tomorrow, those who will complete the construction of socialism and will fight the final struggle with the bourgeoisie.⁴²

In the course of the raging anti-documentarist campaign, official Soviet film ideologists “perfected” the original idea by

41 Vladimir Erofeev, “Beskhrebetnaia publitsistika,” *Proletarskoe kino* 5 (1932): 19.

42 Nikolai Lebedev, “Za proletarskuyu kinopublitsistiku,” *Proletarskoe kino* 12 (1931): 27.

promoting a blend which seamlessly merged reenactment and “nonfiction” footage becoming thus the first platform for experimenting with “alternative facts.”

Afterlife: Ephemera, Archives and the Power of Written Narratives

Erofeev’s untimely death in 1940, at the age of 42, ended a downward spiral triggered by aggressive criticism of his works and his increasing dissatisfaction with the state of documentary production in the second half of the 1930s. Nikolai Lebedev’s successful career as a film historian made his account of the early Soviet film history an authoritative Soviet narrative.⁴³ Even though Eisenstein once ironically referred to him as a “dusty, useless palm tree in a railway restaurant,”⁴⁴ his influence was lasting and his 75th jubilee was celebrated with laudatory articles in film journals.⁴⁵ Erofeev, in turn, apart from one mention of his name in a group of ARK founders, was conspicuously missing from Lebedev’s canonic *Overview of Soviet Film History: Silent Cinema*, first published in 1947 and later reedited and expanded. He was also missing from other film historical accounts where the position of the documentary film pioneers was secured for Dziga Vertov and Esfir’ Shub. In an article from 1971, Lebedev rehabilitated the memory of Erofeev in a paragraph, at once commemorating their early cooperation and claiming institutional and intellectual superiority over his former associate:

Erofeev who, like myself, was not satisfied by his profession as a “universal journalist,” a “reporter on general matters,” gladly

43 Nikolai Lebedev, *Ocherk istorii kino SSSR. Nemoe kino*, vol. 1 (Moscow, 1947).

44 Hans-Joachim Schlegel, “Nemetskie impul’sy dlia sovetskikh kul’turfil’mov 20kh godov,” *Kinovedcheskie zapiski* 58 (2002).

45 Armen Medvedev, “Uchenyi, kommunist, pervoprokhodchik,” *Iskusstvo kino* 10 (1972): 39. V. Zhdan, “N. A. Lebedev,” *Iskusstvo kino* 11 (1978): 145–9.

accepted my invitation: it gave him the possibility to specialize in a new and interesting field of culture. Slow and phlegmatic, with a habitual ironic smile on his face, he, however, was exceptionally hardworking, persistent, and disciplined. He quickly understood the matter and from the first days became the soul of a small collective at the Press Bureau. I was busy primarily with shaping the journal, a lot of time was taken by the scriptwriting section, the Art Council, and the Board. Thus the Press Bureau was basically managed by Erofeev alone, who, however, completed the difficult task of setting it up in the shortest time.⁴⁶

Lebedev's account demonstrates the power of an authoritative narrative writer with a monopoly over the image of the past. On the other hand, his narrative authority was not unlimited since, already in the 1960s, the schematic postformalist binary of "traditionalists" versus "innovators" à la Lebedev, which was taught to film history students, was perceived as inadequate for grasping the Soviet dynamics, as Naum Kleiman pointed out in conversation with Bernard Eisenschitz.⁴⁷ Yet until today, the legacy of Erofeev, one of the most creative early theoreticians of documentary, remains overlooked.⁴⁸

Lebedev's personal archives give unique insight into the complexity of life trajectories of those Shklovskii called the "voluntary captives of a time of genius."⁴⁹ These private records open up new angles in the multifaceted fabric of cinema in the 1920s. Preserving and making these materials available, Muzei Kino under Naum Kleiman functioned as a laboratory that allowed the expansion and revision of established narratives and experimenting with new ways of narrating the past.

46 Nikolai Lebedev, "Boevye dvadtsatye gody," *Iskusstvo kino* 8 (1971): 134–5.

47 Naum Kleiman, "Drugaiia istoria sovetskogo kino" *Kinovedcheskie zapiski* 50 (2001).

48 The first step towards revisiting Erofeev's cinematographic and journalistic heritage was undertaken by Alexander Deriabin in Aleksandr Deriabin (ed.), *Vladimir Alekseevich Erofeev (1898–1940). Materialy k 100-letiiu so dnia rozhdeniia* (Moscow, 1998).

49 Shklovskii, *Za 60 let*, 8.

For this, personal correspondence is an important “ephemeral” material that is no less important than “official” documents – something that Kleiman emphasized and cultivated from the moment of the museum’s creation.⁵⁰

Generational transmission was a cornerstone idea of Muzei Kino, envisioned as an institution for knowledge exchange, as a space where film scholars, students, and the broad public meet and interact, sharing knowledge, enthusiasm, and creative energy. From the beginning, it was not limited to just one physical location – it is an ironical but not all that random coincidence that Muzei Kino’s first outreach programs were organized in Riga and Tbilisi, where, at twenty-four years old, Lebedev discovered for himself the power of cinema. But instead of an overdose of “headless horsemen” or contemporary blockbusters, Muzei Kino’s programs served as a quality compass for making film viewing a process of aesthetic and intellectual discovery. This essay is but a small token of gratitude to Naum Kleiman and his colleagues, especially Gennady Kurbatov, Vladimir Zabrodin, Marina Karaseva, Elena Dolgopiat and Anna Bulgakova, for their dedicated work and for showing that plunging into the history of cinema can be an exciting, rewarding, and an open-ended endeavor.

50 Naum Kleiman, “Ideal’nyi muzei kino (besedu vedut N. Dymshitz and A. Troshin,” *Kinovedcheskie zapiski* 84 (2007), 80–110.

ANTONIO SOMAINI

BILDERFAHRZEUGE

On Flying Carpets and Other Image Vehicles

“Due not only to its mobility, but also its technique, which fitted the multiple reproduction of its image, the Flemish tapestry is the first, albeit colossal, vehicle for mobile image [*Bilderfahrzeug*], which, freed from the wall, served as a forerunner of the printed illustrated page (in other words, the copper engraving and the woodcut) that for the first time made the exchange of expressive values between North and South into a vital part of the process of circulation that shaped the formation of European style.”¹ This is how Aby Warburg, in his 1929 “Introduction” to the Mnemosyne Atlas, underlines the importance of studying the concrete, material supports that, acting as “image vehicles” or “image carriers” (Warburg uses both *Bilderfahrzeug* and *Bildträger*), made possible the circulation of the motifs, forms, and “formulae of pathos” [*Pathosformeln*] that are visualized in the different plates of his Atlas. A few years before Walter Benjamin’s famous artwork essay, Warburg highlights the cultural implications of the different techniques of image reproduction and image circulation, and sees in the process of montage, in the editing together of a number of fragments extracted from the history of forms, a crucial epistemological and historiographic tool. By arranging and rearranging

1 Aby Warburg, “Mnemosyne Einleitung” (1929), *Werke in einem Band*, auf der Grundlage der Manuskripte und Handexemplare herausgegeben und kommentiert von Martin Treml, Sigrid Weigel und Perdita Ladwig. Unter Mitarbeit von Suzanne Hetzer, Herbert Kopp-Oberstebrink und Christina Oberstebrink (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2010), 636. English translation by Matthew Rampley with the title “The Absorption of the Expressive Values of the Past,” *Art in Translation*, 1:2 (2009): 282.

within the black, rectangular space of the Atlas plates, dozens of photographic reproductions – which are themselves almost a paradigmatic example of *Bilderfahrzeuge* – Warburg studied the “exchange of expressive values” that centuries earlier was made possible by tapestries that behaved almost like flying carpets, moving freely between the North and the South of Europe.

A different kind of flying carpet was mentioned by Naum Kleiman on the occasion of my first visit to the Eisenstein Cabinet in Moscow. In the midst of a conversation that lasted for hours and that left me completely overwhelmed – the presence of Eisenstein’s books and belongings all around us was mesmerizing, and Naum’s attitude so warm and welcoming that I felt that I had known him for years – he told me, smiling: “Eisenstein has been my flying carpet.” The phrase left me slightly puzzled, and I asked him what he meant. His answer was that Eisenstein had been his flying carpet because it was the work that he did on his oeuvre that allowed him to travel outside the Soviet Union in years when leaving the country was extremely difficult: for example, in 1968, on the occasion of the screening of the edited photograms of *Bezhin Meadow* at the festival of Oberhausen, the first international presentation of a film that everyone thought to be lost forever. 1968 was also the year of the Prague Spring, a period of hope soon to be followed by utter despair, when the Soviet Union and other members of the Warsaw Pact invaded Czechoslovakia, bringing the experiment of political liberalization to a sudden end.

Many years later, when Joan Neuberger and I were secretly preparing this volume in his honor (we wanted it to be a surprise), I asked Naum again about the meaning of that reference to the flying carpet. This time what I heard was a different, more intimate story, which led back to his childhood and to the strong impressions made upon him by the very first film he saw when he was only four years old. The film was *The Thief of Bagdad*, directed in 1924 by Raoul Walsh. In it, a crystal ball, a cloak of invisibility, a magic apple, a magic powder, and a flying carpet act as supernatural vehicles propelling a plot that ends with the marriage between the Princess and Ahmed, the Thief of Bagh-

dad, interpreted by Douglas Fairbanks. Several years later, after he and his family had been exiled to Siberia, the adolescent Naum kept thinking about that flying carpet, hoping that another one could suddenly materialize in order to bring him and his family back home, to Moldavia.

After Stalin's death, when he finally obtained the permission to move to Moscow, Naum started studying cinema at VGIK, which was then the All-Union State Institute of Cinematography. The idea of the flying carpet was still present in his mind, but at this stage it referred to cinema's role, since its early years, as a means of transportation, as a way of leading the spectators through journeys across space and time, as it happened in the *vues* of the Lumière Brothers, in the films of Méliès, in the first issues of the Pathé Journal, and in Vertov's radical reinterpretation of the idea of "cine-chronicle." While a student at VGIK, Naum made an oral presentation on Vertov, focusing on Vertov's understanding of the *Kino-Glaz* as a set of techniques and operations capable of fragmenting and reorganizing the coordinates of time and space, in order to produce new temporal sequences and new geographies, as we read in "Kinoks. A Revolution" (1923), in a section in which the *Kino-Glaz* starts speaking and addresses the reader: "I am kino-eye. I am a builder. I have placed you, whom I've created today, in an extraordinary room which did not exist until just now, when I also created it. In this room there are twelve walls shot by me in various parts of the world. In bringing together shots of walls and details, I've managed to arrange them in an order that is pleasing and to construct with intervals, correctly, a film-phrase which is the room."² It was 1957, Naum was twenty years old, and Dziga Vertov was his favorite film director.

A year later, the second part of *Ivan the Terrible*, banned by Stalin in 1946, was screened for the very first time. Naum saw

2 Dziga Vertov, "Kinoks: A Revolution," *Kino-Eye. The Writings of Dziga Vertov*, ed. and with an introduction by Annette Michelson, trans. Kevin O'Brien (Berkeley – Los Angeles – London: University of California Press, 1984): 17.

it, and the trajectory of his life took a sharp turn. Eisenstein became the main focus of his intense activities as a film historian, and he started to bring back to light, edit, and publish entire regions of Eisenstein's oeuvre – texts, films, film projects, drawings – that were previously unknown or only partially known. Connecting the various fragments and threads that could be found in the books and the objects preserved in Pera Atasheva's Smolenskaya apartment, in the archives of the Central State Archive of Literature and Art of the USSR (TsGALI, later renamed RGALI) and in those of Gosfilmofond, Naum went on to publish entire new editions of Eisenstein's main book projects (*Montazh*, *Neravnodushnaia priroda*, *Metod*) as well as a whole series of shorter texts in different issues of the journal *Kinovedcheskie zapiski*. He contributed also to the restoration of existing films and to the rediscovery of fragments of films that were considered to be completely lost, as in the case of *Bezhin Meadow*. Through all these activities, Naum Kleiman played a crucial role in establishing Eisenstein's oeuvre as we know it today, and in making it accessible for a wide, international community of scholars, promoting translations and providing generous support and a unique insight.

I had the honor of collaborating with Naum on one of these projects of recovering, editing, and interpreting a section of Eisenstein's oeuvre that, even though not completely unknown, had been mostly ignored. It was in 2010, when Naum introduced me for the first time to the vast, heterogeneous and fragmentary body of texts and notes that Eisenstein wrote for one of his most fascinating projects: the project of writing a “general history of cinema” on which he worked during the last two years of his life, between 1946 and 1948. Here again, one could find traces of the idea of the flying carpet and its Oriental magic, this time in the writings of Eisenstein himself. Working on a “general history” that tried to reconstruct a multiple, intricate genealogy of cinema's “forerunners” that ran “from Dionysus to television,”³ from death masks to “cine-chronicles,” from

3 Sergei M. Eisenstein, “Dynamic Mummification. Notes for a Ge-

stained-glass windows in Gothic cathedrals to stereoscopic cinema, from the spatial experience of the fetus in the mother's womb to a post-cinematic *Raumkunst*, Eisenstein wrote, in a diary note dated June 25, 1947, that he felt he had become "a historian of the *One Thousand and One Nights* of the possibilities of cinema."⁴ A historian, we could add, who was not afraid to freely roam across different epochs and different artistic and religious traditions, in order to understand how cinema had come to be what it was, and what it could eventually become in the future.

Working with Naum on the English edition of these notes was absolutely exciting, and our roles were at the same time closely connected and clearly differentiated. Naum was the one who had found these materials in the archives, had deciphered and transcribed them, and had published some of them in different issues of *Kinovedcheskie zapiski*. The transcription of Eisenstein's notes was especially difficult, since phrases and lists of references were often written in different parts of papers of different sizes, without a clear hierarchy and often mixing words with drawings and diagrams. Naum was also the one in charge of unfolding the intricate web of connections that linked these notes to other sections of Eisenstein's oeuvre, as well as to a vast array of historical, artistic, and literary sources. I was the one, instead, who had the task of understanding how this unfinished and *unfinishable* project, almost utopian in nature, could be connected with two different sets of references: on the one hand, with other ideas about cinema's history, cinema's relation to history, and the epistemological and historiographical functions of montage that could be found during the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s in the writings of authors such as Aby Warburg and Walter Benjamin, Ernst Bloch and Siegfried Kracauer, Jean Epstein and André Bazin; on the other hand, with a series

neral History of Cinema," *Notes for a General History of Cinema*, eds. Naum Kleiman and Antonio Somaini (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016), 169.

4 Sergei M. Eisenstein, *Neravnodushnaia priroda*, 2 vols., ed. Naum Kleiman (Moscow: Eizenshtein-tsentr and Muzei kino, 2004), 2:7.

of recent research perspectives in film and media studies, such as the one known as “media archaeology,” with a special reference to Thomas Elsaesser’s understanding of “film history as media archaeology” in the sense of “an archaeology of possible futures and of the perpetual presence of several pasts.”⁵ Our edition was published, together with thirteen essays by international scholars some of whom are present in this volume, in a book series of Amsterdam University Press entitled “Film Theory in Media History”: a perfect context for Eisenstein’s “general history of cinema.”⁶

Naum’s latest publication to date, the wonderful *Eisenstein on Paper*, lies now in front of my eyes in my studio in Paris.⁷ It arrived just a few days ago, and in it, once more, I find some echos of the idea of the flying carpet that has been running through this text. Not only because Eisenstein’s drawings were often literally flying from hand to hand, as it happened during the shooting of *Ivan the Terrible*, when the drawings were used in order to pre-visualize all aspects of this entirely *designed* film, in which each fragment of each shot, each visual expression and bodily gesture, each detail of the costumes and of the sets was drawn before being filmed (Prokofiev himself, when he didn’t have access to the filmed material, asked to see the drawings before he would start composing the music for a sequence). Eisenstein’s drawings evoke the idea of the flying carpet also for another reason: because they were often considered by Eisenstein to be “image vehicles,” *Bilderfahrzeuge*, capable of visualizing and setting in motion an idea, a motif, or even a “formula of pathos”: a key concept which links Eisenstein’s *Nonindifferent Nature* to Warburg’s *Mnemosyne Atlas*, and which helps us decipher the meaning of entire series of drawings such as the Mexican series dedicated to “Duncan’s

5 Thomas Elsaesser, “The New Film History as Media Archaeology,” *Cinémas: revue d’études cinématographiques* 14: 2-3 (2004): 113.

6 Sergei M. Eisenstein, *Notes for a General History of Cinema*, cit.

7 Naum Kleiman, *Eisenstein on Paper. Graphic Works by the Master of Film*, foreword by Martin Scorsese (London: Thames & Hudson, 2017).

Death,” over two hundred variations on the theme of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth murdering King Duncan. Such a theme, as we know from one of the crucial sections of the book *Montazh*, is strictly connected to Eisenstein’s ideas about the origins of montage in the ecstatic frenzy of the Dionysian rites and in the reenactment of the dismembering and the recomposition of Dionysus’s sacrificial body.

Weaving together formal analysis, iconographic and art-historical reconstructions, graphological and psychological insight, as well as multiple references to Eisenstein’s films, theater projects, and theoretical writings, Naum Kleiman offers us with this book an entirely new perspective on Eisenstein’s oeuvre: a perspective which puts Eisenstein’s graphic art at the center, rather than at the margin, of his work. Through a carefully edited series of color reproductions – which finally show us Eisenstein’s drawings with the materiality of their *Bilderfahrzeuge*, the materiality of the papers on which they were drawn and circulated, instead of erasing completely the material supports and reducing the drawings to a series of black lines floating within an artificially white page, as it happened too often in the past – Naum leads us once more through one of the many tangled webs of Eisenstein’s oeuvre. The various chapters are dedicated to his childhood and adolescent drawings (1912–17), to the drawings produced during his theater years (1917–23), the Mexican drawings (1930–32), the years of *Bezhin Meadow* and *Alexander Nevsky* with little-known series such as the one entitled *Gedanken zur Musik* (1932–41), the drawings produced in Alma-Ata during the filming of *Ivan the Terrible* (1941–44), the drawing series realized during his final years (1944–47), all the way up to the enigmatic drawing *The Faun* (1948), to which Naum dedicates the fascinating last pages of his “Afterword”: a sort of final chord in which we hear the sounds and the textures of all the references that have been mobilized throughout the text in order to help the reader navigate across the various layers of Eisenstein’s graphic art.⁸

8 Ibid., 312–14.

Once more, as it was the case for his Russian editions of *Montazh*, *Neravnodushnaia priroda*, *Metod*, as well as for the many translations that he has promoted throughout the years, Naum Kleiman offers us an invaluable tool to better understand an entire section of Eisenstein's work that had been so far only partially studied. Eisenstein has certainly been Naum's flying carpet, in the many senses of the term that we have tried to explain above. But we could also say that Naum has been Eisenstein's *Bilderfahrzeug*, the vehicle which has allowed his images, texts, projects and ideas to circulate freely and reach scholars, readers and viewers located in different countries and different cultures. Without Naum's passionate, rigorous, generous, decades-long work, Eisenstein's oeuvre would not be what it is today and would have not been perceived in the same way during the last fifty years. We cannot thank him enough for this.

PIA TIKKA
EVER ONWARDS!

My first meeting with Naum Kleiman was in 1990, when I as a young cinematography student, travelled in a small minibus through the deserted landscapes of the Southwest US towards the Telluride film festival. I soon learned that this friendly man was the trusted guardian of the heritage of one of the world's most significant filmmakers and film theorists, Sergei Eisenstein. It took ten years of practical filmmaking before I started to study the montage theories of Eisenstein. The reason was my growing interest in emerging interactive cinema forms. I then turned to Naum for help, as many researchers before me. His open-mindedness and willingness to support my work was astonishing, and his helpfulness in answering to my most intriguing questions was immensely valuable during the following eight years that I spent reading Eisenstein's writings and studying his films. The task I had set myself was not easy. I wanted to apply Eisenstein's multisensuous montage theories in order to develop a totally new cinematic form. Naum immediately understood my idea, not as a breach of contract against the Eisenstein canon, but on the contrary, as a fresh contribution to the already well-established image of Eisenstein.

Eisenstein turned out to be a thrilling source of inspiration and led to new discoveries. Indeed, it turned out that he prophesied such developments as the twenty-first-century virtual reality and 360° cinema already in 1947, when he asked "Will it still be a screen?" in his provocatively titled essay "Ever Onwards!"¹ As

1 Eisenstein, Sergei, "Ever Onwards!" (italics by P.T.), *Selected Works. Vol 3. Writings 1934–47*, ed. Richard Taylor, trans. William Powell (London: BFI Publishing, 1996), 349.

part of the collection of writings intended for publication, his text rushes to answer the question:

Surely the screen will dissolve before our eyes, in the latest achievements of stereoscopic cinema, its three-dimensional representations taking over the entire interior and space of the theatre building – not just the rear wall of the auditorium – which it hurries along into the limitless expanse of the surrounding world, in the wonders of television technology?!²

Eisenstein continues to envision the future cinema with surprising awareness of the immense possibilities of new technology: “the eye, aided by infra-red night-vision goggles, [...]; and the hand, guided by radio [...]; and the brain, aided by electronic calculators.”³ The potential that then seemed like a filmmaker’s utopian vision has now turned into means of contemporary artistic practice in my work as well as that of many others.

My book, *Enactive Cinema: Simulatorium Eisensteinense* (2008) started from the theoretical landscape of Eisenstein’s figurative thinking, penetrated the recent cognitive sciences and neuroscientific findings, and reached the twenty-first-century interactive media via theoretical and practical elaborations.⁴ In the Eisensteinian spirit I introduced the concept of *simulatorium* in order to describe the author’s embodied workspace, which would serve as a conceptual setting for authoring “*enactive cinema*” as a dynamical system. A lesson learned from my simulatorium related to Eisenstein’s idea that by studying oneself, one may find from one’s deepest inner presence the resources for creative work.

Faithful to Eisenstein’s emphasis on the overarching authorship, enactive cinema, conceived of as a complex dynamical system was initially associated to the idea of cybernetic control. In the course of my study, inspired by the embodied

2 Eisenstein, “Ever Onwards!,” 352.

3 Eisenstein, “Ever Onwards!,” 353.

4 Pia Tikka, *Enactive Cinema: Simulatorium Eisensteinense* (Helsinki: University of Art and Design Press, 2008).

mind approach by Francisco Varela and colleagues,⁵ enactive cinema evolved into a narrative system with emergent, self-organizing behavior, driven by the system's recursive two-way dynamics. Seen as such, the generic narrative system receives emotional feedback from the spectator who, in turn, is influenced by the cinematic narrative. Such an adaptive system can no longer be authored in the first-order cybernetic sense, in which the author executes full control over both the narrative flow and the experience of the spectator, or in terms of what can be called *first-order authorship*. Instead, the author of such a complex system has to adopt the meta-level idea of constructing frameworks or environments within which individual narrative events can take place in an emergent manner, outside the author's control, however within the overall constraints set by the author. This new relationship, which I call *second-order authorship*, is comparable to that of a spatial artefact to the architect that creates it. The author's own proper impact on the system is a part of the system, where she is not an external actor, but an *enactor*. The suggested transition from first order to second-order authorship parallels the paradigm shift in systems theory. Preliminary ideas associated to cybernetics emerged in Russia already during Eisenstein's lifetime with the main interest in controlling such systems.⁶ Today, rather than aiming at control, twenty-first-century systems theories are more focused on describing emergent phenomena in complex dynamical systems including technological, biological, cognitive, and social.⁷

Meaningful framing of the unfolding narrative is the key issue for the author of generative database cinema, that is, how

5 Francisco Varela, Eleanor Thompson, and Evan Rosch, *Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991).

6 Ilmari Susiluoto, *The Origins and Development of Systems Thinking in the Soviet Union: Political and Philosophical Controversies from Bogdanov and Bukharin to Present-Day Re-Evaluations*, AASF B Dissertation 30 (Helsinki: Finnish Academy of Sciences, 1982).

7 Tikka, *Enactive Cinema*, 287.

different elements relate to one another in the alternative individual and particular sequences generated by interactive cinema montage. Eisenstein's pioneering work contributes even to this. In 1935 Eisenstein advocates the *pars pro toto* principle and the formulation of the unity of inter-penetrating opposites, which have been recast in the articulation of enactive cinema.⁸ While a first-order enactor manages detailed structures of the system, the second-order author assumes a perspective to the system as a whole. Even as a product of second-order authorship, enactive cinema is to be considered as a dynamically functioning and free-standing, self-sustaining product of its creator with its own life. This refers back to Eisenstein, who argued for the holistic embodiment of the "emotional theme" in the authored montage composition, which then would be transposed to the experience of the spectator.

The interest of the author to maintain full control over the interactive spectator experience is not explicitly obvious to an uninitiated spectator. Typically, an interactive participant experience involves the feel of control, and this is in particular the case with interactive games. However, all commercial and non-commercial interactive products can be considered as fully authored artefacts, involving highly optimized "psycho-engineering," as it was called in Eisenstein's time.⁹ Indeed, both at the macro-scale level of the entertainment industry, as well as in the micro scale, the designer of the product unavoidably holds the "spectator's remote control" in her hand by means of determining the functions that the interactive system offers to the spectator.

In his time, Eisenstein dreamed of an emotion-driven psychological machinery of montage that would steer working masses towards social consciousness of the new Soviet man. Over the historical timespan, Eisenstein's holistic views have

8 Tikka, *Enactive Cinema*, 291–2.

9 Lev Manovich, *The Engineering of Vision from Constructivism to Computer*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Visual and Cultural Studies (University of Rochester, 1993), 27–8.

both challenged and inspired the work of many. Today they can help meet the challenge cinema has to encounter in the twenty-first-century in order to communicate with the generations that have grown up in the age of the Internet and video games. I believe the audience will eventually grow to demand expanding modes of “smart” interactivity, including also a new kind of cinema format that takes into account the spectator’s emotional experience.

David Bordwell in his *Cinema of Eisenstein* referred to Eisenstein as being interested in “everything besides cinema,”¹⁰ involving the physiological basis of images and language, emotions, perception, action, and synesthesia, yet also often emphasizing the non-rational, mysterious, imaginary, aesthetic, hermeneutic and intuitively heuristic aspects of life. While there is a vast literature taking historically-oriented psychoanalytical, formalist, and cultural constructivist perspectives into Eisenstein, the perspective most familiar to Eisenstein’s own thinking, the organic-dynamical systemic view, has been rare. Yet, Eisenstein’s ideas of the feel of material, the embodiment of emotional theme (pathos) and the experiential participation of spectator in what he calls organic unity (ecstasy) can well earn him a position as one of the precursors of the recent embodiment view to the human mind, though in an embryonic form.¹¹

The embodied mind assumption is a foundation of a lot of ongoing searching aimed at understanding what life in general is all about, and what it means to have a mind. Creative cinema can be argued to build on a kind of “as-if” simulation emerging from neurally-based mirroring dynamics. It also provides means of perception of self via the consensual domain of otherness. When I observe the other, I describe her behavior and simulate the feel of her words. In fact, it is me myself whom I observe in the other. How I understand someone’s behavior or meaning of words is dependent on what kind of embodied

10 David Bordwell, *Cinema of Eisenstein* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 137.

11 Tikka, *Enactive Cinema*, 289.

simulation processes are underpinning my own emotive-cognitive evaluation processes. The embodied understanding of the phenomenal world and the intersubjectively shared cinematic worlds may increase the ability to control unpredictable events. As some argue, such embodied unconscious simulation may provide even the basis of socio-emotional understanding.¹²

If cinema is regarded as a way to model life, it packs life into a concentrated form. Already in the 1920s the cinema author Eisenstein and the neuroscientist Alexander Luria established a fruitful collaboration for creating intellectual and methodological ways of studying the human mind with cinema as a research tool. Since the neuroscientist Uri Hasson and his collaborators (2008) coined the new notion of “neurocinematics,”¹³ a totally new innovative neuroscientific paradigm for studying socio-emotional aspects of human mind in the context of film narratives has emerged, an endeavour I have also contributed since 2009.¹⁴ It is not only that cinema studies benefit from neurosciences but, reciprocally, neural and cognitive sciences have realized that they may again, as in Eisenstein’s and Luria’s time, gain from cinema, implying future multi-disciplinary collaborations aiming at deeper understand the socio-emotional human mind.¹⁵

At the podium of the All-Union Creative Conference of Soviet Filmworkers in 1935, Eisenstein’s speech aimed to defend his views against his colleagues’ accusations that he had abandoned his filmmaker’s practice to live in an “ivory tower” of theoretical abstraction.¹⁶ In Eisenstein’s times, challenging practice with theory was not just a move in an intellectual game

12 See Tikka, *Enactive Cinema*, 223.

13 Uri Hasson, Ohad Landesman, Barbara Knappmeyer, Ignacio Val-lines, Nava Rubin, and David J. Heeger, “Neurocinematics: The Neuroscience of Film,” *Projections* 2(1) (2008): 1–26.

14 See www.neurocine.net for neurocinematic publications by Pia Tikka.

15 Tikka, *Enactive Cinema*, 292.

16 Oksana Bulgakowa, *Sergei Eisenstein: A Biography* (Berlin and San Francisco: Potemkin Press. 1998), 170–2.

but a matter of life and death. From the 1930s onwards, intellectuals and scientists who had made the mistake of focusing on theoretical research (e.g. genetics) instead of providing practical outcomes were sent to work camps or were simply executed. Even since those days the hard division of research and practice has never truly vanished. Today, a techno-scientific euphoria comparable to what Eisenstein lived through may be detected in the new potentials of virtual realities, neuroimaging, and bionics (implantable, high-technology neuro-stimulation devices). A cinema author who is oriented towards exploring such domains may no longer be literally executed, but may still face strong opposition from the conservatives.¹⁷

Yet, referring to sciences means not to undermine the intuitive creativity of the author as a cinema professional. Neither does it suggest overlooking the tacit professional knowledge and expertise that cinema authors have accumulated during the last hundred years of cinema history.

Following Eisenstein's footsteps, an interdisciplinary approach is crucial in order to facilitate new kinds of explorations and insights into the very grounds of human mind from which even the phenomenon of cinema emerges. My vision is that future cinematic practice can transgress the borders of world, brain and body, contributing to understanding the embodied dynamics of a cinematic mind. However, in the big picture, the mystery of mind is far from being exhausted. Rather, it continues to be a challenge to science, and thereby also to cinema scholars and authors. To conclude, extrapolating Eisenstein's idea of cinema as figurative thinking to today's technological and scientific landscape could mean enactive participation in a cinematic narrative system. The impact of Eisenstein is meaningful again!

Revisiting Eisenstein has provided me with new insights into his interdisciplinary work as a philosopher, system theorist, and holist beyond the canon. Eisenstein was a modernist whose figurative thinking keeps lingering on as a rich source

17 Tikka, *Enactive Cinema*, 292.

of post-modern and hyper-modern cinema discourse. His work exemplifies how a filmmaker-researcher's autobiographic cinema expertise and scientific findings may converge through exploration. I have to thank Naum Kleiman with whole my heart for opening the doors to the hidden treasures of Eisenstein's creative life.

Ever onwards, Naum!

SERGE TOUBIANA

NAOUM KLEIMAN, LE VEILLEUR DE NUIT

J'ai fait la connaissance de Naoum Kleiman lors d'un voyage à Moscou durant l'été 1989. C'était à l'occasion d'un numéro spécial des *Cahiers du cinéma* que nous voulions concevoir sur place, en pleine Perestroïka. Serge Daney et moi avons rencontré Naoum durant de longues heures dans son « antre », le « Cabinet Eisenstein » dont il était le conservateur. Ce lieu de mémoire situé rue Smolenskaïa était un petit appartement convivial et protégé du temps. Naoum veillait sur les archives de Sergueï Eisenstein dans ce qui fut autrefois l'appartement de sa veuve, Pera Atacheva. Les objets les plus précieux y étaient sauvegardés, ainsi qu'une grande partie de la bibliothèque de l'auteur d'*Ivan le Terrible*.

Il n'était pas difficile de comprendre immédiatement que Naoum était une sorte de gardien du Temple. Entouré d'amis chercheurs et historiens passionnés par l'histoire du cinéma soviétique des années 30, son seul souci était d'en préserver la mémoire à un moment où il semblait inéluctable qu'on allait faire table rase du passé. En cette période de grande ébullition idéologique – c'était quelques mois à peine avant la chute du mur de Berlin –, Eisenstein appartenait à la légende noire du passé, celle du stalinisme. « À vrai dire, on ne lui pardonne toujours pas sa proximité avec la propagande d'État », nous confia Kleiman, ajoutant que « *si Eisenstein avait été assassiné par Staline, il aurait été un héros, comme maintenant Meyerhold* »¹.

1 « Rencontre au Cabinet Eisenstein », propos recueillis par Serge Daney, Serge Toubiana, Laurent Daniélou et Patrick Cazals. Traduction simultanée par Michel Iampolski, le 16 juillet 1989. *Cahiers du cinéma, Spécial URSS*, janvier 1990.

Cette première rencontre m'avait profondément marqué. Par la suite, j'imaginai Naoum, seul ou presque, résistant à la grande vague de « libéralisation » de la Russie et tentant de maintenir sauf ce magnifique héritage du passé, contre vents et marées. Le symbole « Eisenstein » était une prise de guerre évidente pour les tenants du nouveau régime russe, dont il fallait coûte que coûte effacer l'histoire et la mémoire.

J'ai revu Naoum bien des années plus tard, cette fois à Paris. C'était dans mon bureau de la Cinémathèque rue de Bercy. Il avait des ennuis avec les autorités politiques et culturelles, mais je crois qu'il a toujours eu des ennuis avec les autorités, à toutes les périodes politiques et idéologiques, que ce soit du temps de l'URSS ou celui de la nouvelle Russie. Comme s'il gênait le pouvoir en place, quel qu'il soit, et surtout celui de ses subordonnés « culturels ». Le fait de veiller sur le trésor et la mémoire d'un génie du cinéma ayant contribué à une véritable révolution formelle et esthétique de son art semblait insupportable aux tenants de l'ère nouvelle du capitalisme sauvage.

Naoum a passé sa vie à sauvegarder la mémoire d'un immense cinéaste, il l'a fait par passion et sans doute aussi en sacrifiant sa propre vie. Dans ce lieu si émouvant qu'est le « Cabinet Eisenstein », il a tenu tête et résisté à son pire ennemi : l'Oubli. Comme à la période stalinienne, les tenants du Pouvoir ont cette manie d'effacer le passé, de le gommer, voire de l'anéantir. Comme si, du même coup, ils effaçaient le leur.

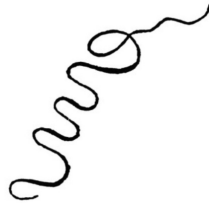
Il est des hommes pour qui le passé a valeur d'exemple dont il est essentiel de tirer des enseignements pour éclairer et mieux comprendre le présent. Veilleur de nuit et résistant, Naoum Kleiman garde le sourire, c'est un homme cultivé et charmant qui n'a peur de rien. Seul ou presque dans son « Cabinet », il a vu l'Histoire et ses soubresauts bousculer le cours des choses et souvent saccager les trésors, tandis que lui tenait bon. C'est la raison pour laquelle je lui voue une admiration éternelle.

YURI TSIVIAN
CINEMA AND ARISTOTLE:
VISUALIZING NAUM KLEIMAN'S
"FORMULA OF A FINALE"

Well, sir, let anyone who thinks all this isn't enough, recall Tristram Shandy again here; in that treasury of ironic devices of literary writing, one of "My Uncle Toby's" tirades devolves into a vivid gesture, and the author introduces it, not in the form of literal description, but by inserting right there on the page after a colon -- a graphic squiggle of the gesture itself!

(Sergei Eisenstein)

Nothing, continued the corporal, can be so sad as confinement for life—or so sweet, an' please your honour, as liberty. "Nothing, Trim – said my uncle Toby, musing – Whilst a man is free – cried the corporal, giving a flourish with his stick thus –"



A thousand of my father's syllogisms could not have said more for celibacy.

(Laurence Sterne, Tristram Shandy)

Closure or Opening?

"The plot is a whole that has a beginning, a middle, and an end," Aristotle famously states in Chapter 7 of his 350 B.C. Poetics. For many a subsequent theorist (and practitioner) of

plot-making, Aristotle's idea of breaking down the whole into three parts proved to be a mixed blessing. On the one hand, the analytical tool Aristotle handed down allows one to parse and examine the three story components one by one. On the other, should we be wedded forever to Aristotle's tripartite doctrine? Will not thinking in fours instead of threes, for example, render a more accurate picture of how most modern (and not so modern) film scenarios handle and ladle narrative information, as Kristin Thompson iconoclastically suggests?¹

On a higher level of abstraction, Aristotle's idea of the plot easily turns into an almost philosophic conundrum. If something we call a whole consists of three parts, can we call it a whole anymore? And isn't each of its three parts a little whole by itself? Such questions are not as inconsequential as they may sound. Is the part that Aristotle calls an end, for instance, integral to the plot as a whole, or it can be detached, replaced or modified without the whole of the plot being essentially changed? Is an end part of a plot equivalent to its middle in terms of significance and size – or is the ending, as some have argued, a mere appendix, a hasty epilogue added to the climactic middle? We have seen films with two alternative endings for Russian and West European audiences – are these therefore two different movies or one and the same movie with two lizard tails? Is the end of a film story mere closure; an all-important final chord which, as it does in music, retroactively colors the (rest of the) whole that precedes it – or, as Vertov and Eisenstein understood it in the mid-1920s, a new opening through which the world presented on the screen spills over into, united with the world of here and now, the very world in which you and I and him and her are sitting and looking at that screen?

Is "The End" an opening or closure? If understood as closure, then choosing the right ending for your film becomes a matter

1 Kristin Thompson, *Storytelling in the New Hollywood: Understanding Classical Narrative Technique* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999); Kristin Thompson, *Storytelling in Film and Television* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).

of picking the right wrapping for your product to sell better, or so Hollywood screen writer William Lord Wright explains in his *Photoplay Writing* (1922):

Your story should end happily. It is true that some great stories carried out to a logical conclusion, end unhappily, but the maker of movies must sell his product and the lady who turns to the last page of her book to see if it ends happily before she reads it, also resents an unpleasant ending in the moving-picture story. People have trouble enough in real life without paying an admission fee to see it screened. And your story with an unhappy ending will not find a ready market.²

True enough; on the other hand, it is not hard to construe the same line of argument leading to an exactly opposite conclusion.³ Closure is closure; this or that way, it's always a wrap-up.

There must be a way out of the closure trap, and this was what young Soviet filmmakers were looking for in the mid-twenties. You close the plot by jumping out of it; or, in more academic terms, switch the discourse from a narrative to para-narrative mode. Thus, Kuleshov's 1924 *Mr. West* switches from being a grotesquely fictional story to becoming a newsreel with the non-fictional Trotsky saluting to a non-fictional parade. Vertov's 1925 non-fictional *The Lenin Kino-Pravda* – what closure, it would appear, could be more final than a report from a funeral? – jumps out of the mourning mood into being an animated political cartoon and, in the very last shot, a trompe-l'œil image of a train rushing, “along the rails of Leninism” straight into the viewing hall. Compare the end-shot of the 1926 *Potemkin* – as Vertov did when he accused Eisenstein of having stolen his, Dziga Vertov's, idea of an open-ended finale: “*The Lenin Kino-Pravda* ... finishes on an element of victory and

2 William Lord Wright, *Photoplay Writing* (New York: Falk Publishing Co. 1922): 33.

3 Yuri Tsivian, “New Notes on Russian Film Culture Between 1908 and 1919,” *The Silent Cinema Reader*, eds. Lee Grieveson and Peter Kramer (London: Routledge, 2004), 339–48.

cheerfulness, shots of the train of Revolution bearing down on the auditorium and sweeping over the viewers' heads. *Potemkin* also ... ends with an element of victory and cheerfulness, the shots of the battleship bearing down on the auditorium. But that is by the by."⁴ As Naum Kleiman has shown in his classic study "Formula finala," such was also the ending Eisenstein envisaged for his last film – minus the element of victory and cheerfulness, of course.

Plotting the Plot

"So what remains of Aristotelian aesthetics? It would be extremely stupid if out of politeness to Aristotle we declined those advantages which the film camera and montage give us: to see more, further and deeper than simple human vision allows us to," Konstantin Feldman wrote in his essay "The Cinema and Aristotle (With regard to the film *Man with a Movie Camera*)."⁵ A left-minded critic and staunch supporter of Vertov and his group, Feldman had little patience for Aristotle's plot theory, or, it appears, for other famous Greeks: "It is a good thing that the kinocs are not like those cinematic Archimedes who cry out to Life, which has already raised its sword over them: 'stop – you will ruin my blueprint!'"⁶ If the image of "cinematic Archimedes" destined to die by the hand of Life-As-It-Is was meant to allegorize not-fiction film in general, but someone specifically, this someone must have been Eisenstein and his blueprints for intellectual cinema.

Archimedes, in the legend Feldman alludes to, did die charting a drawing in the sand. We do not know if Aristotle too had a habit of using his walking stick to make drawings in the sand – or in

4 Dziga Vertov, "O kinokhronike," March 19, 1926, RGALI f. 2494, op.1, ed. khr. 49. Translated by Julian Graffy.

5 K. Feldman, "The Cinema and Aristotle" (With regard to the film *Man with a Movie Camera*), *Sovetskii ekran* 7 (1929): 12. Translated by Julian Graffy.

6 Ibid.

the air – in order to illustrate his theories; but let us, if only for argument’s sake, assume he did. What would have been the likeliest line Aristotle might have chosen to plot out the dynamics of the dramatic plot as it moves from its beginning – through its middle – to its end? Would his imaginary plotline look like a trough $\backslash /$, like a floor $_ _ _$, or like a pyramid \wedge ? If you decide to opt for the latter of the three (as I believe most people will) you are tapping into a venerable scholarly tradition. Such is the curve of all dramatic tension, explained by nineteenth-century drama theorist Gustav Freytag from whose 1876 treatise, *Die Technik des Dramas*, the following diagram is borrowed:

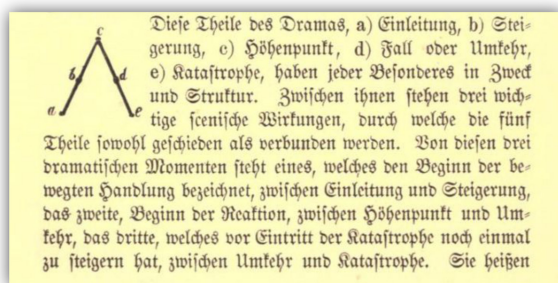


Fig. 1: The dramatic structure diagram known as the Freytag pyramid

Freytag’s pyramid (as it came to be known) is self-consciously dynamic. Among the names Freytag gives to plot stages “Introduction” (a) and “Catastrophe” (e) found at the base of the diagram are the only terms with no explicit kinetic connotations; the other three relate to the upward-downward movement of the curve: b) “Rising;” c) “High point;” d) “Fall or U-turn [*Umkehr*].” As we can see, the pyramid is equilateral: at least in theory, the a-b-c of rising is counterbalanced by as long a fall: c-d-e.

A line is a line. No diagram is ever detailed enough not to be superseded by a more detailed one. This is what modern-day statisticians call the problem of data smoothing.⁷

7 Mike Baxter, Daria Khitrova, Yuri Tsivian, “Exploring cutting

While Freytag's pyramid, which vectors the rise and fall of tension and lists five, rather than three, plot elements, is more informative than Aristotle's beginning-middle-end, it failed to satisfy Alfred Hennequin, a connoisseur of stage drama and melodrama, who, in his 1890 handbook *The Art of Playwriting* offered what he believed was an improved blueprint for a captivating dramatic plot construction. Having chosen as an example Edward Bulwer-Lytton's 1838 melodrama *The Lady of Lyons*, Hennequin zooms in analytically on the rising slope of Freytag's dramatic pyramid to discover that it, too, is not a line but a multiple composed of reduced-size copies of the whole (twentieth-century geometry calls suchlike structures self-similar or fractal):

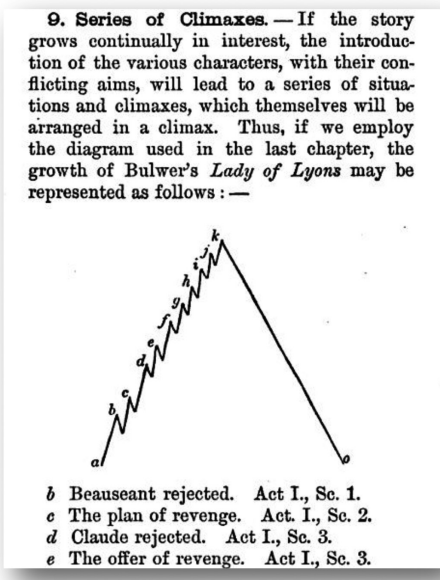


Fig. 2: The dramatic structure diagram from *The Art of Playwriting* by Alfred Hennequin (1890)

structure in film, with applications to the films of D. W. Griffith, Mack Sennett, and Charlie Chaplin," *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities*, 32:1 (April 2017): 1–16.

In Hennequin's diagram, the ascent from the bottom to the peak rising slope is not a continuous climb, but a jagged path that itself consists of nine smaller rises, peaks and falls. Note the asymmetry of this saw-like diagram: the route down from the peak towards the narrative closure is butt-slide smooth.

Note also that the mini-climaxes leading up to the big one are roughly coordinated with the breakup into scenes. This is what made Barry Salt suggest that the way tension mounts in films is quite similar to what Hennequin discovers in melodrama.⁸ Without rekindling the old polemics between Salt and those experts in the rules of modern Hollywood storytelling who stress the importance of narrative acts (three, four or six – opinions differ), let me point to two facts perhaps too obvious to be always remembered. One is that thinking of movies in acts and thinking of them in scenes do not exclude but rather complement each other; to recall a good Formalist term, the important thing is to determine what kind of thinking dominates in any given case. The other fact to keep in mind is that what is dominant and what is subdominant tends to change from epoch to epoch and from case to case. Eisenstein and, strangely, Dziga Vertov, used to think in acts (in *Potemkin* and *Man with a Movie Camera*, these coincided with reels); in early silent films, both before and after the advent of features, it was a sequence of smaller units (let us not call them "scenes," for in the period the term scene usually meant a shot) that often defined the level of interest and tension. Epes Winthrop Sargent's 1916 *Technique of the Photoplay* offers a mental diagram that well explains a trade-off between thinking large and thinking small: "A diagrammatic representation of the plot should offer a succession of peaks and valleys, each peak a little higher than the last and each valley above the level of the one before it. The highest peak represents the climax, and from there the diagram slants sharply toward the bottom."⁹ Griffith used similar language to expose what

8 Barry Salt, *Film Style and Technology: History and Analysis* (London: Starword, 2009), 120–3.

9 Epes Winthrop Sargent, *Technique of the Photoplay* (New York:

he used to call “pace in the movies.” Or take the landscape analogy which Victor Oscar Freeburg used in his 1918 *Art of Photoplay Making*: “Let us symbolize the progression of dramatic attention by a loosely hung cable which ascends a hill-side rhythmically over a row of posts. The angles, or apexes, of the cable would each represent a crisis, except the highest, which would represent the climactic point of the plot.”¹⁰

Those minor apexes and crises presented a problem for practical narratology to solve. How to build a scene so that it forms a peak by itself (as those saw-like teeth do in Figure 2) and, at the same time, remains part of a major peak? Early on in the process of making *Ivan the Terrible*, Eisenstein pledged to abide with what we might call a “never-three” principle. Here is his self-addressed instruction jotted in a working note from September 6, 1941:

Make sure [*strogo prosledit'*] that no separate scene is given
a beginning
a middle
and an end.
 One or two [of the three] – yes! But all the three – never!¹¹

Unlike Vertov’s pen-advocate Konstantin Feldman, Eisenstein never attacked or debated Aristotle and his triad. In fact, he conceptualized the life of Ivan the Terrible as having consisted of three distinct parts (if we agree to discount the boyhood of the prologue), the beginning, the middle and the end, and envisaged to release his *Ivan* in three episodes structured around each. On the other hand, as Naum Kleiman has shown with incomparable clarity of detail, he did not want to end his (and Ivan’s) tragedy on either fear or pity. There had to be a different, non-Aristotelian resolution.

The Moving Picture World, 1916), 45.

10 Victor Oscar Freeburg, *The Art of Photoplay Making* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1918), 258.

11 RGALI, f. 1923, op. 1, ed. khr. 554, l. 20.

A Plot of no Return

The fourth (the “d”) of the five turning points of Gustav Freytag’s dramatic pyramid from 1876 is named *Umkehr*, which can be translated as a return or even, in the language of traffic signs, a U-turn. What it signalled must be this. A typical plot begins in the atmosphere of condensed normalcy. Then some kind of violence happens: a vengeful gypsy woman steals a baby; Pauline Deschapelles jilts the Marquis Beauséant, or the soup the *Potemkin* sailors are served turns out to be made of rotten meat. A series of actions and counteractions reach the high point of tension or suspense. After the climax, however, things ought to start calming down. The plot makes an *Umkehr* towards a more restful closure, be it the happy ever-after of a marriage or a silent never-after of a grave.

Ideologically and artistically, neither of these two outcomes quite worked for early Soviet films. A return to what? A calming closure associated more with complacency than with the worldwide revolution? Tretyakov’s and Eisenstein’s political Guignol *Can You Hear Me, Moscow?* aimed at mobilizing theatergoers for no less than a military intervention into Germany. *Strike* ended with an extreme close up of a (killed?) worker wrathfully calling the proletarian viewers to “remember” (compare “Adieu, adieu, adieu! Remember me” – the last words Father’s Ghost utters to Hamlet in Shakespeare’s tragedy of revenge). Add here the *Potemkin* ending, of course. The political brief was to energize, not to calm down, the masses. The rest is silence, Prince Hamlet says before he dies; the rest is violence, was Vertov’s and Eisenstein’s idea of an ending.

I have two more graphs to show to rest my case. One is by Semen Timoshenko, that Corporal Trim of Soviet montage theory.



Fig. 3: The montage diagram of the prototypical (*normal'no*) film as it appears in Semen Timoshenko's *The Art of Cinema and the Film Montage* (*Iskusstvo kino i montazh filma*) (Leningrad: Akademia, 1926), 69

Timoshenko's diagram of what he calls a "normal" (prototypical; model) 6-reel film plot found in his 1926 *Art of Cinema and the Film Montage* does, indeed, look a little like a series of awkwardly drawn electric poles interconnected by a wire. The "ground" below is calibrated and labeled by reel numbers: Reel 1, 2 ... 6. Each pole marks *udarnoe mesto* (a Russian term close to what Hollywood screenwriters call a punch), that is, the spot within the duration of a film where what Hennequin used to call "climaxes" occurs. The poles are not identical: those topped with a single ripple are "reel punches" (minor climaxes, one per reel); the three crowned by a double-ripple each are "film punches," that is, major ones. Curiously, against the best advice given to playwrights by Freytag or Hennequin, two of the three major punches in Timoshenko's mental movie take place not around the middle, but at the very opening and very closure, with a pre-final punch delivered some eight or ten minutes before the last one (a knockdown before a knockout, to realize the metaphor of the term "punch.") Illiterate as it could have looked to the well-made drama wizards like Hennequin and Freytag, Timoshenko's "electric-line" diagram made perfect sense from the Soviet point of view. Revolutionary movies must shake and grip you from the start and electrify you at the end. The key task of the proper ending of the quintessential Soviet movie was not to provide closure but to furnish an exit: from the past to the future, from fiction to reality, from the screen into the viewing hall.

The final plot diagram I bring to present – more skillful and clear (if somewhat less informative) than Timoshenko’s – comes from Herbert P. J. Marshall’s student-year notebook preserved, among Marshall’s other papers at the Special Collection of Hesburgh Libraries, at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana.

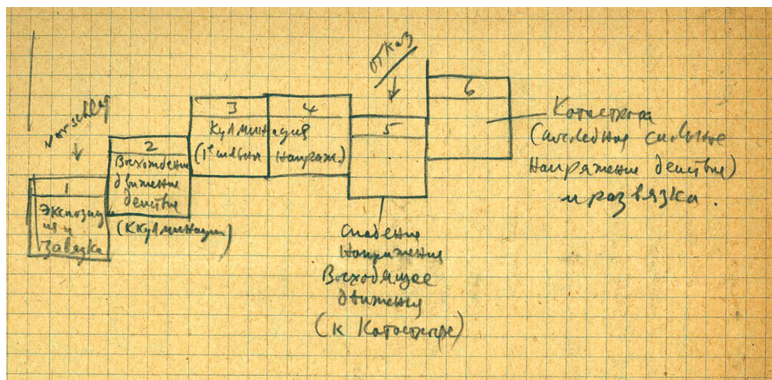


Fig. 4: Film story diagram as reproduced in Herbert Marshall’s student notebook (the 1930s)

Marshall’s diagram is composed of six adjoined and consecutively numbered boxes (more than likely each representing a reel of a six-reel film) drawn side by side on five different levels of elevation. Written next to and/or inside those reels/boxes are legends indicating where each belongs on the scale of dramatic tension. Box 1 says “*Vorschlag* [= proposal in German; literally: pre-punch], Exposition and Outset;” Box 2: “Mounting, Movement, Action (towards Climax);” Boxes 3 and 4 share the following inscription that runs across the line between the two: “Climax (1st strong tension);” above Box 5 stands “Recoil,” beneath it: “Decrease of tension” and “Rising tension (towards the catastrophe);” pointing at the last Box (the highest of the six) are these words: “The catastrophe (the final strong tension of action) and denouement.” More tame and tradition-informed than Timoshenko’s, the diagram in Figure 2 shares with it a decidedly

upward thrust. The word “denouement” *is* mentioned in this diagram, it is true; yet, whatever resolution the maker of this diagram might have envisioned, it does not weigh the reel down. The tension and energy remains at its highest in the end. The story skeleton we are inspecting here must be of Soviet origin.

Who was the draughtsman? The question is anything but idle. In the mid-thirties, young Englishman Herbert Marshall studied at the All-Union State Institute of Cinematography (VGIK) under the tutelage of Sergei Eisenstein. Judging by the names on the covers of some of Marshall’s notebooks, he took classes with Lev Kuleshov and Abram Room. Could this drawing have come from the pen of one of these? Maybe: Marshall’s Russian was not very fluent and his Russian handwriting was less curative and assured. My first instinct (perhaps wishful) was to attribute the drawing to Eisenstein. Eisenstein routinely inserted German words into his writings, and the word “recoil” [*otkaz*] was Meyerhold’s and his. But then again, not only: biomechanics continued to be taught at VGIK, and “recoil” was a standard term for a standard body attitude. On the other hand, it was so Eisenstein to take terms and ticks relating to gesture and body and apply them to the movement of the plot...

Fortunately, I had the good sense to seek advice. I have worked with Eisenstein’s handwritten documents and can read his hand well. But I knew my expertise was not enough to look at a written note and say with authority whether or not this was Eisenstein’s handwriting. So before I sat down to write this essay I wrote to the only people whom I knew I could trust on this count: Naum Kleiman and his daughter and colleague Vera Rummyantseva, both of whom have been working on Eisenstein’s manuscripts for years. So, without telling what I needed it for (unnecessary secrecy being part of the traditional choreography around festschrift essays), I sent the above diagram from Marshall’s notebook (plus another page with sundry notes in English and Russian) to Vera and Naum in Moscow asking if this could have been written by Eisenstein.

Their expert report failed to confirm my bias, but then, it turned out to be such a delightful specimen of expertise-as-art

that I decided, without Naum's or Vera's permission, to reproduce it here:

Eisenstein's written characters are a little more rounded; nor have we ever seen in his writings a Russian written "л" as tall as here; he never used & instead of and; in his diagrams, the line is of a different character. This handwriting betokens a bilingual writer: both "Russian" and "Roman" hands are very unrestricted. Is it our "*Anglichanin*" [Marshall's nickname at VGIK] or perhaps an émigré's hand? The unusual orthography of "*кульминация*" with the "б" missing appears to be pointing in this direction. Curious – when did the habit of using "б" in "*кульминация*" in Russian orthography take root? Or was it how it had always been written? And if so, does not the dropped "б" betray the trace of an English accent?¹²

Here is Naum Kleiman for you, pure and simple. Nowadays scholarship has become increasingly associated with exchange of ideas and syllogistic reasoning involving larger issues. A true heir to Eisenstein's theoretical audacity, when it comes to ideas Kleiman can easily beat the pants off most of us. At the same time, Naum is always prepared to back up ideas with something many of us lack. This something is the sense of fact. By this I mean not only Naum's knowledge of fact, but his almost uncanny ability to hear what facts tell and to translate what facts tell from their language into ours. To him, a single frame from Eisenstein's film or a tiny squiggle or scribble from Eisenstein's written legacy tell more than thousand syllogisms of Tristram Shandy's father can tell us. If true scholarship still exists, this is what it looks like.

12 Naum Kleiman and Vera Rumyantseva to this author in email message of Wednesday, June 21, 2017 9:04 AM. My translation.

JULIA VASSILIEVA
EISENSTEIN
AND CULTURAL-HISTORICAL THEORY

This article unveils new facts about, and sheds new light upon, the collaboration between Sergei Eisenstein, the cultural psychologist Lev Vygotsky, and the neuropsychologist Alexander Luria. I argue that Eisenstein's aesthetic theory and Luria's and Vygotsky's integrative science of mind and brain developed from a common source represented two sides of the same overarching approach to the brain, mind and culture – an approach known as cultural-historical theory.¹ The extent of their contacts demonstrates that it was an authentic collaboration based on extensively overlapping agendas, mutually shared theoretical frameworks and methodologies. My argument rests, to a large degree, on historical evidence – the duration of the three theorists' collaborations, the frequency and depth of their exchanges and their involvement in each other's research, their

1 Contacts between Eisenstein, Vygotsky and Luria were the subject of research interest before, however, my theorization is different from these advanced previously: Viacheslav Ivanov understood their work as anticipating the semiotic turn (Viacheslav Ivanov, *Ocherki po istorii semiotiki v SSSR* [Moscow: Nauka, 1976]); Pia Tikka provided an account of their contacts combining the insight of a filmmaker with the recent neuroscientific perspective (Pia Tikka, *Enactive Cinema: Simulatorium Eisensteinense*. PhD dissertation. Helsinki: University of Art and Design Publication Series, 2008), while Oksana Bulgakowa read their ideas through the lens of gestalt psychology (Oksana Bulgakowa, "From Expressive Movement to the "Basic Problem" – the Vygotsky-Luria-Eisenstein Theory of Art," *The Cambridge Handbook of Cultural-historical Psychology*, eds. Anton Yasnitsky and René Van Der Veer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

shared theoretical sources, their reading, reception and critique. In my reconstruction of this historical conjuncture, Naum Kleiman's guidance and help have been indispensable, enriching and inspiring.

Kleiman reports that Eisenstein and Luria met in 1925. His account of their meeting relies on a conversation with Alexander Zaporozhets, who recalled how he first introduced Luria to Eisenstein. Zaporozhets had recently moved to Moscow from Ukraine and was just embarking on his new career as a psychologist, following his previous work in theatre when he was performing under the direction of a remarkable Ukrainian director, Les' Kurbas. It was Kurbas's directorial work that aroused Zaporozhets's interest in psychological processes, which he decided to study at Moscow University. Zaporozhets's trajectory was nonetheless typical of the period, which often witnessed convergences of psychology and theatre predicated on an "understanding of directorial activity as practical psychology, aimed at movement and action, which represent the material of an actor's performance."² More broadly, Zaporozhets's trajectory was symptomatic of a fundamental overlap between theatre and the emerging art of cinema, on one hand, and the psy-disciplines, on the other hand – psychology, psychiatry and psychotherapy – the disciplines that, as Nikolas Rose suggests, engage in various ways in moulding, shaping, or constructing a subject.³ This overlap was sustained by the broad modernist impulse toward the creation of the "new man" and, in the Soviet context, by the specifically Bolshevik agenda of producing a revolutionary, reformed subject – the agenda that Vygotsky and Luria, on one hand, and Eisenstein, on the other, at once enthusiastically supported and radically subverted.

Luria, Eisenstein and Vygotsky met during a decade that would become decisive for all three of them, when each

2 Vladimir Zinchenko, "Stanovlenie Psychologa," *Issues in Psychology*, 5 (1995): 1.

3 Nikolas S. Rose, *Inventing Our Selves: Psychology, Power, and Personhood* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

emerged as a leading figure in his own field. During this period Eisenstein produced his “revolutionary tetralogy” of films, *Strike* (1925), *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), *October* (1927) and *Old and New* (1929), while simultaneously expanding his early theorizing of montage and expressive movement into a general theory of art. Luria and Vygotsky were meanwhile elaborating a new psychological perspective – cultural-historical psychology – which would exert a significant influence on disciplines ranging from neuroscience to social constructivism. My archival research has established that Eisenstein kept abreast of their evolving paradigm by reading Vygotsky and Luria’s writings and by participating in experimental work with Luria in areas such as hypnosis, psychological testing, motor regulation in embryos, cognitive development in twins, schizophrenia, synaesthesia, and memory. Most importantly, as Eisenstein’s diary reveals, Luria and Eisenstein maintained ongoing discussions of the key issues of cultural-historical theory, which ranged from the complex psychological problem of concept-formation to the analysis of cases that Luria and Vygotsky encountered in their clinical work and were attempting to theorise within their new paradigm.

Cultural-historical psychology rests on three main assumptions: its methodology is fundamentally genetic, insisting that psychological processes should be studied in their development; it argues that mental processes and emotions are mediated by cultural tools such as signs and words; and it insists that frameworks for cognitive and emotional processes are social in origin and are internalised through cultural practices. The mediating role of the sign within this paradigm is not limited to its representational or referential function, but also resides in its potential to be used in a self-directed way – as a device to organise the very structure of mental processes. Vygotsky and Luria introduced a distinction between lower, or natural psychological functions, which are not mediated by signs, and higher, or cultural functions, which are mediated. They argued that natural psychological functions operate involuntarily and in this respect differ radically from higher or mediated func-

tions, over which we have control. In this way, memory becomes voluntary, attention becomes self-directed, and thinking becomes goal-oriented and abstract. Later on, Luria demonstrated experimentally that cultural mediation also changes the functional architecture of the brain, arriving at an understanding of the brain as, ultimately, a socially plastic structure.

In contemporary terms, Luria's and Vygotsky's perspective can be described as an integrative science of mind and brain that outlines how psychological functioning is constituted by various features of the body, the natural environment, and the cultural and technical tools that humans use. As such, it anticipated one of the most discussed theories in today's brain sciences: the so-called 4E/A perspective, which emphasises the ways in which mental processes are embodied, embedded, enacted and extended, and always operate in tandem with emotions, which has been advanced by such scholars as Antonio Damasio, Daniel Dennett, Francisco Varela and Michael Gazzaniga.

In what follows, I will explore how three core ideas of cultural-historical theory – those of the transformative power of mediation, the instrumental use of signs, and historical methodology – provide a common framework for, on one hand, Vygotsky and Luria's research and, on the other, Eisenstein's theoretical work, culminating in his late magnum opus, *Method* (1932–48).

Eisenstein gained his first glimpse of this emerging framework through Vygotsky's *The Psychology of Art*. Vygotsky conducted his investigations for this study between 1917 and 1922 and defended it as his dissertation in 1925. While not intending to publish his findings, Vygotsky gave a typescript of *The Psychology of Art* to Eisenstein, who read it with the utmost attention. There are several themes in *The Psychology of Art* that were clearly of paramount interest to Eisenstein. Vygotsky suggests that “art is the social technique of feelings,”⁴ an idea that anticipates his later interest in psychological tools and

4 Lev Vygotsky, *The Psychology of Art* (New York: MIT Press, 1971), 17.

valorization of the instrumentalist attitude in psychology. Art, says Vygotsky, “is determined and conditioned by the psyche of the social man” and “systematizes a very special sphere in the psyche of social man – his emotions.”⁵ This view corresponds to Eisenstein’s own understanding of the functions of art as “issues of regulating the psyche of the spectator” and provides a fundamental vector for the research paradigm that Eisenstein shared with Vygotsky.⁶

Vygotsky posited that at the core of aesthetic reaction was a conflict engendered by the tension between “the content” and “the form” of the work of art, which he described as an “overcoming of material by the form.”⁷ The inherent tension between form and content in the structure of the work of art produces conflicting emotions in the viewer, which are eventually resolved in a moment of catharsis. Vygotsky defined catharsis as emotional explosion when two opposing emotional tendencies reach their peak, which is not, however, equal to the discharge or annihilation of emotion. Rather, it implies transcendence, the reaching of a higher plane of experience. As Vygotsky insists, an aesthetic response to art is not limited to the visceral, it always involves simultaneous intellectual processing: “The emotions caused by art are intelligent emotions.”⁸ Thus the catharsis produced by the encounter with a work of art involves, for Vygotsky, a generalization from personal emotions to a higher human truth. As Smagorinsky notes, “Art serves as a medium through which one may anticipate a social future, one channelled by cultural mediation.”⁹

Meanwhile, emotions and affect were also the subject of Luria’s massive experimental research project that lasted for seven

5 Vygotsky, *Psychology*, 12–13.

6 Sergei Eizenshtein, *Izbrannye proizvedeniia v shesti tomakh* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1964), 1:86.

7 Vygotsky, *Psychology*, 43.

8 Vygotsky, *Psychology*, 212.

9 Peter Smagorinsky, “Vygotsky’s Stage Theory: The Psychology of Art and the Actor under the Direction of ‘Perezhivanie.’” *Mind, Culture, and Activity* 18: 4 (2011): 319–41, 332.

years, between 1923 and 1930, and in which Eisenstein became deeply involved. The results of this study were published in the US in 1932 as *The Nature of Human Conflict or Emotion, Conflict, and Will: An Objective Study of Disorganisation and Control of Human Behaviour*.¹⁰ This study became infamous for its introduction of a method of analysing verbal and motor reactions in combination, a method which, outside the laboratory, found its most important application in the criminal justice system, as a result of which Luria was credited with inventing the first lie detector. On a theoretical level, however, Luria aimed to explore the dynamics of strong emotions and their effect on the overall behavior of an individual, as well as the individual's ability to control and regulate affective states.

Eisenstein initially became interested in the project as a means of exploring expressive movement¹¹ but his interest later shifted towards the relationship between speech, movement and images, or the visual and the verbal. The latter relationship also became central to Luria's interests over the course of the project. Luria wrote: "Although I had begun with an interest in studying the dynamic course of emotions, Vygotsky saw in my research a model for studying the relation between complex voluntary movement and speech. In particular, he emphasized the way in which speech served as an instrument for organizing behavior."¹² This interest culminated in the last part of Luria's

10 In Russian the monograph was published for the first time only in 2002, other than Luria's defense of it as a doctoral dissertation at the Institute of Tbilisi in 1937.

11 In his 1925 article Eisenstein reports that he wanted to verify his theory of expressive movement experimentally at the "Institute of the Brain." Presumably, he means the laboratory in the Clinic of Nervous Diseases of Moscow University, where both Vygotsky and Luria worked in 1925. Sergei Eizenshtein, "Po lichnomu voprosu," *Iz tvorcheskogo naslediia S. M. Eizenshteina. Materialy i soobshcheniia*, ed. L. K. Kozlov (Moscow: VNIK, 1985).

12 Alexander Luria, Michael Cole, and Sheila Cole, *The Making of Mind: A Personal Account of Soviet Psychology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 51–2.

book, which seems to echo the discussions he had with Eisenstein and Vygotsky at the time. Luria wrote:

We would like to demonstrate that a symbolic device, incorporated into the system of actions, mediates the reaction in the same way as speech does, separates excitation from immediate transfer into the motor reaction and results in a complexly organized structure of response. Precisely in this sense, every symbolic system can serve as a powerful device of overcoming and organizing affect. We could prove this assumption using the history of culture by demonstrating that most symbolic systems (images, colors, graphic symbols) in their origin are linked with the expression of emotions and always – in the visual arts, theater, magic – served to organize affect; yet we will use another strategy and will try to demonstrate experimentally the function of symbolic devices in managing and controlling affect.¹³

What Luria decided *not to do* in this study – undertake an historical exploration of culture – later resurfaces as one of the main aims of the research program that Eisenstein articulates and addresses in his *Method*.

The third block of ideas instructive for Eisenstein's later theorizing arose from Luria's and Vygotsky's exploration of the developmental progression of mediated psychological actions. In their joint study *Ape. Primitive. Child*, published in 1930, Vygotsky and Luria investigated three lines of inquiry in the formation of the human psyche and cognition: the evolutionary, focusing on humans' closest relatives, primates; the historical, drawing on vast anthropological and ethnographic material; and the ontogenetic, utilizing their experimental work with children.¹⁴ The central idea developed in the book is that forms of psychological functioning specific to humanity evolved with the help of cultural tools.

13 Alexander Luria, *Priroda Chelovecheskikh Konfliktov* (Moscow: Cogito Centre, 2002), 515.

14 Lev Vygotsky and Alexander Luria, *Obeziana. Primitiv. Rebenok* (Moscow: Gosizdatel'stvo, 1930).

The second part of *Ape. Primitive. Child*, the part which was arguably of most interest to Eisenstein, investigates the specific forms of behavior and cognitive make-up of people of different historical epochs and cultural formations. Using ethnographic and anthropological data, Vygotsky and Luria argued that there is a qualitative difference in historically diverse types of cognition, determined by changes in the use of psychological tools. For example, reconstructing the development of mnemonic systems in traditional societies, Vygotsky and Luria demonstrated how memory becomes mediated and increasingly relies on artificially produced signs, ranging from knots and clay figurines to pictorial and hieroglyphic types of mnemotechnics. These cultural tools serve as psychological instruments that transform memory from a natural capacity into a “functional system” organized and mastered by the individual.

The instrumentalist perspective articulated in the book provided a critical framework through which Vygotsky and Luria appropriated the earlier theoretical developments and findings in ethnography and anthropology, such as Richard Thurnwald’s and Lévy-Bruhl’s research, that later exerted a significant influence on Eisenstein. It is from Luria and Vygotsky’s discussion of Lévy-Bruhl that Eisenstein borrowed a number of ideas regarding pre-logical, primitive thinking, as well as his notion of the “magic of art” which increasingly encompasses his theoretical work from early 1930s. But while Lévy-Bruhl’s description of primitive thinking as magical implied that such thinking doesn’t differentiate between the object and its image or the whole and the part, Vygotsky rethought Lévy-Bruhl’s analysis of magic along the instrumentalist line that was becoming central for him, Luria and Eisenstein. Vygotsky wrote:

Magic exhibits not only a tendency to dominate nature but to an equal extent a tendency to dominate oneself. In this respect, we find in it the embryo of another purely human form of behavior: control of one’s own reactions. Magic envisages a basically identical influence on the forces of nature and on human behavior. It may conspire to an equal degree to induce either love or rain. For

this reason, it contains the undivided nucleus of future technique designed to dominate nature, and of civilized technique for the control of man's own behavior.¹⁵

While “magic” is, of course, one of the key tropes in the modernist understanding of cinema, referring to the dialectics of the visible and invisible and implying conjuring the presence of absent or imaginary objects, the meaning Eisenstein attributes to “magic” is radically different. For him, as for Vygotsky and Luria, magic implies using signs and broader cultural mediation to control, influence, and transform the human psyche.

Eisenstein's theoretical trajectory has been described as a move from determinism to symbolism (Ian Aitken),¹⁶ a transition from technicism to mysticism (Robert Stam),¹⁷ or an evolution from mechanistic to organic theory (Dudley Andrew).¹⁸ The earlier and later stages of his theorising are sometimes understood as separated by an “epistemological shift.”¹⁹ Foregrounding the importance of cultural-historical theory in Eisenstein's research can allow us to see the progression from his early to his later theorizing as a shift from a model of unmediated cinematic impact to a model of an increasingly mediated system.

If we read Eisenstein's early theorizing as arising from and developing the ideas initially introduced in *Montage of Attractions* we can see this shift clearly. There, Eisenstein posited the film as a script of the sensory-perceptual responses of viewers. The montage of attractions relied on a collection of emotional stimuli which are strung together in a film to produce respons-

15 Vygotsky and Luria, *Obeziana. Primitiv. Rebenok*, 120–1.

16 Ian Aitken, *European Film Theory and Cinema: A Critical Introduction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001).

17 Robert Stam, *Film Theory: An Introduction* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2000).

18 Dudley Andrew, *The Major Film Theories: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976).

19 David Bordwell, “Eisenstein's Epistemological Shift,” *Screen* 15: 4 (1974).

es in a viewer in an unmediated, direct, almost physiological manner. In *Film Fable*, Rancière points out that attraction represents, simultaneously, an “abstract morpheme” and a “sensory stimulus” that “reaches the nervous system directly, without having to rely on the mediation,” and is aimed “at one point – the spectator’s brain.”²⁰ As Rancière comments further, cinema for Eisenstein is “the art that guarantees the non-mimetic effect by reducing the communication of ideas and ecstatic explosion of sensory affects to a common unit of measurement,” namely, the viewer’s sensation.²¹ Reflecting on the paradoxical nature of Eisenstein’s imperative “to reach the nervous system directly,” Rancière diagnoses this intention as madness – and madness it would have remained had Eisenstein’s theorizing not progressed further. Against this critique, Eisenstein’s research in the 1930s and 1940s can be seen as a search for cultural and historical ways of mediating, and thus constructing, aesthetic responses.

The turning-point in the transformation of Eisenstein’s theoretical views appears to have been his journey to Mexico, where he started to work on *Que Vivo Mexico!*, his historical film about the country, and simultaneously embarked on a new theoretical project, *Method*. However, Eisenstein’s trip serendipitously occurred at exactly the same time as Luria was conducting his first expedition to Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan to test the ideas of cultural-historical theory. For Luria, the expeditions to Asian republics provided a unique opportunity to explore cognitive processes in groups of people whom he saw as operating at different levels of cultural development, while for Eisenstein, Mexico provided fertile ground for the exploration of the deep historical roots of cultural practices that he was starting in *Method*. The shared agenda of their theoretical explorations is revealed in Eisenstein’s diary entry in 1931, in which he stated his intention to engage Luria as a co-author

20 Jacques Rancière, *Film Fables*, trans. Emiliano Battista (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 25.

21 Rancière, *Film Fables*, 25.

for *Method*,²² while Luria repeatedly invited Eisenstein to join his expeditions to Asian republics (invitations Eisenstein had to decline).

Eisenstein saw Mexico as geographical and spatialised embodiment of history.²³ And just as Eisenstein treated Mexico as a place where different historical epochs overlapped, Luria approached Central Asia as a region where different socio-economic and cultural formations coexisted – some maintaining the ancient way of life unchanged for centuries, and some exposed to Russian revolutionary urbanization, industrialization, and western educational practices. Working with different groups of subjects exposed in varying degrees to these broad transformations, Luria aimed to confirm his and Vygotsky's hypothesis that the introduction of new cultural tools such as literacy and numeracy, discursive language and propositional logic, engender the transition from concrete to abstract thought. For Luria and Vygotsky this transition was the epitome of cultural progress for, as Luria argues, "a person capable of abstract thought reflects the world more profoundly and completely."²⁴

Luria's team explored perception, reasoning, memory and imagination among groups of subjects exposed in differing degrees to literacy and technology. They found that illiterate people did not have the same visual illusions as people exposed to formal education and were not able to distinguish depth in either photographs or drawings. Their study of logical thinking indicated that illiterate people used situational rather than logical principles to classify objects, while their analysis of memory also revealed a tendency towards reliance on concrete, pictorial, cues.

22 RGALI, f. 1923, op. 2, ed khr. 1125, l. 26.

23 See Antonio Somaini's discussion of this issue in Sergei M. Eisenstein, *Notes for a General History of Cinema*, eds. Naum Kleiman and Antonio Somaini (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016).

24 Alexander Luria, *The Cognitive Development: Its Cultural and Social Foundations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 100.

In these experiments, Luria recognized the same tendency that Walter Benjamin described as the historicity of perception. Following the completion of his first expedition, Luria sent to Eisenstein an excited report (dated December 7, 1931), of which Eisenstein highlighted the following passage: “Can you imagine: what had appeared to us in psychology as natural processes (for example: perception, comparison, association) – now is revealed to us as historical regularities, organized differently at the early stages of development! This is a great shift in psychology...” Eisenstein noted in his diary: “This letter from my dearest Alexander Romanovich arrived yesterday – and precisely on the topic, but I think that my point of view goes somehow further: that the processes themselves are simultaneously encountering each other different historical stages...”²⁵ While clearly sharing Luria’s agenda here, Eisenstein appears to challenge his strictly teleological understanding of historical development as progress toward higher levels of logical, abstract, formal thinking. Eisenstein’s comments allow for a more fluid relationship between what Luria and Vygotsky defined as higher and lower levels of psychological functioning, thus anticipating his later argument that each logical thesis can be articulated through historically earlier means in order to make it effective.

Upon his return to Moscow in 1932, Eisenstein initiated a research seminar and invited Luria, Vygotsky and the linguist Nikolai Marr to participate.²⁶ The intellectual contacts between Vygotsky, Luria, and Eisenstein were particularly intense around this time. Among other things, they were planning to co-author publications in *Character and Personality*, but although scheduled to appear in 1934 they were never published.²⁷ It was

25 RGALI. f. 1923, op. 2, ed. khr. 1130, l. 71.

26 Sergei Eizenshtein, *Metod*, 2 vols (Moscow: Muzei kino, 2002), 1: 136.

27 In 1934 the following articles were announced by the journal as “forthcoming”: Sergei Eisenstein, “The Dynamics of Facial Expression”; A. R. Luria, “Self-Analysis and Social Conduct”; L. S. Vygotsky, “Comparative Psychology of the Child.” The copies of the journal with these announcements are preserved in Eisenstein’s library in Moscow.

at this time that Vygotsky produced his key cultural-historical work, *Thought and Speech*, and attempted to expand his theory to address emotions. Vygotsky's death from tuberculosis in June 1934 and Marr's death in December 1934 put an end to this, the most formal, stage of Eisenstein's involvement in the development of cultural-historical theory, yet, his work on *Method* arguably continued and extended the cultural-historical paradigm in innovative, radical, and far-reaching ways.

As Viacheslav Ivanov notes, the distinctive feature of the approach that Eisenstein adopted in *Method* is his consistent and determinant historicism, with equal attention given to the synchronic and the diachronic aspects of works of art.²⁸ At the core of the elaboration of *Method* Eisenstein positioned what he called the *Grundproblem*, the German term he used to define a main or a basic problem of art. For Eisenstein this problem consists in the ability of a work of art to mobilize two opposing impulses: one towards a rational, intellectual insight and enrichment, realised mainly at the level of the content of the work, and another towards the engagement of the whole sensory, affective, and emotional sphere and achieved mainly through the form of art. The latter, in turn, only becomes possible, according to Eisenstein, because the language of form is based on a plethora of mechanisms developed throughout the cultural history of humankind and its evolutionary prehistory as a species.

The effect of a work of art builds upon the fact that two processes occur within it simultaneously: a determined progressive ascent towards ideas (the highest peaks of consciousness) and, through its formal structure, a penetration into the deepest layers of sensual thinking. The polarity between these two tendencies creates the remarkable tension between the unity of form and content that distinguishes genuine works of art.²⁹

28 Viacheslav Ivanov, *Ocherki po istorii semiotici v SSSR* (Moscow: Nauka, 1976).

29 Sergei Eisenstein, *Selected Works. Volume 3. Writing 1934–1947*, ed. Richard Taylor, trans. William Powell (London: BFI, 1996), 38.

In contemporary terms, *Grundproblem* addresses the relationship between cinema, meaning-making and the brain-body system. Eisenstein explores how cinema engages the senses and sensorium – all the functions of perception, ranging from the cognitive and intellectual to the sensory and carnal. In this line of inquiry Eisenstein's research anticipates contemporary film theorists' interest in the embodied aspects of cinematic perception and affect. However, Eisenstein simultaneously insists that mobilizing this sensory sphere is only possible through the use of complex aesthetic techniques, stylistic devices, and material technologies. With this in view, he investigates how the expressive means of artistic media other than cinema – literature, dance, painting, music – correspond or contrast with the specific devices and techniques of cinema. In this respect, *Method* represents a detailed study of cinema's intermedial relationship with other arts and its transmedial capacities to engage the viewer.

But Eisenstein's project was not simply descriptive or analytical, not just concerned with explicating the most general "laws" of art's effectiveness; his aim was also to construct a working methodology for use by artists in their creative practices – an orientation that corresponds to Vygotsky's ideas about the instrumental use of symbolic systems as cultural tools. Arguably Eisenstein treated the expressive means of cinema as psychological tools for organising aesthetic audiences' reactions. It is significant also that Eisenstein shared the cultural-historical view that such tools are specific to particular cultures and change historically, a view that opened up the possibility of situating the cultural history of aesthetic response within the broader perspective of evolutionary psychology, on one hand, and technological progress, on the other.

Similarly to Vygotsky and Luria, Eisenstein focused on evolutionary (philogenetic), ontogenetic and cultural lines of development, with a particular interest in early embryonic forms of perception and thought that Luria described as "psychological archeology." In *Method*, Eisenstein explores such phenom-

ena as synaesthesia – a non-differentiated form of perception in which various modalities of the senses are interconnected; the diffuse, pre-logical thinking; the disintegrated syntax of inner speech; and the ways these earlier forms of psychological functioning can be mobilized to produce aesthetic effect in works of art. However, Eisenstein's methodology doesn't simply explore early plastic means of expression, but reconstructs a dynamic, historically changing continuum of different forms of mediation, starting with the simplest acts of form-giving activity.

One of the striking examples of such form-giving activity analysed in *Method* is rhythm, which Eisenstein posits as one of the most basic structuring principles in art. Eisenstein writes that the "rhythmic drum" is effective because it returns us to the primitive sensory-perceptual stage:

everything in us that occurs *apart from consciousness* and will – occurs *rhythmically*: the beating of the heart and breathing, peristalsis of the intestines, merging and separation of cells, etc. Switching off consciousness, we sink into the inviolable rhythm of breathing during sleep, the rhythm of sleepwalking, etc. And conversely – the monotony of a repeated rhythm brings us closer to those states "next to consciousness," where only the traits of sensuous thought are capable of functioning fully.³⁰

Yet rhythm is not equal to frequency and pulsations; in order to be perceived as rhythm, pulsation needs to be organized into a pattern, to be given form, and this can only come about via cultural mediation. Thus Eisenstein relates rhythm to various forms of ritualized actions calculated to produce a specific effect. He writes,

Starting with the simplest and most literal [rhythm] – the ritual drums of the voodoo cult (in Cuba). Their measured beating, in a continuously accelerating tempo, leads the responsive listeners into a state of total frenzy. And they are totally in the power of the images flashing through their excited imagination, or of whatever

30 Eisenstein, *Method*, 1:185.

their leader suggests to them... The rhythmic drum of the Catholic religious machine is described by Zola in *Lourdes*... For orthodox ecstasy – Gorky has left a description...³¹

What we see here is a typical move that Eisenstein makes in *Method* and which can be characterised as a double mediation. Not only is a developmentally early or “natural” capacity seen as mediated and transformed by culture – as when a natural pulsation characteristic of biological processes becomes effective as a proto-aesthetic device once it is mediated by the cultural tools of drums and religious ritual – but the rituals themselves come to us through literary descriptions, such as those provided by Zola and Gorky.

Eisenstein presented the central ideas of *Method* at a major Soviet filmmakers’ conference, the First All Union Creative Congress, in 1935. In his celebrated address to the conference he referred to Luria and Vygotsky’s work several times, albeit without mentioning their names since cultural-historical psychology had been criticized since 1931 and would be effectively banned for thirty years from the mid-1930s onwards. The reasons for this suppression were twofold. Vygotsky’s and Luria’s valorization of the semiotic sphere, or culture in a broad sense, as a key determinant of psychological development contradicted the Marxian insistence on the material and economic realm as the major determining factor in culture and psychology; and their attribution of a key role to the individual, interiority, and agency, also offended the insistence on the collective as a basis of the new subjectivity in the official Soviet academic discourse of the time.

Eisenstein’s blueprint for *Method*, revealed in 1935, was not attacked immediately, neither, arguably, was the radical potential of his theory grasped. But, in the same year, Eisenstein began working on his first sound feature, *Bezhin Meadow*, which he saw as a practical exploration of the issues addressed in *Method* and which Luria regarded as his highest cinematic

31 Eisenstein, *Method*, 1: 185.

achievement. The Soviet authorities declared *Bezhin Meadow* an ideological mistake and banned the film. Its stylistic approach, especially its reliance on broad intertextual allusions to religious themes and iconography, as well as its mobilization of myth and ritual were subjected to harsh criticism. Subsequently, Eisenstein's theoretical agenda, in general, was similarly criticized and he had to move his research on *Method* into three increasingly private sites: his notes, his diary, and his memoir.

Yet, Luria's request in 1940 for Eisenstein to address *The Psychology of Art*, which resulted in the text of the same title demonstrates that their efforts to identify constructive ways in which aesthetic theory and the science of mind could be more closely articulated was not abandoned. Eisenstein's notes on *The Psychology of Art* are an attempt to present, in a condensed form, "The part that has been the least developed and described: *the method of art*."³² After the interruption of the Second World War, Luria returned to his request in 1947 and suggested that Eisenstein deliver a course of lectures on *The Psychology of Art* for students of the Psychology Institute of Moscow University. Eisenstein began writing the "Conspectus of Lectures on the Psychology of Art" on November 19, 1947, and it was one of the last pieces of writing that he produced. Eisenstein died in February 1948, leaving this project, as well as his work on *Method*, unfinished. In 1959, following Stalin's death and anticipating reforms in Soviet academia, Luria wrote an article entitled, "Toward a General Theory of Expression (S. M. Eisenstein the Thinker),"³³ in which he presented a formulation of the main ideas of *Method* that demonstrates that cultural-historical theory provided a shared conceptual framework for both Eisenstein's work and Luria's and Vygotsky's. Luria explained:

Eisenstein had to focus on the historical process in which thought took shape, and trace the historical pathways of its forma-

32 Sergei Eisenstein, "The Psychology of Art," *Journal of Russian & East European Psychology* 51: 5–6 (2013): 193.

33 Alexander Luria, "Toward a General Theory of Expression," *Journal of Russian & East European Psychology* 51:5–6 (2013).

tion while describing the deep layers of sensual thinking that have survived in the psyche of every person but whose laws may be perceived and converted for higher, consciously formulated purposes and used to express the highest ideological content. It was precisely this conscious perception of unconscious forms of figurative expression of thought, the discovery of their rules and their use for mastering the laws of expression, that especially preoccupied Eisenstein and was the common thread of his explorations.³⁴

Reflecting on the enormity of *Method's* scope, Luria wrote further in his article: "This is why the study of Eisenstein's archives, which in itself is a task of enormous difficulty and requires tremendous attention and almost all-inclusive erudition, is a major project that will lead to a point where we will have before us the features of an immense system that is still inaccessible and whose fragments and contours we can only guess at."³⁵ This was the challenge to which Naum Kleiman rose. The edition of *Method* that the editorial team led by Kleiman published in 2002, after decades of painstaking archival work, is not only a monument of textual reconstruction, it is also a solid theoretical and methodological accomplishment reflecting the major parameters of the cultural-historical framework that Eisenstein shared with Vygotsky and Luria. In tackling the task of organising thousands of pages addressing a vast range of themes, Kleiman presented Eisenstein's writings in two volumes: Volume One, "Grundproblem," which explores the "Ways of Regress," meaning, by and large, embodied, "natural" mechanisms, the biological affordances that make aesthetic experience possible; and Volume Two, "The Secrets of Great Masters," a historical exploration of changing aesthetic techniques, technologies and devices that can be used to organize an aesthetic reaction. This logic is broadly analogous to Vygotsky and Luria's developmental perspective on mind and brain that foregrounds the difference between the lower and the higher psychological func-

34 Luria, "General Theory," 203–4.

35 Luria, "General Theory," 206.

tions, where the former are transformed by the use of symbolic means, and thus become purely human.

Significantly, Kleiman positioned one of Eisenstein's late texts, "The Magic of Art," which had been preserved in Luria's personal archive, as a prologue for *Method*.³⁶ This is an apt tribute to the life-long collaboration between Eisenstein, Vygotsky, and Luria and an acknowledgment of the centrality of the ideas of cultural-historical theory for Eisenstein's legacy. Among other themes, Eisenstein reiterates in this piece his conviction that art should not be mimetic but kinetic – that it should not "reflect" the world but transform it – and that it is in such kinesis that art's true "magic" resides. But he also demonstrates how this orientation developed from his early discussions with Luria and Vygotsky of cultural mediation and its power to organize behavior and transform the human psyche, with a nod to the understanding of ritual that they had collaboratively developed in the 1920s:

My orientation has shown – and still bears a vestige of – how art's predecessor, ritual, was used, namely:

– to conquer – by exerting influence – to override, to subordinate to one's will.

There (and then) – nature and the forces of nature.

Now, in the case of art, the spectator's psychology (and feelings) are taken possession of, and his ideology is overridden and transformed by my own ideology as a propagandist (by my idea, my conception, my worldview).

The project of "reflection" has always appeared to me as passive and unworthy.

I always imagined art as "one of the means of violence" – always as a tool (weapon) for transforming the world by changing people's consciousness.

It is interesting that this is directly linked with the process of

36 I have discovered this essay while working in A.R. Luria's private archive and first published it as I. Vassilieva, "Teoreticheskoe nasledie S.Eizenshteina: Publikatsii iz arkhiva A.R. Luria," *Kinovedcheskie zapiski* 8 (1990).

personality-formation in nature, whereas “reflection” is linked with primary automatism, with the eidetic ability to reproduce, which is a stage lower than personality formation – a purely imitative instinctual phase and directly associated with the lowest reproductive stage – the biological reproduction of oneself in ... descendants: both in animals and in plants.³⁷

Eisenstein’s rhetoric, here, might seem redolent of his earlier proclamations about “ploughing the psyche of the viewer” or hitting the viewer’s consciousness with the “cine-fist,” which have generated intense debates in film theory. At stake in such debates was the issue of freedom, both the interpretative freedom of the spectator and the self-determination of the social subject, to which Eisenstein’s position appeared to be antithetical. Yet, in this piece he argues that his instrumental attitude in art “is directly linked with the process of personality formation,” echoing the core insistence of cultural-historical theory that the use of symbolic tools provides the way to higher levels of psychological functioning and, eventually, liberation. Vygotsky believed that “The central problem of all psychology is freedom.”³⁸ And the way to freedom for Vygotsky passes through the use of signs as a means of self-control, mastery, and agency: “with the help of signs, [man] subordinates to his will processes of his own behaviour.”³⁹ For Vygotsky, this, precisely, is what allows a person not only to regulate his cognitive processes, but also to create his affects, personality and destiny. Eisenstein’s instrumentalist perspective, which he shared with Vygotsky, renders art one of the most powerful techniques that humans can use to transform themselves. While being a product of history and culture, art becomes a tool for transgressing the

37 Eizenshtein, *Metod*, 1: 46–7.

38 Ekaterina Zavershneva, “‘The Way to Freedom’ (On the Publication of Documents from the Family Archive of Lev Vygotsky),” *Journal of Russian and East European Psychology* 48:1 (2010), 70.

39 Lev Vygotsky, “The Structure of Higher Mental Functions,” *The Essential Vygotsky*, eds., R.W. Rieber, D.K. Robinson et al. (New York: Kluwer Academic Press, 2004), 362.

actual, overcoming both natural and historical limitations. The heuristic potential and ethical imperative of the Eisenstein-Vygotsky-Luria collaboration is thus far from exhausted. On the contrary, given the current reinvigoration of interest in how study of the brain can be integrated with the achievements of film theory, it is more relevant than ever.

ELENA VOGMAN

DIE URGESTEN DER „LINEAREN SPRACHE“: NIKOLAJ MARR UND SERGEJ EISENSTEIN



Fig. 1 Nikolaj Marr, „Ausgrabungen an den Wänden des Aschots“,
Ani 1892–1893, Archiv der Staatlichen Akademie
der Geschichte Materielle Kultur, St.-Petersburg

Das *Körperliche* durchzieht Sergej Eisensteins Verständnis der sprachlichen Zeichen, genauso wie der Sprache stets ein geistlich-expressiver Moment innewohnt. Die Lehre von einer archaischen Gestensprache, der sogenannten „linearen Sprache“, die ein Stadium in der Genese der menschlichen Lautsprache darstellt, ist auf eine verblüffende Weise in der Sprachpaläontologie von Nikolaj Marr formuliert worden. Diese Paläontologie der Sprache lieferte nicht nur theoretische, sondern auch entscheidende methodische Impulse für Eisensteins Arbeit. Eine nichtlineare, *mäandernde*, von Latenzen und Wiederholungen durchzogene Temporalität stellte *für beide Ansätze* ein Modell dar, in dem die Kulturentwicklung nicht als ein abgeschlossenes Ereignis erschien, sondern als eine stets offene Potentialität.

Wie lässt sich aber in diesem offenen Zeitmodell die Entwicklung denken? Und welche Rolle kommt darin der Kultur zu, ihren Sprachen und ihren Zeichen? Die im Körper und seinen Gesten *übertragene* Dynamik lieferte für Marr die Indizien eines lebendigen „Ursprungs der Sprache“, während sie für Eisenstein durch die Praxis der Montage immer weitere Dimensionen eines „sinnlichen Denkens“ der Bilder freilegte. Es geht im Folgenden um einige Elemente aus Marrs Paläontologie der Sprache, welche – trotz ihrer komplexen Entwicklung in der Sowjetunion sowie einigen spekulativen und strittigen Hypothesen – starken Einfluss auf Eisensteins nichtorthodoxe und selbst schöpferische Historiographie der Kunst hatte. Ohne hier auch nur annähernd auf die vielen Resonanzen einzugehen zu können, die Marrs Denken in Eisensteins theoretischem Spätwerk vernehmen lässt, möchte ich einige Perspektiven der Analyse aufzeigen. Diese Perspektiven wurden durch Naum Klejmans unermüdliche editorische Arbeit ermöglicht: Seine Publikation hochkomplexer Schriften Eisensteins – von *Montaž*, über *Metod* und *Neravnodušnaja priroda* (Eine nichtgleichmütige Natur) bis *Vseobščaja istorija kino* (Allgemeine Geschichte des Kinos). Diese editorische Arbeit von Naum Klejman hat in vielen Ländern bereits mehrere Generationen der Eisenstein-Forschung befruchtet und bereichert.

In historischen Enzyklopädien wird der georgisch-russische Sprachwissenschaftler und Orientalist Nikolaj Marr (1864–1934) auch als Archäologe, Philologe, Linguist, Ethnograph und sogar als Paläontolinguist vorgestellt. Marr begründete die „Neue Lehre von der Sprache“, die *Japhetologie*. Sie galt aufgrund ihrer klassengeschichtlichen Orientierung als offizielle sowjetische Sprachtheorie, bis sie 1950 von Stalin in der *Pravda* negiert und verworfen wurde.¹ Die Japhetologie ging von der Existenz einer „japhetischen“ Sprachfamilie aus, zu der

1 Vgl. Elke Hentschel, „Die Sprachursprungstheorie N. J. Marrs“, *Theorien vom Ursprung der Sprache*, hg. Joachim Gessinger, Wolfert von Rahden, Bd. 1, (New York und Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1989) 627–648.

die Sprachen des Kaukasus, Vorderasiens sowie einige nicht-indoeuropäische Sprachen Eurasiens und Afrikas gehörten. Nicht nur Marrs Sprachtheorie, sondern auch seine interdisziplinär-spekulative paläontologische Methode erweckte vor allem im Kreis der Futuristen wie Velimir Chlebnikov großes Interesse. In seinen Texten zur Montage verglich Eisenstein Marrs Vorlesungen, die er in den 1920er Jahren besuchte, mit der polyphonen Lektüre von James Joyce.

Im Unterschied zur idealistischen oder mimetischen Fundierung der Sprachgenese, wie sie noch bei Herder oder Wundt im Primat der Geste kulminierte, versuchte Marr ein materialistisches Fundament der Sprache zu finden. Das temporale Modell war auch hier ein archäologisches, das aus Marrs mehrjähriger praktischer Erfahrung resultierte. Noch vor der Revolution prägte Marr nämlich vor allem durch die zahlreichen, intensiv fotodokumentierten Grabungen in der armenischen Bagratiden-Stadt Ani² [Fig. 1] einen archäologischen Zugang zur Kulturgeschichte. Seine Sprachforschung basierte auf einer paläontologischen Erforschung des „Ursprungs“ von Sprachen (Japhetologie), wo er das Konzept einer operativen Funktion der Geste in ihrer Implikation in Arbeitsprozesse entwickelte. Der indoeuropäischen Linguistik, die lediglich „auf die Daten toter und überhaupt traditioneller Schriftsprachen“ gerichtet sei, setzte Marr seinen sozialbiologischen Ansatz und seine paläontologische Forschungs-

2 Für die Dokumentation seiner archäologischen Expeditionen absolvierte Marr sogar eine dreimonatige Schulung in Fotografie. Der aufschlussreiche Artikel von T. Devel' und T. Tomes über das „Fotoarchiv“ von Nikolaj Marr beschreibt das in großem Maße noch unveröffentlichte Fotoarchiv von Marr, das der Archäologe rigoros zwischen 1876 und 1933 gesammelt hat. Seit einigen Jahren ist das im Institut der Geschichte der materiellen Kultur der Russischen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Petersburg aufbewahrte Fotoarchiv wieder zugänglich. Nach der Revolution gründete Marr in St.-Petersburg auf der Grundlage dieser Materialien das Japhetische Institut sowie die Staatliche Akademie der Geschichte Materielle Kultur. Vgl. T. M. Devel' und T. B. Tomes, „Die Sammlung von Nikolaj Marr im Fotoarchiv von LOIA AN UdSSR“, *Istoriko-filologičeskij žurnal*, Nr. 3, (Jerevan, 1971) 289-295.

methode entgegen.³ In den 1920er Jahren, als Marr an der ersten russischen Übersetzung des französischen Ethnologen Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, namentlich seiner *Mentalité primitive* arbeitete⁴, besuchte Eisenstein Marrs Vorlesungen. Marr hätte den entscheidenden Impuls für Eisensteins anthropologische Fundierung der Kunst geben können, mit Blick auf ihre komplexe Temporalität und ihre gestisch-mimische Entwicklung. Es war der „Zusammenhang zwischen unserem und frühem Denken, ihre Wechselwirkung und die fundamentale Bedeutung der Sprachvergangenheit für die Probleme des aktuellen Bewusstseins“⁵, die Marrs Ansatz für Eisenstein hervorbrachte.

Für die Affinität zwischen materieller Kultur, Sprache und Körper, die sowohl für Marrs Paläontologie der Sprache als auch für Eisensteins anthropologische Kunsttheorie besonders wichtig war, sind Lévy-Bruhls Ausführungen über das archaische Denken und die Mechanismen der Partizipation eine entscheidende Quelle. In seiner Konzeption eines „prälogischen Denkens“, das nach einer formimmanenten bildlichen Logik verfährt, die sich über Widersprüche hinwegsetzt, formulierte Lévy-Bruhl kein teleologisches Modell, sondern ein Denken, das auch andere Denkmechanismen neben sich koexistieren lässt. Damit lieferte der Anthropologe ein Modell sowohl für Eisenteins „sinnliches Denken“ in ästhetischen Prozessen als auch für Marrs konkreten bzw. bildhaften Modus „urzeitlicher“ Wörter und Begriffe. Für Marr waren diese urzeitlichen Wörter „prälogisch“ im Sinne polyfunktionaler Einheiten: Sie waren offen für heterogene Verbindungen oder Montagen. So strittig man das Marr heute machen kann, wenn er so konkrete Aussagen über die japhetische „Urzeit“ traf – es gäbe in ihr beispielsweise „keine verschiedenen Redeteile, es fehlte auch der

3 Nikolai Marr, „Über die Entstehung der Sprache“ (1926), *Unter dem Banner des Marxismus (Pod Znamenem Marksizma)* 3 (1926): 558.

4 Lévy-Bruhls *La Mentalité primitive* erschien 1930 mit Marrs Vorwort in Moskau im Verlag „Ateist“. Die Ausgabe wird das in Eisensteins Bibliothek, mit dem Datum 22.12.1932 versehen, aufbewahrt.

5 Sergej Eisenstein, *Metod (Methode)*, hg. Naum Klejman (Moskau: Muzej Kino, 2002), 88.

abstrakteste unter ihnen, das Verbum“, – so machte sein Ansatz gleichsam eine morphologische und sinnliche Struktur der Sprache offen, die sehr nahe an den visuellen Prozessen des Kinos lag. Diese Vieldeutigkeit der Wörter rief die Notwendigkeit einer zusätzlichen Ebene der Kommunikation auf den Plan:

Zum richtigen Verständnis so vieldeutiger Worte wirkte sehr wesentlich die Mimik mit, vor allem die Hand, d. h. die Gebärde; außerdem Höhe und Tiefe der Stimme, Längung und Kürzung der Laute, endlich der Ton selbst, d. h. diejenigen Elemente der Sprache, welche nur an lebendigen Sprachen erforscht werden können, wenn wir ihre Bedeutung erkennen wollen.⁶

Die Sprache involviert folglich den gesamten Körper und seine Ausdrucksmöglichkeiten: Gesten und Mimik, Töne und ihre Dauer. Die Wahrnehmung dieser Sprache (ihre *aesthesia*) wäre angesichts dieser Manifestationen auch bis aufs Äußerste involviert werden. Denn für Marr war die Präzision des Ausdrucks – trotz der „Vieldeutigkeit“ seiner Elemente – ebenso wesentlich wie für die späteren bzw. moderneren Sprachformationen. Erstaunlich erscheint auch die Betonung jeder Verbindung, die Marr zwischen der urzeitlichen und lebendigen Sprache etabliert und erforscht. Wie kein einziger Gedanke so ist auch kein einziges Wort in seiner ursprünglichen Form erhalten geblieben; trotz dieser historischen Wandlungen lassen sich stets Bruchstücke der ursprünglichen Sprache rekonstruieren. Auf dieser Dialektik gründete auch Eisensteins „Dialektik des Kunstwerks“, in der das Sinnliche und das Intelligible, die Transformation und die Wiederkehr stets gleichzeitig präsent waren.⁷

Die Metamorphosen der japhetischen Sprachen in der Aktualität aufzuspüren, war das Ziel von Marrs linguistischer Me-

6 Nikolaj Marr, „Jafeticeskij Kavkaz i tretij etniceskij element v sozidanii sredizemnomorskoj kul'tury“ (Der japhetische Kaukasus und das dritte ethnische Element im Bildungsprojekt der mittelländischen Kultur) *Isbrannye Raboty*, Bd. II, hg. L. Basindzagan (Leningrad, 1920), 51.

7 Eisenstein, *Metod*, 167.

thode: seiner „diachronischen vergleichenden Grammatik“, die Eisenstein oft mit Montage assoziierte. Marrs Methode zielte darauf, „auf dem Wege der Vergleichung das Bild der Umwandlung der Sprache in den verschiedenen Epochen der Sprachschöpfung“ aufzufalten.⁸ So rekonstruierte Marrs Paläontologie aus zeitgenössischen Sprachformen die darin überlieferten und überlebenden archaischen „Reste“ und legte darin die historischen „Stadien“ der Sprachentwicklung frei.

Diese Ansätze Marrs durchziehen über die konkreten Referenzen hinaus Eisensteins Theorie. In *Montaž* assoziiert er die Vorlesungen Marrs mit der Lektüre von Joyces *Ulysses*: ihrer Vielsprachigkeit, der Polyphonie eines Gedankens, den Peripetien eines Wortes, letztlich einer vertikal montierten Reihe heterogener „widersprüchlicher und gegensätzlicher Erscheinungen“.⁹ In *Metod* beruft sich Eisenstein auf ein 1928 geplantes Laboratorium, in dem neben Marr die Psychologen Lev Vygotskij und Alexandr Lurja gemeinsam die Probleme der aufkommenden Filmsprache erforschen sollten.¹⁰

Marrs sprachgenetischer Ansatz untersuchte die Entstehung der Lautsprache aus der „linearen“ bzw. gestischen (motorischen) Sprache. In seinem Aufsatz von 1926 „Über die Entstehung der Sprache“ beteuerte Marr:

Es ist völlig undenkbar, dass die Hand, ehe Werkzeuge sie als Erzeugerin materieller Güter ablösen, als Erzeugerin eines geistigen Werts, der Sprache, ersetzt werden und dass damals schon eine artikulierte Lautsprache an die Stelle der Handsprache treten konnte.¹¹

8 Marr, „Über die Entstehung der Sprache“, 570.

9 Sergej Eisenstein, *Montaž* (Montage) hg. Naum Klejman (Moskau: Muzej kino, 2000), 363–365.

10 Eisenstein, *Metod*, 136.

11 Die indoeuropäischen Sprachen stellen nach Marr den historischen Zustand, die japhetischen den vorhistorischen ein und derselben Sprachen dar. Die sozialbiologische Sprachwissenschaft wird auf materialistische Weise fundiert: Die Sprache, besonders die Lautsprache sei „Produkt der Entwicklung der Gesellschaft, ihres kollektiven Schöpfertums“, was ihre Zugehörigkeit einer bestimmten



Fig. 2 Nikolaj Marr, „Die Gestensprache einer Grusinischen Frau: die Hände sind verbunden, sie bezeichnen ‚die Sonne‘“, Tbilisi, 1931, Archiv der Staatlichen Akademie der Geschichte Materieller Kultur, St.-Petersburg

Die Beherrschung der Lautsprache war anfänglich also nur wenigen zugänglich und konnte deshalb offenbar auch zum Mittel der „herrschenden Klasse“ gehören. Ebenso wie Marr, beruft sich Eisenstein in der Beschreibung der Handsprache auf *Manual Concepts* des Ethnologen Frank Hamilton Cushing, der zwischen 1879 und 1884 die gegenseitige Entwicklung von Hand- und Lautsprache bei Völkern in New Mexico untersuchte. Die nicht-mimetische Struktur eines „linearen“, handsprachlichen Ausdrucks assoziierte Eisenstein in *Metod* mit dem „Tanz der Hände“ auf Bali, dem sogenannten „Mudras“, bei dem der äußere Ablauf nicht die Gestalt der Gegenstände abbildet, sondern strukturell dem Ablauf der Gedanken entspricht. Kraft des Rhythmus, dessen Potentialität sich in der Zeit steigert, operiert Mudras Eisenstein zufolge auf der Schwelle zwischen einem

Rasse oder Nation völlig ausschließe, denn sie sei vielmehr durch produktiven Arbeitsprozess bedingt. Marr, „Über die Entstehung der Sprache“, 593.

„Pulsieren der Emotion“ und der „Verkörperung in sichtbaren Formen“.¹²

Auch die diachrone zeithistorische Verbindung der Handsprache mit der Lautsprache als methodischer Kern Marrs Sprachpaläontologie inspirierte Eisensteins Ansatz einer polyphonen ursprünglichen Gestensprache. Es ging ihm einerseits um die Möglichkeit, in lebenden Sprachen die darin nachlebenden archaischen Strukturen aufzuspüren und so aus dem *pars* eines „fossilen Überbleibsel“ das gestische *totum* zu rekonstruieren. Andererseits legt die phasenhafte bzw. stadiale Entwicklung der menschlichen Kultur und Sprache, die sich im Rahmen politischer, sozialer und ökonomischer Bedingungen stufenweise wandelten, die Vorstellung einer Simultaneität und Koexistenz verschiedener gesellschaftlicher und sozialhistorischer Formationen nahe. Es geht zugleich um das latente Fortbestehen dieser Formationen im Bewusstsein als Denkformen und Denkweisen der aktuellen Kulturprozesse.

Marrs Paläontologie der Sprache lieferte schließlich ein methodisch-theoretisches Denkmodell, das Eisenstein in mexikanischen Tagebüchern reflektierte:

Die Idee von der Stadialität der Sprache [...] Marr; aber auch die Form als Stadium des Inhalts etc. verschiebt die Frage von der ‚Kontinuität der Stile‘ und Wechselwirkungen. Sie erlaubt den Vergleich von völlig disparaten Erscheinungen wie zum Beispiel des Theaters der Basken mit dem Theater Mexikos.¹³

Es geht um eine Gegenüberstellung heterogener kulturhistorischer Phänomene, deren Vergleich immer neue ungeahnte Verbindungen produziert. Man kann diese Methode in Eisensteins idiosynkratischer Denk- und Schreibpraxis wiedererkennen, die in der Materialmontage eine vergleichende Erforschung kultureller Denkschichten unternimmt und die

12 Eisenstein, *Metod*, 397.

13 Sergej Eisenstein, Tagebuch vom August 1932, Moskau: RGALI 1923-2-1126 (1), list 1, 2, 3.

eigenen Texte dabei zur schillernden Polyphonie von Bezügen und Korrespondenzen transformiert.

Das Interesse für die Geste beschränkt sich nicht auf Fragen der Sprachgenese. Es ist Ausdruck eines prinzipielleren, man könnte sagen kulturarchäologischen Interesses für das Nachleben archaischer Denkformationen in „Sprachen“ des Materials und deren affizierender Wirkung:

Darin liegt die Rekonstruktion eines hochkomplexen Prozesses, den die psychische Seite unserer menschlichen Spezies evolutionär durchgemacht hat [...] Und die entsprechenden ‚Schichten‘ können nicht anders als in einer Antwort zu ‚vibrieren‘ und aktiv in ein solches Spiel der Farbenleinwand einzutauchen.¹⁴

Weit davon entfernt, hier eine bloße Parallele oder Metapher zu sehen, die durch Zuschreibung von Gesten das Kunstwerk anthropomorphisieren würde, geht es Eisenstein um eine unbewusste sinnliche Kommunikation. Vielmehr soll sie der wahrnehmbaren Vielfalt von Formen eine archaische Erfahrungsdimension entgegenbringen. In diesen „Schichten“, denen vergangene Erfahrungswerte innewohnen, deckt Eisenstein eine Art Archäologie evolutionärer Sprachformen auf¹⁵, die er als „nachlebend“ – d. h. aktualisierbar und aktiv – im sinnlichen Denken der Kunst auffindet. Die *Mise-en-scène* betrachtet er in Analogie mit der „Sprache der Bienen“: einer räumlichen

14 Sergej Eisenstein, *Neravnodušnaja priroda* (Eine nicht gleichmütige Natur), hg. Naum Klejman (Moskau: Muzej kino, 2004), 169.

15 Das Projekt einer Genealogie und Archäologie von kinematographischer Wahrnehmung wird ausführlich erst 1946-1948 in den Aufzeichnungen für eine *Allgemeine Geschichte des Kinos* realisiert, die erstmals von Naum Klejman in der Zeitschrift *Kinovedceskie Zapiski* publiziert wurde. Das Fragment gebliebene Projekt Eisensteins schreibt die Kinogeschichte ausgehend von vorkinematographischen Wahrnehmungsformen, visuellen Dispositiven und medialen Praktiken, die im Kino wieder aktualisiert bzw. aktiviert werden. Sergei Eisenstein, *Notes pour une histoire générale du cinéma*, hg. François Albera, Naum Klejman, Antonio Somaini, (Paris: Association française de recherche sur l'histoire du cinéma, 2014).

„Tanzsprache“, mit der die Bienen einander Informationen über Trachtplätze übertragen. Eisenstein bezieht sie aus der gleichnamigen Studie von Karl von Frisch.¹⁶ Im französischen Wort „Tournesol“ (deutsch: Sonnenblume) macht er ein nachlebendes Moment des „heliotropischen Stadiums“ aus¹⁷: „wenn der gesamte Komplex von Ausdrucksbewegungen“ einer Pflanze die Ausbalancierung des Gleichgewichts anstrebt. „Die Wurzel der Pflanze [...] strebt immer zum tiefsten Punkt, der am nächsten zum Zentrum der Gravitationskraft der Erde ist.“¹⁸ Analog dazu wird die menschliche Ausdrucksbewegung gesehen: als „plastische Sprache“, die sich im Verhältnis mit der Anziehungskraft der Erde bzw. dem „eigenen Gewicht“ konstituiert. Ein weiteres „Überlebsel“ (*perežitok*) des heliotropischen Stadiums sah Eisenstein auf einem Werbeplakat für elektrische Lampen „Osram“, die mit dem Satz „Licht lockt Leute“ an diese pflanzlich-archaischen Reaktionsmodi appellieren.¹⁹ Die Anziehungskraft des Gedichts von Konstantin Bal'mont „Seien wir wie die Sonne“ oder die Redewendung „zum Feuer einladen“ führ Eisenstein folgend unbewusst auf Denkschichten zurück, die das Heliotropische bewahrt haben.²⁰

16 Eisenstein, *Neravnodušnaja priroda*, 170. Bezüge auf die „Tanzsprache“ stammen aus Karl von Frisch, „Über die ‚Sprache‘ der Bienen. Eine tierpsychologische Untersuchung“, *Zoologische Jahrbücher (Physiologie)* 40 (Jena: Verlag von Gustav Fischer, 1923).

17 Eine interessante Parallele zu diesem Verständnis der Gestik in Analogie zur heliotropischen Anziehungskraft findet sich in einer Metapher Walter Benjamins, in der er im Aufsatz „Über den Begriff der Geschichte“ die dialektische Beziehung der Vergangenheit zum Jetzt zu beschreiben sucht: „Wie Blumen ihr Haupt nach der Sonne wenden, so strebt kraft eines Heliotropismus geheimer Art, das Gewesene der Sonne sich zuzuwenden, die am Himmel der Geschichte im Aufgehen ist.“ Walter Benjamin, „Über den Begriff der Geschichte“, *Gesammelte Schriften*, I, 2, I c, 694. Für den Hinweis danke ich Matthew Vollgraff.

18 Eisenstein, *Neravnodušnaja priroda*, 167.

19 Eisenstein, *Neravnodušnaja priroda*, 167.

20 Eisenstein, *Neravnodušnaja priroda*, 167.

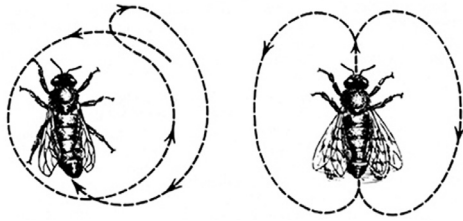


Fig. 3 Rundtanz, Schwänzeltanz. Der Rundtanz alarmiert andere Mitglieder des Schwarms zur Suche nahe gelegener Nahrung. Aus Karl von Frisch, „Über die ‚Sprache‘ der Bienen“, *Erinnerungen eines Biologen*, (Berlin, Göttingen, Heidelberg: Springer, 1957), 126.

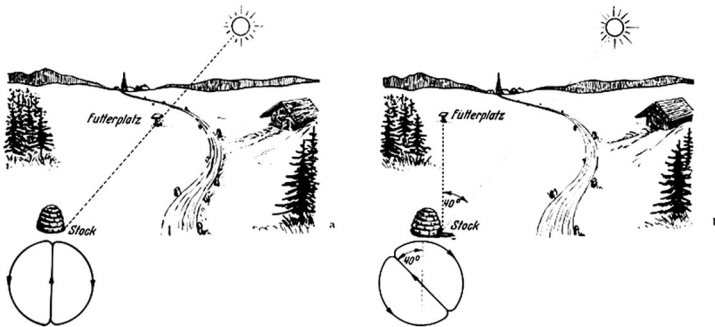


Fig. 4 Der Schwänzeltanz gibt die Distanz und Richtung weiter entfernter Nahrungsquellen an. Karl von Frisch, „Über die ‚Sprache‘ der Bienen“, 126.

Dieser materialgebundenen Affektion durch die Kunst liegt also eine *aktive Passivität* archaischer Denkschichten zugrunde, die in der Latenz stets fortwirken. Eisenstein beschreibt sie als Gefühle „in der Vertikale“:

Und auf diese Weise gewinnt unsere Definition der *vertikalen* Montage eine viel tiefere Bedeutung: Ihr Bild ist nicht mehr ein Abdruck [skolok] von einer Partiturseite, sondern ein authentisches Bild dessen, was unser ganzes Bewusstsein und alle seine ‚Schichten‘ bis in die tiefsten Tiefen im Schaffensprozess erfasst.²¹

21 Eisenstein, *Neravnodušnaja priroda*, 170.

Eben in dieser Vertikale der Denkschichten kann die Synästhesie situiert werden, die sich als „Verschiebung“ von Wahrnehmung und Denken auswirkt. Eisenstein erkennt darin eine zugleich kinematographische wie archaische Dimension der Wahrnehmung, in der „es noch keine strenge Unterscheidung zwischen den einzelnen Wahrnehmungsarten gibt. Wenn man fähig ist... Ton zu sehen... Farben zu hören.“²²

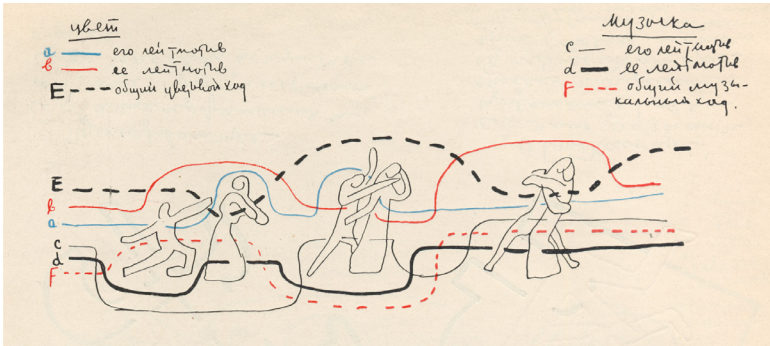


Fig. 5. Eisenstein, „Farbe und Musik werden doppelt im Bild verbunden, indem sie es zugleich durchziehen und umfassen“, *Neravnodušnaja priroda*, 225.

Das Denken im Medium des Materials konstituiert in Eisensteins Spätwerk einen wesentlichen Untersuchungsgegenstand, der im Zusammenhang mit Überlegungen zur Farbtonmontage auf morphologische und poetologische Paradigmen erweitert wird. Konzepte wie Polyphonie, Synästhesie, Rhythmus, Synchronie, Asynchronie, Dissonanz u. a. werden selbst im Rahmen einer polyphonen medialen Konstellation reflektiert: in Literatur und Poesie, in Schriften der Ästhetik und Philosophie, in Theaterstücken, Operninszenierungen und im Film. In diesen ästhetischen Ausdrucksformen erkennt Eisenstein jene Operation, die mit Blick auf die Geste in der „vertikalen Montage“ problematisiert wird: die Korrelation von Farben, Tönen, Dynamik der Komposition und Bewegung der Linien. Dieses Verfahren wird in sprachlichen, akustischen und visuellen Aus-

22 Eisenstein, *Neravnodušnaja priroda*, 170.

drucksmedien vollzogen. Die gefühlsmobilisierende „Einheit“ wird über eine Bewegung im Werk produziert, die gleichsam als Grundlage für intermediale und synästhetische Korrelationen gesehen wird.

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SERGE TOUBIANA. Ancien critique et rédacteur en chef des *Cahiers du cinéma*, éditeur, auteur d'ouvrages (sur François Truffaut, Maurice Pialat, Amos Gitai, etc.), ancien directeur général de la Cinémathèque française (2003 à 2015), auteur et réalisateur de documentaires sur le cinéma (sur François Truffaut, Isabelle Huppert, Gérard Depardieu, Charles Chaplin, Hitchcock-Truffaut). Président depuis juillet 2017 d'Unifrance.

Son dernier ouvrage, *Les fantômes du souvenir* a été publié en octobre 2016 (Grasset).

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ELENA VOGMAN is a postdoctoral research fellow in the DFG-project “Rhythm and Projection” at the Institute of General and Comparative Literature at the Free University in Berlin. She wrote her dissertation on the concept of *Sensuous Thinking* in Sergei Eisenstein’s theory project *Method*, to be published by diaphanes in 2018. She has published various articles on Soviet cinema, forms of visual thinking, practices of montage and the relations between literature, ethnology, art and science. Together with Gottfried Schnödl she founded the research group on Critical Morphology, based at the Free University in Berlin in collaboration with Universität Lüneburg. Together with Marie Rebecchi she curated the exhibition “Sergei Eisenstein: The Anthropology of Rhythm” (September 2017 – January 2018) at Nomas Foundation, Rome.

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The Flying Carpet. Studies on Eisenstein and Russian Cinema in Honor of Naum Kleiman gathers 33 essays (in English, French, and German) written by scholars working in Europe, North America, Latin America, India, and Australia. The essays have been written specifically for this occasion and are dedicated to Naum Kleiman, whose work and generosity—as the world’s leading Eisenstein specialist, as a film historian and curator of many exhibitions and retrospectives, as the custodian of Eisenstein’s memorial apartment, and the former, long-time director of the Moscow Cinema Museum—have been and continue to be a primary reference point for scholars, curators, film and theater directors interested in Eisenstein and in Russian cinema.

Naum Kleiman is the editor of the Russian editions of several of Eisenstein’s main book projects, including *Method, Montage, Nonindifferent Nature*, and the *Memoirs*, and the editor-in-chief of the Russian film studies journal *Kinovedcheskie zapiski*. He is the author of the collection of essays *Formula finala. Stat’i, vystupleniia, besedy* (Moskva: Eisenstein Centre, 2004), and has been involved in many other cinema related publications, in Russian and in various foreign languages. His latest publication to date is *Eisenstein on Paper. Graphic Works from the Master of Film* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2017).

Antonio Somaini is Professor in Film, Media, and Visual Culture Theory at the Université Sorbonne Nouvelle - Paris 3. He is the author of *Ejzenštejn. Il cinema, le arti, il montaggio* (Turin: Einaudi, 2011; English translation forthcoming with The University of Illinois Press). He has edited, together with Naum Kleiman, the English edition of Eisenstein’s *Notes for a General History of Cinema* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016).

Joan Neuberger is Professor of History at the University of Texas at Austin. She is the author of *Ivan the Terrible: The Film Companion*, numerous articles on Eisenstein and Russian visual culture, and the forthcoming, *This Thing of Darkness: Eisenstein’s Ivan the Terrible in Stalin’s Russia* (Cornell, 2018).

