

# EXPERIMENTAL CINEMA

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INTERNATIONAL FILM MANIFESTATION



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# EXPERIMENTAL CINEMA

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EXPERIMENTAL CINEMA is the only magazine in America devoted to the principles of the art of the motion picture.

EXPERIMENTAL CINEMA is a forum for the discussion of the new cinematic ideas and forms of America, Europe and U. S. S. R.

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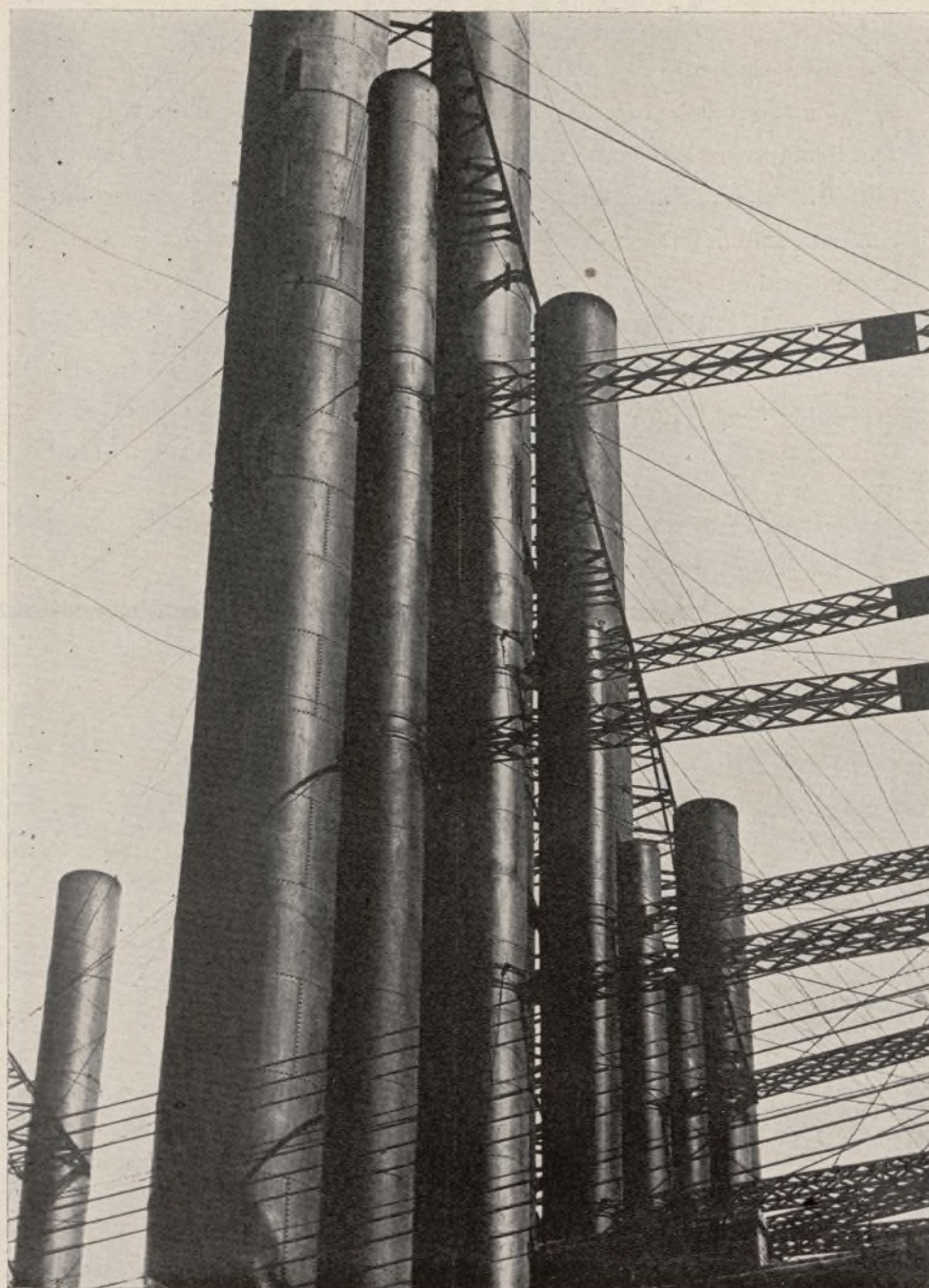


PHOTO  
BY  
BRETT  
WESTON

## FOCUS AND MECHANISM

**I**T cannot be denied that the feeble rationalism of the great body of modern thought carried over from a long disintegrated theology has failed dismally to penetrate and humanize the forces of the naturalistic world surrounding us today (as reflected in *radio, television, cinema, the machine in general*) forces which are as inescapable as they are directionless. For the first time in centuries man is without a *humanistic*

system or theory of the universe potent enough to meet, cooperate with and give meaning and reality to the new naturalistic synthesis disclosed and still being disclosed by modern science. Whereas in the middle ages, there was at one time powerful reciprocal relationship between the social, political and philosophical forces on one side and the natural or theologic powers on the other, — no such harmony exists for us today. Twentieth century man is without a symbology as inclusive



as that of the Mahabharata or the Divine Comedy which would support him in a union with *nature* and the mechanization of nature, the *machine* and thereby lend profound purpose to all phenomena within its scope. An ideology in which the machine would be incorporated integrally and vitally in the modern scheme both as affecting *the act* or *behavior* as well as the *thought* of man within it. It cannot be stated too often that this lack of a humanistic orientation of the modern world is responsible for a good deal of the unrest and weariness of our time. Indeed, social, political and humane development are so far in the arrears of scientific progress that it becomes more and more doubtful whether the balance will ever be fully adjusted one with the other, at least by rationalism. And to suggest a solution to the difficulty, by deliberate evasion of these new natural phenomena (radio, television, cinema, the machine) and by concentration on the traditional inner forces of man that have so long in the past contributed to his happiness and welfare in a less mechanical age, is the typical escape of the *spiritually retrogressive*. As though happiness is something that can be achieved by withdrawing so naively — and yet so desperately from pain; or chaos something that can be resolved to order in an ivory tower; as though humanistic forces themselves are not determined largely by the naturalistic. The very concept of good and evil itself must ultimately conform to a naturalistic ethos, whether it is the theologic synthesis of the 13th century or the scientific equivalent of the 20th. This type of rationalism however defeats itself as will be seen in a crisis, when it will always be found in the ranks of the most conservative or reactionary elements. Also to offer a solution to the question, in blind acceptance of mechanical science and technological progress, is to fall practically into the same error—a point of view that fails to take into consideration the irrationality — the creative irrationalism of nature since the days of Spencerian science. If it has been proven that even *nature* herself is irrational and imaginative in her behavior (as is now revealed) how on earth is it possible to erect systematic or rationalistic states, societies or philosophies, etc., without allowing for that element of mystery. Thus the so-called humanist and the modernist arrive at the same point without having touched the heart of the subject. Neither of these views has been able to explain or visualize the philosophical or social-political implications of the relation of man to a world wherein it is possible or soon will be possible for him to see an event in any part of the globe the *moment* it occurs. "The world for man today", wrote Jean Epstein, brilliant French cinematographer in "Broom", several years ago, "is like descriptive geometry with its infinite planes of projection. Everything possesses hundreds of apparent diameters which never superimpose exactly. A voice heard naturally, then heard springing from the black graphite of the telephone, then finally re-

sounding when the sapphire delivers it from the disc is no longer, whatever one may say, the simple voice, the same voice". It is this new space-time spirit that is awaiting a human synthesis. "An historical reconstruction on the screen strikes out for a few half hours, twenty centuries of time. The instantaneous photograph has discovered gestures which the eye now delivers and the hand reproduces. We notice how suddenly a face on the screen shows itself to be different. A wrinkle appears that we failed to notice for twenty years; but from now on we shall have learned to see it." And if "the speed realized by man has given a new character to civilized life", it will appear, it must appear in the creative forms of today. So as it becomes more and more impossible to eliminate or deflect the main currents of our time as they are manifested in radio, television, aeronautics, cinema, relativity, etc., it becomes more and more urgent that these factors if they are eventually to react to our benefit and not to our havoc be controlled by an ideology nourished by and through free creative contact with these realities. And the first premise of this *vision* will reject the false *dualism* of matter and spirit that has infected our age so long — for a spiritual *monism* more in consonance with the temper of the time — a *monism* that will suggest there is more of the beginnings, the foundations, of the new spirit in creative work outside the art world, than those within it — that the positive values of Machinery, Bridges, Automobiles, Zeppelins, Dynamos, the Cinema — celebrating the union of art and science — are of more importance for our ideology than the literature, painting or music of the day desperately struggling in a cul de sac and most of which exalts negative values entirely outside modern life. It will suggest that the *Cinema*, the *absolute focus* of the new spirit — is great enough in possibilities to not only *contain* but to give *direction* and *purpose* to poetry, music, painting, sculpture, etc. in the throes of a futile romanticism, and that it is the only major force of the day that in any way incorporates the vision of the new universe and the only medium in control of the artist today that can possibly unite with him in attempting a modern humanistic synthesis of the world powerful enough to give meaning and reality to the new naturalistic synthesis of science.

David Platt

In 1900 a Swede found a block of magnetic steel which retained the invisible vibrations of sound and retranslated them for the human ear. The steel, when demagnetized, became deaf and dumb. If matter hears and speaks, do not objects see? Do not lines adjust themselves to one another? A process not yet accessible to the human consciousness. Similarly, do not the vibrations of the cinema have speech, thought, will? Scientific investigators may track down the evidence of this life; hieroglyphists may interpret its system of logic; but is not the imagination to be permitted its faith in an arrangement of living lines which, going beyond pretext and scenery, play the leading role? The art of the cinema offers us a new expression of thought.

Etienne de Beaumont.



# IN EISENSTEIN'S DOMAIN

By Dr. ERWIN HONIG (Berlin)

(Translated by Christel Gang from the Original Article Published in *Internationale Filmschau*)

S. M. Eisenstein, the creator of the *POTEMKIN* film, which, even if only externally, nevertheless enriched last year's world-production, was recently in Berlin to arrange the final preparations for the initial showing of the new film, *THE GENERAL LINE*\*. He expects to leave soon for America, in order, as he humbly expresses himself, to learn from to make camera angles.

The intellectual and spiritual development of Eisenstein is today one of the most important factors for the advance of the cinema. Whoever has had the opportunity to watch him at his work in the Leningrad Winter Palace, in the arranging of scenes for the Russian October-Revolution, then in the cutting of *The General Line* in his Moscow studio, and now in Berlin in the enforcement of the newly established problems of the tone-film, is perpetually astonished at the stormy intellectual tempo of this man. The tone-film? It is no longer a dreamed-of goal, or resting-place, — it is an inwardly conquered affair. This director, to whom the intellectual is all-important, cannot be tempted with the promise of the American dollar. He will return to Soviet Russia, as only in that country will it be possible for him to realize his ideas.

This was an established decision already on those chatty winter evenings in Eisenstein's Moscow home — (prominent travelers through Soviet Russia, such as Theodore Dreiser and Stefan Zweig, have sung praise of these quarters). America will bring much to him in the nature of mechanical technicalities, but whatever may be the film which Eisenstein will direct in America, his main thought belongs even now to that gigantic task which he has undertaken, the picturization of Karl Marx's "CAPITAL".

Montage is the pass-word to his plans. The idea is to treat the philosophical foundation of socialism by way of montage from image to image, and by means of image combined with sound, to present it in so clear a form that the Russian worker and peasant can understand it. The well-founded montage of the Russian Revolutionary films can today be duplicated by almost any young man of the Moscow Cinema University (Moskauer Kino-Technikum). But one of them should try to present cinematically "The Economy of Antitheses!" . . . Whoever would dare to do that must possess a profound education and a perpetual "boring" desire for research. Tendencies towards this intellectual montage can already be observed in the earlier films of Eisenstein; atten-

tion may be called to the idea of "War in the Name of the Lord", as it was shown in the film *Ten Days That Shook the World* (October).

The strongest elements of montage the Russian director has discovered in Japanese art. The ancient Japanese theatre "Kabuki" imparted to the intellectual life of Moscow last year a special impetus (impulse). No one rushed with greater intensity upon this stimulant than Eisenstein. The joint application of picture, movement and sound has existed since medieval times in the strictest tradition of this theatre. It is an established montage\*. And deeper still lead Eisenstein's studies into the origin of the Japanese script, as a montage composed of drawings and brush-strokes with symbolic expression.

But whoever wants to see the man at his work, must follow him from his studio into his practical teacher-capacity. In Moscow there is the State cinema-university (of Soviet Russia), where Eisenstein functions as one of the most important teachers in the training of young directors. To add spice to the work it happens that this university is established in the former restaurant "Jar", where in the old days Rasputin, during his Moscow sojourn, held his parties and love affairs. Today, those private chambers, instead of being luxuriously furnished, are decorated with a small, simple picture, the head of Lenin, and underneath are printed his words: "The Film is one of the most important means of the State". Only in the light of the State policies of the Soviet system does their treatment of cinema art become clarified. Of greater importance here than the commercial success of the film is the fact that young directors and actors of the Asiatic nations are being instructed. Here a nucleus is being formed to bring about the autonomous, national film for every folk-people. The most vital, agitative thoughts are to be instilled into the people in such a way that they will not be aware of its external source, and the best means to use for a people that is not trained in reading or in writing, is the film, the montage. It is a terrible means of power that is being fostered here.

The cinema university has divisions for all branches, for photography, developing, acting and for directing. A remarkable feature of Eisenstein's ideas is a shooting-room partitioned according to a coordination-system. Every object receives its definite geometrical position. Every dramatic action is divided into its mathematical

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\*"This film has been changed to "Old and New".



components. The scientific law of film-shooting is being outlined here.

But the heart of this domain is the technical school for young directors. Eisenstein conducts this himself. Tonight there will be exercises on Zola's works. The foundation of naturalism, a scene "Death in a Bakery", written by Zola with minutest observations, is being read and is to be worked out for the following day in scenario form. Another student — we are in a poor country, so one Zola novel is divided among three students — reads the famous part about the flagrant flowers in the garden of the priest Mouret.

When the Zola course is finished, they move on the impression, then to expressionism, and to their mutual friend, the young Russian poet, Babel. Description of an evening's fantastic illumination at Babel's house. After expressionism

comes the chamber-artist, the psychological miniature-painter, Stefan Zweig, and one of the most popularly read authors in Soviet Russia. And, as a final course, the *Ulysses* of James Joyce.

The intense enthusiasm of these young people, who are gathered here around an ideal task under the most unfavorable living and working conditions, is one of the strongest positive forces Soviet Russia has to offer today. It is one of the signs demonstrating that even in the face of the dire need of living quarters and the trying economic situation, spiritual-intellectual power can prevail. But it is also a warning to the rulers of State everywhere, to grant such spiritual-intellectual elements their necessary freedom.

\*Literally, in the German, "it is an anticipatory montage" (i.e., anticipatory of modern film-montage). Trans. note.



"TEN DAYS"—EISENSTEIN—SOVKINO

## Evolution of Cinematography in France

by ALBERTO CAVALCANTI

Translated by Richard Aldrich

**A**T the International Congress of Independent Cinematography, at Sarrez, my remarks on the growth of cinematography from the dramatic point of view were to indicate the solution of some questions with which my comrades and myself were occupied, questions that were the purpose of the meeting.

The silent cinema is dead. Its decline provoked a crisis so violent that we have neither composure, not recoil. Toward the establishment of an historical view of this silent phase, however, an examination of the material already allows formulation of a certain amount of certitude, and an analysis of the aesthetique.

A composite reel made up of a resume of cin-

ematic work in France since 1893 and selections from French films were projected to illustrate the talk at Sarrez.

The first film I think was a release from the Lumière flat in Lyons in 1894. This film was more self-sufficient than evocative; it was followed by a short period of enthusiasm. It concerned the arrival of people by train, and a boat moving around a dock. It carried sufficient novelty and movement to retain attention. Cinematic art began with *L'Arroseur Arrosé* in 1900. Was the cinema aware of its possibilities? Was it going to interpret human emotion, the comic, life itself? Also instead of catching its true voice in



the beginning indicated so clearly in this film, the year lost itself in encumbrances with theatrical tradition. Armand Callier, has shown us at the Studio des Ursulines several very beautiful examples of theatre-film. How is one to forget *Mimosa la dernière grisette*, with Leonace Perret, and above all, *Werther* with André Brulé? The year recalls also *L'Assassinat Du Duc de Guise*, one of the first of the "historic reconstruction" class of film that unhappily remains much in vogue among French directors. This did not at all impede development, for the cinema recovered itself, first with Méliès who was the author of one of the first phantasy films.

The cue was not found alone in phantasy films, however; Fevillade turned out a little later the first comedies (the series of the *Beleé*, for example) played out of doors, which one has not seen again and which in spite of their twenty years seem scarcely obsolete.

The period had not completely passed away when Louis Delluc began to work. He died young, before he had arrived at a fruition of his work. He was a theorist of the first order. Even though they are incomplete, his works for the most part are beautiful specimens and they mark distinctly a new transition.

The cinema reacts definitely against the double influence of the theatre and of letters in the growth of the episodic, the cultural and the comic film. A curious lacuna particularly in French production is the long disappearance of the comic film so abundantly and astonishingly developed in America. Only the films of Max Linder are excepted.

Forthwith in the appearance of masterpieces such as *Judex*, or in America, *The Mysteries of New York*, the intrusion of decor in its turn shackled the growth of the cinema from the dramatic point of view. How can we forget apartments grander than the cathedrals and intimate affairs where one saw scores of figures?

By the side of this ostentation which tended to bring to cinema sumptuous spectacles of the bad music hall, dramatic documents took on in their disturbing simplicity all the power of photographic veracity. One will never say too much of what a valuable lesson these actualities have been, one indispensable in the evolution of cinematography. How could one forget the straining vision of an automobile race accident in the United States? You saw the torn form thrown into the air and fall to the ground. In another you saw a ship that starts to flounder careen on the waves; the sailors let her glide and escape the wreck by swimming in the fatal turmoil of the engulfment.

These cruder devices were used for a long time. The technique achieved adequacy for the time; objectives of great works were seen. The panchromatic film was evolved. Then a diminution of scale cinematography reached a point that would have seemed formerly quite improbable. This has brought forth a precision that seems absolute and consonant to the rhythm of the images. One

such a reduction of scale was a study of a vivid struggle between a mongoose and a cobra; an extreme diminution was that of a soap bubble which burst; another of a revolver bullet penetrating a plank, and another of the flight of a dragon-fly—these mysteries gave up their secrets in the excellent photography of these rhythms, movements and solutions.

Today most improvement in the domain of speed hardly seem to astonish us. The achievement that will again appease us will perhaps arise in the growth of greater unification of cinematic elements.

How much on the side of semblance of the marvelous should one try to attain in a film. The problem calls for realization that is profound. To have reverence for life, to guard its wild freedom, to interpret it in an act of true reconstruction—this is something to look forward to in the cinema.

It is not always possible to renew data sufficiently to have actuality, nor to accept the rhythm revealed in the first unification of the picture. One secures an alien rhythm of the flow of images themselves. This is called montage. It is brought out by means of adjusting simple interior rhythms, and powerfully it accents dramatic action. Among the first beautiful examples of concordant rhythms one may name the mounting of the machine in *La Rove* (Gance) and the summons to battle in *Le Jover d'Echecs* (Bernard).

Reacting in its turn against certain bad usages of montage the travel films, often of great dramatic power, cooperate by their naturalism to reestablish the film in a form that is better balanced. *La Croisière Noir* (Poerier, *Le Voyage d'Andre Gide au Congo* (Allegret) in France, and Grass, Chang, Moana and others have had a direct influence on film direction.

In the future the cinema finds in pure photography the material of its unique kind of drama. It exists by itself. It is neither a question of theatre nor of literature. Dramatic structure of the film, it seems to us, has arrived at a degree of purity and perfection that is difficult to surpass when the sound element comes into consideration. We thought the formula already found for cinematography was definitive, but instead of proceeding on a new stage of present growth as one expected, the introduction of sound has produced on the contrary a regressive phenomenon. They do not show us the equal of *Train de la Ciotat* and of *Canot Contournant la Jetée* etc. The opera singers and players of the saxophone whom one likes well enough on discs are works of filmed theatre, and we cannot believe such violations will endure. Rather we are seeking to realize in the new form of cinematography the visual and auditory elements that will make up the developed sound film. With sound film a new era is upon us, and cinematography should begin to evolve the destiny that the addition of tone now lays upon the silent drama.



# Film Direction and Film Manuscript

by W. L. PUDOWKIN

Translated by Christel Gang from the German of Georg and Nadja Friedland.  
Edition Verlag der Licht Bild Buehne Revision according to Russian Original

Translation Copyright by Seymour Stern, 1930

## Chapter II — THE BUILDING UP OF THE MANUSCRIPT

If we try to divide the work of the manuscript into stages, so that we advance from the general to the particular, we get, roughly, the following scheme:

1. The stuff (subject matter)
2. The script (action)
3. The cinematographic treatment of the action

Naturally, such a scheme can be drafted only if the final manuscript has been thoughtfully established. As I have already remarked, however, the creative process can advance in a different order: individual scenes can emerge (i. e., "come up") during the working-process and can then for the first time be incorporated in the manuscript. It is certain, however, that the final valid form of the work will consist of all three above moments in their sequence. One should always keep in mind that the film, owing to the peculiarity of its construction, (the quick change of consecutive pieces) requires of the spectator an extraordinary strain of attention. The director, and consequently also the author, lead the spectator despotically in their path. The spectator sees only that which the director shows him. To reflect, doubt and to pause for criticism, there is neither space nor time, and therefore the minutest error or slip in the clarity and definiteness of the construction will be interpreted as a disturbing confusion or simply as a meaningless vacuum. One must therefore, before all else, be cautious to obtain the greatest simplicity and clarity in the solution of every single task. For convenient elucidation, we will examine the points of the above-mentioned scheme separately.

### THE STUFF (Subject-Matter)

The word *stuff* (or subject-matter) is an inartistic concept. *Every human thought can be ultimately utilized as "stuff";* only whether it is effective and purposeful, can be discussed. For a long while the tendency prevailed (and partly exists to this day) to choose such subjects as embrace material that stretches out extensively over time and space. As an example, take the American film "Hate", whose *stuff* may be described as follows: "In all times and among all peoples, from the earliest days unto the present, there has been hate among men, and only where there is hate, follows

murder." That is a *stuff* of enormous dimensions and already the fact that it is extended to "all times and peoples", necessitates an incalculable wealth of material. The result is exceptionally characteristic. First of all, the film-material could hardly be squeezed into twelve reels and the action developed so awkwardly (that the effect, due to the unbroken boresomeness, was very questionable. In the second place, the excess of stuff forced the director to work out the theme very generally, without going into particulars; the consequence was a stark discrepancy between the depth of the motive and the superficiality of the treatment. Only the part which takes place in the present time, where the action is more concentrated, had a strong effect. Particularly, owing to the wealth of subject-material, the forced superficialities were conspicuous. And film-art, young to this day, has other such presuppositions, which do not permit her to tackle so wide a field.

*It is noteworthy, that good films are distinguished mainly by a relatively simple theme and by uncomplicated action. Bela Belasz, in his "Film-Culture," "hits the nail on the head" when he says that the failure of many filmings of literary works is to be traced to the fact that the author attempted to force too much stuff into the narrow scope of the film.*

The film is above all limited by the determined length of the film-strip. A film over 2300 meters quickly tires. There exists, however, the possibility to show a film in several parts, but this method is suitable only for films of a special kind. Adventure films, whose content consists chiefly in a series of interesting incidents in the fate of the hero, which really have little intrinsic inter-connection and have mostly a self-sustaining interest (acrobatic and directorial tricks), can naturally be presented to the spectator in serial form. The spectator, without losing the impression, can see the second part without knowledge of the first, whose content he learns from the opening title. The connection between the parts is effected through a simple play on the curiosity of the spectator: for example, if the hero at the end of the first part falls into some kind of difficult situation, which is unravelled only at the beginning of the second



part. The film with deeper content, however, whose worth lies always in its total impression, cannot be divided in such a way into two parts.

The influence of the circumscribed space of the film is still further magnified through the fact that the film-artist, for the clear presentation of a thought, needs considerably more place than, say, the poet.

Often a word contains a whole complex of difficult thoughts. Visible appearances, however, which are capable of presenting such a thought symbolically, occur very seldom, and the film-creator is thus forced to mount scenically (*inzenieren*) an extensive image-presentation, if he does not want to renounce the effect.

I repeat, that this contention regarding the limitation of theme is perhaps only a passing one, but at the present time it is necessary to insist on it rigidly.

#### THEME and CLARITY

On this account a stipulation, that is rooted in the peculiar quality of the film itself, will probably always have to be laid down: the striving towards clarity. I have already mentioned above the necessity of absolute clarity in the discussion of the individual tasks in the film. This is valid in a comprehensive sense also for the work on the subject-matter. If the *basic thought*, which is to serve as the spine of the manuscript, is indefinite and vague, the manuscript from the beginning is condemned to failure. Assuming the most careful planning in laying down the foundations of the film in the manuscript, it is very well possible to disentangle hazy suggestions and cloggings. I should like to make mention of the following example from experience: A manuscript writer presented us with an already finished manuscript on the life of a factory-worker of the period before the Russian Revolution. The manuscript is based on a definite personality, a worker. In the development of the action the worker comes into contact with a group of persons, friends and enemies. The enemies do him ill. The friends help him. At the beginning of the film the hero is portrayed as a crude, raw type of human being; at the end he becomes and honest, revolutionary worker. The manuscript is very naturalistically written and yields undoubtedly interesting, living material, which testifies to the gift of observation and the knowledge of the author. In spite of that, it is unusable.

A series of incidents from life, a series of accidental meetings and conflicts which bear no other connection than a correctly timed, sequential order, finally represent nothing else than an accumulation of episodes. The theme as a fundamental idea, which gives expression to the meaning of these events as they are shown, is missing; consequently the single figures in a deeper sense are impersonal, the actions of the hero just as chaotic and accidental as the meeting of passers-by on the street, as they rush past a show-window.

The writer was sensible, and on the basis of our objections, undertook to re-construct the manuscript. He brought the hero into a new line

of development by placing him in lasting relationship to the clearly formulated theme. The basic thought was conceived in a distinct, comprehensive formula: that is, it is not sufficient, to be solely a revolutionary inclined human being; in order to serve the cause, one must possess also a correctly organized consciousness of actuality. In short, the brawling, quarrelsome worker, thirsting for action, became an anarchist. His enemies accordingly stood in a definite, clear front. The impact of the hero with them and his future friends received definite meaning and clear significance, a whole series of superfluous burdens were dispensed with and the confused, intricate, manuscript was transformed into a lucid, convincing structure. One may define the above rendered thought of this story already as the theme, the clear formulation of which unconditionally regulates the whole work and which alone can yield a clear impressive creation. As a rule, it should be noted: *Formulate the theme clearly and exactly, otherwise the work will lose its deeper significance and its unity which every work of art must have.* All further restrictions which influence the choice of the theme are connected with the working out of the action. As I mentioned before, the creative process never occurs in scheduled succession; if one takes up a theme, one must almost instantaneously think the formation of the script.

#### THE FORMATION OF THE SCRIPT

Already in the initial stage of his work the author possesses a certain material which is later embodied in the frame of the work. This material is obtained through experience, observation, and through imagination. When the *basic thought* of the theme, which determines the selection of material, is established, the author must next attack the problem of organization. First, the persons acting in the picture are introduced, their relationships to one another are established, their significance in the development of the action is defined and, finally, certain proportions of the division of the total material throughout the manuscript are drafted.

In that moment when the treatment of the action begins, the author makes his first contacts with the conditions of artistic labor. Just as the pure (raw) stuff\* can be considered as an absolutely inartistic thing\*\*, so, in the same way, the work on the action is conditioned through a whole series of regulations which are peculiar to art.

Let us begin with the most general: *If the writer thinks through the whole planned out work, he will always construct a series of certain "prop" points which are fundamental for the formation of the stuff and which extend over the total length of the theme. These prop-points throw the general outline into bold relief.* To this belong the characterization of individuals, the particularity

\*Stuff — meaning absolutely raw, unformed material.

\*\*In the German the word is "moment", that is, instance or state of condition.



of events which react upon these figures, often also certain details which determine the meaning and force of the upward-and-downward movement.

*To think unsystematically about the subject is senseless.* (ATTENTION HOLLYWOOD!—Trans. Note) One may not simply say that at the start the hero is an anarchist and then, after a series of mishaps, he becomes a conscious communist. Such a scheme does not release the theme and does not bring us to the decisive transformation.

One must perceive not only *what* happens but also *how* it happens. In the work on the script the form must be already fulfilled. To propose a revolution in the world-philosophy of the hero by no means signifies a high-point in the manuscript. Before a certain concrete form is found, of which the intended effect, according to the author's meaning, may influence the spectator from the screen, the bare thought of the revolution has no artistic worth and cannot serve as a prop-point in the building-up of the script. *These prop-points, however, are necessary: they establish the solid skeleton of the script* and clear away the dead places, which always crop up, if such an important moment in the development of the manuscript is thought through carelessly and unsystematically. The neglect of this moment can have irremediable consequences: particularly, it is easy for elements to creep in which combat the final plastic treatment and thus destroy the whole structure.

The writer can represent his high-points through detailed description; the dramatist through dialogue. The manuscript-writer, however, must think in terms of plastic (external) means; he must discipline his power of imagination to that degree where he is able to present every thought in the form of a sequence of images on the screen. *Mor than that: he must learn to govern these images and, out of the mass of image-forms that flow to him, to select the clearest and most expressive.* He must learn to master them as the writer masters the word and the dramatist the dialogue. The clearness and definiteness of the treatment depends conclusively on the clear formulation of the theme.

Let us take, as an example, a real naive American film of little worth, which runs under the title "Immer fremd" (Lit. — "Always strange"). Apart from the modesty of its content, it presents an excellent example of a clearly defined theme and of a simply and definitely worked out script (action). The theme is formulated somewhat as follows:

"Human beings of different classes of society will never be happy if they marry."

The building up of the action is as follows: A chauffeur turns down the love of a laundress, because he has fallen in love with the daughter of a capitalist whom he has to drive around daily in the auto. The son of another wealthy man, who accidentally sees in his home the young laundress, falls in love with her. The couples marry. The

small quarters of the chauffeur appear to the daughter of the capitalist like a dog's kennel. The natural desire of the chauffeur, to find, after a tiring day's work, a home-cooked meal ready for him, meets with an insurmountable obstacle — his wife has not the slightest idea of how to go about making a fire. The fire is too hot, the dishes dirty her hands and the half-finished meal falls to the floor. When friends of the chauffeur visit him to spend a gay evening, they behave, according to the spoiled lady's opinion, so raw, that she finally rushes out of the room in an hysterical crying-fit.

But the laundress in the house of the wealthy man fares no better. Surrounded by servants she falls from one embarrassment into another. Her maid, who helps her dress and undress, gives her one surprise after another. In fancy dress she feels ridiculous. Among the guests at dinner she makes one faux pas after another, so that she becomes the target of ridicule, to the worry of the spouse and his relatives.

By accident the chauffeur and the former laundress meet. It turns out that under the influence of their common disappointments, the former affection is re-awakened. Both couples separate and find each other in a newer, happier union. The laundress manages the kitchen in perfect order, and the new wife of the capitalist wears the dress in perfect style and dances a wonderful Charleston.

The manuscript is just as primitive as the theme, but nevertheless one can designate the film as exceptional in the clearly planned construction. Every detail is in place and in immediate connection with the underlying thought: At the same time one feels even in the superficial content-sketch distinctly visible the clear, plastically worked out picture-sequence. The kitchen, the guests of the chauffeur, the elegant dress, the invited dinner guests, and again the kitchen and the dress in another form. Every essential moment in the development of the manuscript is defined through distinct plastic material. As a counter example, I shall reproduce an excerpt from one of the many daily submitted manuscripts:

"A family has fallen into dire poverty. Neither the father nor the daughter can find work. Everywhere they are turned down. Often a friend calls on them and tries with consoling words to cheer up the despairful daughter, etc."

This is a typical example of filmic colorlessness and helplessness in the presentation. One finds here nothing except meetings and conversations. Such expressions as "often a friend calls on them", to cheer up with consoling words", everywhere turned down", etc. show the complete failure to connect the work on the script with the filmic form which the manuscript should finally assume. Such suggestions can at best serve as stuff for titles, but not for film-shots, for the word "often" unmistakably means "several times", and to show the friend entering the room four or five times would even seem absurd to the writer of this manuscript.



The same is to be said about the notation "everywhere they were turned down."

It is also important that one should not draft in the general preparatory treatment of the manuscript that which is unfilmable and inessential, but only that which one can positively accept as the plastic, expressive "high" points of the film. As prop-points in the above example could be designated the character of a scene, expressing dire poverty, or a deed, (not words), which characterizes the relationship of the daughter to the friend. One could reply that the work on the plastic form belongs already to the subsequent stages and can be left up to the director. Against this, I stress the point once more, that one must always keep in mind the plastic form as the goal. Already at the start of the work, one must know exactly where one wishes to go, if one desires to avoid serious difficulties later. For example, I would draw attention to the above-mentioned entirely unnecessary and unplastic word "often".

We have, however, established, the necessity for the author to orient himself towards the plastic material, which is finally decisive for the form of his presentation.

#### CONCENTRATION OF THE STUFF

We now turn to the general questions, in particular to the problem of the concentration of the stuff. There is a whole series of rules, which regulate the construction of the narrative, the novel and the drama. They all correspond closely with the work on the manuscript, but to discuss them in detail would far overstep the boundaries of this book. Out of the group of problems dealing with general construction, only one question shall be mentioned here. The author must at all times during the work on the script take into consideration the different degrees of *tension* in the action. This tension must finally cause a reaction in the spectator in that it forces him to follow the picture with lesser and greater excitement. This excitement depends not alone on the dramatic situation, but it can also be evoked through purely external methods. The linking up of the dynamic moment, in the action, the introduction of scenes, which render conspicuous the intensification of the energy of the actors: all this effects the increase of excitement in the spectator and *one must learn so to form the manuscript that the progressive action captures cumulatively the interest of the spectator, so that the strongest emotional factor is ungeared through the climax.* A great mass of manuscripts suffer from the poor manipulation of the attention factor. As an example, one may cite the Russian film *The Adventure of Mr. West*. The first three reels are looked upon with constantly mounting interest. The cowboy, who has arrived in Moscow with the American visitor, Mr. West, falls into a series of difficult situations and gets out of them with a cleverness that constantly builds up the interest of the audience. The first reels, thoroughly dynamic, are "easy to look upon" and

hold the spectator in constantly mounting excitement. But after the end of the third reel, when the adventures of the cowboy come to an end through an unexpected finale, there is a natural reaction in the spectator, and the continuation, despite the excellent direction, is seen with far less interest. And the last reel, the weakest of the whole film, (a journey through the streets of Moscow and through some sort of dreary factories), finally eradicates the impression and leaves the spectator unsatisfied.

As an interesting example of the opposite correct manipulation of the mounting of the tension-moment in the action may be cited the films of the well-known American director, Griffith. He even created a type of film-climax designated with his name, which is being used by many of his followers to this day. Let us take, for instance, the aforementioned film, *Hate*. The young worker, having been dismissed on account of his participation in a strike, comes to New York and then falls in with a gang of thieves. But after he meets the beloved girl, he decides to seek an honest occupation. However the dark elements will not leave him in peace. Finally, they involve him in a murder case and the worker is thrown into jail. The evidence is so unquestionable, that the jury condemns him to death. In the end, the young girl, who meanwhile has become his wife, unexpectedly discovers the murderer. Her husband is already prepared for execution; only the governor has the power to revoke the sentence, and he has just left the city in an express train. Then begins a wild chase to save the hero's life. The woman races in a speedster, whose driver has been given to understand that upon his speed depends a human life, towards the train. In the cell the man confesses before his death. — The auto has almost reached the express. — The preparations for the execution near the end. In the very last moment, when the noose is supposed to slip around the neck of the hero, comes the pardon, which was obtained by the wife with the last degree of energy and exertion. The quick change of these shots (montage-images), the vividly contrasted change of the racing machine with the methodical preparations for the execution of an innocent human being, the constantly mounting unrest of the spectator, "will she get there or not?", all this forces a heightening of excitement, which through its solution in the finale, ends the film happily.

The method of Griffith combines inner dramatic fullness of action with masterly exploitation of external effects. His films can be used as master examples of correctly built-up intensification. A thoroughly worked out script, in which all lines of action are clearly laid down, in which the essential situations of the actors are designated, in which finally, the action is skilfully intensified and mounted in such a way, that solution, satisfaction and climax fall together: such a script is the perfect "expose" for the director, who, in reflec-



tion upon the "plastic material", upon the "image reaction" (optical effect), transforms it into continuity.

### THE SCENARIO

The next stage in the work of the author is already the particularized cinematographic treatment of the subject. Up to now, the subject has received no essential cinematographic designation: it has had so to say, only an adaptation for the film based on principles. Now the phase of the plastically animated treatment of the picture comes to the fore. The manuscript must be divided into parts, the parts into episodes, these into scenes, the scenes into single placements, which correspond to the pieces, out of which finally the film-strip is pasted together. The reels (*Akte*) must not be allowed to exceed a certain length and the manuscript-writer must learn to feel them. The average length of a reel consists of from 300 to 400 meter. In order to feel this length correctly, one must take the following into consideration. The projection-machine runs, at average speed, one metre in 3 seconds. Consequently, the entire reel runs within 20 minutes. If one tries to visualize the corresponding scenes, belonging to each single reel as they run on the screen, and takes into consideration the time which they require in running, one can then calculate the amount of scenes it takes to provide the contents of one reel.

A manuscript thoroughly worked out in scenes has the following appearance:

#### 1. Scene

On a country road a peasant wagon drags slowly along, sinking in the mud. Sad and unwilling the driver urges the tired horse on. In the corner of the wagon cowers a figure and huddles itself up in an old soldier's cloak, in order to get protection from the sharp wind. An approaching wanderer stops curiously, the driver addresses him:

Title:

"Is it still far to Nabin?"

The wanderer points with his hand. The wagon continues on its way, while the wanderer gazes after it.

#### 2. Scene

Peasant hut. On the bench in the corner lies an old, white-haired man, covered with rags; he breathes heavily. A little old mother busies herself around the stove and angrily clatters about with pots and pans. The sick man turns around with difficulty and says to her:

Title:

"It seems to me that somebody is knocking?"

The old woman steps to the window and looks out.

Title:

"No, old man. You are mistaken; it is only the wind, rattling the door."

A manuscript worked out in such a form, that is already divided into single scenes and titles, re-

presents the first phase of filmic treatment. But it is still far from the final form of the finished continuity which alone can serve as the fundamental structure for the shooting. One should consider the fact that a whole series of characteristic details are presented here in narrative form, as for instance, "sinking in the mud", "the sad driver", "huddled in a soldier's cloak", "sharp wind", etc. All these descriptive particulars would not be impressed upon the spectator, if they were used merely as "properties" (*Requisiten*) and if the scene as a whole, were photographed just as it is described. In order to bring these particulars into effective development, the film has its own peculiar and effective method, thanks to which, one can draw the spectator's attention to each single detail. Through this method, one does not just casually become aware of "bad weather — two people in a wagon", but each of the details is effectively represented. This method is called Montage.\* Some manuscript writers use a somewhat similar means, in that they often bring into the description of the scene, a so-called close atmospheric shot, for example, "Village street", "Festival Day", "a peasant family centered around a lively gesticulating communist, new groups step up to them, they raise their voices loudly in protest, etc". Such insertions are better omitted as they have nothing in common with Montage. The terms "insertion" (*Einfuegung*) and "interruption" (*Unterbrechung*) are absurd concepts, which are merely left-overs of the old misunderstanding of kino-technical methods. All details, which belong to scenes of the aforementioned kind, should not be inserted into the scene, but the scene must be built up out of them. We shall go over to montage, as the fundamental method of effectively influencing the spectator from the screen, when we have given the necessary explanations regarding the fundamental types and the choice of the plastic material.

\*This refers only to the montage (or building-up) of the details of atmosphere, as described in the scenes on the preceding page.

—Trans. Note

Part II of Pudowkin's book will appear in the next number of *EXPERIMENTAL CINEMA*

The following books have been received and will be reviewed in the next issue of "Experimental cinema":

"An Hour with the Movies and Talkies — G. Seldes — Lippincott, Phila., Pa.

"The Crisis in the Film — J. G. Fletcher — Univ. of Washington Chap Books.

"Exposition of Decorative & Modern Industrial Art" — Larousse, Paris.

"American Annual of Photography", 1930 — American Photographic Publ., Boston.

"Films of Today and Tomorrow" — Hans Richter, Berlin.



# HOLLYWOOD

**F**OR nine months, ever since the Hollywood Film-arte Theatre at 1228 North Vine Street re-opened its doors with the Dreyer film, *Passion of Joan of Arc*, the American film-capital has had an unusual opportunity to take a course in cinema art. Outstanding pictures from practically every country have been shown here. The nation best represented was, of course, Soviet Russia. What would a film-art theatre be without Russian films? . . .

The following is a list of the Russian films shown in Hollywood since September, 1929, in chronological order:

POTEMKIN  
THE VILLAGE OF SIN  
TWO DAYS  
HER WAY OF LOVE (*Das Weib des Gardisten*)  
TEN DAYS THAT SHOOK THE WORLD  
IN OLD SIBERIA (*Zuchthaus Nach Sibirien*)  
ARSENAL  
FLAMES ON THE VOLGA (*Revolt in Kazan*)  
THE YELLOW PASS  
THE NEW BABYLON (*Kampf Um Paris*)

In some cases the prints were inexcusably bad. *Ten Days That Shook The World* looked like the victim of a Ku Klux Klan or an American Legion mauling. At least one-third of the scenes were out of place or upside down and had to be correctly re-patched; titles were run two, three or four together, with the intercut scenes hundreds of feet further ahead in the material; and the general condition of the print was scratchy and dirty — defects due to the cheapness of the laboratory work and to the carelessness of handling. Such customary defiling of Russian film-prints that find their way to America and other foreign countries naturally weakens the tonal impression of the photography — very important to the general effect in Russian films — and causes the "victimized" film to appear jumpy and old, or badly mounted. Despite censorship, *Arsenal* probably suffered less in these respects than any of the other Soviet productions brought to Hollywood.

How do the American movie people react to the cinema masterpieces of Soviet Russia. How do famous directors, who get thousands of dollars a week, react to the directing of Eisenstein — Dovzhenko — Raismann — Trauberg — Preobrajenskaja — whose collective salary per month in the Soviet Union amounts to less than the weekly check of a single big American "star?" And the "stars" — those magnificently tailored religious idols of the American public — what do the "stars" think of the acting in the Soviet films, of the dynamic close-ups of working-men, peasant women, revolutionaries, etc? How does

Miss Dolores Gorgeous, who teaches millions of young girls the magic by-words: "Oh, don't you understand?" and "I love you, Pierre, I love you" — how does Gorgeous feel when she sees Emma Zessarskaja tell a husky Russian peasant to go to hell, that the old order is over and the new regime of Communism is at hand? What does the little grey haired actress, who plays "mother roles" in sixty-four out of sixty-five Hollywood "tearjerkers", think of the real mothers in *Potemkin*, *Arsenal*, *New Babylon*, etc., not waving flags, but killing officers in defense of their young, not gushing songs about "clouds-with-silver-linings", but risking their lives behind barricades to help their husbands and sons against the imperialist rulers of the world- . . . Hollywood's "cutters" — what do they say when they witness triumphs of montage-cutting in the Tartar's dance of "*Ten Days*, in the massacre of *Potemkin* or in the revolutionary episodes of *Arsenal*? And the cameramen, — how enthusiastic are they when they observe the photography of Russian cameramen — of Tisse Golownia, Feldmann, Demutzki, etc?

It is of course impossible to make a report that will cover every individual reaction. Even the best general statement necessarily neglects to include a great many "buts", "ifs", and "perhappses". These statements are based, sometimes verbatim, on the verbally expressed reactions of American movie-people.

*Potemkin* and *Ten Days That Shook the World* were by far the biggest "box-office" attractions at the Filmarte. Particularly, *Ten Days*. There was widespread amazement throughout the American film-industry at the night photography of this film, especially the night photography of the perspective mass-shots during the storming of the Winter Palace.

The mass-scenes, both of *Potemkin* and *Ten Days*, came in for a due share of astonishment and disbelief. Directors, assistant-directors, technicians, etc., who were questioned, were emphatic in their conviction that these scenes (specifically, the Bolshevik demonstration and machine-gun episode on Sadovaja street, in *Ten Days*), were not produced but were taken from news-reels. They chose to ignore the fact that at the time of these events, there was no filming at all in Russia and hardly any equipment, and that whatever equipment there was, had been sabotaged by the fleeing bourgeois owners of the few small pre-Revolutionary studios. Similarly, they believed that the character of Lenin was not played but real — news-reel shots of Lenin underground and so on . . .



# BULLETIN

A great amount of curiosity was aroused by the hanging horse in *Ten Days*. Directors speculated with one another whether the horse was real or dummy. If dummy — not bad. If real — those bestial Bolsheviks! . . .

There was also speculation, ridicule and general wise-cracking about the symbolism. The Hollywood movie-people wanted to know: "What's the idea of all the statues?" This reaction was noted in respect to practically all the Soviet films shown here.

Directors, cutters, picture-people variously employed (scenarists, continuity-writers, etc.), whose views were sought in course of conversation and discussion, also severely criticized the cutting. They wanted to know why Eisenstein cut back and forth so much and so fast. Soviet films have become known here as the pictures with "choppy cutting". Explanations of the montage-technique are invariably met with complaints about the alleged "strain" on the eyesight which this necessitates. One Hollywood movie-man, who relieved himself of a heated denunciation of all Russian films, regards the "choppy cutting" of these films as an indication of the "backwardness" of their technique and as evidence that the Soviet film-industry must have reached the stage "where the American movies were fifteen years ago" when eye-strain was the price paid for looking at the "flickers".

Minor reverberations of these general critical reactions resounded to the less famous Russian films. For example, much noise was made over the "cruelty" of killing the puppy in Stabavoj's *Two Days*. Here was the proof, right by the "Reds" themselves, God-sent to the righteous, upstanding producers of anti-Soviet propaganda pictures, which depict the Hollywood "conception" of the Russian "revolution", that the Bolsheviks, after all, like the Huns during the war, are fiends who bayonet babies for Sunday pleasure and chew up young girls for evening meals! Although all the American movie-people interviewed were not absolutely positive that they could duplicate some of the scenes in *Ten Days That Shook the World* or *Potemkin*, most of them sincerely insisted that they could make much better films than *Two Days*, *In Old Siberia*, *Her Way of Love*, etc. (on some other revolution) "if they weren't 'in it' for the money."

A few individuals connected with the American movie-world, also "in it for the money", were a bit more willing to credit Eisenstein and the other Soviet directors with some ability and intelligence: They admired, according to their fancy, the photography here, or a mass-scene there, or the dance of

the Tartars in *Ten Days*, or the wheat field scenes in *The Village of Sin* or the tornado in *Her Way of Love* . . .

The reactions of the Hollywood lay public are more difficult to get at.

The average audience in attendance at Filmarte showings is a stormy combination of Los Angeles radicals with "White Russian" emigres — ex-counts, ex-dukes, ex-chamber-maids of the Czar and all the flotsam and jetsam of the late Czar's regime, who have found welcome, shelter and warm beds among the "Aristocracy" of America's movie colony. In between these two antagonistic elements, are all shades and species of individuals of the much-advertised "great American masses".

Nevertheless, practically all intelligent and serious-minded individuals within a fifty-mile radius of Hollywood have generously patronized the Filmarte Theatre, even when it was forced to run films less meritorious than the Russian.

In contrast to this popular support, the studios yielded only a very small percentage of their total population. With the exception of one or two studios, that permitted placards to be posted, no interest was shown. One company requested certain of its directors and cameramen to see *Ten Days That Shook the World* "to learn the real way how to film a revolution"! Another company asked a private showing of *Potemkin* for its technical staff. A third requested certain departments to see *In Old Siberia* . . . Outside of this purely momentary attention, dictated by a specific temporary necessity, the Hollywood studios exhibited no more than passing curiosity, and absolutely no genuine interest, in the Soviet films.

When the wheat field shots of *The Village of Sin* appeared, the audience at every performance of the film, literally moved by the beauty of the landscape and photography, applauded.

*Two Days* was enthusiastically applauded at the end of every showing, throughout its run.

*Ten Days That Shook the World* was applauded thunderously throughout the film and at its conclusion. Not only the Communists, but the intelligent bourgeois public, hailed it as a masterpiece of directorial genius and motion picture art.

The tornado scenes in *Her Way of Love*, unique in the films, were acclaimed by the general public every night.

*Potemkin*, *In Old Siberia*, *The Yellow Pass* — all met with the same enthusiastic reception on the part of the general public.



The manifest conclusion to be drawn from these facts is that the appreciation of artistic films is on a much higher level among intelligent American groups than "appreciation" among technically experience people connected with the American movie-industry. In every instance, the latter exhibited a state of mind absolutely ignorant and offensive as contrasted with the open-minded receptions given the Russian films by Hollywood laymen.

Hollywood, however, is a zoo of many strange animals. The films of the Soviet Union did not always find the path so rosy . . .

That old stand-by, the militant patriot, and his twin, the well-to-do jingoist, condescended to visit an art-theatre, and when they got there, they were shocked to find themselves so cleverly portrayed by Messrs. Eisenstein, Dovzhenko, Trauberg, Ozep, Raismann, Poznansky, etc., that it was just too hot for comfort.

After all, it was alright for Sergy Eisenstein to use a peacock as a symbol to describe — that is, to "express" — dictators of the engineer and saviour variety; and it was also alright for Dovzhenko's soldier-rebel to face an august military board and calmly announce that he had decided to demobilize himself regardless of their need of being "defended". True, America must be kept "pure" of that sort of thing. But it had all happened in Soviet Russia, and any breach of military, patriotic or parlor etiquette could be expected there . . . Besides, *Ten Days That Shook the World* was a famous film, Eisenstein was a famous director and a great many people seemed to enjoy the spectacle of the Bolshevik Revolution too much for isolated protests to be effective. *Arsenal*, on the other hand, although it gave birth to the suspicion in some patriotic genius's head that the manager of the Filmarte Theatre was trying to build up a "little Soviet", was altogether too abstruse to be understood. After the first two days, when it ran to the tune of the ridicule and wise-cracking of a few mentally empty movie-directors, it played to an empty house . . . But *The New Babylon* was different.

*The New Babylon* got too close to home to be seen without squirming. Moscow is Moscow, but Paris is almost as much America as it is Paris — that is, politically speaking . . . One is Russia, "Dark Russia", but the other is the Western world. And a good American patriot should not without blushing behold the sight of French patriots being-made-asses-of by being-shown-singing *La Marseillaise* while Communards starve — especially when these patriots are "respectable people" with lots of money. It all gets too close to home: the faces begin to look too familiar. They no longer have that distinctively Slavic expression . . . So the American patriots "blushed" . . .

There were no less than seven complaints, several of them distinguished for their moneyed vi-

ciousness. These came from members of a certain notorious patriotic society known for its kindly habit of blowing up the homes of starving foreign workers. These particular important individuals were overheard to threaten the Filmarte with "investigation". Their country's saviours pronounced *The New Babylon* corruptive, subversive and dangerous. Perhaps they would call attention to the case at headquarters . . .

This encounter between the Filmarte Theatre and the saviours of the fatherland was merely the direct, open manifestation of an attitude which had been growing for months and to which less vociferous, but not less definite, expression had already been given. It is not the first time a purely cultural movement has had to meet insult, abuse and even active insanity on the part of militant patriots, who see red in everything except in their own eye-balls. But in the long run, such manifestations of bigotry and bought love do not avail. In the present case, the overwhelming majority of people who attend such theatres as the Filmarte are happy to be able to witness creative masterpieces like the Russian films. The attendance every time one is shown is the living proof of the popular sentiment out here.

To be complete, this report has only to mention that the reception of the Soviet films by professional critics on Los Angeles newspapers and magazines was in almost every case enthusiastic and intelligent. Rob Wagner in *Script*, Arthur Millet in the *Los Angeles Times*, Frank Daugherty in the *Film Spectator* and a number of reporters on various papers found these films to be the realization of the oldest hopes for motion picture art. Their publicity partly compensated for the American industry's indifference and hostility.

This is the story of what happened when the Soviet film-masterpieces came to Hollywood, the "Capital" of the American film-industry and supposedly of the entire film-world. From the time that *Potemkin* created excitement because of its unfaked realism, to the time that *Arsenal* was laughed at and dismissed as something mad and *The New Babylon* was jeered at by the dollar patriots — not one important personage of the most expensive film-industry in the world came out with a public statement encouraging people to see these works or advising the industry to learn something from them about cinema technique.

Of course, the American film-producers can learn nothing about motion pictures. They know it all. By their own admission they make the "biggest and best" films in the world . . . Hollywood, Cal. S. S.



# DECOMPOSITION

UNTIL we learn to differentiate the sentimental and narrative values from the filmic or cineplastic qualities in a film, the latter and greater problem will be neglected.

Each of the arts has its individual medium and the forms and values which it can effect depend upon the medium employed. The director who tries to blend in the film the effects appropriate to other media, injures the aesthetic ensemble of his own medium. Consequently a director's value is dependent upon his ability to project his celluloid results only in filmic terms, and without the intervention of any agency (moral, literary or pictorial) other than the specific cinematic means.

In contrast, we find the entire cinema scene dominated by either the principles of acting, plot, dancing, sound, color; or such mawkish items as dramatic sequences, divisions of climaxes, rise and fall of suspense, the psychology of spectator reactions:—tricks and formulas, and in no sense contributing to the cinema that unique quality which distinguishes the film from other media of expression; and even at best a detriment to true film creation.

The representation of the cinematic world is achieved through the modifications of a surface (screen) by means of the properties of the motion picture camera and projector, (cinematic means). It is the manipulation of these cinematic units (the details that constitute the notation of the cinema) that objects (subject matter) are given a filmic recognition, filmic association and filmic unity, entirely different from the recognitions, associations, and unities that they had before. The business of the director is to integrate the subject matter and medium in a *filmic* synthesis, extracting the essence of an object or situation and projecting it anew and enriched because of that particular filmic unification. This is the process of composition and is the arrangement and unification of subject matter and cinematic notation and not a mere literal reproduction of objects or individuals.

Behind every film is the idea. This idea is twofold; subject matter or theme, (this can be anything, document, nature, abstractions) and the cinematic process. As a result of the modification of subject matter under the stress of the cinematic notation (long shot, close up, etc., position on the screen and in the film as a whole, angle, tempo, duration, action, tone, etc. etc.) a quality or form embracing the essence of both subject matter and notation, is projected. This quality, called *Imagery*, is one of three structural elements in the cineplastic progression of a film. This element of *Imagery* exhibits itself as the greatest compositional state (filmic and psychological) of the

funded cinematic details (matter and notation). Because of the repetitions in time-space projection of shots, (the nature of the film medium) this quality of *Imagery* creates a condition or order called *Movement*. This simply means that our senses connect two or more shots and attribute a dimension to the spaces between. We imagine a line leading from one shot to the other. These spaces between are filled in with all degrees of durations, intervals and stress. When these spaces are ordered, that is, paralleled and organized in time-space sequences they create the second of the cineplastic homogenities called *Movement*. This quality *Movement* is conditioned by the momentum of the element *Imagery* and governed or controlled by the third cineplastic quality, *Time*. . . . *Time* exhibits itself as the tempo, duration, interval and stress of Images, of cinematic notation and as the governing factor of *Movement* and its rhythms.

These cineplastic qualities, *Imagery*, *Movement* and *Time* are the structural means for filmic form. Question as to which of these elements contribute the most to the film, is for the moment unimportant. *Movement* is the very spirit of object or situation. *Time* is the core of *Movement* and *Imagery* is the body and essence of the film medium. Each unreels to project a living whole exactly as the various parts of a body are all seen together and make up the body which consists of and lives because of them all. These qualities have an independent appeal of their own (regardless of subject matter) and form in the cinema can only be created by the arrangements and unifications of the differentiation of *Imagery*, *Movement*, *Time*.

There is no limit to the multiplicity of integrations of *Imagery* *Movement* and *Time*, but their methods of compositional procedure are displayed in the following two types:

First, as an unreeling of single images, one following another in a simple linear projection, with the proportion and the content of the *subject matter* acting as the dominating idea; and the only distortions (if any) in the relation of the *psychology of the subject matter* itself. This is an illustrative type of film. Actions, scenes, characters, atmospheres, ideas, are evoked and *the film is circumscribed by the logic of documentation*. A two dimensional type of composition and at its most fluent will never exceed pattern in painting, melody in music, or narration in literature. Nearly all films to-date are of this order.

More complex, and as yet unknown to the commercial cinema is this second type of film composition. Such a film is projected as a rhythmic order with the intensifications not only of subject matter, but of *imagery* (which is its greatest compositional state) and *Movement* and *Time*. As a



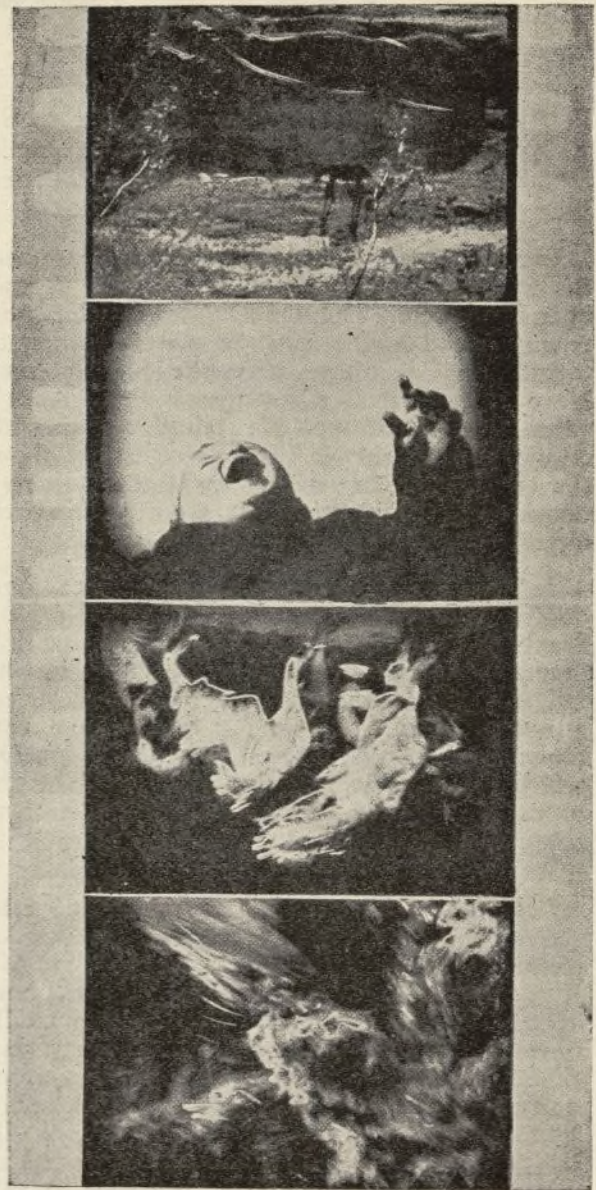
result of a structural integration among these cineplastic elements there unrolls a *filmic* order of continuous movement whose beginning and end are synchronous. A cineplastic ensemble is projected wherein the qualities *Imagery Movement and Time* serve as the generating motif for succeeding sequences of *Imagery, Movement and Time*, and which in integration evolve toward a summit and conclusion. Each new rhythm of *Imagery, Movement and Time* grow naturally out of the initial ones and the compositional steps are wholly dictated by the logic of *Cinema aesthetics*. Such a film contains no climaxes, only a completion, and its formal order is *never* dictated by the values of the subject matter, (social, political, religious etc.). The director communicates with the spectator without the intervention of any other agencies than the specific cineplastic elements — *Imagery, Movement and Time*.

True cinema style implies the ease with which the director employs the structural terms. His method of film articulation will vary with every shade and thought projected in accordance with the needs of filmic form, cineplastic form.

Cineplastic form is the organization by which the details that constitute *Imagery, Movement and Time* (subject matter and cinematic notation) are brought into filmic relations, fused and integrated so that they unite to produce a single cineplastic effect. The more complete unification there is, the richer the form, and hence the better the film.

To recapitulate: — The idea, theme etc. must be expressed solely in terms of *Imagery, Movement and Time*. The director should not project any of the structural terms to such an extent that they distract from the perception of the film as a whole. No isolated effects, either of photography, decor, acting, cinematic angle, tone, movement etc. or overaccentuation of psychological values should absorb the attention of the spectator; but combine to create a filmic whole which consists of and lives because of that particular integration of *Imagery, Movement and Time*.

Lewis Jacobs



Strip from Pudovkin's film "Mother", mounted psychologically to convey a filmic idea.

## POPULISM AND DIALECTICS

by H. A. POTAMKIN

(Continuation of "Film Problems of Soviet Russia")

The major problem confronting the film-maker of the U.S.S.R. is the thorough treatment of the social theme. By thorough treatment is meant non-sentimental or critical treatment. It is the social idea as against populism. The latter is the concern with the popular expression as a fact in itself, uncritically. We have known it in politics here; we have known it in the "highbrow" inflation of the popular idiom: "jazz", "slang", "movie", etc. In Russia it evinces itself in professional peasant-poetry exaggerating the peasant

as an ideal, an inimical propounding in the proletarian dictatorship. The critical expression of society in the U.S.S.R. is articulated in the Marxian dialectics, and its conversion into the form of the cinema is a structural problem. The solution of this problem determines the degree of achievement in the single instance of a film, as well as in the entire Soviet kino.

Dialectics as drama is conflict — and that is its structure in the film. There is the THESIS — the status quo. The ANTITHESIS asserts it-



self — the proletariat (combatant, antagonist-protagonist) or the new force. The result is the SYNTHESIS — the new order. The idea-dynamics of the Soviet film is dialectics.

One may divide the history of the Soviet kino to date into three periods: the first is the pre-dialectic period, so to speak, and while it has vestiges even in the present, it is not over-important in the present consideration. The dialectic-film divides itself into that typified by Pudowkin and that being typified by Eisenstein. Pudowkin typifies the usual, and what seems to be the more popular brand. In this film the individual represents, as accumulant, the social movement: first (Thesis) as the apathetic of the order, second (Antithesis) as the collection of the antagonism, third (Synthesis) as the positive explosion of the new. Examples are: the peasant migrant in *The End of St. Petersburg*, the Mongol youth in *Storm over Asia*, the amnesia-victim in *The Fragment of an Empire*, the peasant brother in *The China Express*. Of these the amnesia-victim is more deliberately a dialectic-symbol than the others. He is, in fact, about ready to pass into the objective milieu of Eisenstein.

The dialectics of Pudowkin is more symptomatic than purposeful it is an expression of the social occurrence which is being presented. In Eisenstein the dialectics is the intent and not the incident. It is expressed completely as structure and conveyed as idea. In Pudowkin it is more literary. *The End of St. Petersburg* is the dialectics of the individual expressing the mass. *Ten Days* is the dialectics of mass. Even in his latest film, *The Old and the New* (*The General Line*), Eisenstein does not divert from pure mass dialectics, although he has in *Martha* the individual representing the new collective aspiration. *Martha* is not an accumulant, since she is convinced and collective-minded before the moment of climactic change, the qualitative moment. The mass, peasantry, is itself Thesis, Antithesis, Synthesis, a very much more absolute realization than the individual-accumulant. The stress of the dialectics in *The Old and the New* is the machine — the milk-separator, thresher, tractor—which is present at the moments of crises to concentrate the mass-processes into assertions.

*The Old and the New* is the first statement of dialectics in unfolding. Dialectics is the theme. It comes as an advance and simple statement of the official Dialectic-Film, the film whose theme will be Marx's Capital. The casual examiner may find in *The Old and the New* traces of populism. The narrative is in its bare fable the Broncho Billy ranch-film of the battle between two economic kinds (in the old western cattlemen versus sheepmen); just as *The China Express* in its fable-skeleton is the American railroad serial, and *Storm over Asia* the western-Fairbanks combination — Fred Thomson. But — the difference in the stresses, in the mass-emphases, the proportioning of caress to indictment puts *The Old and the New* far away from the populist.

Populistic impurities are more apprehensible in the romantic Pudowkin, who begins with the individual combatant rather than with socio-structural motive. To the extent that populism diverts the Soviet film from the dialectic motive, that film is unsatisfactory. Motele Spinder, *The Simple Tailor*, directed by V. V. Wilner, is a flagrant instance of a film which divides itself into an overplay of the individuals (though they are supposedly social indicators) and a mass-experience, a people's plight. Here the individual-symbolic does not move within the mass, accumulating the force, as in a film by Pudowkin or as in the case of the peasant-soldier in *The New Babylon*. First there is the individual or individuals within a narrative, then there is the mass. There is no complete, nor even, a considerable degree, of synthesis. The fact that the film deals with pre-revolutionary days, in which the Synthesis, the new order, was not yet achieved does not modify the criticism of its unsynthesized structure. The dialectic-idea can inform any subject-matter that is social. The glory of the Soviet kino is that it possesses just that sort of unvacillating motivating idea. *The New Babylon* deals with the Paris Commune, which achieved no Synthesis. Yet the dialectic-idea was contained within the peasant-soldier who expressed the mass verging on the Synthesis.

The problem becomes a simple statement of choice: shall it be sympathy with the individual or sympathy with the social idea? The former tends to be retrogressive in its answer, as witness the recent film by Petrov-Bytov, made of Gorki's *Cain and Artem*, which belongs actually to the Polikoushka (German-style) period, before the Soviet cinematists had, under the tutelage of Kuleshov, built a kino by studying the cinema at its source in the American folk-film. Petrov-Bytov makes folk an end, POPULISM; the film of sympathy with the social idea makes folk a source and the social experience an end. The latter category is the category that moves forward with the evolving cinema, which intensifies its speculations, extends its human preoccupations and compounds its utilities. It is in this category, the insistent Soviet film, that the U S S R serves the cinema of the world and becomes its mentor.



"OLD & NEW" — EISENSTEIN



# THE MODERN SPIRIT IN FILMS

THEATRE AND MOTION PICTURE

by BARNET G. BRAVER-MANN

THE stage and the motion picture make use of the dramatic types: melodrama, farce, comedy, tragedy and burlesque in the delineation of character and scenes, and there any likeness between the two forms begins and ends. The media of film and stage are wholly unlike in the mounting of the completed production. Each form has its own advantages, laws and characteristics, and in our time practitioners in cinema and the theatre have demonstrated their incapacity to utilize fully those advantages and laws. The theatre, for instance, has neglected to enter into the tempo of our time by adhering to the picture-frame, peepshow stage, with its spatial confines for the player and for the movement of the play, instead of devising and constructing stages that would free the drama and the player from the limitations of back wall and border lights.

Since the bourgeois theatre is one of the most conservative of institutions, it may take many years before its leaders realize the effect of its debilitating mechanics and ideology upon both the stage and the motion picture. The theatre might overcome the lethargic pace on its boards by returning to the Greek practice of continuous action, as has been demonstrated recently in *The Trial of Mary Dugan*. This method preserves not only continuity of action, but keeps the situations intact instead of splitting them into three and four acts, and utilizes movement in a manner that is lacking in the conventional modern play, with its time lapses suggested by the falling curtain before an intermission. Why should the spectator attend a play with intermissions, time lapses and interruptions when the same play can be read at home without breaks in the continuity? It would seem that the theatre could return in many instances to the classic forms with profit. For one thing, the stage has obviously distinctive features foreign to the technique of the motion picture, - such as the actual presence of the actor, the sound of actual living speech, rich color gradations in objects, textures and lighting - all mingled in a kind of intimacy between audience and actor that is not possible in cinema. Esthetically, there is no more rivalry between the visual power of the best films and the connotative speech in the best plays than there is between an image on the screen and an actor on the stage. Each form has its own place. To say that the screen is an alternative artistically preferable to the theatre is to submit a comparison determined by personal taste rather than by fact. Nevertheless, the stage and cinema, each in its own way, makes us feel things differently and by dif-

ferent means. Where the stage offers a combined emotional and intellectual appeal through the living actor and human voice, the motion picture produces the same effect with its flowing dynamic images and patterns. The images are shadow and light in motion; they must be dramatically and visually significant. This dramatic and visual significance is made apparent according to the manner in which the scenes are planned in the script, then played, photographed, directed and their images mounted. The cutting determines length, tempo and quality of imagery in the mounting, and after that is done, pace is regulated by the projector. Obviously the stage does none of these things because the stage is not cinema.

The cinema gives us visual intimacy of objects and forms - such as closeups of anything from a pair of eyes to a mass scene containing thousands of images. The appeal of the film is first visual, then emotional, and lastly intellectual. The cinema overcomes space and depth, save in those films wherein the film merchants have sought deliberately to imitate the stage. On the screen a figure may become the size of a tennis ball like the man in the arena of Victor Seastrom's film version of *He Who Gets Slapped* and be magnified to striking proportions that make the nose and eyes fill the screen. It frees us from the physical limitations of time by flashing back into past centuries and cutting forward into the future. It frees us of actuality through such devices as dissolves, fade-ins, fade-outs and double-exposures which lend themselves to moods of fantasy, to liberties with the actual and temporal.

The theatre is bound by the actualities of space and time. Occasionally, a playwright for example Molnar, in *The Red Mill*, specifies a rapid change of scene with sliding sectional walls, that face the audience, each section covering a scene in process of arrangement. But *The Red Mill* is not pure theatre since its technique infringes so heavily upon the movie scene that its effect is wearisome. The theatre play must function on a basis of chronological progression; it cannot cut back into time. In a few plays the movie type of progression has been tried,—notably in *Dear Brutus*, *Marco's Millions*, and *The Beggar on Horseback*, but the success of such plays has not been attained as a consequence of the treatment of time, but rather because of other elements of appeal which neutralized the effect of an undramatic handling of time. Events that happen on the stage must follow one another consecutively. The last act in a drama can not tell us what has happened during the first



act and the third act cannot cut back to the first or second act, nor can the first act alternate with the last act. Least of all, can the stage build up an idea by means of a synthesis of scenes unrelated to each other in physical content, as appears so often in Russian films; in some German and Swedish films.

The theatre mounts *productions* with scenes on the stage. The screen, flat and two dimensional, flashes shadow-images that are fragmentary *reproductions* of scenes and objects. The player and the fragments of him on the screen form images . . . visual fragments that show the most delicate motion of the lips, an eye, and contribute to the completion of the idea. An image naturally does not fill physical space as does the actor on the stage. Yet, the images make us conscious of their meaning by their movement on the screen. The theatre offers us physical actuality because unlike the film, it is not a pattern in flowing images, a difference which brings the film closer to emotional experience. The film is not concerned with physical actuality but with physical illusion, which directs its appeal to the emotions through the eye before the observer has time to rationalize his emotional reaction.

On the stage, the resonant voice issues from a living body. Living voices are foreign to shadow-images. Absence of voice puts the image into the category of illusion, although the motion and interlacing of images and patterns may suggest reality. Motions of the fingers, of the hands, of the head may build inner states and all the moods that can be expressed by speech and voice. In the theatre, there is rapport between the emotions of the audience and the emotions of the players; but the images of the screen may stir our emotions just as deeply without this personal relationship. Conversation on the stage directs our minds to past events, which are pictured by the cut-back in the film. Thus images on the screen function similarly to words and speech on the stage. Because tradition has controlled the architectural form of our playhouses, spectators in different sections of the theatre have different lines of vision — those in the front row orchestra, center, look up at the actors; those in rear orchestra see them directly in a straight line; those in either the balcony or gallery look down upon the actors; and those on either side of the house have sharply angular lines of vision. However definitely the stage director may arrange a setting or the action of a scene, the audience gets the effect from different angles. The motion picture presents scenes, the dimensions of whose patterns appear the same to every spectator in the cinema house.

On the stage even the most imaginative effects are bound by actuality. Gauze and color lighting are combined to suggest both mood and actuality. The motion picture, as in Rex Ingram's *The Four Horsemen* to mention only one example, can ignore actuality and with devices peculiar to cinema, depict images, such as horses, chariots and

symbolic figures dashing across the sky and then advancing towards the spectator.

The stage cannot use inanimate objects to suggest mood, thoughts, character, environment, or foreshadowing of events, as is possible in the motion picture. Murnau does it in *Sunrise* with the floating bullrushes; Eisenstein gives a most elaborate and concrete example of the possibilities of meaning in inanimate objects in *Ten Days That Shook The World*. The dramatic aspects of the drawbridge in *Ten Days* make of that mechanism a living thing; Kerensky pictured dreaming of Napoleonic power as he plays with a toy crown and places it on quarter-shaped crystal perfume bottles, repetition of the theatrically despotic assumed pose by Kerensky; the swinging gun in *Potemkin*; the legs of a carcass of meat in the cellar, suggestive of the petty bourgeois butcher's lust in Stroheim's *Wedding March* illustrate the symbolic use of the inanimate object in cinema.

The stage makes no pretense of showing perspective in unlimited space. The motion picture is limited in this respect only by the horizon line where situation may be built by the director: dark, sharp-edged masses in the foreground lend to the illusion of distance on the horizon.

Pantomime on the stage is limited usually in that its action suggests movement but not sound. On the motion picture screen the motion of the players and objects can *suggest any kind of sound*, from human speech to the whirr of machinery. Alternating scenes are a rarity on the stage. In the motion picture, they are essential to show the actual relation of one situation to another, of one mood to another. On the stage all the action takes place within the limits of set scenes. Despite the efforts of Eugene O'Neill to handle the setting psychologically as a "stage picture" it is always fairly defined over a period of time, no matter how cleverly Robert Edmund Jones may succeed in disguising the actualities of wood, canvass and paint. Here is one of the major limitations of the drama . . . it must conform to the conditions of the theatre. It is possible we shall never see some plays satisfactorily presented until we have greater architectural variety in our playhouses. The necessity for such variety has been proved by the spatial demands of plays like *The Hairy Ape*, *The Beggar on Horseback*, *Lazarus Laughed* and *Processional*.

In the motion picture, action may occur anywhere — on the street, on a mountain top, in the air, below the sea, on the walls of buildings, — and may be depicted from many angles. Lastly, the play written for the stage is arranged to harmonize with the *purposes of dialogue* in conjunction with conventional stage movements. The stage play is built essentially upon speech; at times it may achieve even literary form. The photograph is built in the language of cinematic images, and these are described in words that compose the continuity. It has no affinity with dialogue, although American studio practitioners are inclined



to use too many explanatory or conversational sub-titles, instead of terse phraseology indicative of a mood, a pause, or a time lapse, bound up with montage. Even so, the scenarist and director who know montage seek to avoid the sub-title and to work wholly with images. Curiously enough, in the current talking pictures, sub-titles are spoken.

The stage director deals with actual situations carried out by players whose "business" he regulates. He works with actual time, in actual space, from the start to the finish of a production. Actual plastic forms, actual time and actual space are his materials for building up to the high point in a drama. But in the cinema, the director works with filmic time, which is not subject to causality: By means of what he does with the piecing together and mounting of the images on the film strip, the director gives the screen a time all its own. Filmic time is a reality produced by the film director, just as he creates its rhythms which have no relation to the actual rhythms of the stage. "The film", writes Pudovkin, "is a succession of visual images moving through their own world, their own time, their own space". The film therefore, is not concerned with the reproduction of actuality as it appears on the stage or in life, but with the *creation of reality through the meaning which the director gives the images* by his mounting in the script, on the set, and in the film strip. His principle tool for forging reality is that of suggestion — the selective visual essence of events, of time, of space.

The basic element of the theatre scene is scenic *totality*. The basic element of the film is the *fragment* of the totality, scene, or object. This distinction so long neglected by Hollywood and Neubabelsberg, was made clear by Fernand Leger, the French painter, who first called attention to this violation of cinematic principles by theatre-minded film practitioners. The strongest, clearest, deepest impressions on the mind and the emotions are inherent in the implication given the fragment by the directorial will. It can suggest a world of meaning by an ear, a stairway, a statue's head, or part of a bottle, all depending upon the film director's skill in montage. The early phase of the film merely was confined to speculation about its possibilities as to motion. It was looked upon as a novelty or stunt discovery. Experiments were limited at first to taking images on the film strip of ordinary scenes or objects, in city, on sea, and in country lanes. Later recruits from the stage began to experiment with the film. Such scenes as were taken by them were in the stage manner and were merely photographs of players going through stage business, illustrated by many long titles that robbed the images of any possible significance. The director, usually from the theatre, indicated the two points between the action, the entrance and the exit as in the theatre, taking scenes in their totality, just as they might

have appeared on the stage. This application of directorial theatre technique to the cinema, plus the influence of players, who for the most part were from the stage and the destructive factory methods of Hollywood, played havoc with the development of the medium of the motion picture. Scenes were mounted in progression in the film-strip the same as in a theatre, instead of being broken down analytically to build definite visual ideas.

In *The Birth of a Nation* and *Intolerance* were first revealed the self-contained elements of the motion picture independent of the stage. Griffith showed that the cinema could soar beyond the architectural barriers of the theatre, that greater emotional significance could be given objects when they were viewed from every possible angle. Instead of using the totality of the theatre scene, Griffith broke the scene into fragments of visual suggestion. He made the camera flexible. He used the visual impression of the moment, of the fragment, as means with which to interpret deeply and dynamically character and situation. The fragment, the dominant important visual element of the film bears no relation to the actuality of nature or of the theatre. The theatre imparts meaning through the totality of all its forms, the film transmits meaning through the fragment of the totality . . . of a crowd, a man, a street, a billiard table, a hand, things seen with the shifting glance of the eye. In the theatre, the spectator must organize his attention. In the cinema, the director must assume the task of organizing the attention of the spectator in the montage.

In this brief exposition of the difference between the stage and cinema, we have sought to consider the fundamental distinctions between the two in the matter of medium and of mechanics. With forms so thoroughly self-contained, wherever imitation is attempted, the result is never satisfying. The theatre can no more be cinema than the cinema can be theatre. Each form has its own esthetic laws and special methods of production; each develops its own practices, and imitation of one by the other reduces such production to a mechanical process that is neither cinema or theatre. The motion picture of tomorrow, of which the triumphant Soviet films are prophetic, will be guided by image-minded poets, artists and philosophers, and will convey meaning only through images freed from the intrusion of the theatre and all other non-cinematic elements.

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Note: Consideration here of the differences in the technique of the theatre and of the motion picture excludes the audible film because the latter is neither cinema nor theatre.



# From GEORGE MELIES to S. M. EISENSTEIN

by LEON MOUSSINAC

Translated by Vivian Chideckel

**T**HROUGH mere coincidence the films of George Melies, produced from 1902 to 1912, and the last work\* of S. M. Eisenstein and Alexandroff, Soviet directors, were projected in Paris during the same week. There was thus afforded an opportunity to suggest a point not yet brought out concerning these films representing in some manner two poles of the silent cinema, (since it is necessary to contemplate henceforth the contribution of the "Talking" and the "Sonorous" before color and relief, moreover near at hand), and expressing the sense and character of the researches of yesterday and today.

George Melies was, by first profession, a prestigitator. In adopting the camera he remained a magician. His imagination and technique led him to play with images, using all the resource of magic that for the most part he had devised, just as he had loved to juggle, striving to amuse, in the dark room of the Dufayel, children temporarily abandoned by parents in quest of bargains. But it happens that these films have kept enough power and fantasy to interest us today in our turn. Ridicule and charm go neighboring there with the movement and ingenuity which, without doubt, inspired the American Mack Sennett, creator of flickering comedies, in an epoch when the French film represented seventy-five per cent of the cinematographic production of the world. The cleverness of Melies is extraordinary, though the literary surrealism attains nothing in *Le voyage dans la lune*, *Les quatre cents coups du diable* and *A la conquete du pole*. And without doubt, if Melies had not taken chances in the drama (*Le Juif errant* gives us a foretaste) his films would have been worth no more than *l'Assassinat du duc de Guise*, "superproductions" of the same period that certain houses of the vanguard were pleased to project these last years for the great amusement of the public.

George Melies represents exactly the cinematographic pre-war comedy with a spirit in some way primitive, which makes his work worthy of the exhibiting which it will gain henceforth. And one can say that *Les quatre cents coups du diable* is a well executed film in that these diverse parts exactly answer to their object. To discuss the quality of the object is another question, but one cannot fail to acknowledge in this film all its historic, its creative value. George Melies will remain the precursor.

Since these heroic times, the photoplay, through a thousand adventures without glory, and some

flashing manifestations, has in vain sought a balance. It is that economic necessities keep it in an exclusive state of dependency, and that by way of expression it carries to its maximum this contradiction of modern societies which opposes art to industry. The placing to a technical point, of the synchronization of sound and image has not been done for disinterested objectives, but only for the temporary salvage of a capitalist organization which had come to be saturated with sentimental stupidity, with romantic or polished banality, and the weak percentage of a public that had through the world stuck to a taste for adventure and a certain need of spiritual evasion, without its being a question besides, of appreciating here the quality of this taste nor the degree of this need.

With *La Ligne generale* one touches to the quick, finally, gravest problems rising by the very intention of the photoplay inasmuch as it strives to a new mode of expression. This film, powerful, pathetic, of a poetic intensity sometimes overwhelming, astonishingly creating life, attacks in front a social problem: the industrialization of the peasants, the collectivization of the soil of the U S S R, a problem and program the more so charged with humanity that to their solution, to their success, is tragically bound, for a time, the destiny of a revolution theme: the poor village, and three elements of dramatic progression, namely the female milk skimmer, a reproductive bull, an agricultural tractor. The whole film is attended with freedom, vigorously developed images radiant with a force of expression, with a lyricism, a truth, not to be forgotten. Here, as with George Melies — if one dares this comparison — the film answers exactly to its object, only this object is quite on another scale. It is no more a question of amusing and making one dream like children, but of exalting life, of carrying away with itself millions of men, of running routines, of abolishing prejudices, of gaining the adhesion of a nation of peasants still uneducated to a social system which constructs a new order on the ruins of individual property. Ambition, one sees, is moving. It remains that the significance, from an aesthetic point of view, of a film like *La Ligne generale* surpasses that of the highest work that the cinematographic has given us since its origin, and that the Soviet cinema has offered us with *The Mother*, the *Armored Cruiser Potemkin* and *The End of St. Petersburg*. It is a question of nothing less than binding intimately, thanks to the photoplay, the world of sensibility and the world of ideas, sentiment and reason, science and



art. This intimate connection, Jean Epstein, before being director, had already alluded to in his *Lyrosophie*, but without any cinematographic solution, and one would find without doubt in the philosophy of Maine de Biran, the premises of such theoretical researches. But S. M. Eisenstein, is the first to discover in the photoplay the practical means of realizing the imposing fusion. Here is how he recently explained himself in an article, *l'Avenir du cinema*.\*\*

"... Where then is there a difference between the perfect method of a symphony and the method perfected in view of the acquisition of new knowledge? It is necessary that the new art put an end to the dualism of these two spheres that are *sentiment* and *reason*. It is necessary to render to science its sensuality and to its intellectual process fire and passion.

"It is necessary to plunge into the fire boiling with practical activity — the process of abstract thought. It is necessary that collected and speculative formula be attached anew to the richness and opulence of the living and palpable form. The formal will must acquire the exactitude of ideologic formulas.

"There is the exigency that we create, there are the exigencies that we propose to the new epoch of art. What form of art is their match? Uniquely and only, the cinematography of the intellect, synthesis of the film of emotion, of the documentary film and the absolute film."

S. M. Eisenstein insists:

"... only a cinema capable of directly uniting dialectic conflicts in the growing of ideas possesses the possibility of penetrating the mind of the great masses of ideas and new perceptions. Such a cinema, alone, will dominate by the form, the summits of modern industrial technique. Finally, alone, such a cinema will have the right to exist among the miracles of radio, television and the theory of relativity.

"The old type of original cinema, as the type of abstract film, will disappear before the new concrete film of the intellect."

There is the question of the progresses of the cinema — we mean of its destinies — placed with force at the same hour when it seems that the international photoplay has reached an abrupt turn in its history. It is that it's a matter of saving a mode of expression of adventures, and that one in the name of the mind, and not one of the most powerful industrial and commercial organizations of the world in the name of money.

From the simple play of images of George Melies to the passionate work of Eisenstein one can measure with emotion a decisive stage entirely marked by these agitations of the world which will accompany for a long time yet, the birth of the cinema.

\*\*Old and New"

\*\*Monde. November 16, 1929.

## Paris Letter

**S**INCE the advent of the talkies, or more exactly, since little more than a year (and before we question the value of the talkies) we who live in France and love American films are conscious of being poor parents of the Cinema. We read reports of the talking films that we shall never see, and while

you work fervently in America on the construction of a new cinematographic expression, we aesthetes and other cumbersome personages discuss the value or the non-value of the talkies.

But I am forgetting — talking films have been produced in Europe but these are neither of the cinema nor of the theatre, or perhaps more rightly they have taken from these two forms only what is less interesting. In general up to now they have had only very bad photographic theatre such as the "3 masques" or that other abominable film of a man in whom we were wrong to have confidence, namely: E. A. Dupont, and his film "Atlantic".

It is true we also had Walter Ruttmann's "Melody of the World". Ruttmann is a remarkable mind in the European cinema, and if theory, perhaps, has too much place in his cinematographic life, you can expect from him very beautiful films. "Melody of the World" is not correctly speaking a talkie. It is a document compiled for the most part of extreme actuality, but of which he has made the setting in a very obvious way, to which he has known how to add noises or music which astonishingly reinforce the significance of the images. Ruttmann is a musician and that is felt. The setting is not only, as in many Russian films made to dazzle, but a means employed soberly to lead us to a necessary crescendo, or to the comprehension of his work, of his thought. He has not really created a talking film, but he gives us the assurance that he knows exactly how to make use of image and sound, in a manner so agreeably intelligent that we are permitted to expect much from his next films.

The others still use sound as a toy. We are still in the heroic epic where we admire the perfect coincidence of the movement of the lips and the sound that comes forth. I would never have suspected that Europe was so young, pardon, I mean infantile. What we admitted to be the vanguard is distinctly dying in the interval. The talkie had killed it. We knew already some time ago that the vanguard which promised so much and held nothing was engaged in a dangerous impasse from which one could see no issue. But the slowness of mind of certain people is really terrifying. To use a camera; to seek for angles; to discover extraordinary planes is not enough. I claim that any camera enthusiast can obtain today this result: to show a succession of images interesting in themselves but insignificant. The talkie today again substantiates one idea: one does not make a film for images, but because one has something to express. The talkie has proved to us the impossibility of continuing in the way of the vanguard of yesterday. A dialogue which says nothing, which expresses no idea is more blantly stupid than a succession of inexpressive images.

Tomorrow's vanguard will no longer busy itself in telling us anything with common images. It will, on the contrary, tell us much, it will tell us important things with the simplicity that sincerity demands.

Jean Lenauer



# PROPOSED CONTINUITY FOR THE ENDING OF "ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT."

by WERNER KLINGLER

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"This proposed ending to "All Quiet On The Western Front" was submitted to & considered by Universal Pictures Corp. but was finally not accepted."

## SOUND

## PICTURE

## IDEOLOGICAL SPECIFICATION

All shots mirror lightninglike the theme of the book and are balanced up in such a manner, that in their retrospective montage of contrasting image-values they lead up to the apotheosis, passing an impressive judgment on the horrors of war.

After Katzinsky's death . . . . .

LONGSHOT of Paul from behind, staggering out into the open field towards the French lines.

MEDIUM CLOSEUP of a French machine-gun and crew.

LONGSHOT of Paul, walking towards the camera.

CLOSEUP of the French machine-gun, firing.

Sound of firing machine-gun.

MEDIUMSHOT of Paul, as he pauses hit by a bullet, slowly sinking down.

CLOSE UP of Paul's face falling from the upper picture frame towards the lower one.

CLOSEUP of Paul's EYES.

He sees, in a vision of quick-changing images, becoming more and more rapid, the following pictures. (Montage of cutting.)

*The action of Paul's vision occurs between the first and last part of his fall to the ground.*

(In this visionary action there are shown only shots which have already occurred in the film, except four *semiotic* images indicated by an asterik.)



## EXPERIMENTAL CINEMA

SOUND	PICTURE	IDEOLOGICAL SPECIFICATION
Machine-gun keeps firing incessantly, but with intervals between.	FADE IN DOUBLE EXPOSURE CLOSE UP OF Paul's mother.	
Voice of teacher Kantorek: "PAUL BAUMER, AND I WONDER W H A T YOU ARE GOING TO DO?"	QUICK L A P DISSOLVE TO CLOSEUP of teacher Kantorek in the schoolroom. CUT TO CLOSEUP of the student, Paul Baumer, in the schoolroom, rising with reckless enthusiasm.	A part of that sentence has already been heard in the mother-closeup, and extends to — — —
Voice of Paul: "I'LL GO!"	FADE OUT DOUBLE EXPOSURE of Paul's eyes. Paul's close up remains in the picture. CUT TO CLOSEUP DOUBLE EX- POSURE of Iron Cross* coming to- wards the camera until it fills out the whole screen.	
Double-print: firing French machine-gun and voice of Kantorek: "YOU ARE THE LIFE OF THE FATHERLAND, YOU BOYS."	QUICK LAP DISSOLVE O U T FROM IRON CROSS INTO rain of silvercoins.*	The coins should be generic, but not the particular coins of any one nation. The glittering quality should be emphasized photograph- ically.
	LAP DISSOLVE TO CLOSEUP of Christ on Cross* in a cemetery, taken from below.	
	DIRECT CUT OUT DOUBLE EX- POSURE of Paul. Christ remains in the picture.	



SOUND

PICTURE

IDEOLOGICAL SPECIFICATION

Voice of Kantorek:  
"SWEET and FITTING  
IT IS TO DIE FOR THE  
FATHERLAND." This  
sentence spoken by Kan-  
torek covers all the scenes  
up to Medium closeup of  
*soldier Behm*. The ex-  
plosion of the shells and  
the yelling of Behm start  
in with the last words of  
Kantorek.

CLOSEUP OF BEHM as a student in  
schoolroom, shaking his head deny-  
ing-ly.

DIRECT CUT OUT DOUBLE EX-  
POSURE of Christ. Behm's closeup  
remains in the picture. Behm, still  
shaking his head . . . .

CUT TO MEDIUM CLOSEUP of  
BEHM AS A SOLDIER. (Night shot).  
Behm is hurled down on the battlefield  
by an exploding shell. He jumps to  
his feet, blinded, and runs in circles, his  
hands to his eyes.

CUT TO CLOSEUP OF KEMME-  
RICH (as a student) in schoolroom.

Voice of Kemmerich: "Me  
TOO!" From far away,  
the roar of cannon and the  
tatata of machine-guns.

CUT TO CLOSEUP OF KEMME-  
RICH AS A SOLDIER, dying in hos-  
pital-bed.

CUT TO CLOSEUP OF ALBERT  
as a student in schoolroom.

Voice of Albert:  
"COUNT ON ME!"

CUT TO CLOSEUP OF ALBERT  
AS A SOLDIER, getting wounded  
during an infantry attack.

Voice of Kantorek: "ARE  
YOU MOTHERS SO  
WEAK THAT YOU  
CANNOT SEND YOUR  
SONS TO DEFEND  
THE LAND WHICH  
GAVE THEM BIRTH?"



SOUND      PICTURE      IDEOLOGICAL SPECIFICATION

CUT TO CLOSEUP of KANTOREK  
in schoolroom.

This sentence spoken by  
Kantorek is sustained  
throughout the quick  
montage-cuts and vanishes  
only at that shot when  
Paul finishes his *fall to the  
ground*.

CUT TO CLOSEUP OF dead French-  
man.

CUT TO CLOSEUP OF Paul's  
mother.

CUT TO LONG SHOT OF common  
grave\* with many crosses.

CUT TO A QUICK SERIES OF  
BLACK AND WHITE FRAMES  
flashed in visual synchronization to  
the — — —

tatata sound of the firing  
machine-gun now very  
loud.

OVER THE BLACK AND WHITE  
FRAMES FADE IN DOUBLE EX-  
POSURE CLOSE UP OF Paul as he  
*finishes his fall to the ground.* (Shot  
from above).

QUICK FADEOUT DOUBLE EX-  
POSURE OF black and white frames.  
PAUL'S CLOSE UP REMAINS.

There is a smile of peace and calm on  
his face.

(The arrangement of these last three  
shots represents a new type of montage-  
form.)

The volume of Kantorek's voice,  
in the beginning very strong, slows  
down gradually during these  
scenes, and as Paul falls to the  
ground, it seems to come from be-  
yond. Thus demonstrating the  
spatial and temporal depth of the  
vision and the ascendancy of un-  
consciousness.

The diminution of the volume of  
Kantorek's voice coincides with the  
shortening of the tempo of the pic-  
ture-frames.



SOUND

The now highly magnified tatatatata of the machine-gun slowly dissolves

into  
the sound of a wireless telegraph. -- . . . . - - . . . .

Sound of telegraph lingers on.

"REPORT" :  
"ALL" . . . . .

" . . . . QUIET ON  
THE WESTERN  
FRONT",

PICTURE

SLOW FADE OUT OF Paul's face.

After Paul's face has faded from the screen, a series of black and white frames are flashed, visualizing the - - . . . . - - . . . . of the telegraph.

FADE IN CLOSEUP OF a hand, holding the receiver of a German field-phone to ear. (Objectification close-up)

CUT TO CLOSEUP OF a Mouth, forming the words:

CUT TO CLOSEUP OF the mouthpiece of a phone. Camera traveling fast towards it, "creeping" into it. When the mouthpiece occupies the *full* screen, FADE OUT of picture — and darkness remains. . . . while the last words:

IDEOLOGICAL SPECIFICATION

are not only heard from the screen, but *at one and the same time from several loudspeakers*, installed in different places about the theatre (some above, some on the sides, some on the floor, lobby). By such an arrangement, the spectators will directly share all experienced emotions, and the words: "ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT" will echo as a psychological sensation, like a Mythos, stirring up the unconscious mind.

*Note:*

This sound-montage idea may be used also for any scenes in which the spectator is made to experience the physical and psychological sensation of the players. As, for instance, players heavily involved in battle-scenes (cannon thunder, explosion of grenades, machine-guns, etc.), air-battles (roar of motors, machine-guns, tail-spinning planes, etc.) \*

\*All montage-ideas, special sound-effects, etc. of the above continuity are fully protected by copyright of Werner Klingler.





**"PASSION OF  
JOAN OF ARC"  
CARL DREYER**