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Sergei Eisenstein's revolutionary trilogy through the perspective of
Semiotic Studies: intertextual and intermedial aspects

Master's Thesis

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Abstract

Since Soviet times Sergei Eisenstein's heritage has been studied in the context of Semiotics, because it is a well-known fact that his film and other humanities researches are closely related to the sign studies. But anyway, Eisenstein's films are still an immense field for the analysis.

The main idea of this master's thesis lies at the intersection of Semiotic and Film studies and touches upon the topics of Structuralism, film language, intermediality and intertextuality in the case of Sergei Eisenstein's revolutionary trilogy ("Strike", "Battleship Potemkin" and "October") analysis.

The research on Eisenstein's film experiments from the angle of intermediality and intertextuality plays a significant role in understanding not only the film theory, but the effect on the particular audience. That is why Eisenstein's legacy might and have to be examined through the prism of cultural and social point of view.

As the structural analysis of the certain films' scenes analysis is being conducted, the questions related to the connection of intermediality and intertextuality with such Tartu-Moscow Semiotic School concept as cultural memory will be raised. Here also the answers on the questions connected to the correlation between culture and intermedial and intertextual processes will be given. Moreover, the phenomenon of blurring the boundaries between the film space and the space of real life will be explained.

Introduction

Since my bachelor studies I was interested in Sergei Eisenstein's film theory and how he put it into practice. Undoubtedly, Eisenstein's legacy occupies an important place in the world cinematography. His films and writings are studied all over the world. In fact, his theories of a "Montage of Attractions" and intellectual montage (I mention only those approaches, which are related to Eisenstein's revolutionary trilogy) are considered as a cornerstone of all subsequent action films worldwide. From the point of view of Semiotic Studies Eisenstein's heritage is of interest as well for the research. "Eisenstein [...] is traditionally perceived as the forerunner of many areas of humanitarian thought including Semiotics"¹ (Петровская, 1999).

For instance, we can recall Eisenstein's interest in semantics of signs. As a child, Sergei Eisenstein was exposed to the rich traditions and symbolism of Orthodox Christianity, which had a profound impact on his creative vision. The elaborate iconography and mystical symbolism found in the Orthodox Church informed Eisenstein's storytelling approach, which often emphasized metaphor and visual allegory. Additionally, Eisenstein was fascinated by the intricate designs of Chinese and Japanese characters known as hieroglyphs. He saw these characters as a form of visual language that could convey complex ideas and emotions with a single stroke (Иванов, 1976: 147-148). This fascination with symbolism and visual language would later be reflected in his work as a filmmaker, as he experimented with the use of montage and composition to convey meaning through image and movement.

During my master's degree in Semiotics, I tried to apply semiotic approach in combination with media studies to film analysis and found out the good prospect of applying the concepts of intermediality and intertextuality to Eisenstein's activity (I use this word in

¹ Translation by the author – E.K

order to highlight that I mean not only his films, but film research as well). This thought came to my mind when I started to explore the reactions on Eisenstein's films in different forms of art, including reminiscence, allusions etc. In order to approach this topic, we need to start from the very beginning, from the roots of Eisenstein's film language, structuralists researches of the first decades of XX century and the analysis of the certain most illustrative scenes, which could be considered as a research object. So, I decided to devote my master's research paper to these topics, because to the present moment I already collected enough literary material and got sufficient visual experience to cover this topic comprehensively.

This thesis is dedicated to the analysis of three S. Eisenstein's silent films which are usually united into the so-called revolutionary trilogy: "Strike" (1924), "Battleship Potemkin" (1925) and "October" (1927) through the prism Semiotic and Structural studies as well as intermedial and intertextual aspects. To delimit the research object, I am going to choose the most canonical and well-known episodes from each of the films and consider them as texts, in the understanding of Tartu-Moscow Semiotic School (TMS). Moreover, TMS researches constitute an important part of my thesis as a whole. I will also focus on the notions of cultural memory, binary culture, explosions and text, offered by Juri Lotman and developed by other TMS members. Additional explanation is required to clarify what I mean by "the most canonical and well-known episodes". To make my analysis more coherent and accurate, I consider only those scenes that were described in detail by Eisenstein himself in his articles and memoirs. Therefore, we can follow Eisenstein's line of thought, which is connected with cinematic experiments and, moreover, explore their theoretical background, idea, creation process and some conclusions. Later I will discuss the exact scenes that will be analyzed.

The interest of the scientific community in the works of Eisenstein was manifested even at the beginning of his directorial career in early 1920s. First of all, Eisenstein's aspirations in inventing the film language brought him closer to the structuralists and formalists Roman Jakobson, Victor Shklovsky and Yuri Tynyanov. All of them, despite the fact that they belonged to different spheres of research, like linguistics, literary criticism, and psychology, cinematography, were inspired by the brand-new type of art and motivated to contribute to Eisenstein's attempts to construct the structure of the film language. The semiotic approach was applied to Eisenstein's films analysis during the late Soviet times too. One of the most famous semiotic researchers, a member of Tartu-Moscow school, who took Eisenstein's legacy into account, was Vyacheslav Ivanov. In his 1976 book "Essays on the history of

semiotics in the USSR” (“*Очерки по истории семиотики в СССР*”), Ivanov pays a lot of attention to the idea of semiotic systems’ structures, aesthetic theory and film-language in Eisenstein’s films and research: “[T]he aesthetic legacy of S.M. Eisenstein, who was essentially the first to investigate the deep structures of semiotic art systems, is of exceptional interest. [...] The aesthetic theory of S.M. Eisenstein [...] is rightfully considered consonant with the main ideas of modern semiotics and structural poetics”² (ИВАНОВ, 1976: 56). Alexander Zholkovsky, another representative of TMS, dedicated to Eisenstein at least two articles. One of them is called “Generative poetics in the works of S. M. Eisenstein”, where the author, from the point of view of linguistics, tried to explain the emergence of text (he considers films as a text) and what kind of tools Eisenstein used for it. Zholkovsky writes: “The records of Eisenstein's directorial studies [...] being a protocol for the active use of the language of art, give us not just an artistic text, but more or less complete information about its structure and the interdependencies of its elements, not to mention direct formulations of the basic principles of its generation”³ (ЖОЛКОВСКИЙ, 1970: 451 - 452). Juri Lotman also mentions Eisenstein in his book “Semiotics of Cinema”, where he analyzes some structural aspects of Eisenstein’s film language, specifically, a frame as a unit of a montage. Then, in the first post-Soviet years art theorist M. Yampolsky, in “The Memory of Tiresias: Intertextuality and Film”, mentions Eisenstein in the context of intertextuality: “Eisenstein's interest lay not so much in the situation of intertextuality itself <...> as in the existence of some mysterious, hidden equivalent that permits the juxtaposition of these various extratextual realities” (Yampolsky, 1993: 221).

However, nowadays still there aren’t any comprehensive semiotic researches that take into account the intertextuality and intermediality of the early Soviet cinematography in modern understanding although, from my point of view, the consideration of Eisenstein’s films perceptions within the perspective of these phenomenon suggests itself. “The concept of intertextuality requires, therefore, that we understand texts not as self-contained systems but as differential and historical, as traces and tracings of otherness, since they are shaped by the repetition and transformation of other textual structures” (Alfaro, 1996: 268). This understanding of intertextuality, which is initially offered by Julia Kristeva (I am referring to the secondary texts, as Alfaro’s, since I couldn’t find any proper Kristeva’s papers in English)

² Translation by the author - E.K.

³ id.

, explains the impossibility of the existence of a text as a closed system. So, I find it interesting to analyze cinematographic units, for which certain scenes from Eisenstein's films serve as intertexts (i.e. I will focus on such features as similar motifs, images etc. transferring from a film to a film). I suppose that it will allow us to investigate cultural autocommunication "after Eisenstein" and learn the way of how these texts are rethought by other film directors. Did Eisenstein's ideas remain intact or were they distorted? Moreover, due to the fact that cinema is primarily a visual form of art, there are prospects for the study of Eisenstein's texts not only within the framework of cinema, but also other visual arts (theater, photography, painting). That is why I also decided to concentrate on the concept of intermediality, in the understanding of Irina O. Rajewsky, who considered it as "a generic term for all those phenomena <...> that in some way take place between media. 'Intermedial' therefore designates those configurations which have to do with a crossing of borders between media" (Rajewsky, 2005: 46). Within the framework of my thesis, I will understand by this term images and motifs transferring not from film to film (as in the case of intertexts), but from a film to painting, from film to photography, etc.

Therefore, the relevant research related to the media studies such as "A Semiotic Theory of Media Experience" by R. Eugeni (2011) and "Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook" by Astrid Erll (2008) etc. helped me to include the ideas of mediality, the impact of films on viewers and cultural memory. We can research the way how early Eisenstein's films affected the audience through the different resources: the director's memoirs, memoirs of contemporaries, journalistic texts of those times and, furthermore, the reflection and reception of scenes and images in films of other directors, as well as other types of art. The last resource, in my opinion, has the most intriguing and extensive field of research, because it let us open up new horizons for studying Eisenstein's activity in the context of the whole culture. Erll writes: "Fictions, both novelistic and filmic, possess the potential to generate and mold images of the past which will be retained by whole generations" (Erll, 2008: 389). Eugeni's thoughts on media experience could play directly into our hands, because they give us a certain method of analyzing films as well as cultural features distributed via these films. So, I took into account the intertextual nature of cultural memory, and took this fact as the starting point of my research. The idea of researching intermediality of Eisenstein's films came to my mind later, when I realized that there are many cases when these texts go beyond the boundaries of their type of art and spread to

others. Moreover, it begins to re-write itself. In cinematography it can be expressed, for example, in repeated (in different films) visually similar scenes. It will be discussed in details in chapter three.

Thus, I find the topic of my thesis pretty intriguing and beneficial, because it can contribute both to semiotic and film studies. The intermedial and intertextual analysis will help to achieve the comprehensive results in researching films in one hand as a cultural units and partially social and on the other hand as semiotic units.

The aim of the thesis and research questions

As the aim of this current master's thesis I set a semiotic analysis of the canonical scenes from "Strike", "Battleship Potemkin" and "October" on the basis of Semiotic and structural studies, considering the aspect of intermediality and intertextuality. To reach this aim I will proceed from the following research questions:

1. What was the cultural and historical context of Eisenstein's creative path?
2. What was the influence of structural approach on the art and in particular cinema of Soviet Russia at the beginning of the XX century?
3. How and why Eisenstein expressed himself in his own films?
4. What role do intertexts and intermedia play in perceiving a film episode as a historical fact?

Research object

As a research object, as I mentioned previously, I will take a several scenes from each movie of the Eisenstein's revolutionary trilogy. First of all, from the "Strike" I am going to take the scene which is usually called "Slaughter", where Eisenstein originally applies (not taking into account his theatrical performances) his theory of the montage of attractions (associative or metaphorical montage). The film "Strike" itself is about the uprising of the proletarians caused by injustice, cruel and humiliating attitude from the bourgeois leadership. The workers make certain demands, but the factory's owners ignore them. The film ends with

a “Slaughter”: by order of the governor, Cossacks and police brutally suppress the strike and shoot the workers. This episode is important for us, in the context of how Eisenstein builds a structure of his film language. Following the visual images and at the same time drawing the parallels with the director’s and his contemporaries’ theoretical edge we could make some conclusions on how Eisenstein’s film language structure is built. For the first time in the history of cinematography the concept of metaphor was embodied on the screen. And, of course, Semiotics here is able to provide us answers to questions related to the language as a communicative sign structure. It opens up prospects for investigating the film language from the smallest particle of the system (a frame) and then allow gradually expands the research area.

Then, in “Battleship Potemkin”, the film about the uprising of the sailors against the humiliating attitude towards them, I am interested in “Odessa staircase” scene. This episode is also dedicated to dispersal of the civilian population. Residents of Odessa happily welcomed the battleship on which the uprising happened. Unfortunately, the soldiers of the tsarist government began to shoot those gathered. Besides the structure, it is important to us as the examples of intertextual and intermedial processes, which continue even nowadays and lead to blurring boundaries between film and reality. This blurring can be researched from two perspectives: cultural studies and media studies. And as a consequence, we will get the answers related to the question of the cultural and social reaction as well as media experience of the Soviet society. Prof. Ruggero Eugeni claims had media experience “is a kind of experience pre-established from the outside and by subjects ‘others’ than those who live it; moreover, media experience is not unique and personal, but repeatable by different subjects and then serialized” (Eugeni, 2011). This thought gives us an opportunity to develop the idea of the importance of media experience among Soviet citizens and, as I suppose, it is possible to connect it to the research of binary type culture, which was offered by Juri Lotman.

The similar proposal occurs when speaking about “October”, dedicated to the Bolshevik revolution 1917, which will be analyzed from the perspective of “The storming of the Winter palace”. Moreover, the concept of intermediality is added as well, because we can see here how the cinematic images transfer to other types of art such as theatre, paintings etc. Yampolsky, who was mentioned above, considered Eisenstein’s works in his book as a final point of the certain intertextual process. But what if to continue and consider it as a starting point? From my point of view, intertextual analysis is able to reveal the idea of how artistic

images of particular historical event are distributed among art pieces for many decades and then become a part of society's cultural memory. I assume that here of course we face with a kind of educational process which took place in the USSR. It was important for the Soviet government to fix in the mind of the recipient a certain visual image of the events of the Bolshevik revolution

Methodology

In order to answer the research questions and consequently achieve the main aim of this thesis, I decided to consider my paper as a qualitative secondary research, which is an efficient way to collect all the necessary data and systemize it in the proper way. Since I work with pre-existing data, I based my choice on Eisenstein's self-description aspect, which I mentioned earlier as well as the film studies background and chose the episodes that are most often found in film textbooks and the most quoted in both cinema and other art forms. Eisenstein's filmography is relatively rich and covers two decades of both silent and sound films. That is why the idea of taking the revolutionary trilogy as a research object seems reasonable to me. These three films related to the silent-era, they are united by a common topic and constitute the embodiment of one film theory.

The structural analysis (a method of film studies analysis) plays a significant role in my research, because, as I mentioned previously, I would like to start my investigations from the film language. This kind of approach involves the specific elements of the language of the film, the interaction of compositional techniques and characteristic features, the analysis of the most accurate set of expressive and visual means and their relationships in the whole structure. Moreover, it pays a special attention to structural commonalities and connections of cinema with traditional arts. The correlations and interrelations of their systems of images are in the spotlight of this approach. It can help us in:

- Understanding of Eisenstein's theory of film language origins, in the context of the development of art in the 1920s.
- Explanation of how Eisenstein's film language works and evaluation of the influence of literary structural studies in it.

This method of film analysis was actively developed among others by Formal School members. Thus, I am going to refer to such works as “A Film – A word – music” (Тынянов, 1924//1977), “On the basics of cinema” (Тынянов, 2001), “Basic laws of the film frame” (Шкловский, 1965) etc.

Furthermore, in order to consider Eisenstein’s films precisely as texts, I find it appropriate here to use Juri Lotman’s typology of text functions as a method. I will follow the theses that were mentioned in “The Semiotics of Culture and the Concept of a Text” (Lotman, 1981). In this way, I will:

- Find the principles of communication between the text and the cultural context.
- Analyze scenes from the trilogy from Eisenstein’s own point of view (make an accent on Eisenstein’s biography and his creative path in general, on relationship between the text and the author).
- Consider the certain examples of how the audience communicates with a cultural tradition (the function of collective cultural memory).

Finally, the concepts of intertexts and intermedia will be in the focus of attention. Here the concepts of Irina Rajewsky can be applied: “There is indeed a close relation between intermedial references and intertextual or, more broadly conceived, intramedial references, and numerous insights of the intertextuality debate – for instance questions of textual markers and different modes of referencing – can be fruitful for the examination of intermedial phenomena” (Rajewsky, 2005: 54) . Applying the terms to the revolutionary trilogy, I can consider the scenes from point of view of extra-textual reality. Moreover, we should not forget about “differential and historical” (Alfaro, 1996: 268) texts. I find it intriguing to connect the intermedial and intertextual processes to the forming of cultural memory. The artistic references (especially the way they function and correlate to the origins) to Eisenstein’s works will be in a spotlight.

Expected results

As a result of this work, I would like to get a comprehensive and coherent semiotic analysis of the scenes from Eisenstein’s revolutionary trilogy based on Film, Semiotic, Media studies as well as intermedial, intertextual approach. If speaking more detailed, I expect:

- explanation of the principles of the Eisenstein's film language structure functioning through the study of the relevant sign systems;
- understanding the role of intermedia and intertextual processes in the forming of cultural memory through films.

Structure

The first chapter of my thesis will be dedicated to the common tendencies in art of the beginning of the XX century in Russia. This important introductory part will shed light on the origins of Sergei Eisenstein's way of thinking. I am going to build the parallels between painting, literature and theatre in the first decades of the Soviet era. Moreover, the special attention will be paid to the ideas of Structuralism, developed by among others Russian Formal School, and its influence on the development of art and artistic thinking in Russia in 1920s. Finally, I will assess the role of cinematography in this sophisticated structure.

In the second chapter, Sergei Eisenstein's research on the language of film and its impact on society will be in the spotlight. I will pay attention to the common ideas of Eisenstein, Vygotsky and Shklovsky and research the literary approach that the director considered as a keystone of the film language. The idea of literariness of Eisenstein's films will be considered too. I am going to find out which features of structural thinking affected the director's film theories and find the examples of how these features were embodied on the screen.

Then, in the chapter three, I will touch upon the topic of Sergei Eisenstein's self-reflection that was showed through the certain episodes of his revolutionary trilogy. I will analyze the episodes "Slaughter", "Odessa staircase" and "The storming of the Winter palace" from the point of view of the director's personal experience and impressions on Bolshevik revolution. Here I will find some parallels between the real-life experience and the way of how structural approach transforms cinema into a category of art. And the question of the boundary between reality and fiction will be raised.

In the fourth and the last chapter I would like to concentrate on the notions of intertextuality and intermediality and try to find out how it is related to the real historical

events in the early years of the Soviet Union and at the same time to the cultural memory in the context of semiotic, film and media studies. The same film scenes that were mentioned earlier will be analyzed here. We will discuss the interconnection of history and imagination and how the myth of Bolshevik revolution based on Eisenstein's films emerged. The circumstance of transferring images, meanings and signs among different films and then different types of art will be in the spotlight.

I. 1910s – 1920s Tendencies in the search for a “new language” of arts. The context of Eisenstein’s creative path

Let’s try to recall what constituted Russian cinematography in the beginning of its path, before the avant-garde artists took power into their own hands. In most cases, for the audience of 1900s–1910s, films were considered as entertainment, something similar to theatre: pavilion filming, static camera and, consequently, static viewpoint, long shots or even the total absence of montage. Cinema did not claim the title of art at all, thus it was literally an “artistic surrogate”, which used the already existing ideas, images and artistic means in order to resonate with the certain target audience⁴ (Гинзбург, 1965: 10-11). Cinematography as a non-art was inseparably connected to performative activities, literature (at the level of scripts), paintings (visual components) and did not have its own system of communication with the recipients. So, the question is: when and how did cinematography become an art?

Nowadays, of course, the attitude towards the art of the late Russian Empire is much more respectful than in Soviet times. Looking with hindsight we can say that it is inappropriate to consider pre-revolutionary cinema as something banal and primitive while comparing it with Soviet films. Different times require different preferences and trends among the population. Soviet culture as the binary type culture, speaking in Juri Lotman’s terms, “is represented by the complete destruction of all that already exists which is considered to be irretrievably corrupt” (Lotman, 2009: 166). It concerned not only films, but the whole culture, including art. And this phenomenon was quite symptomatically reflected in brand-new artistic tendencies, which were brought with the Bolshevik revolutions by the wind of change. For instance, we can recall one of the most famous and illustrative manifestos published by the Futurist poets in 1912 in a collection of poems called “Slap to the face of public taste”. Here

⁴ Translation by the author - E.K.

is a brief extract: “The past is tight. The Academy and Pushkin are more incomprehensible than hieroglyphs. We must throw Pushkin, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and etc. off the steamship of Modernity ... We decree to honor the rights of poets: 1) To increase the dictionary in its volume with arbitrary and obtained words (innovation words). 2) To irresistibly hate the language that existed before them”⁵ (Бурлюк et al., 1912). New society declares new texts and new language in order to abandon the vicious past. The correctness of such and any views is debatable, however I offer to take it for granted. Not accidentally, I began this research from the poets, because they were the ones who became an unshakeable foundation of a future development of art. How did it happen?

The beginning of the XX century from the point of view of humanities is characterized by rapid development of Structuralism, which in Soviet Union was developed from Russian Formal School. This approach also had a significant impact on what was happening in the sphere of art, despite of the fact that Structuralism initially was allied with linguistics and anthropology. If earlier semantics was at the head of understanding the laws of information exchange, then the new era thrust the perception of signs, their systems and the ways of communication to the forefront. Therefore, intersections between structuralists and artists are beyond doubt. First of all, this applies to literature. For instance, Roman Jakobson, one of the most famous structuralists of the Soviet school, supported and was actively involved in activities of avant-garde circles, Futurist poets’ society, first of all. Writing about poetry, he explains the obsolescence of XIX century literature (what the Futurists wrote in their manifestos about) related to the petrified structure of the language of bygone eras (Jakobson, 1979). That is, we can say that Jakobson explains and finds the roots of such a cultural phenomenon from the point of view of structural linguistics. Therefore, I think it would be appropriate here to follow the ideas of a structural approach in the analysis of my research object, because it was created in an “atmosphere” of Structuralism as well. So, if structuralists did not influence the formation of avant-garde literature, then at least they scientifically justified its appearance and explained the principles of its functioning. It is known for certain that Jakobson was the co-author of Alexei Kruchyonykh, were dealing with Velimir Khlebnikov etc. And as a culmination we got the formation and activity of the OPOJAZ – Russian formal school, for which the subject of attention lied initially in avant-garde poetics.

⁵ Translation by the author - E.K.

So, step by step, the artists who were encouraged by the radical changes in the country and in human consciousness in the first decades of the XX century, actively started to develop the ideas of “purification” and “renewal” of the language, which emerged in literary circles and then used to be at the peak of discussions all the artistic spheres. Everyone called it in their own way, but still, in fact, it all boils down to one term, *ostranenie*, offered by one of the Formalists. Writers, painters as well as people from the sphere of theater and cinema fought for the self-sufficiency of all kinds of art. Referring to Lotman’s “Culture and Explosion” again, where the language is a code plus its history (Lotman, 2009: 9), we can assume that it was not just the invention of a new language, but an attempt to destroy the connection with the past in this way, to build a new culture. And this destruction was held under the slogan of *ostranenie* (strangeness; breaking the connection between an object and its value and creating a new link).

1.1. Literature. *Ostranenie*

Speaking about literature, the main notion in the context of this thesis will be *ostranenie*. This notion was introduced by Victor Shklovsky, one of the participants of OPOJAZ, in the 1910s and later such a concept was actively spread not only among poets, but one way or another among painters, theatrical figures and film directors. “*Ostranenie* – is the isolation of an object or phenomenon from a familiar context in order to treat it as new, to see new properties in it”⁶ (Шкловский, 1929).

As the most prominent example from the sphere of literature, in my opinion, can be considered poetic experiments of Alexey Kruchyonykh, who was already mentioned previously, and his “*zaum*” (in Russian “*заумь*”), a brand new poetic language, purified from “worldly filth”. “Thought and speech do not keep up with feeling,” writes Kruchyonykh in his “Declaration of *Zaum* Language”, “so the artist is free to express himself not only in a general language (concepts), but also in a personal one (the creator is individual), and in a language that has no definite meaning (not frozen), “*zaum*” language”. A common language binds, but

⁶ Translation by the author - E.K.

a free one allows us to express ourselves more fully”⁷ (Кручёных, 1921). Speaking in general terms, the main idea was to deprive words of their usual meanings. Using in the semiotic terminology of Ferdinand de Saussure, *zaum*’s task was to exclude the signified and leave only the signifier. Kruchyonykh supposed that the language, combinations of the letters and the sounds can express itself and that is why they don’t need any intermediaries in the form of images or associations fixed in people’s minds. As a result we got poetic experiments in *zaum*’ language consisting only of a set of letters and combinations of sounds. Shklovsky supported the idea of Kruchyonykh and wrote that “the poet does not dare to say a ‘*zaum* word’”, because many artists are accustomed to *zaum*, which “hides under the guise of some content, often deceptive, imaginary, forcing the poets themselves to admit that they themselves do not understand the content of their poems”⁸ (Шкловский, 1919). However everything is much easier. *Zaum* lies precisely in the lack of content.

So, can we say that *zaum* is based on the concept of *ostranenie*? Definitely. The poets created new structures based on already existing signs (letters and sounds), eliminating any connection between them and familiar images. We can call *ostranenie* as a kind of reverse semiosis, which helps recipients to eliminate the automatism reality’s perception.

1.2. Paintings. *Bespredmetnost*’

In this subchapter we are going to focus our attention on another significant concept – *bespredmetnost*’ (objectless; lack of a realistic image that could evoke familiar associations), which emerged in the sphere of painting.

Vasily Kandinsky, as a bright representative of contemporary painting of those times, claimed in his autobiographical novel “The Artist’s Text” (1913 – 1918) that “pure art” (in the meaning of painting) with its independent and special sign systems requires rejection of objectivity. That is how paintings will be able to “speak” their own language and not being just a copy of reality⁹ (Кандинский, 2018). The embodiment of the sign should not resemble any real object. Kandinsky promotes the idea of indices (Charles Peirce’s terminology) of

⁷ id.

⁸ Translation by the author - E.K.

⁹ id

feelings that arise in a person's mind at the sight of certain shapes and colors. This is similar to Kruchyonykh's *zaum'* and, of course, *ostranenie*, isn't it? Thus, Kandinsky, using colors and shapes, the tools of paintings, as Kruchenykh used letters and sounds, also strives to create new structures in order to elaborate new meanings.

Nevertheless, Vasily Kandinsky and then Kazimir Malevich coined and actively used the term *bespredmetnost'*, which in fact can be considered as a pictorial analogy of literary *ostranenie*. From the manifesto, which is called "From Cubism and Futurism to Suprematism" we can find out that Malevich in general shared the views of Kandinsky and takes *bespredmetnost'* as a basis of his Suprematism. He also writes about the violation of objects' integrity "for the purely pictorial essence"¹⁰ (Малевич, 2001). And that is how he finally came to the term, objectless in painting. "Our world of art has become new, non-objective, pure" (Ibid), writes Malevich.

1.3. Theatre. The Third Meaning

Speaking about theatre, Vsevolod Meyerhold, who was Eisenstein's beloved teacher by the way, tried to develop the semiotic ideas of the language of theatre. In the book "About theatre" he mentions: "The desire to show everything at all costs, the fear of Secrets and understatement turn the theater into an illustration of the author's words"¹¹ (Мейерхольд, 1913). According to his concepts, Meyerhold pretends to separate the theater from the script writer, i.e. from the literary text of the play and thus focuses on a movement as a unit of theatrical language. So, it means that he makes an accent on the visual component of the theatre, which historically is more important than the verbal one (the roots of this lie in the ancient theater and medieval theater, in Dionysias, mysteries, etc.) and refers to the pre-linguistic stage of information exchange. By creating such a counterpoint of word and action, Meyerhold achieves *ostranenie* that is commonly called The Third Meaning here, and was invented by Roland Barthes (Ряпосов, 2022). Thus we can claim that Meyerhold also developed the ideas of the formalists in his own way, in the context of theatre.

¹⁰ Translation by the author - E.K.

¹¹ id

More detailed information about The Third Meaning, initially developed in the sphere of theatre, we can find in one of the works of Roland Barthes, where the author analyses Sergei Eisenstein's films through their structure and focuses on the meaning making. Foremost, Barthes considers late Eisenstein's films, just because the article called "The Third Meaning" was written in 1970, two decades after Eisenstein's death. However, this text gives us a complete understanding of The Third Meaning appearance in Eisenstein's films for the future research. Barthes, using the examples of "Battleship Potemkin" and "Ivan the Terrible" writes about three levels of meaning: informative (the level of communication; a structure, a plot etc.), symbolic (means of artistic expression) and the third level, which is connected to perception of a particular scene by the consciousness of the viewer (Barthes, 2007). It means that The Third Meaning occurs when the viewer's personality faces his or her own historical and cultural background.

1.4. Cinematography. What is its feature?

As we can see, even if we focus only on my not so detailed examples, the fates, as well as the creative and scientific paths of many figures of that time intersect. All the personalities and texts I paid attention to, were mentioned in order to illustrate that Eisenstein's way of thinking was not something exceptional, but in the spirit of those times. So, now let's take Eisenstein's thoughts into account. As we already noticed, the most significant part of the "new language" theories consists of *ostranenie*. It becomes obvious when we realize that all the Russian avant-garde artists sought to destroy somehow the connection between the signifier and the signified in order to create new semiotic systems within the framework of certain types of art.

Painting, literature and theater are types of art that have existed for many centuries and that is why by the beginning of the 20th century there was already a basis on which such theories could be based. Each of them has its own characteristic tools of artistic expression. Cinematography, fortunately or unfortunately, in the times of young Eisenstein was a new-born art form, and it has gathered pictorial, literary and scenic elements. Therefore, he, as soon as destiny dragged him into the world of cinema, inspired by formal and structural

tendencies, faced with the task of discovering the pure and self-sufficient film language and separating film from, first of all, theatre. Therefore, Eisenstein for many years followed the structural ideas in order to find out all the components of the film language, and finally the film frame was chosen as the basic and the minimum unit (hereinafter, this term refers to the moment from turning the camera on to turning it off). This cinematic unit is an analogue of a word in speech, a sound in music, a brushstroke in a picture, etc. Montage in this system plays the role of language: “there remains an understanding of montage not only as a tool which produce effects, but above all as an instrument for speaking, an instrument for expressing ideas, to express them through a special kind of cinematic language, through a special form of cinematic speech” (Эйзенштейн, 1944a).

Of course, Eisenstein was not the first one who started to remove theater features from cinema. These trends have already been observed earlier and, of course, by structuralists. For instance, I found some similar thoughts in the article “Dada” written by Roman Jakobson in 1921: “The theater is dying, the movies are blossoming. The screen ceases bit by bit to be the equivalent of the stage; it frees itself of the theatrical unities, of the theatrical *mise en scene*” (Jakobson, 1987: 39). Jakobson, who in the 1910s–1920s was interested in the form of avant-garde paintings and *zaum* (Puyal, 2010), uses his experience very accurately and applies it to the analysis of cinematography as well. That’s why we will see his name pretty often in this paper.

Sergei Eisenstein’s interest in structures and signs is traced throughout his entire life: it originates from the director’s childhood and has gone through his whole the creative path. And in particular, what interests us in the framework of this research, sign studies were applied by Eisenstein to the development of his film theories and films themselves: “The problem of the gradual transformation of a specific subject designation into a hieroglyphic sign for an abstract concept becomes one of the main subjects of Eisenstein's thoughts at the time when he begins to solve the problems of intellectual film” (Иванов, 1976: 138). Signs for Eisenstein are based on the idea of tropes or, in other words, methods of artistic expression. How and through what Eisenstein came to the structural and sign theories that became the basis of his further work will be discussed in more detail in the chapter II.

II. Structural approach and its application to film theory

During my research I came to the conclusion that Sergei Eisenstein's film theory is strongly based on the structural research of language and literature. Film as a pretty specific type of art has, on the one hand, its own visual features, but on the other hand, these features limit the possibility of transferring abstract images and concepts to the screen, as, for example, literature does. It means that the true language of film can't be built without such things as abstract thinking, artistic expression tools, symbolism etc. That is why Eisenstein presumably chose literature as the foundation for his film theories of the 1920s. Moreover, one way or another, agitation of the population played an important role, thus an equally important task for Eisenstein was to establish communication between the film and the viewer at the level of signs.

2.1. Linguistic origins of structuralism

I suppose that we can begin from speaking here about poetics, which is initially related to the linguistics and literature, deals with questions of speech structures and later often applied to cinema. Roman Jakobson formulates the basic question of poetics as: "What makes a verbal message a work of art?" (Jakobson, 1960: 63) So, if we, for instance, put cinema at the same raw form with a verbal message ("It is evident that many devices studied by poetics are not confined to verbal art" (Ibid)), another question comes to the mind: what makes a film a work of art? Thus we come to the idea of structural analysis of cinema or film poetics.

The first concept, in which we are interested within the framework of this research, is the concept of *rhythm*, which was actively developed by Jakobson in the context of poetics.

“The problem of rhythm was recognized in the Moscow Linguistic Circle and by Russian Formalists as a primarily problem of poetic language, in contradistinction to the language of prose” (Senderovich, 1982). Moreover, Jakobson’s notion of rhythm is associated with two other concepts – *trope*, that adds the second layer of meaning (“poetic trope is a foregrounded nexus of linguistic form and meaning such that meaning cannot be divorced from a given signals/signatum structure” (Ibid)) and *myth*, which “is an expression of the holistic aspect of the creative personality of a poet” (Ibid). These three concepts also resonate with Eisenstein's ideas.

Vyacheslav Ivanov in “Essays on the history of Semiotics...” writes: “...It would not be an exaggeration if we say that the structure, according to Eisenstein, carries the greatest semantic load in the piece of art: the piece may not be pictorial (like an ornament or a circus performance), but it cannot be devoid of meaning in this sense”¹² (ИВАНОВ, 1976: 152). And indeed, even in Eisenstein’s first text, the first significant article that he presented to the world of cinema is called “The Montage of Attractions” and was written in 1923, had the first rudiments of structural thinking. This article requires some explanation, since it was written back in the days of “theatrical” Eisenstein and, therefore, primarily refers to his theater experience. There is no doubt that the greatest impact on Eisenstein was made by his teacher Vsevolod Meyerhold. Eisenstein, in fact, was the successor of his teacher’s ideas and he even writes a lot about it in his memoirs.

However, within the framework of this research, I would like to focus specifically on the influence of the formalists – structuralists circle (Jakobson, Shklovsky, Tynyanov) and Semiotic studies on the film work of the young director. So generally, Eisenstein successfully applied his theatrical concepts (which were developed into cinematic with time, in his article “The Montage of Film-attractions” (1924)) that later were proclaimed in his revolutionary film trilogy. The director considered the potential language of the “new” theatre as a correlation between a part and a whole, where the part is an attraction, and the whole is a montage. It obviously resonates with Jakobson again: “...language cannot be interpreted as a whole, isolated and hermetically sealed, but it must be simultaneously viewed both as a whole and as a part” (Jakobson, 1971: 282). Moreover, instead of reflecting some event and its logical impact on the viewer, sensory or/and psychological impact become in the spotlight,

¹² Translation by the author - E.K.

thus referring to the recipient's unconscious (Эйзенштейн, 1968). That is exactly what the notion of attraction (in Russian *аттракцион*) means.

2.2. Victor Shklovsky and Juri Tynyanov: is film an art?

Vyacheslav Ivanov also pays a lot of attention to the fact that in the 1920s Eisenstein's thoughts on film language were very close to what literary critics and participants of OPOJAZ Viktor Shklovsky and Juri Tynyanov developed in their scientific work. These two researchers adhered to the ideas of structural linguistics, which I mentioned in the previous chapter and were resonated with the young film director. Undoubtedly, there were much more than two structuralists related to film and in particular Eisenstein, but in order to limit my sphere of research, I decided to dwell on these most prominent figures. Eisenstein, Shklovsky and Tynyanov constantly refer to each other's texts, which will be discussed later. And this fact definitely facilitates the study, since three sources are able to give a more comprehensive picture of what was happening. I decided to find some parallels between their researches in order to appreciate their contribution to film language development.

Victor Shklovsky wrote many texts about cinematography and personally Sergei Eisenstein in the 1920s. Fate has brought these two men together on the basis of common interest – filmmaking. That is why this tandem was fruitful in a film language research. It's even hard to say who influenced whom more. As an example, let's pay attention to Shklovsky's thoughts on film language in the 1920s. The researcher, discussing the language of film, compared it with literature. He found that literature has a significant advantage – unlike film, there is no strong connection between the object and its reproduction. That is why, literature is art, but film is not. And “this difference is the creative will of the artist” (Шкловский, 1927). If we put it in semiotic terms, Shklovsky writes about the relationship between signifier and signified and calls to break the bond between them. Here we can see how *ostranenie* penetrates even into film. This, in his opinion, is the primary condition for the emergence of film language. Shklovsky, inspired by the discoveries of avant-garde cinematographers, writes that “connecting different fragments of the narrative into a single whole, as well as by developing conditions that can make the sign more hieroglyphic, in

particular, due to camera work: the choice of lighting and shooting point, framing, etc.” (Познер, 2000). In other words, Shklovsky supports the idea of bringing the montage to the fore and trying to focus the attention of the audience using pure cinematic tools. Moreover, not for nothing he uses the notion of hieroglyphs (this, by the way, is also resonates with Eisenstein’s interests). Thus Shklovsky suggests, using Pierce’s terminology make a transfer from iconic signs, which are such characteristic for films, to symbols. If iconic signs are related mostly with the simple process of comparing and recognition, symbols are related particularly with cognition and intelligence.

So, what is the main benefit for film to be literary? Shklovsky gave a comprehensive answer on this question in his book dedicated to Eisenstein. He noticed that while applying literary structures to films, to emergence of totally new forms happens. And thus it is possible to overcome the “particularity of the image” and come to the general meanings (ШКЛОВСКИЙ, 1976). Firstly, it hints at the literary concept, which was the focus of our attention in the first chapter and which is called *ostranenie*. Secondly, it explains that there is no wonder that Eisenstein later, in “October” came to the concept of “Intellectual montage”, in which he set as his aim the transfer on the screen not just visual images, but abstract concepts.

In addition, Shklovsky applies purely literary notions of poetic and prosaic to cinematography which highlight the structural component of the film language. In the article “Poetry and Prose in Cinema” that was originally released in 1927 in “Poetics of Film”, he associates these two types of literature with rhythm of film (we immediately recall Jakobson here: rhythm – trope – myth). Shklovsky writes: “poetic and prosaic films ... differ from each other [...] not only in rhythm, but in the predominance of technical formal moments (in poetic cinema) over semantic ones, and formal moments replace semantic ones”¹³ (ШКЛОВСКИЙ, 2001).

At the same collection of articles “Poetics of Film” we meet another character of my research – Yuri Tynyanov. Unlike his colleague Victor Shklovsky, he confidently and without hesitation calls cinematography an art, but similarly to Shklovsky, Tynyanov draws a parallel with literature. He makes the accent on the metaphorical abilities of literature and mentions that film is able to and even should be metaphorical as well, using its technical capabilities. In addition, Tynyanov highlights the semiotic aspect of a film frame: “frame follows another frame and carries the semantic sign of this previous frame” (ТЯНЯНОВ, 2001). Perhaps the most

¹³ id.

important thing for the topic discussed in this chapter is Tynyanov's invident reference to the concept of *ostranenie* as well. Tynyanov claims that such cinematic tools as angle, perspective and composition of the frame as a whole can help the filmmaker to achieve new understanding and perception of objects on the screen. Three years prior, we can find another one of Tynyanov's articles about cinema which is called "A Film – A Word – Music" (1924). It is pretty intriguing that the author highlights the same idea in these two texts: cinematography is not "the Great Silent (Mute)", as many people used to call it because of the lack of sound. The mute is not able to speak, however films can! "Cinema provides an abstract speech that is decomposed into its constituent elements," writes Tynyanov, "[...] Speech does not exist in its entirety, not in the real connection of its elements, but in their combination" (Тынянов, 1977). Tynyanov's approach, as we can see, is also rooted in Semiotics. He decomposes the language of cinema into parts and considers the structure of the film, analyzing the smallest units – frames. As we remember, it is pretty similar to what Eisenstein did in his film theory.

2.3. Film as literature. Eisenstein's vision on film language

Most texts of Shklovsky and Tynyanov cited in the previous subchapter were written before Eisenstein released his revolutionary trilogy films and even before his most famous articles dedicated to film theory. I did it in order to illustrate the impact of formalists-structuralists on the director and his vision of ways of film development. Now we turn directly to Sergei Eisenstein and concrete examples of manifestation of structural thinking that was discussed previously in his films.

For "silent" Eisenstein rhythm, the notion of Jakobson, was the most important element of film structure, which directly connected with montage. And that is exactly what brought poetry to his films, related to the words of Shklovsky. Unlike literature, due to the in one form or another lack of phonetics in cinema, rhythm is created by speeding up or slowing down the frame rate, making the movie "sound" special. One of the most fruitful of Eisenstein's articles dedicated to the film rhythm is called "The fourth dimension of cinema" (1929). Eisenstein lists there various categories of montage and under the number 2 he has rhythmic montage,

which is characterized not only by the length of frames (in the sense of filmstrips), but also by the rhythm of intra-frame features. The director offers the “Odessa staircase” episode from “Battleship Potemkin” as an example. This iconic scene shows the violent dispersal of Odessa demonstrators, who greeted Battleship Potemkin, by pro-governmental “White” army officers.

After gunshots were heard, people started to escape and run downstairs. That’s what Eisenstein writes about this episode:

A classic example is the "Odessa Staircase". There, the “rhythmic drum” of descending soldiers' feet violate all the conventions of the metric [...] The final increase in tension is given by switching the rhythm of the [soldiers'] steps descending from the stairs into another – a new kind of movement - [into] the next stage of intensity of the same action - into a baby stroller rolling down the stairs.¹⁴
(Эйзенштейн, 1929)

Eisenstein’s use of tropes is also beyond doubt. Besides the metaphor that the director himself often uses and writes about, we can recall his obsession with metonymy and synecdoche, which hold a special place in his creative path (“Эйзенштейн, 1944: 11-25). Eisenstein usually calls it *pars pro toto* – a part instead of the whole. “Battleship Potemkin” can be an appropriate example here as well and, in fact, this film can be considered as a part of the whole at different levels and ending with certain images showing the whole concepts. The idea of film synecdoche is mostly built around close-ups. For instance, we can recall the image of a mother, from the same scene “Odessa staircase”, who was killed by a bullet to the belly. Attentive viewers usually notice the image of a swan on a woman’s belt, which obviously carries a reference of religious symbol of Virgin Mary. The murdered child, by the way, can also be interpreted individually: the death of children for the sake of undivided authority. From my point of view it is very close to the “Massacre of the Innocents” story from the New Testament. So, now we no longer see the suffering of ordinary people, but we see the passions of the Lord. And that is how *pars pro toto* works. A part becomes a whole. I suppose that Eisenstein sees Christianity as the highest manifestation of pathos and the main message of the entire film. A couple of shots concentrated in themselves the idea of the whole “Battleship Potemkin”.

The role of myth is also very important. Eisenstein, thank to him for this, wrote a long biography in which he himself outlined the influence of personal life experiences on filmmaking. For Roman Jakobson, who considers it through the prism of literature (in most

¹⁴ Translation by the author - E.K.

cases poetry), “poetic myth bears on the properties of the holistic world comprised of a body of works of a given poet. It is an expression of the holistic aspect of the creative personality of a poet” (Senderovich, 1982: 348). Anyway, Eisenstein’s trilogy is formed around his lyrical hero, so “tied by a metaphoric chain, then the mythology and the life of the poet are bound to be merged into an indivisible unity” (Ibid). That is why in the next chapter I will also focus on Eisenstein’s self-description and its embodiment in his films.

Sergei Eisenstein, in his turn, successfully applied the concept of symbol and marked the beginning of the development of film “hieroglification” back then in 1924 in “Strike”, although he states this only in the 1929 article called “The Filmic Fourth Dimension”: “The film-frame can never be an inflexible letter of the alphabet, but must always remain a multiple meaning ideogram [in Russian *hieroglyph (иероглиф)*]. And it can be read only in juxtaposition, just as an ideogram acquires its specific significance, meaning, and even pronunciation ... only when combined with a separately indicated reading or tiny meaning-an indicator for the exact reading-placed alongside the basic hieroglyph” (Eisenstein, 1929//1969).

In fact, everything he did in “Strike” he called a metaphor, however any metaphor is usually established with the help of symbol, which evokes an association in the recipient’s mind. Let’s take the most canonical example – the scene called “Slaughter”. In this final episode, the director alternates between shots of a crackdown on a proletarian strike and a bloody farm animal’s slaughter to achieve the result of viewer’s intellectual perception of the film-metaphor, in which humans are equated with livestock. In order to understand the role of symbolism here, it is important to understand the connotation of the word livestock (*скот* – “*skot*” or *быдло* – “*bydlo*” in Russian) in Russian language. Initially the word *skot* is directly and literally related to meaning cattle. However, it has another figurative negative meaning that has culturally stuck in the minds of Russian speakers. *Skot* means the class of wordlessly submissive people who belong to a low social status and who do hard dirty work. Accordingly, such a connotation has become symbolic and Eisenstein uses the symbol of livestock very appropriately, for building a metaphor of slaughter, the attraction which is perceived consciously and evokes viewer’s strong emotions. Let’s see what Eisenstein writes in 1924 about the scene analyzed above: “In order to avoid affectedness [...] and expelling falseness, I made the following step: associative comparison of execution with slaughter ... The first which is needed to be remembered that film does not exist or even must not exist

beyond agitation. The purpose of agitation through the spectacle is to create a new chain of conditioned reflexes by associating the selected phenomena with the evoked (corresponding methods) unconditional ones” (Эйзенштейн, 2016). Here we face obvious *ostranenie* for the first time in Eisenstein’s films. Making the chains of usual superficial images of livestock, protesters and cruel officers he achieves the brand new meaning, which is located in fact outside the film, but in the viewer’s cognition.

Two years later, in 1926, when “Battleship Potemkin” was already touring all around the world, Eisenstein finally came to the conclusion that cinematography is developing along the path of literature. The director continues to investigate the idea of film symbolism and again makes the accent on the role of montage in it. Eisenstein writes: “The understanding of film is now entering a “second literary period” – the phase of approaching the symbolism of the language. Speech”¹⁵ (Эйзенштейн, 1926: 277). The famous scene from “October” which is usually called “Gods” achieves the highest point of literariness (in understanding of *ostranenie*’ of course). In this episode Eisenstein tried to express the idea of non-existence of God on the screen (Иванов, 1976), using series of images related to different religions and then mixing them with the concept of homeland, expressed in awards and other external attributes of state recognition. He starts from the Orthodox Church and its symbols and then, step by step, referring to more and more ancient religions and ends with wooden pagan idols. Then the images of Gods and motherland (which are expressed in epaulettes and award crosses) are overlapped. And that is how the understanding of discrediting and depreciation of religion happens. Religion becomes only a kind of manipulation for the forcible implementation of government leadership.

So, we can conclude, that Sergei Eisenstein’s film theory is mostly based on the ideas of literary structural research, developed by Russian Formalist school and Roman Jakobson in particular. Moreover, Victor Shklovsky and Yuri Tynyanov, as the closest (in every sense) theorists to Eisenstein, obviously influenced Eisenstein and directed his work into the sphere of Structural and Semiotic studies. What does this information give us? Using this information, I am going to analyze the scenes from the revolutionary trilogy (including those already mentioned in this chapter), applying additionally the experience of media. I will try to answer questions about how Eisenstein’s language of film is related to the perception of films

¹⁵ Translation by the author - E.K.

by the audience and how it is related to intermedial and intertextual processes. But before that, let's take into account the director's self-reflection, manifested through his texts and films.

III. Films episodes as Eisenstein's self-reflection

Eisenstein's memoirs and theoretical articles can help us to investigate not only his structural thinking in films, but something more global, related to his personality and his further perception by society. So, if in the previous chapters we considered the basis of his film language, then in this chapter we are going to investigate in details how Eisenstein described and analyzed the scenes, which became canonical with a help of reassessing through other types of art. In the chapter III we will try to find the answer to the question why actually such scenes as "Slaughter", "Odessa staircase" and "The storming the Winter palace" became canonical, and what exactly made them like this.

3.1. "Slaughter": the emergence of the author and the first cinematic embodiment of structural thinking

We already started to discuss "Slaughter" from "Strike" in the subchapter 2.3., in order to give an example of how Eisenstein builds a cinematic metaphor, based on structural research of language and literature. However, the footage of cattle killing is not the only one that could be interesting for us. Here I would like to start with another footage, which can clarify for us how "Slaughter" fit into the director's life and creative path. We will touch the topic of the "cattle" metaphor again by the end of this subchapter.



Figure 1: Frame from "Strike", the episode "Slaughter": a boy among the horses' legs.



Figure 2: Frames from “Strike”, the episode “Slaughter”: the officer grabs a boy and throws him off a balcony

Ivan Aksyonov, the author of the book “Sergei Eisenstein. Portrait of the artist”, when writing about the beginning of “Slaughter” scene mentions a “little blond boy”, who is walking among the giant dangerous horses’ legs (Аксенов, 1991). In fact, the author is a bit mistaken. The child is wearing a hat, so how can we say whether he is blond or not. He definitely describes a certain scene (Figure 1), but the actual boy, which he recalls was in another footage (Figure 2). In this small episode the cruel officer grabs a defenseless child and throws him off a balcony from a great height. So, I found the thoughts related to blond the boy pretty intriguing:



Figure 3: Photo of Eisenstein in his childhood

https://vk.com/wall396915837_31467?z=photo396915837_457284815%2Fwall396915837_31467

“A little blond boy. His curly hair is fluttering in the wind. Round cheeks obey the smile of his lips ... One glance at the Eisenstein family portrait is enough to recognize this child. This was the director in the days when the royal reality interrupted the normal development of his consciousness and forced him to solve issues that were often too much for the developed thinking of adults”¹⁶ (*Ibid*).

The author suggests, that here we can speak about the film image of Sergei Eisenstein himself (Figure 3). And I, in general, share his position, because found the same (but less obvious) motif in “October” (see subchapter 3.3.). Eisenstein was just seven years old, when the first revolution in 1905 happened, so he encountered the first civil unrest at an even earlier age. Such frames we really can interpret these shots as the director's self-reflection. In “Slaughter” the cruel hand of historical events throws the boy off the balcony, and already in “The Storming of the Winter palace” (in “October”) the boy already sits on the royal throne. But more on that later.

Sergei Eisenstein had a bit of a condescending attitude towards “Strike”. When the film was released, in 1924, Eisenstein, of course, was certainly proud of it and wrote about its concreteness, in the sense that all the images there are not designed for contemplation, but for specific logical conclusions (Эйзенштейн, 1964). Decades after, in 1945, Eisenstein characterized “Strike” as a ridiculous, sharp-angled, unexpected and rollicking work, which is

¹⁶ Translation by the author - E.K.

“unusually fraught with the germs of almost everything that passes already in mature forms through years of mature work”¹⁷ (Эйзенштейн, 1945: 112).

We can assume what does he means under such characteristics, if we recall the previous chapter. Eisenstein considers “Strike” as a starting point of applying structural approach in film language, which under the influence of technical tools of cinema grew into the montage of attractions, and then into the theory of intellectual montage. In “Semiotics of Cinema” Lotman gives a distinctive description of such processes, for which “Slaughter” could be a vivid example. He offers three points: 1) Comparison of iconic image with the real thing or event; 2) Comparison of iconic image with another similar iconic image; 3) Comparison of iconic image with itself in another unit of time (Lotman, 1981). That’s exactly how “Slaughter” works. Let’s take an abstract modern Russian film viewer as an example.

A person compares an image of a herd with a real heard, which he could see in his or her real life. Then a viewer tries to find some analogies from the cultural background. For instance, even nowadays, the image of cattle (sheep or cows most often) is usually applicable to the sphere of political and economic issues in Russia. Thus, if we take into account a contemporary Russian viewer, we can find similar images from the internet, like the on the satirical picture, which is presented under a figure 4, where the sheep at the demonstration support some economic and political ideas promoted by government that are in fact harmful to them.

Then, a viewer ask himself whether this image of cattle means the same at the moment of watching the footage, after the end of the film and even a years after. The answer, in the most cases, is yes. Media studies call this kind of metaphor’s function transference, i.e. “transfer certain qualities from one sign to another, which is thus invested with properties it might not originally have had” (Thwaites T., Davis L., Mules W., 2002).



Figure 4: Parodic comic strip. The signs depicted on the image read: “Lada Kalina – is my car”; “Thank you for the devaluation and price increase”; “Our money to our people”; “Let’s support the banking sector”; “Thank you for the layoff”; “I agree with the increase in utility tariffs”. Source: https://pikabu.ru/story/stado_baranov_1230851

¹⁷ Translation by the author - E.K.

3.2. Why is “Odessa staircase” a part of something bigger than just a film

The Odessa staircase episode is the most remarkable and significant scene in Eisenstein’s “Battleship Potemkin” (1925). It can be considered as the climax of the film or as an individual piece as well. There are several approaches which are used to analyze this episode. But the most intriguing and non-obvious interpretation was offered personally by Eisenstein, of course. In his memoirs he wrote: “one certain episode becomes the emotional embodiment of the 1905 year epepee overall”¹⁸ (Эйзенштейн, 1968).

It is also important to mention Eisenstein’s *pars pro toto* theory, which was already mentioned in subchapter 2.3 in passing. From my point of view, the “Odessa staircase” episode can be researched literally and figuratively as a part of the whole.

Eisenstein’s films structure, as we already know, is similar to literary structure, especially when we speak about silent films. This is accomplished among other things from a mobile “literary” point of view, which is not characteristic for paintings and theatre (Lotman, 1981). In “Battleship Potemkin” we also can easily determine an exposition, a rising action, a resolution etc., which bring this film much closer to a novel. And I suppose that we can consider “Odessa Staircase” as a climax of “Battleship Potemkin” structure. We will take it for granted. Tensions culminated in this scene because in fact all the injustice and violence reached the most dramatic turn. The ruthless act of vengeance against the ordinary Odessa residents including older folk, children and disabled people became the embodiment of both concept and context.

To begin with, I would like to pay attention to the fact that steps and stairs in principle play a significant role in Eisenstein’s films and “often serve a common purpose of graphically enriching the frame and dynamically enhancing the action”¹⁹ (Лёврен, 2020: 138). By the way, we will face with the image of stairs again, when we will speak about intermediality. However, here I am going to offer an alternative point of view which is directly connected with the narration structure. So, if we respect the fact that the Odessa staircase scene is a climax then we need to pay attention to how Eisenstein highlights it visually, because unlike the literature with which it has many similarities, cinematography, especially in the silent films era is predominantly a visual art. The climax is the moment of the highest tension, after

¹⁸ Translation by the author - E.K.

¹⁹ id.



Figure 5: A frame from “Battleship Potemkin”, the episode “Odessa Staircase”: a wide shot taken upwards with the main emphasis on the downward movement, from the highest point to the lowest.

which this tension goes down. “Highest” and “goes down” - those are the key words! Let’s recall how the Odessa staircase looks like through the prism of the director's perspective.

In the Figure 5, we can see a wide shot taken upwards and the main emphasis on the downward movement, from the highest point to the lowest. In Figure 6, the downward movement continues, but in this case the camera films an image also downwards.



Figure 6: A frame from “Battleship Potemkin”, the episode “Odessa Staircase”: the downward movement continues, but in this case the camera films an image also downwards.

From my point of view, it is a powerful illustration of how Eisenstein visualizes the notion of climax - the highest point (= the top of the staircase) and the downward movement (= running civilians and walking soldiers). All in all, the Odessa staircase episode indeed is a part of a structural whole of “Battleship Potemkin” and there are visual confirmations of this fact.

It is obvious that Eisenstein’s personal experience left its mark on this film. That’s what Eisenstein writes about the context of the Odessa staircase episode:

“The staircase scene has absorbed both the Baku massacre and the Ninth of January, when the trusting crowd enjoyed the spring air of freedom of the year 1905 and when these impulses are just as mercilessly crushed ... as the unbridled Black Hundred rioters violently set fire to the Tomsk theater during the demonstration”²⁰ (Эйзенштейн, 1968).

As we can understand, Eisenstein mentions three real historical events that took place at the beginning of the 20th century, and made a great impact on him: The March days in Baku (1918; Figure 7), Bloody Sunday (1905; Figure 8) and the Black Hundred terror in Tomsk (1905; Figure 9). What do these tragic events have in common and how are they related to the scene on the Odessa stairs?

This means that the Odessa staircase episode does not describe an individual case, but summarizes various events that happened on the Soviet territories at that time and what the director witnessed. I suppose that here we can speak about the staircase scene like about the text. That is actually what Juri Lotman wrote about:

²⁰ Translation by the author - E.K.

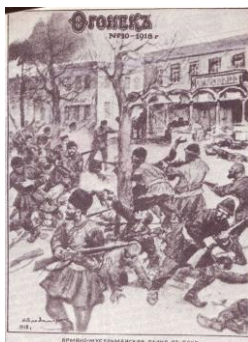


Figure 7:
 “Armenian-Muslim massacre in Baku”.
 The cover of the
 “Ogonyok”
 magazine.
[https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Мартовские_события_в_Баку_\(1918\)#/media/Файл:The_massacre_in_Baku,_1918.jpg](https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Мартовские_события_в_Баку_(1918)#/media/Файл:The_massacre_in_Baku,_1918.jpg)

“Communication between a text and the cultural context. In this case the text is not an agent of a communicative act, but a full-fledged participant in it, as a source or a receiver of information. The relations of a text to the cultural context may have a metaphorical character, as when the text is perceived as a substitute for the overall context to which it is, in a certain respect, equivalent, or as metonymic, as when a text represents the context as a part of the whole” (Lotman: 1981: 56).

It also is necessary to notice that of course film viewers of 1920’s are very different from us, modern recipients. And of course unlike us, for whom “Odessa staircase” is a kind of “text [...] pulled out from its natural context and deciphered in this context by some codes lost to us”²¹ (Лотман, 1986), they were closer to the cultural and historical context of that time, so that is why for moviegoers of the early 20th century, it was easier to interpret this episode and relate it to current real events.

In general, I think it can be said that the scene on the Odessa stairs (as well as the “Battleship Potemkin” in general) can be regarded as a kind of archaic text for contemporary viewers, the codes for deciphering which are partly lost. This is probably connected not only with historical events that are unfamiliar to most of us, but also directly with the development of cinema and the changes in its language. For example, cinematic metaphor and similar visual things (including the most of Eisenstein’s inventions) although did not completely lose their significance, but faded



Figure 8: Execution of the people in front of the Winter palace on January 9, 1905 (I. Vladimirov).
https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Кровавое_воскресенье#/media/Файл:Vladimirov-krocvavoe-voskr.jpg



Figure 9: The 1905 Black Hundred Pogrom in Tomsk (V. Vucicevich-Sibirsky).
<https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Файл:Intro-vuchichevich.jpg>

into the background for some time. So, it turns out that for us, modern film viewers, the text, not the code, comes first. We analyze the film from the whole to its parts.

The Odessa staircase episode can be considered as a part of the whole on different levels. Firstly, the most obvious analysis approach is related to the scene as a part of the “Battleship Potemkin” structure. It is definitely the culmination of this film, which can be proved not only from the point of view of the narrative, but also if we consider its

²¹ Translation by the author - E.K.

visual part. Secondly, staircase scene is a part of the film concept. By the virtue of Eisenstein's close-ups theory development, this episode concentrated in itself a leading humanistic idea connected to the Christian values. Finally, the Odessa staircase scene (not even the whole film, but this concrete episode) can be considered as a text and therefore as a part of its the context.

By the end of this subchapter, I would like to offer some of Eisenstein's post-reflection. For the director, the global idea of revolution always was a leitmotif of the whole life. Let's refer again to the text which was written in 1945, almost at the end of his life, and dedicated to "Battleship Potemkin: "An intellectual who came to the revolution after 1917 had an inevitable stage of 'I' and 'they'" before merging into the concept of the Soviet revolutionary 'we'" (Эйзенштейн, 1945: 117). Under intellectual he means himself, of course. I can suppose that "Odessa staircase" became this embodiment of "I" and "we" in all its glory. Singling out vivid personalities (images), like a mother with a child, a baby in a stroller, an old lady, disabled person etc. from the crowd of people Eisenstein highlights that the person is a smallest unit of society (structural concept of a part and a whole, by the way). It is quite different from what we saw in "Slaughter" in "Strike", where in fact there weren't any individuals and all attention was directed to the crowd as a protagonist. This change is quite personal for Eisenstein. We are going to continue analyzing this motif in the subchapter 3.3 and will see how it was expressed in the third part of the trilogy.

3.3. How Eisenstein came up with the Storming of Winter palace

The final scene from "October" usually called "The Storming of Winter palace" became without exaggeration an iconic image of October events of the year 1917. Sometimes these shots are even mistaken for documentaries. So, what made it so iconic and why isn't there a shred of truth in it? Let's try to investigate it. First of all, let's mark the boundaries of the analyzed scene. We will consider the scene of the storming of the winter palace from the moment the gates were stormed to the arrest of the provisional government.

I suggest starting with the most famous and most quoted frames from the “The Storming of the Winter palace” episode: an armed crowd of proletarians climbs over the gates of the main tsar’s residence (Figure 10). “In fact, the gates of the Winter palace were not closed, – writes



Figure 10: Frames from “October”, the episode “Storming of Winter palace”: an armed crowd of proletarians climbs over the gates of the main tsar’s residence.

Victor Shklovsky, – and it was not necessary to climb over them” (Шкловский, 1976) (moreover, the golden eagles on the tops of the gates, incidentally, were absent by the year 1917). Shklovsky means the divergence between the real historical facts and the director’s fantasy and highlights the idea of metaphoricity, which is, as we already know, a significant part of Eisenstein’s film language. The proletarians trample monarchical values, embodied in the gates with a double-headed eagle, the imperial emblem. Naum Kleiman, the most famous living researcher of Eisenstein’s legacy, taking into account such intentional ahistoricity, considers “The Storming...” as a model of the revolution. Not even the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, but revolution as a concept (Клейман, 2000).

We can assume that this is a manifestation of the theory of intellectual montage as well. The misunderstanding began from the moment when these frames began to pass off as documentary (intentionally or unintentionally), thereby violating, in fact, the concept of Eisenstein, who never claimed the authenticity of the “The Storming...”. This affected the attitude towards Eisenstein and accused him of propaganda embellishment. But in my opinion it’s a very controversial to call Eisenstein the Bolsheviks’ propagandist, even if to watch “Storming...” attentively: it is hard to believe that the proletarians, who neglected communist ideals and began to steal silver cutlery from the palace rooms, as soon as they got there, are indisputably positive images, not compromising the leading Bolshevik force.

Nevertheless, here we can recall the previous subchapter about “Odessa staircase”, where we mentioned Eisenstein’s a bit belated experience of revolution. So, here we are faced with the same thinking. “Filming in the Winter palace, I catch up with a missed piece of history from my own biography” (Эйзенштейн, 1946b: 35). This phrase is taken out of context of Eisenstein’s memoirs and even not dated. However, it really confirms the idea of autobiographical motifs in “October” and Eisenstein’s embodiment of self-reflection on revolution in the film. In fact, here we can speak about extraordinary media experience for the

author himself. Cinematography for Sergei Eisenstein can be considered as a method of self-reflection on historical event or even the whole era.

However, climbing the gate, although impressive footage, is also another aspect within the framework of this chapter, if we are talking about the personal impressions of the director. As Ruggero Eugeni writes, for a subject of experience it is characteristic to be “engaged in an ongoing, unfolding activity of interpretation” and constantly arrange available resources. We can refer to such resources for a variety of things (Eugeni, 2011). Let’s turn to the less obvious of them, which are much more related to the language of film. In the article which is called “Eisenstein as a ‘curator’”, the author Oksana Bulgakova pays attention to a very specific aspect of Eisenstein’s “Storming...” related to the director’s experience on “proximity to exhibition practice of the late 20s” (Булгакова, 2020). She analyses the frames that were shot in the rooms in Winter palace, Kunstkamera etc., where various exhibits of royal life were presented.

Many critics, including for example Victor Shklovsky, noted at those times that Eisenstein was mired in materialism, in the sense of paying excessive attention to objects as protagonists. Although, according to Bulgakova, everything turned out quite the opposite. She claims that “Working with the objects in the space of the museum led Eisenstein to a new form of montage of matching” (Ibid). According to these thoughts I decided that this aspect might be interesting for us in the context of Sergei Eisenstein’s experience related to his attitude to the monarch family as a phenomenon..

Eisenstein in fact was pretty close to the tsar Nikolai II and his wife empress Maria Fyodorovna. At least a little more than most of the inhabitants of the Russian Empire (Эйзенштейн, 1946b: 94). The director’s father was an official at the Empress's department. Eisenstein even mentions that he saw Nikolai with his own eyes in his childhood. Therefore, he doesn’t deny that his childhood memories somehow affected “October”, especially the footage of Alexander III monument destruction (Ibid). So, what does Eisenstein “tells” about the monarchy through the “Storming...”? First of all, it’s about debunking the religious myth formed around the tsar. In orthodox culture tsar is a Lord's anointed, a person who was chosen to reign by God and it goes without saying that tsar is a priori sublime above all other people. So, Eisenstein used the objects of royal private life, like family photos, bedding, hygiene supplies and even the chamber pot in order to bringing the monarchs down from heaven to

earth. Shklovsky dismissively calls it all “insurrection of utensils”²² (Шкловский, 1985). Through the eyes of a proletarian, the viewers are able to observe a kind of dichotomy of the demonstrated images. Here is one of the examples of such “film phrases” below (Figure 11):



Thus, this montage comparison causes the viewer to doubt the divinity of the royal

Figure 11: Frames from “October”, the episode “The Storming of Winter palace”: the dichotomy of the images. Debunking the religious myth formed around the tsar.

family. It turns out that they are no different from other people. In fact this is very close to the theory of *ostranenie*. For Sergei Eisenstein, as a person who was involved in the cult of tsar because of historical coincidences, these frames became a kind of self-reflection, a way of abandoning the old imperial worldviews with which his personality has been formed over the years.

We can conclude that “The Storming of the Winter palace” in “October”, built by the method of intellectual montage, is a reflection of at least two biographical aspects of Sergei Eisenstein: the understanding of “I” and “We” (the concept began its development in “Strike”, in “Storming...” reaches its apogee) and the phenomenon of monarchy (which he considers through the prism of the myth’s deconstruction).

I would like to finish this subchapter with an interesting observation, related to the footage of a playful fun boy sitting on the royal throne after the Winter palace was finally occupied (Figure 12). The boy whose appearance hints at his apparently non-noble origin settled himself on a tsar’s place that is unacceptable to him by social class. In fact, the director could put absolutely anyone on the throne – for example, one of the armed proletarians. And it would have been more logical, isn’t it? Then it would be an obvious metaphor for the victory of an autocratic regime, as it was in the shots with the gates.

²² Translation by the author - E.K.



Figure 12: Frames from “October”, the episode “Storming of Winter palace”: a playful fun boy sitting on the royal throne after the Winter palace was finally occupied

Sergei Eisenstein in his memoirs sometimes talks about himself in the third person and calls himself a boy, emphasizing his inner childish attitude, childish worldview, even becoming a world-famous director: “Doug and Mary go to Moscow to “shake” the hand of the boy from Riga who made “Potemkin”; “In the midst of the war, a book about cinema written by a boy from Riga is published and distributes instantly among American and English editions”²³ (Эйзенштейн, 1946а: 31-32).

I suppose that here we can also deal with Eisenstein's self-reflection. This idea was prompted by one of the photographs of the director, taken during the filming of “October” (figure 13). In this photo Eisenstein is imposingly sitting on the same throne, as the film character sat. He seems to copy the playful way of sitting of the boy from the “Storming...”. From my point of view, if we assume that the boy is the embodiment of Eisenstein himself, then by placing himself on the throne, the director seems to put an end to the debunking of the myth of the monarchy, including his own attempts to realize his place in the modern world.



Figure 13: A photo of Eisenstein, taken during the filming of “October”.

https://ic.pics.livejournal.com/maysuryan/46825033/3205192/3205192_800.jpg

²³ Translation by the author - E.K.

IV. “Outside” reaction. The role of intertextual and intermedial aspect in forming of cultural memory

This chapter is dedicated to the processes, that took place in the extra-textual reality, and specifically, the scenes described above. “Odessa staircase” and “Storming...” became a starting point for many subsequent texts that reinterpreted (as a tribute to the great director) scenes from Eisenstein's revolutionary trilogy. Sergei Eisenstein, in fact, intentionally or accidentally, created a very specific environment based on his, as Alexander Zholkovsky calls it, totalitarian poetics. Perhaps the historical context makes sense here (Жолковский, 1992: 118). It means that Eisenstein’s poetics as if persistently impose certain meanings and, theoretically, a variability of interpretation has no place in this case. Thus, based one way or another on the specific historical events, Eisenstein’s films raise questions about “the link between collective memories and identity politics” (Rigney, 2005: 13)

So, I suppose that we can construct a sort of logical chain, where Sergei Eisenstein’s film theory, because of its undeniable concreteness (totalitarian poetics) of perception of artistic images’ montage combinations, becomes a basis for cultural memory forming. Intertextual and intermedial make the connection between an image and a meaning even stronger and thereby certain images with their concrete non-variable meanings begin to be perceived as reliable and indisputable facts, and not as a fiction, which is not characteristic for works of art. Cultural memory, in its turn, is interesting for us here from the point of view of creative (art) memory in which “potentially the entire thickness of texts is active”²⁴ (Лотман, 1992: 47).

Here also Juri Lotman’s concept of a text-code can contribute to the explanation to what was happening to Eisenstein’s texts. Such intermediate units between text and language,

²⁴ Translation by the author - E.K.

which Eisenstein's Battleship Potemkin and October can be considered as, are identified as an ideal model for texts lower in the hierarchy of culture (like those that are going to be discussed below) (ЛЮТМАН, 1981: 6). In other words, Eisenstein created not just a rules of how to make a certain text, but made a self-sufficient and well-organized whole, which can function as an independent text and generate similar intertexts. That is a “characteristic feature of a culture with a mythological orientation”²⁵ (Ibid).

It is necessary to highlight that in this chapter I will focus my attention only on “Battleship Potemkin” and “October” but will avoid the discussion of “Strike” in the context of intertexts and intermedia. The reason is that “Strike” is not dedicated to the specific historical events, but, rather describes the characteristics of the revolutions’ eruptions and transmits a kind of abstract revolutionary spirit. So, “Strike” as the first film from the trilogy serves as a good example for explaining of Eisenstein’s film language principles and demonstrating the rudiments of his self-reflection’s film implementations. However, in order to analyze the effect of intertextual and intermedial processes on cultural memory, we need to speak about certain historical facts that are perceived by the people from the cinematic point of view.

4.1. Intertexts as a tribute to Eisenstein

Initially the notions of intertextuality and intertexts, having earlier roots (the notion of Roland Barthes) but formulated by such a name by Julia Kristeva in 1960s, related to the simultaneous coexistence and mutually beneficial interaction and development of various literary works: “A narrow conception of “text” implies that intertextuality is understood in the limited sense of references by a (literary) text either to individual other texts or to literary (sub)systems (Rajewsky, 2005: 54). Having proved the connection of Eisenstein's films with literary structures, we can apply the concept of intertextuality to them without a doubt, especially since “under the latter category we could also classify references by an individual film to another film or to filmic (sub)systems” (Ibid). Speaking about intertextuality in the

²⁵ Translation by the author - E.K.

context of film, I mean first of all such references as cinematic allusions expressed by the reproduction by other directors of Eisenstein's revolutionary trilogy content.

4.1.1. *Odessa staircase. Intertextual aspect of allusions and postmodern tendencies.*

In continuation of the discussion about intertextuality, let's move on to the film "Battleship Potemkin" and the "Odessa staircase" scene. "Battleship..." was quoted in more than a dozen of films ("The Return of the Battleship" (1996), "Goodbye, Lenin" (2003) etc.), from which I decided to choose one that can more or less be considered as a representative example. That is why, from my point of view, it would be appropriate if I could find a film from the similar cultural environment as "Battleship...", but from another time, when the political changes had an impact on the perception of certain historical events through the prism of cultural phenomena. Thus, I consider "Déjà vu" (1989) directed by Juliusz Machulski as a proper example here.



Figure 14: Frames from "Déjà vu" in comparison with frames from "Battleship Potemkin". The director Juliusz Machulski recreates the "Odessa Staircase" scene.

"Déjà vu" is a Soviet-Polish comedy film about a killer, who was sent to Odessa by the American mafia to kill a criminal boss there. In one of the scenes of the film, the main character gets to the Odessa staircase, where at this very moment the director Sergei Eisenstein films his famous scene of the shooting of the demonstration. In this episode Machulski recreates the "Odessa staircase" episode from "Battleship Potemkin", taking into account even the details (Figure 14). The director highlights all the most vivid images from this scene, such as, for example, a mother with a baby, a person with disabled person etc. So, here we can speak about the concept of allusion, which is related among other things to ideas of postmodernism on one hand, and can be considered as a product of intertextual processes.

Noël Carroll in his article “The Future of Allusion: Hollywood in the Seventies (And beyond)” clarifies the term allusion and writes that it is an “umbrella term covering a mixed lot of practices including quotations, the memorialization of past genres, the reworking of past genres, homages, and the recreation of “classic” scenes, shots, plot motifs, lines of dialogue, themes, gestures, and so forth from film history” (Carroll, 1982: 52).

In “Déjà vu”, we see an example of a so-called film in film. It gives viewers an opportunity to watch “Odessa staircase” scene from aside. In “Battleship Potemkin”, we have a strong direct connection between the text and recipients, while in “Déjà vu”, intertexts in the form of allusion create three points of a contact: a film, an intertext, a viewer. Machulski deconstructs a common structure, which can be considered as an indicator of a postmodern tendencies. Thus, such films have a self-reflection component and are “aware of their existence and place in the context of film history” (Philipson, 2017: 2). So, we can say that intertextual allusion to Eisenstein’s work is not just an ordinary tribute to the director of “Battleship...” but a kind of cinematic analysis of its place in Soviet culture.

Another aspect of this reflection also could be connected to a genre changing. During Perestroika (1985 – 1991), it became possible to laugh at what used to have mythological cultural value. That is why the tragic plot of Eisenstein turns in Machulski’s film into something like a parody. And the concept of parody is also interesting for us in the context of intertextuality.

Tynyanov writes a plenty of texts about a phenomenon of parody in, speaking in the words of contemporary terminology, in the perspective of intertextuality. He writes: “behind the plan of the work stands another plan, stylized or parodied. But in parody, the discrepancy between both plans, their displacement is obligatory; comedy will be a parody of tragedy (it doesn’t matter whether through emphasizing the tragic or through the corresponding substitution it by comic)”²⁶ (ТЫНЯНОВ, 1977b: 201). So, in what way do these two plans do not fit each other? If we answer this question, we will find the roots of comic in “Déjà vu”. In my opinion, here we are considering some manipulations with the “seriousness” of the battleship’s myth. Machulski demonstrates an “off-stage” point of view, thus the myth seems destroyed, because it exists, in fact, only in the framework of Eisenstein’s film.

In general, the deconstruction of Soviet myths in the cinematography of Perestroika is a wide field for research. But this is a topic for a different study.

²⁶ Translation by the author - E.K.

4.1.2. *Storming of Winter palace. Intertextual aspect of totalitarian poetics and propaganda*

Now let's focus on "October" and its scene "Storming of Winter palace". To illustrate the topic of intertextuality, I decided to take "Lenin in October" (1937) by Mikhail Romm as an example. This film has completely different tendencies and features than "Déjà vu", and that is why it can help us to analyze the intertextual aspect in an absolutely different way.



Figure 15: A frame from "Lenin in October". Sailors storming the gates of Winter palace.

"Lenin in October" is a revolutionary film about the events of October 1917 where Vladimir Lenin is considered as a central figure. Contrary to Perestroika times, the mid 1930s were an apotheosis of Soviet mythology. It can be connected to such phenomenon as Stalin's personality cult, the idea of rallying the people of the country around the leader in order to protect the homeland from a potential invader etc. Nevertheless, strengthening revolutionary mythology has indeed a strong position in Soviet culture in the 1930s. Thus, in this context it was not without new intertexts, which were emerged on the basis of strong and bright images.

In my opinion, Mikhail Romm represents the "Storming of Winter palace" in such a way that the viewer accurately understands the reference to Eisenstein's "October" (Figure 15). We see the same gates with the same double-headed eagle and sailors climbing these gates. I am sure, that Romm did not just plagiarize "October", but deliberately paid tribute to Eisenstein in this way. And it is not also just a passing reference. "The merciless machine of Eisenstein's poetics," writes Zholkovsky, "really appears as part of the totalitarian complex"²⁷ (Жолковский, 1991). And this poetics piece is characterized by "Eisenstein's desire for total control of the Mind" (Ibid). It means that the elements of the poetics of "October", such as film language and other smaller units of it have a strong intertextual value for being the starting point for other texts. So, there is prospect of researching intertexts within the framework of propaganda.

²⁷ Translation by the author - E.K.

Intertextuality is one of the most powerful tools of propaganda. Confirmation of this idea can be found mostly in political discourse, of course. Propaganda is not just about a single message or text, it is a process of constantly reinforcing and spreading a certain ideology or message across various contexts and situations, often using different media and forms of communication. This intertextuality allows propaganda to reach a wider audience and have a greater impact, as the same message is echoed and amplified through different channels (Oddo, 2023: 219-234).

Speaking about Eisenstein and Romm we can conclude that we face the emergence of film-propaganda phenomenon. Cinema as an influential mass-media rewrites potentially influential texts. Iampolsky in “The Memory of Tiresias...” mentions:

“...the resulting intertextualization has a tendency to gravitate toward the source that best corresponds to subsequent and established notions about how art evolves. The reader-interpreter is more apt to locate the source of a quote in an intertextual that closely resembles the film being discussed and that most readily falls into the art historical narrative that is being reconstructed after the fact” (Iampolsky, 1998 :84).

It means that the same content will be repeated from time to time in different films (and even different media, as we will see in the next subchapter about intermedia) at least as long as the Eisenstein storming of the Winter palace remains in the memory of the audience.

4.2. The role of intermedial processes in forming and strengthening myths

According to the research paper “Intermediality: Disciplinary flux or formalist Retrenchment?” by Andrew Shail, where the author differentiates the concepts of intertextuality and intermediality, I also would like to follow the same pattern. Shail, who has also researched silent cinema, highlights that “‘intermediality’ must be used as distinct from ‘intertextuality’ rather than as a subcategory of it” (Shail, 2010). He takes into account that “content can also determine the media expectations with which intermediality is concerned, in such cases as unusual genre markers in content serving to assign a certain media object the status of ‘out of medium’” (Ibid). Moreover, in order to distinguish the content and the form, I also prefer to separate intermediality from intertextuality. So, in this subchapter it is important for me to pay attention to the visual elements and interaction between different media

structures, which can be reconstructed on the basis of the marks that different media left in a certain work of art.

To clarify the notion (since intermedia has a rather diverse connotation, due to its active research), I need to mention that in the context of my thesis, intermedia means a certain phenomenon that emerged in a concrete media (film, in my case) and then was distributed among other media types. Ágnes Pethő writes that intermediality “considering film either as a medium that interacts with other media on several levels and in a variety of forms, or as a medium that has developed certain configurations” (Pethő, 2010: 49). As in the situation with intertextuality, this subchapter will also deal with the visual aspect of cinema, since intermedia processes are possible on the basis of visual images. We can also specify, according to Rajewski, that we will focus on the type of intermedia which is called media combination. It arises on the background of epochs’ changing. Every generation has its own perception of a particular work of art, grown on the basis of cultural experience on one hand and demand for new methods of artistic realization on another. I think it is important to notice because this type is related to “creation of an integral polyartistic space in the system of culture”²⁸ (Кулькина, 2018: 25).

It is important to mention that Shail also refers to Sergei Eisenstein in the context of intermedia. He notices that the director’s statements in 1944 were a bit opposed to the theses of the formal school. Eisenstein wrote:

[I]t is always pleasing to recognize again and again the fact that our cinema is not altogether without parents and without pedigree, without a past, without the traditions and rich cultural heritage of the past epochs. It is only very thoughtless and presumptuous people who can erect laws and an esthetic for cinema, proceeding from premises of some incredible virgin-birth of this art! (Eisenstein 1953, 232)

It means that despite of the fact that Eisenstein began his creative path on the basis of the Formal School research, he finally changed his views on film language and considered it as a part of a certain open system of meanings. Thus, the intermedia aspect is appropriate when speaking about Eisenstein’s films.

Moreover, in this chapter, I would like to lead the reader to the topic of myth and what role intermedia play here. The switch from an artistic text to mythological one is not an extraordinary phenomenon. A myth, in compliance with Juri Lotman’s terms, is a secondary language (secondary modeling system) as well as art. Any artistic text includes two aspects: the aspect of a plot and the aspect of mythologisation (Лотман, 1998: 259).

²⁸ Translation by the author - E.K.

Lotman recalls the films of Dziga Vertov as an example. This contemporary of Sergei Eisenstein, regardless of the fact that he tried to “replace art with pieces of reality” (Ibid) making the half-documentary and half-feature films, mythologized reality with the help of artistic and technical facilities of cinema (montage, frames restriction’s etc.). So, can we say that Eisenstein in his revolutionary trilogy also “replaced art with pieces of reality”? Keeping in mind what was written in the previous chapter, Eisenstein also did not have such a goal, and his films are more a reflection of his personal experiences than an objective reproduction of reality. However, his film theories described previously undeniably include mythologization, specifically, of the Bolshevik revolution. So, I suppose that any artistic text, which becomes an intermedial object, is gradually saturated with the characteristics of the art forms through which it passes. This thought I can reinforce with a quote from “Transmediality of cultural autocommunication”: “The more a text has been interpreted and mediated, and the more active the dialogue between the text and its surrounding culture, the more strongly is the text tied to the culture” (Ojamaa, Torop, 2015: 65).

Finally, the connection between a signifier and a signified is strengthened (this is exactly what the avant-gardists fought against), the myth is strengthened (more about it we will discuss in the last subchapter on cultural memory) and the events of the artistic text (in our situation we speak about film) begin to be perceived by the recipients as real events. And touching upon a bit the aspect of propaganda, this kind of process played into the hands of the Soviet political regime, because the repetition of the same symbols and images keeps “them active in cultural memory and integrate them with culture’s contemporaneity” (Ibid: 63). And now, let’s become more familiar with the concrete examples.

4.2.1. Odessa staircase. Intermedial aspect

Roland Barthes provided the analysis of photography from the point of view of structure in his article “The Photographic Message” (1983). In fact, Barthes writes about press photos, however there are some ideas that are applicable to our case. For instance, he mentions denotative (an analog of reality) and connotative (the context of cultural background) statuses of a photo which both exist at the same time. So, we speak about cognitive connotation here: “Connotation, the imposition of second meaning on the photographic message proper, is

realized at the different levels of production of the photograph [...] and represents, finally, a coding of a photograph analogue” (Barthes, 1983: 199).

As a vivid example of “Odessa Staircase” episode’s intermedial aspect, I would like to consider photography. Let’s take a look at the picture called “Staircase” by a famous Soviet avant-garde artist and photographer Alexander Rodchenko (Figure 16). In fact, the collaboration of



Figure 16: A photo by Alexander Rodchenko. “Staircase” (1929).

<http://www.suehubbard.com/images/rodchenko/rodchenko1.jpg>

Rodchenko and Eisenstein was obviously manifested in film posters that the artist made for “Battleship Potemkin” and some other drawings for unrealized ideas of Eisenstein. However, here photography is interesting us as “another” type of art, into which the cinematic images penetrated. According to Barthes here we deal with the type of connotation procedure related to the “meaning comes from objects photographed” (Ibid: 201). The photo was made in Moscow, but it definitely visually refers the viewer to the famous staircase in Odessa: a) frequent stairs as the central architectural unit and the stepped décor on each side of it; b) the image of a mother with a child in her arms. This combination of images certainly evokes associations with what Eisenstein made in “Battleship Potemkin”.

But the differences are more interesting for us here. As I mentioned previously, after a while any intermedial artistic image is perceived differently in comparison with the original work. Despite the fact that Rodchenko’s “Staircase” was made only four years after Eisenstein’s “Odessa Staircase” scene, we already can recognize some rethinking of a familiar image. From my point of view, the atmosphere of the photo obviously is much calmer than in the film. The mother no longer saves the child, fleeing in fear from cruel soldiers, but confidently climbs the stairs. The absence of strangers around also makes the photo peaceful.

It is important to highlight that the topic of rhythm can be touched on here. As far as we remember from the previous chapters, structuralists’ concept of rhythm was significant for Eisenstein especially in the context of “Odessa Staircase”: “The staircase whose steps seem to serve as a rhythmic and dramatic echo of the fragmentation of tragedy”²⁹ (Эйзенштейн, 1968a). Photography, due to its static nature, cannot convey the alternation of speed of movement, as it usually happens in cinema. But here, in this photo the rhythm is also presented and embodied in the alternation of narrow and wide, as well as black and wide lines

²⁹ Translation by the author - E.K.

of the stairs. Thus we can see how the rhythmic form of the film is transferred into the photo. Here we trace the way of such element as rhythm: literature – film – photo. Dick and Hannah Higgins in their paper dedicated to intermedia through arts highlight that “the photographed visual material is presented as a sequence with a grammar of its own, as if each visual element were a word of a sentence” (D., H. Higgins, 2001: 52). Especially it works for Rodchenko, who, as we can assume can be considered as a successor of the tendencies formed by Formal School.

4.2.2. *Storming of Winter palace. Intermedial aspect*

From my point of view, the “Storming of Winter palace” is the most intermedial episode of all three. I think it is because it shows the most important event of the Bolshevik revolution, the climax of the myth, the moment when everything had to be resolved.

I decided to consider a painting here in order to demonstrate the intermedial units that emerged in Eisenstein’s film and then were distributed in paintings. In fact, I need to notice, the most of the Soviet paintings related to this scene as pretty similar and my choice fell on the painting of V. Serov (Figure 17) just because it contains all the specific elements that I will discuss below and thus it the most prominent representative of the “Storming...” painting.



Figure 17: A painting by Vladimir Serov “Storming of Winter palace” (1940).

So, in Serov’s painting, we can see at least three main objects on which the composition is built. From left to right: the soldiers on a dais (it could be a kind of roadblock or an armoured truck), the central figure of the man with the red flag and, finally, the gates. Let me start with the gates, because I already paid attention to it earlier. We already know, that the gates, by the moment of Winter palace occupation, were absent and Eisenstein used them in his film as the symbol of a win over the monarchy. So, the author of the painting, in fact, does not avoid this symbol and adds it to his work, and, as we can assume, it carries the same semantics. If we see the gates even at the work that was made almost two decades after the “October”, it means that the intermediality of this image is quite strong and influential, and was transferred for many times.

The central figure of the man with the red flag is also very characteristic for this scene. This person plays the role of a commander, who he leads the other fighters, motivates and supports them. In my opinion, this idea of highlighting the personality among the crowd is can be also perceived from “October”, where Eisenstein from the hero-crowd, as it was in the “Strike” goes to the ideas of personality. It is intriguing that exactly the image of the leader becomes the dominant of his future sound films, but that is the topic for another research. But back to the “Storming...” we can also notice that in Eisenstein’s film, the role of the commander, oddly enough, is played by the very boy who sits on the throne at the end of the scene (for details refer to the subchapter on Eisenstein’s self-reflection in “October”). He shouts, waves his hands and it seems that he leads the proletarians into battle against the monarchical Winter palace’s defenders (Figure 18).



Figure 18: Frames from the “October”. The boy plays the role of commander and encourages the proletarians

Of course, taking into account the aspect of self-reflection regarding this image, the boy at some point was replaced by an adult man who, of course, is more organic for this situation.

And the last element of composition here is the image of soldiers on a dais. I cannot say that here semantics can be discussed, so I consider it only as the visual component of composition. However, anyway I see the parallel motifs between Eisenstein’s “Storming...” and Serov’s painting. The painter also builds his composition on the alternation of high and low points, how Eisenstein did it in “Storming...” (Figure 19).



Figure 19: Frames from the “October”. The examples of “high points” in “Storming...”

So, considering the example of painting we can trace some specific visual elements, on which the composition of the scene of Winter palace occupation is built through two types of media. Considering also the fact that the difference between the creation of a film and a

painting is about 20 years, we can say that the “image of revolution” created by Eisenstein remained in the minds of people at least until the 1940s.

4.3. How the myth of revolution related to the cultural memory

Finally, I would like to conclude my thesis with the ideas that de facto motivated me to analyze Eisenstein’s films that are united under the leitmotif of the revolution of 1905 – 1917. In this subchapter, considering the aspects of intertextuality and intermediality, I would like to touch upon the topic of cultural memory and how the historical events showed in the films “Battleship Potemkin” and “October”, are perceived by the recipients from the point of view of art.

Ann Rigney in her “Plenitude, scarcity and the circulation of cultural memory” writes: “[the] lived memory’ is constantly on the brink of extinction or erosion with the passage of time as the richness of experience fades and those who did the experiencing die out. At a certain point, the only way for the memory to survive is for it to be written down” (Rigney, 2005: 12). But speaking about the Bolshevik revolution in a connection with Sergei Eisenstein’s trilogy we face an intriguing phenomenon, when the imagination of the artist gave recipients the images of historical events. However it is a common paradox which is caused by “vicarious recollection”, related to the cultural memory, when “shared memories of the past are the product of mediation, textualization and acts of communication” (Ibid: 14). As I mentioned previously in the chapter dedicated to Eisenstein’s self-reflecton, the director himself was not and even could not be a direct participant of the events that happened in the early 1900’s simply due to his age. So, the revolutionary trilogy initially could not be considered as an undeniable representation of the uprising on the battleship “Potemkin” and the Winter palace occupation.

4.3.1. *The uprising on the battleship Potemkin through the cinematic perception*

I would like to start with from the episode which precedes the “Odessa Staircase” scene, but still has a significant influence on the aspect of cultural memory. So, I cannot ignore it. This is about a scene of the unsuccessful sailors’ execution, where the officers command to cover the rebellious sailors with a tarpaulin and shoot them (Figure 20).

It was already discussed many times that this scene has nothing to do with reality. However, it should not have. Referring to Eisenstein, it was a pure fiction, an artistic image and nothing more: “In fact, no one was under the tarpaulin. And even couldn’t stand under it. For the simple reason that no one has ever been covered on the Potemkin with a tarpaulin! The scene with the sailors covered in tarpaulin was [...] a pure invention of the stage director!” (Эйзенштейн, 1968а). Of



Figure 20: A frame from the “Battleship Potemkin”. The rebellious sailors are covered by the tarpaulin before being shot.

course, we are not going to justify the director or blame him for embellishing historical events. This is not the purpose of this thesis. Another aspect is interesting for us here, namely, how the fictional episode with the tarpaulin entered as a real historical fact in the memory of the audience and thus began to even distort the actual historical facts.

Here could be two explanations. The first one is mostly related to the media experience, what Eugeni writes about:

“On one hand, film experience borrows the dynamics of sensibility, perception, emotion, cognition and action that characterize the interaction between the body and the world in real life; on the other hand it relocates these dynamics within a controlled device; moreover, film experience overlaps the world directly perceived with a fictional “world viewed” which is seen and experienced to some extent as the “real” world” (Eugeni, 2011).

Another one, as I suppose, is indeed connected to the aspect of intermedia and a great impact was made, first of all, by film reviewers, who actively highlighted this scene in their texts. In my opinion, we can also consider films reviews as a kind of intermedia, because a) the visual elements are transferred to journalistic texts; b) there is an undoubted influence of the reflection of the author of a journalistic text. So, newspapers’ reviews could make an impact on society, especially when the same ideas and considerations were repeated for many times.

I found a couple of those reviews, which were written by the different authors after the premiere of “Battleship Potemkin”. I offer here my translation of the articles. For example, someone signed by A. Dubrovsky from the newspaper “Cinema” (“*Kino*” in Russian), even in 1926 suspected something improbable in this episode: “The tarpaulin trick is implausible, because the execution of sailors for refusing to eat spoiled borscht [...] could only happen on a pirate ship”³⁰ (Дубровский, 1926: 1). To the contrary, the author signed by the surname Krasnov in the same newspaper of the year 1926, but from another issue, did not pay attention to the plausibility of the scene devoted a whole paragraph full of admiration to the tarpaulin:

“The tarpaulin used to cover the sailors before being shot is unforgettable. A few minutes ago in a mortal fear, the condemned huddled together under it [...] But then there was a riot on the battleship. There was only one piece of tarp left on the empty deck [...] the tarpaulin was not destined to stain with the blood of the rebels”³¹ (Краснов, 1926: 1).

So, the tarpaulin scene indeed could make a strong impression on the audience and was fixed in their minds, among other things, thanks to its quotation in journalistic texts, since newspapers were perhaps the most influential media of those times (in spite of the fact that already in 1922 radio broadcasting has already begun for ordinary listeners).

Now, let’s get into “Odessa staircase”. In accordance with Eisenstein’s memoirs, we can conclude that this famous scene also was nothing more than a director’s fantasy. There were a plenty of images from Eisenstein’s experience that were deposited in his mind and then became a reality of the film (and just reality, as we will see soon): some illustrations from the journals, inspiration by the slope of the stairs etc. (Эйзенштейн, 1968а: 135). And the most intriguing thing here is that Eisenstein himself describes the situations when the viewers of his film were caught on the manipulations of facts, unaware that the scenes of the film have nothing to do with real historical facts. Regarding “Odessa Staircase” the director mentions the old man, who burst into tears after watching “Battleship Potemkin” and “admitted” that he was one of the soldiers who shot civilians on the staircase in 1905 (Ibid: 125 – 126), taking into account the fact that there was no dispersal of the demonstrators, at least in the form in which it was shown in the film.

I suppose that such a phenomenon can also be explained from the point of view of intermedia. The press also most likely had an influence here. However different films and

³⁰ Translation by the author - E.K.

³¹ id.

different media reinforce the images in the minds of people belonging to the same culture. Thus, this for me is more interesting here how the perception of “Odessa Staircase” looks nowadays, when almost a hundred years have passed since the release of “Battleship Potemkin”. So, referring to the subchapters on intertextual and intermedial aspects of this scene I would like to build parallels with contemporary perception. I attach some examples below. The most vivid manifestations of intermedial images we can find in mass media and digital teaching resources, because they are most prone to falsification, as they provide the recipient with the most general information about certain events and often do not require references to authoritative scientific sources.

мяса вследствие жары и отсутствия холодильников. В 11 часов был дан сигнал на обед. Но ни командир корабля, ни вахтенный офицер (в нарушение устава) не стали брать пробу с борща, сваренного для команды. Команда также отказалась его есть.



Командир корабля приказал принести брезент: тогда через него на флоте расстреливали зачинщиков беспорядков. В ответ матросы завладели оружием – начался бунт. Офицерами была убита часть матросов – в ответ убиты практически все офицеры.

Figure 21: A quote from the newspaper “Ural military news”, dedicated to the uprising on the battleship Potemkin as a historical event. <https://ric.mil.ru/upload/site17/3/dWiaNmC679.pdf>

The figure 21

demonstrates a quote from the Russian military newspaper “Ural military news” (in Russian “*Уральские военные вести*”) dated September 1919. The highlighted text says: “The commander of the ship ordered to bring a tarpaulin: in those days, instigators of unrest were shot through it”³². Despite of the fact that the author of the article tells about historical events, in general it looks like he summarizes Eisenstein’s “Battleship Potemkin”.

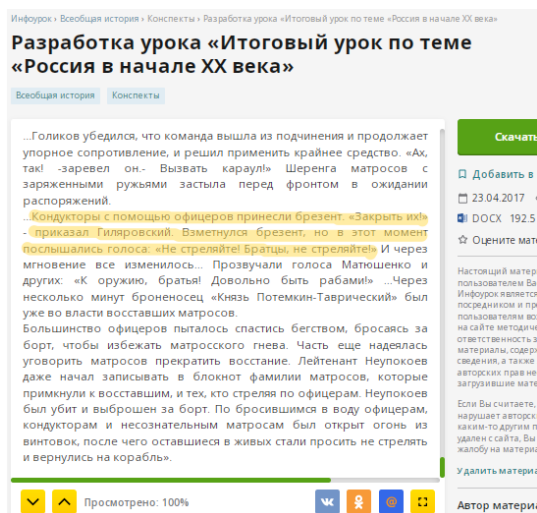


Figure 22: Final history lesson on the topic “Russia at the beginning of the XX century”. The author of the studying material refers to the memoirs of the uprising’s participant Ivan Lychev. <https://infourok.ru/razrabotka-uroka-itogoviy-urok-po-teme-rossiya-v-nachale-veka-1827599.html>

the events of the year 1905, in which the author of the work refers to the memoirs of one of the uprising’s participants, Ivan Lychev, who writes (highlighted text): “Conductors with the help of officers brought a tarpaulin: «Cover them!» – ordered Gilyarovsky. The tarpaulin

³² Translation by the author - E.K.

raised, but at the very moment voices were heard: “Don’t shoot! Brothers, don’t shoot!”³³ So, in both examples notorious tarpaulin appears, which is noticed in the context of historical events. Now let’s see what we can find directly about “Odessa Staircase”.



Первым в Петербург о восстании уже утром 15 (28) июня 1905 год сообщил Министру внутренних дел начальник Одесского охранного отделения М.П. Бобров. Его доклад основывался на рассказе о произошедшем молодого матроса М.Ф. Хандыги, которому на весельной лодке удалось бежать с борта миноносца № 267, на котором он прятался весь переход с Тендровской косы до Одессы. Телеграмма М.П. Боброва была немедленно передана Николаю Второму, который затрепетал в дневнике: «Получил ошеломляющее известие из Одессы о том, что команда пришедшего судна «Броненосца» князя Потемкина-Таврического забунтовалась, перебила офицеров и овладела судном, угрожая беспорядками в городе. Просто не верится!» и направил командующему Одесским военным округом телеграмму следующего содержания: «Примите немедленно самые жестокие, решительные меры к подавлению восстания как на „Потемкине“, так и среди населения порта. Каждый час промедления может в будущем обернуться потоками крови».

Figure 23: The author of the article gives no references and illustrates the text about historical events with a frame from Eisenstein’s “Battleship Potemkin”. Highlighted text notices the order of the tsar Nicholas II to stop the unrest in Odessa, but there is no talk of shooting demonstrators.

<https://fishki.net/1578749-bronosec-quotpotyomkinquot.html>

(Barthes, 1983: 204). Regarding to my research objective we can conclude that written characteristics of a certain “revolutionary” picture, even if they are mentioned in the historical context, are not equal to the historical facts. The authors of such comparisons of the historical context and works of art (frames from films, theatrical performances, paintings, etc.) contribute to the falsification of facts based on parasitism on artistic images. Of course, I mean only those examples where the author does not clarify the origins of the pictures, as presented in the Figure 23. The author of the article writes about the history of battleship Potemkin’s uprising. Firstly, he gives no references to historical documents or researches. Secondly, he illustrates his text with a frame from Eisenstein’s “Odessa staircase”. The author quotes tsar Nicholas II, who ordered to disperse the demonstrators, but the execution is not mentioned by him. Finally, the ordinary reader understands the text and the illustration in a

Since many images from Eisenstein's films are fixed in the minds of people as historical facts, I suppose that it could also be connected with such a phenomenon that Barthes writes about in his “The Photographic message”. We can call it “the effect of a press photo”. So, let me clarify this thought.

Textual materials related to the Bolshevik revolution, especially the uprising on the battleship Potemkin and Winter palace’ storming, are often supported by the different visual elements, such as photos and paintings. Barthes writes: “the text constitutes a parasitic message designed to connote the image to «quicken» with one or more second-order signifieds. In other words, and this is an important historical reversal, the image no longer illustrates the words; it is now the words which, structurally, are parasitic on the image”

³³ Translation by the author - E.K.

combination, so he or she faces a process when “in the movement from one structure to another second signifieds are inevitably developed” (Ibid: 205).

4.3.2. *Storming of Winter palace through the cinematic perception*



Figure 24: Frames from the so-called newsreel “The Red Flag 1917”. Among real documentary filming there are three clearly shown frames from Eisenstein’s “October”.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2bjgQ3VWVVE>

There are plenty of examples of how the cinematic myth of Winter palace’ storming in penetrated into the historical context from the cultural one. Repeated from film to film, from media to media, the metaphorical images offered by Sergei Eisenstein are strongly stuck in people’s minds that it is often passed off as reality. But in order not to repeat the thoughts already mentioned earlier, I would like to discuss here other aspect that can be considered in details. It is the role of falsifications in the sphere of documentary footages from 1917. There are many examples of it that can be found on the Internet, one of them is demonstrated in the Figure 24. Some of film editors probably falsify historical footage unintentionally, just in order to add some more pathos, but the combination of fiction and documentary, where documentary prevails, obviously creates the effect of realism of the whole film.

This topic also takes place in 1920s, when Soviet avant-garde directors, Dziga Vertov deserves a special attention here, started to contribute artistic fictional elements to the films which were positioned as documentaries (“Cine – Eye” “Man with a Movie Camera” etc.). Nevertheless, the effect of documentary is a characteristic feature of cinematography as a representative media. But speaking in terms of film studies, true documentaries represent reality, as a document which confirms certain events, but fictional films construct it (Якимов, 2021). Dmitry Mamulia in his article dedicated to the problem of documentary and non-documentary writes: “Giving something the status of a document, we legitimize this

phenomenon. We make it legitimate, existing. What is culture? Culture is a mechanism that legitimizes, rooting intangible, speculative symbols”³⁴ (Мамулия, 2007).

As a result the film viewers have the understanding of fragments of a feature film as newsreels and begin to evaluate it from the point of view of realism (figure 25), although such an assessment here, as we already know, is inappropriate. So, this improper approach in film analysis caused by the influence of intertextual and

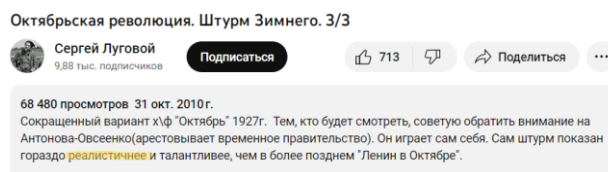


Figure 25: The description under the video on YouTube with footage of Winter palace’ storming from the film “October”. The author notices “the realism” (highlighted) of the scene and compare it with less realistic “Lenin in October” directed by M. Romm.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hig4zwidQV4>

intermedial processes usually causes erroneous conclusions, because of mixing the actual reality and the reality of a film. Mixing two types of experience and subsequently creates falsifications. Intertexts and intermedia, considering their ability of creation of a permanent discourse, accumulation and rethinking of information, indeed play an important role in this process: “the principle of repetition or iteration is important both from the point of view of textual construction and of culture as a whole” (Ojamaa, Torop, 2015: 63).

I can also supplement my observations with the point of view of the media studies. Referring to Niklas Luhmann’s “The Reality of the Mass Media”, it can be explained as a recipient’s need for impressions that are more vivid than can be acquired in real life. This thought is close to what R. Eugeni wrote about. On the contrary, Luhmann not just states a fact, but explains how this process works: cinema as a mass-media (a really influential mass-media, especially if we speak of the USSR of the 1920s), has the goal of instilling to the viewer that fictitious experience is equated with real experience: “The one side [a film story] is copied over into the other [an author, a mechanisms of text’s distributions, a recipient] out of which opportunities for communication are won whose basis is the artificiality of the experiences common to both” (Luhmann, 2000: 129). Regarding the research object, this means that Eisenstein’s films dedicated to the topic of revolution creates a sense of reality for the viewers, even though the experience is fictitious. Through the use of storytelling, visual effects, and sound, cinema manipulates the viewer’s emotions and beliefs, and makes a powerful influence on their thoughts.

³⁴ Translation by the author - E.K.

Conclusions

There is no doubt that the film language developed by Sergei Eisenstein had and still has a great impact not only on film studies and films themselves, but the understanding the Soviet myths and their value for the Soviet and post-Soviet societies (at least Russia). Based on the literary researches of Russian Formal School, Eisenstein's film theory carries the ideas of structural and sign theories.

The influence of Jakobson, Shklovsky and Tynyanov is also reflected in the creative path and the worldview of the director. We can find many thoughts that Eisenstein he borrowed from the works of these researchers. Accordingly, for Eisenstein it was important to build visual logical chains of film metaphors that exclude variable interpretation. He could do it using the literary methods of a structure creating such as rhythm, trope and myth, and unite it with a specific cinematic tool - montage. In his film theory the director resorts to the idea of a part and a whole and thus creates the concept of the film language on the basis of the literary one. And this was the first factor that played a role in the formation of the cultural memory of society about the revolutionary events of 1905 and 1917.

Moreover, intertextual and intermedial processes contributed a lot to the cultural understanding of Bolshevik revolution through the cinematic perspective. Paying the tribute to Sergei Eisenstein different artists from different spheres of art intentionally and unintentionally transferred elements of Eisenstein's films narrative, structural elements of his films into their works. Cinema, as an influential mass media in the beginning of the XX century, distributed the information actively. That is how the certain images, due to their regular repetition in diverse media, according to the principle of propaganda, were strengthened in the minds of people.

The cinematic perception of historical events, based on the memories formed under the impression of art works has a strong influence and often negatively affects areas such as education and the mass-media. As a result of emerging a plenty of intertextual and intermedial references referring to “October” and “Battleship Potemkin”, cases of falsification of historical facts and events have become more frequent. Eisenstein's films, originally conceived as a work of fiction, began to be perceived as documentaries.

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Magistritöö kokkuvõte

SERGEI EISENSTEINI REVOLUTSIOONITRILOOGIA SEMIOOTIKAUURINGUTE PERSPEKTIIVIS: INTERTEKSTUAALNE JA INTERMEEDIALINE ASPEKT

Sergei Eisensteini pärandit on semiootika kontekstis uuritud alates nõukogude ajast, sest on teada-tuntud fakt, et tema töö teadlasena filmitooria ning teistes humanitaarteaduste valdkondades on tihedalt seotud märgiteadustega. Sellest hoolimata pakuvad Eisensteini filmid ikka veel palju analüüsimisvõimalusi.

Selle magistritöö peamise idee võib paigutada semiootika- ja filmiuuringute ristumispunkti ja see puudutab Sergei Eisensteini revolutsioonitrioloogia (“Streik”, “Soomuslaev Potjomkin” ja “Oktoober”) analüüsimise aspekte, mis on seotud strukturalismi, filmikeele, meediavahelisuse ja intertekstuaalsusega.

Eisensteini filmieksperimentide uurimine intermeedialisuse ja intertekstuaalsuse vaatepunktist mängib suurt rolli mitte pelgalt filmitooria mõistmisel, vaid ka konkreetse auditooriumi mõjutamise seisukohast. Just seetõttu tuleks Eisensteini pärandit analüüsida nii läbi kultuuriprisma kui ühiskondliku prisma vaadatuna.

Valitud filmistseenide struktuurse analüüsi kerkis üles küsimus, kas ja mil moel on intermeedialisus ja intertekstuaalsus seotud sellise Tartu-Moskva semiootikakoolkonna kontseptsiooniga nagu kultuurimälu. Töö pakub ka vastuseid kultuuris toimuvate intermeedialiste ja intertekstuaalsete protsesside korrelatsiooni puudutavatele küsimustele. Lisaks selgitatakse filmiruumi ja reaalse tegelikkuse ruumi piiride hägustumise fenomeni.

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