VISUAL METAPHORS FOR THE PEOPLE

A Study of Cinematic Propoganda in Sergei Eisenstein's Film

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THIS PAPER ATTEMPTS TO UNDERSTAND HOW THE CELEBRATED AND CONTROVERSIAL FIGURE OF SERGEI EISENSTEIN UNDERSTOOD AND CONTRIBUTED TO THE FORMATION OF THE SOVIET UNION THROUGH HIS FILMS OF THE 1920S. THE LENS OF VISUAL METAPHORS OFFER A SPECIFIC INSIGHT INTO HOW ARTISTIC CHOICES OF THE DIRECTOR WERE INFORMED BY HIS OWN PEDAGOGY FOR THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION. THE PAPER ASKS THE QUESTIONS: DID EISENSTEIN'S FILMS REFLECT THE OFFICIAL PARTY RHETORIC? HOW DID THEY INFORM OR MOTIVATE THE PUBLIC TOWARD THE COMMUNIST IDEOLOGY OF THE EARLY SOVIET UNION? THE PRIMARY SOURCES USED IN THIS PAPER ARE FROM THE FILMS *STRIKE* (1925), *BATTLESHIP POTEMKIN* (1926), *OCTOBER* (1928), AND *THE GENERAL LINE* (1929). EISENSTEIN CREATED VISUAL METAPHORS THROUGH THE JUXTAPOSITION OF IMAGES IN HIS FILMS WHICH ALLUDED TO HIGHER CONCEPTS. A SHOT OF A WORKER FOLLOWED BY THE SHOT OF GEARS TURNING CREATED THE CONCEPT OF INDUSTRY IN THE MINDS OF THE AUDIENCE. THROUGH VISUAL METAPHORS, IT IS POSSIBLE TO UNDERSTAND THE MOTIVES OF EISENSTEIN AND THE COMMUNIST PARTY. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE, WITH THE AID OF SECONDARY SOURCES, TO SEE HOW THOSE MOTIVES DIFFERED.

"Language is much closer to film than painting is. For example, in painting the form arises from abstract elements of line and color, while in cinema the material concreteness of the image within the frame presents—as an element—the greatest difficulty in manipulation. So why not lean towards the system of language, which is forced to use the same mechanics in inventing words and word-complexes"[1]—Sergei Eisenstein, *A Dialectical Approach to Film Form*

THE LANGUAGE OF IMAGES

Similar to how individual words are arranged to construct meaning in language, individual images are used to create meaning in films. Language constructs images, themes, and allegories for its audiences using concrete words, much like the way film constructs visual metaphors—associative points of similarity—through shots of concrete images. A visual metaphor is the representation of a concept through a suggested association with a similar or contrasting image.[2] Sergei Eisenstein is most notable in his contributions to the field of film theory for his development of styles of montage, the "assemblage" or editing of shots that forms an aesthetic compilation. The sum of the montage is more valuable to the narrative than its parts. The images of each shot compose a visual metaphor that serves to connect the subject of the shot to the experiences of the audience through a symbolic relationship.[3] Audiences watching *Strike* in 1925 saw factory workers crossing their arms overlaid by a shot of gears stopping; they could see that the workers had the power to stop the production.[4] This allegorical relationship was employed by Eisenstein in his silent films of the 1920s to establish a pedagogy of revolution. While Eisenstein's development of montage in film theory is widely acclaimed, scholars studying Eisenstein's works often fail to take visual metaphors on their own terms.

HISTORIOGRAPHY

The deeply developed body of scholarly works devoted to Eisenstein's life and films in the realms of politics and film theory focuses mostly on the nuanced shifts in Eisenstein's political views and development of film theory over the course of his career. Scholarly works that examine Eisenstein's career through a historical lens focus on his shift from Marxist-influenced, optimistic revolution in the 1920s to the dogmatic genre of socialist realism under Stalin.[5] The Department of Culture and Propaganda bureaucratized the field of cinema and encouraged filmmakers to follow the doctrine of Social Realism, which aimed at the "... organization of the psychology of the masses."[6] Works about Eisenstein in the field of film theory examine Eisenstein's career in theater, the evolution of his approach to montage, and his artistic expression.[7] Scholars have missed or failed to fully explore the importance of visual metaphors in Eisenstein's works because the use of objects to create allegories was critiqued for being too obscure for audiences to understand.[8] Although Eisenstein's use of visual metaphor, at times, made his works less accessible to the public because of the abstract ideas presented in his early films,[9] visual metaphors are a valuable resource for unpacking Eisenstein's revolutionary credo. This paper will attempt to address gaps in the field of works produced on Eisenstein by closely examining a singular component of his films from the first decade of his career in order to understand how Eisenstein was able to craft his revolutionary ideology in his early career through visual metaphor.

VISUAL METAPHORS IN SERGEI EISENSTEIN'S PEDAGOGY OF REVOLUTION

The visual metaphors of Eisenstein's early works can be used to unpack a pedagogy of revolution, which emphasizes themes of social change through collectivism. Eisenstein evokes connections between the films' narratives and real events and problems faced by the audience. The visual

A CARTOON OF SERGEI EISENSTEIN (COURTESY OF *FLICKR*)

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metaphors emphasize collective bargaining power and social unity as driving forces toward social and economic restructuring. Sergei Eisenstein uses visual metaphor to teach audiences the benefits of cooperative action from all industries of production and defense. These allegories serve the pedagogy of revolution through visual cues and connections that influence the audience by introducing, reinforcing, and glamorizing concepts of collectivism that were propagated during and after the October Revolution and the Civil War. Eisenstein's films expose the monarchy and provisional government for obscuring from the people a manifest truth: the power to regulate politics and the economy has always been with the collective of the proletariat. The visual metaphors of Eisenstein's early films are valuable in understanding Eisenstein's visions of how society should change through the use of setting motifs that critique and remind people of the harsh socio-economic conditions before the revolution, the deconstruction of the value and symbols of the Russian Empire, and the power of the organized masses in affecting positive change. The artistic freedom which Eisenstein experienced at the beginning of his film career allowed him to express a revolutionary pedagogy through film techniques including visual metaphor that venerated organization of the masses and collective cooperation as the pinnacle of justice. In the late 1920s, the Bolshevik Party's consolidation of power diminished the artistic freedom of Soviet directors and prevented Eisenstein from using many of his early techniques to manifest his revolutionary pedagogy.

EISENSTEIN'S FILMS FROM 1925-1928

Eisenstein gained recognition for his second film, *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), in an era of bold avant-garde experimentation.[10] During the Revolution of 1917, many in the established film industry fled to Yalta, which left a gap for new Bolshevik innovators to emerge from other artistic fields. Eisenstein established himself amongst the avant-garde during this time as a film theorist and later as a director. His first four films of the 1920s present and attempt to deconstruct the individualistic ideals of the capitalist economic system of the Russian Empire and emphasize the importance of collectivism. Denise Youngblood, author of Movies for the Masses: Popular Cinema and Soviet Society in the 1920s, notes, "This was the era of film without a hero (unless that 'hero' was the masses) and a film without a plot (unless that 'plot' was the Revolution)."[11] Eisenstein's films are intentionally directed at the working classes in order to appeal to, honor, and strengthen the Bolshevik's basis of power. The Bolshevik Party recruited its members directly from the working class for fifteen years following the revolution.[12] Eisenstein's first film, *Strike* (1925), serves as an example of Bolshevik recruitment techniques in that it is set at a factory complex where the workers are portrayed as the heroes.[13] Following *Strike*, Eisenstein directed *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), which focused on sailors rebelling against inhumane treatment from their captains.[14] Film theorists hailed *Potemkin* as an artistic feat. One critic called for films to "romanticize the struggle between the birth of the new and the death of the old."[15] Early in his career, Eisenstein's films fit into the Bolshevik pedagogy of revolution; eventually, romanticism of the revolution would not be enough to meet the Party's needs. In 1927 Eisenstein was commissioned for the film *October: Ten Days that Shook the World* for the tenth anniversary of the October Revolution.[16] Its release was delayed until 1928 due to extensive re-editing mandated by the Stalin administration to remove Trotsky's influence.[17] *October* was Eisenstein's first Soviet film to be creatively limited by the Bolshevik Party. The era of 'film without a hero' had concluded with or without Eisenstein's consent. He received criticism for casting a common worker to play Lenin in *October*.[18] Eisenstein's focus on the power of the masses did not translate into the idolatry of Party figures which the Bolsheviks required. He chose to have one main protagonist in his subsequent film, *The General Line*, also known as *Old and New* (1929).[19] It depicted a poor farmer named Marfa leading her community of

agrarian workers to benefit from the sharing their collective resources. Similar to *October*, *The General Line* also received party scrutiny for the use of complex metaphors. Through a variety of techniques, Eisenstein created visual metaphors that glorified the collective organization of workers as the base of the revolution until his freedom, in particular his use of objects to create visual metaphors, was limited by Party interference.

MOTIFS AND CHARACTERIZATION

Eisenstein used motifs regarding the settings of each film to remind audiences of and criticize unjust socio-economic conditions before the revolution. He utilized the physical landscapes of his films' settings as a motif to bring meaning to the experiences of the characters:

> The revolutionary quality of *Strike* was exemplified by the fact that it took its renewing principle... from those that are directly utilitarian: specifically, the principle of the construction of the exposition of manufacturing processes in the film [...] that sphere whose principles might alone define the ideology of the forms of revolutionary art just as they have defined revolutionary ideology in general: heavy industry, factory production, and the forms of the manufacturing process.[20]

The form of man is present—even in shots dominated by tools and mechanics—to remind the audience who is responsible for making and maintaining the factory. *Strike* opens with a still shot of smokestacks billowing smoke.[21] The productivity of the workers is constant, and the domination of the industrial landscape against the skyline reflects the advancements of mankind. The smokestacks set an appropriate theme for the workers attempting to advance towards a utopian future of their own making. The industrial landscape is a tool for the workers to use in order to bargain for a better future against the oppressive factory owners. In *Strike*, the workers envision a happier future in which they have more of a say in their job conditions and more time to spend with their families. A secondary establishing shot is the turning of enormous gears, with the silhouettes of workers imposed on the gears as if they are caught in an unceasing cycle of productivity.[22] During *Strike*, the smokestacks and the wheel stop. A gear slows downt, overlaid with a frame of three men crossing their arms. As they glare into the camera, the gear stops.[23] In Marxist fashion, the people have seized the modes of production. As Sheila Fitzpatrick noted, "Marxism was both an ideology of revolution and an ideology of economic development;" therefore, the smokestacks that "clutter the landscape of the former Soviet Union were, in their time, the fulfillment of revolutionary dream."[24] Eisenstein defines the people by the landscape of industry and the factory by its workers. When the people refuse to work, the factory is still. There is no motion of one without motion of the other.

Where the workers are defined by mechanical imagery, the antagonists of the film are defined by bourgeois symbols of luxury and exotic animals. In one scene, the factory managers laugh over drinks served in decorative crystal decanters. One manager squeezes a lemon squeezer, metaphorically denoting his power to put pressure on the Strikers until they give in.[25] The spies are introduced by overlapping shots of the animals bearing each of their code names. The Monkey jumps about, while the Owl blinks slowly as his face is overlaid with the face of the animal.[26] The spies have no belonging amongst their human peers As animals, they are marked out as an antithesis to the mechanical motifs of the workers. The factory workers are dialectically opposed to their oppressors through the contrast of imagery natural to and unnatural to the industrial landscape.

Eisenstein's use of animal imagery to define the hopes and aspirations of the workers denotes collectivism and hope through common motifs of spring and renewal rather than otherness. The children mimic their parents by putting goats in wheelbarrows, imitating how the managers were pushed into the pond.[27] Where earlier the pet shop analogy denoted the subservience and otherness of the spies, this naturally-occurring animal life serves other metaphorical purposes. Baby animals, including duck-

A PHOTOGRAPH OF THE DIRECTOR SERGEI EISENSTEIN (COURTESY OF *FLICKR*)

lings, kittens, pigs, and geese are all representative of the revolutionary hope for renewal of life.[28] The connection between the child and the animals serves the pedagogy of revolution in the promise of a better future for the children of those who participated in *Strike* (or the revolution, as the audience would connect).

The hopeful images of animals in symbolic relationship with the workers is subverted as the pressures of the management take its toll. Without food or money, the factory workers' despair is revealed through the imagery of dead cats hanging from rafters.[29] Whereas young animals symbolize hope, adult animals serve as a reminder of the hardships and pain of life at the hands of oppressors. The climactic end to *Strike* features the factory workers and their families being slaughtered by the police overlaid with shots depicting the butchering of a cow.[30] The chief of police is denoted as the butcher. He upturns a bottle of ink and slams his hand into it.[31] The metaphorical blood on his hands translates literally on the screen as *Strike* is ended with the martyrdom of the entire factory.

Eisenstein claimed that his second film, *Battleship Potemkin*, was not "simply a successor to *Strike* but a contemporary answer to it." *Battleship Potemkin* makes use of similar setting motifs to characterize the sailors.[32] Characters in the movie are allegorically compared to rotten food in order to demonstrate their mistreatment, actions, and outlook. The sailors complain about rotten meat, each examining the maggots that crawl over the meat on hooks hanging in the open.[33] The meat is a representation of the sailor's poor treatment by their officers, and the poor conditions of the workers and people of Russia in 1905. It signifies the rottenness of the system that provides these conditions. The meat on a hook represents not only the inadequate provisions given to the sailors but also their feelings of being "hung out" and "left to rot" by their corrupt government. Eisenstein intended for this to be the final injustice that caused the sailors to rebel because it enforces the themes propagated by revolutionaries of rotten leadership with the workers being continuously mistreated and subjugated to inhumane conditions. The food, much like the government, is unpalatable.

Shots of boiling soup being prepared are cut together with the sailors' increasing fervor and action. The more the soup boils, the angrier the sailors get.[34] This serves to show there are multiple factors, or 'ingredients,' at play in the film: the sailors' anger at being mistreated, the workers' plight (which the sailors discuss supporting in the first scene), and the peasants who would later appear in support of the sailors. The contributing factors that are not evident at the beginning of the film are foreshadowed by the ingredients in the soup, the total picture that boils with revolutionary fervor. The sailors refuse to eat the soup, beginning their rebellion by acting out against the inadequate provisions.

One critic hailed *October* as the "symphony after the étude of *Potemkin;*"[35] Eisenstein again infused his film's revolutionary quality with the motifs of its setting. Eisenstein uses imagery of and related to the city of Petrograd in *October* to comment on the freedoms or lack thereof of the working class during the reign of the provisional government. In a dramatic reproduction of a demonstration in July of 1917, the proletariat is cut off from the center of the city by a series of bridges being raised with the bodies of people shot by the army falling off them into the sea.[36] This represents how the people were completely cut off, not only from the city center in the film, but from the access to basic luxuries enjoyed by the bourgeoisie. Eisenstein recalled waking up in the Nicholas library after shooting interior shots of the Winter Palace. He saw the Palace Bridge, a landmark that could unite or separate different parts of the city, through the window, and said:

> The bridge evolved into a symbol [...] of the city's split [...] ultimately a symbol of two outstretched arms, reaching out to each other in a firm grip. This was of structural importance in my conception of the whole film.[37]

The structure of two outstretched hands represents the people's struggle to connect with their collective ownership and relationship with their own city and culture. Where the bourgeoisie enjoyed freedom of movement, the workers were restricted. The raised bridge symbolized the social stratification that the revolution was able to overcome. When the hands of the bridge were joined, the people were united.

The use of visual metaphors taken from images characteristic to the setting of each film emphasizes the importance of each sphere of society. Eisenstein noted the importance of the means of production in revolutionary ideology.[38] The same can be said for his later films that draw from elements of scenery to imply the nature of both protagonists and antagonists. Where the settings are familiar, the audience better understands the connections

that Eisenstein attempts to conceive through the use of visual metaphors. These messages share purpose in educating the people about the pedagogy of the revolution in Eisenstein's vision. The scenery exposes the exploitation of the workers and the cruelty of the ruling class, while serving to remind the people of their power should they organize and seize the means of production and the hope of a utopian future.

In *The General Line* and *October*, Eisenstein again used the technique of creating visual metaphors from motifs of the setting to characterize the protagonists. The farmers receive a loan for a machine that separates milk to make butter. The shots of the shiny machine in the dull, low ceilinged house present an allegory for the modernization of the peasants' lives.[39] With their collective power, they have brought in new technology from which they will all benefit together. Collectivism is the tool by which they can access success and the future. The revolution is characterized by utopian dreams. For Eisenstein, these dreams were achievable through organization of the working class. The Cultural Revolution began in the spring of 1928, and caused a demand for films about collectivism starring peasants. Eisenstein continued the tradition of his earlier works; he "certainly exhibited the requisite enthusiasm for collectivism in his movie," but received criticism from the party for his focus on objects as narrative devices through visual metaphors. Eisenstein was outspoken against Social Realism until 1929.[40] Following the release of *The General Line*, he left the Soviet Union to travel through Europe.[41] Eisenstein rejected the film trend of Social Realism which relied on internal rather than external characterization. Social Realism developed the revolutionary education and aspirations of characters through focus on internal psychology.[42] Throughout the 1920s Eisenstein consistently attempted to appeal to a uniquely Russian sense of identity in which the pride of the working class audiences was embodied by the landscape and geography—both manmade and natural—of their country.

JUXTAPOSITION AND INTELLECTUAL MONTAGE

Eisenstein juxtaposes visual metaphors to deconstruct the cultural norms and values of the Russian Empire Juxtaposition is the use of two opposing concepts put in conjunction with each other to emphasize contrast. In film, Eisenstein uses montage to create juxtaposition. The images being juxtaposed in each shot create the metaphor. As Eisenstein wrote, "from the collision of two given factors arises a concept. 'Linkage' is, in my interpretation, only a possible special case [...] Thus montage is conflict."[43] The tension that arises from the juxtaposition of images and concepts allows for Eisenstein's films to challenge and break down normative cultural assumptions of supporters of the Russian Empire and the Provisional Government. The purpose of challenging the norms of the monarchy was to educate and agitate the Russian people so that they would support and comply with the Bolshevik regime. Eisenstein joined the Red Army during the Civil War. Although Eisenstein had less creative control over his later two films of the 1920s, he used the technique of intellectual montage to create visual metaphor to serve as communist propaganda. Eisenstein created his films with the intention of agitation and propaganda.[44] The conflict that arises from juxtaposition in montage is revolutionary agitation against the monarchy.

Eisenstein further evolved his theories on intellectual montage, in which two unrelated images shown sequentially would create a new concept in the minds of the audience. In *October*, a Bolshevik accidentally crosses a soldier by the waterfront with his bourgeois girlfriend and older, upper class civilians. Spotting him, they begin to attack.[45] Shots of an elderly aristocratic woman stamping on the pole of the Bolshevik's banner are cut with scenes of a white horse pulling a carriage slipping and falling, then sliding down the street. As the woman's foot stomps down on the Bolshevik dream, the elegant horse's legs break.[46] The conflict of the two shots results from the destruction of both Bolshevik and bourgeois symbols. As the aristocrat attempts to break the revolutionary fervor, her foot almost appears to be the cause of the horse's leg breaking in the cut between the two images. Eisenstein draws out this tension through the implication that the harder the upper class fought the revolution, the more they damaged their own goals and way of life.

In a long montage, Eisenstein displays a baroque sculpture of Jesus, followed by a Hindu God, the Buddha, and numerous pagan idols.[47] This series of images, compared one after the other in close-up, minimizes the differences of each statue and implies that all religions are the same. Christianity is no more correct than paganism.[48] As each idol devolves in the complexity of its artistic form, from the ornate Jesus to the simple humanistic, or animalistic, figures of the pagan idols, the importance of all idols diminishes. Military medals are then shown, followed by shots of kings on statues being toppled over in reverse, so that the chairs tip backward to stand resurrected. This, again, is followed by an animalistic sculpture. The shot of

the king being reassembled speeds up as the shots of idols quickly intercut the action. The military and state are connected with religious fervor. Eisenstein uses juxtaposition to condemn the old ways of religion and loyalty to the monarchy. He further develops theories of intellectual montage to emphasize Bolshevik ideology, which justifies revolution against the monarchy and the provisional government. In order for the Bolsheviks to create a new Russian culture, it was important to show that the old ways of life were wrong and had been destroyed. Along with getting rid of cultural traditions, the legacies of enemies of the Bolsheviks had to be dismembered.

October targeted Alexander Kerensky, the moderate socialist leader of the Provisional Government in 1917,[49] is compared in one scene to a preening mechanical peacock. He climbs the stairs of the Winter Palace, shaking hands with and saluting leaders and officers as he climbs. At the top, he reaches a gilded door that does not open. Kerensky holds his gloves behind his back. Suddenly there appears the image of a mechanical peacock. It blinks to life and begins unfolding its prominent tail feather.[50] The scene cuts back to Kerensky holding the gloves behind his back. The images in this intellectual montage imply that Kerensky is a vain, preening man.[51] Kerensky's regime is depicted as an "anachronistic restoration of autocracy," noted James Goodwin, in which Kerensky's comparison to a peacock, his throne framed by ivory tusks, and his flask stopper that looks like a tiny crown,[52] all draw the comparison of the many to an ornate artifact, a relic of the age of the Russian monarchy, with aspirations of autocratic power.[53] The juxtaposition of objects with Kerensky dehumanizes the Provisional Government, serving the pedagogy of revolution in portraying the antagonists as authoritarian and inhuman.

A MOVIE STILL TAKEN FROM ONE OF SERGEI EISENSTEIN'S FILMS (COURTESY OF *FLICKR*)

Eisenstein's personal history factored into his expansion of visual metaphor through depictions of Alexander Kerensky. The leader of the provisional government climbs the stairs of the Winter Palace and stands at the top. As he looks down on his generals, a statue of Napoleon appears.[54] The general slowly salutes Kerensky, but the following shot displays the statue of Napoleon once more, as if it is he whom they are saluting. Kerensky is compared to the power-hungry emperor and implied to have visions of grandeur.[55] Eisenstein had personal motivation in his comparison of Kerensky to Napoleon. Eisenstein first encountered the French dictator as a child perusing his father's bookshelves. The man worshipped Bonaparte as the ideal of "any self made man." Ronald Bergan noted Eisenstein's depiction of Kerensky shared similarities in mannerism and appearance to Eisenstein's father, who joined the White Army after Eisenstein joined the Red.[56] The intellectual montage serves to demonize the leader at a level relatable to the audiences familiar with Bonaparte's impact, while also serving Eisenstein's personal edification for rebelling against his father and the paternalistic view of the provisional government in Eisenstein's past.

The question remains of the extent Eisenstein's use of juxtaposition was in service of the Bolshevik teachings of the revolution. *October*'s characterization of Kerensky is not entirely unsubstantiated by fact, noted author Denise Youngblood based off newsreel footage from Esfir Shub's "The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty".[57] Sheila Fitzpatrick described the dual power relationship between the bourgeois Provisional Government and the proletariat Petrograd Soviet. Although the Provisional Government represented autocratic interests in terms of maintaining property and capital for the wealthier citizens, Eisenstein's films negate the backlash against radical revolution felt by the Bolsheviks within their own party and from other socialist movements, presenting a unilateral front of workers against the Provisional Government, with little acknowledgement of parties that sought compromise. Eisenstein's visual metaphors denote the antagonists' materialist natures and the workers' martyrdom and self sacrifice, but wholly discard the fact that support for the Bolsheviks was not universal from the lower classes. Alexander Kerensky, despite being a moderate socialist himself, was depicted negatively because he stood in opposition to Lenin's goal of a Bolshevik 'dictatorship of the proletariat.'[58] The manner in which Eisenstein depicted the Provisional Government, the on-

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screen masses' negative response to it, and their positive response to Vladimir Lenin leaves no room to question whether the Bolshevik Party served the will of the people. Eisenstein used juxtaposition to deconstruct the power structures of the monarchy and the Provisional Government so that a new cultural norm based in the pedagogy of Bolshevism could emerge. However, the Bolshevik Party's aim to iconize Lenin as the definitive father of the revolution could not be reconciled with Eisenstein's desire to depict the masses as the embodiment of revolution.

Eisenstein received criticism from the Bolshevik party for his casting choices because the actor who played Lenin was outshone by the actor who portrayed Kerensky,[59] Eisenstein casted a member of the working class to play Lenin named Nikandrov. Although the worker resembled Lenin, his performance was subpar.[60] Eisenstein's plan to honor the working classes in the revolution was his biggest detriment towards fulfilling the demands of the Bolshevik Party. The failure to depict Lenin as a convincing hero undermined the Bolshevik pedagogy which insisted on iconizing the leaders of the Party in the minds of the people they ruled. Eisenstein's didacticism sought to depict the masses as the heroes of the revolution, and subsequently portrayed the antagonists—including Kerensky—as individuals, while the protagonists were shown en-masse.

FRAMING THE MASSES

The dichotomy between wide shots and close ups gives allegorical significance to the importance of collectivism and shows the necessity of martyrdom in the pedagogy of revolution. Every shot of the captains in *Battleship Potemkin* is a closeup, while most shots of the workers are wide shots.[61] The officers are shown to be outnumbered, which reinforces the idea of collectivism giving strength to the masses. Unity is essential to the Marxist doctrine of the revolution. Closeups of the antagonists demonstrate their separation from the collective—they stand against the majority of the people and are therefore evil. Only one of the sailors is shown in a closeup; Vakulinchuk,a leader of the revolution, is the only person in the shot as he makes a speech about the injustices faced by the sailors.[62] The other sailors are shown to nod and agree with him. Later he asks the guards who they are shooting at as they prepare to massacre a group of sailors. The guards hesitate, causing the men to escape and the rebellion to begin in earnest. Vakulinchuk is shot in the head during the fight and almost gracefully falls backwards off the ship while grabbing a rope. He lands, crucified, on a massive rope pulley near the water, and is pulled up by the anguished, yet victorious, sailors. The shot ends by zooming in on Vakulinchuk's martyred face in the shape of a circle with the outside of the screen in black.[63] The tension between the individualism of the villains and the masses is shown through. The tension between Eisenstein's focus on portraying the masses and protagonists and the need to captivate audiences through interesting individual characters manifests in Eisenstein's portrayal of martyrs in closeups.

Eisenstein created visual metaphors about the importance of the collective social consciousness of the people through framing. The film follows with shots of the peasants coming down to the harbor to honor Vakulinchuk's body and assemble to discuss revolution.[64] The use of wide shots allows for the massive number of bodies to metaphorically emphasize the importance of collectivism, organization, and unity of the people. Wide overhead shots reinforce the message that there are more peasants and sailors than there are those who oppress them.

As the soldiers move in and begin shooting the people, a child is shot and trampled in the panic. The shots of the people in assembly were those of wide shots and mid-range shots to emphasize collectiveness. However, once the people are being massacred, there are more shots that show the individual horrors expressed by the people sacrificing their lives for the freedom of others. The mother sees the body of her child and carries it, screaming, in front of the soldiers, holding them accountable for their unjust actions.[65] She too is shot. This part of the scene is

filmed in closeup to reinforce the humanity of the people and the inhumane actions of the autocratic authority controlling the soldiers. Other closeups of martyrs reveal another mother being shot and her body causing her baby's bassinet to fall down the steps, and an old woman with pince-nez is killed after watching the massacre unfold.[66] The use of close ups personalizes the lives of the innocents being the victims of a tyrannical monarchy.

The villains are shot in closeups or mid shots when they are ensemble. The people are often shot with wide shots to show the collective as a single powerful entity. The removal of individualism from the protagonists serves the philosophy of a Marxist revolution. The exception to this is the portrayal of martyrs for the revolution, who filmed in close ups upon their death, to emphasize injustice of the state and imply that their heroic sacrifices that will be honored after their deaths. The appeal of individual glory was strong for audiences. Eisenstein catered to this in the depictions of martyrs as individuals. Later in his career, Eisenstein used the same techniques, but received criticism for his depictions of the masses as the heroes. The Bolshevik party favored the film genre of Social Realism in the late 1920s because it depicted individualistic stories of protagonists who were often passionate young men full of revolutionary fervor who were guided by Bolshevik mentors.[67] For Eisenstein, the masses were the embodiment of the revolution.

DESTRUCTION OF SYMBOLS OF THE OLD WAYS

The on-screen destruction of figures and monuments allegorical to the Russian Empire serves as a metaphor for the deconstruction of the autocratic regime and its influence over the people of the Soviet Union. In *Battleship Potemkin*, the officers exert power over the sailors through an old monk with wild hair. He is depicted from a low angle with smoke billowing behind him, his face lit from below to emphasize the shadows on his face and his wide, unblinking eyes.[68] The monk rebukes the sailors with an ornate cross. During the sailors' rebellion, the monk falls, and his cross hits the deck like a knife. The wild, mystic depiction of the monk is allegorical to depictions of Rasputin, the spiritual advisor and mystic of the Tsar and Tsarina, who is said to have had strange power over the ruling family. The defeat of the monk in *Potemkin* is a metaphor for the people's defeat of the mystic's power over the monarchy and the government, and the power of religion as a whole as an "opium of the people."[69] Eisenstein portrays a metaphorical depiction of workers taking back what Karl Marx claimed religion took from man: "qualities—moral ideals—of our natural human life and gives them, unnaturally, to an imaginary and alien being we call God."[70] In *Potemkin*, visual metaphors serve Marxist revolutionary pedagogy in the destruction of religious symbols as well as symbols of luxury.

Marx wrote, "as religion robs us of our human merits and gives them to God, so the capitalist economy robs us of our labor... and gives it... into the hands of those—the rich—who are able to buy it."[71] As the sailors rebel, there is a shot in the officer's quarters in which a sailor chases an officer around the room and over the furniture. There is a closeup of the officer's foot stepping on the piano and crushing the candle holder as he attempts to escape the sailor. There is no place for luxury in times of crisis; they are useless and unhelpful to the officers and are destroyed in the new era as remnants of old, ineffective opulence.

October opens with the people tearing down the statues of Tsar Nicholas II. The people tear down the statue of Tsar Nicholas to symbolize his abdication of power and the supposed joy felt by the masses, according to the pedagogical intent of the Party.[72] The Bolsheviks storm the Winter Palace that has been appropriated by the Provisional government. This serves to oust the Provisional government in its search for replacing the monarchy, as alluded in descriptions of Kerensky's character. It also shows that the symbolic strength of the monarchy falls to the ideals and literal, rather than metaphorical, strength of the united Bolsheviks. Tearing down symbolic monuments and statues both undermines the power of the monarchy and didactically serves the revolution in portraying the people as fully supportive of the revolution, with all opposition being portrayed as militaristic and capitalistic, rather than civil. The nuances of socialist opposition to the Bolsheviks are erased. Eisenstein's films supported the Bolsheviks by revealing the uselessness of luxuries and symbols of the monarchy. The destruction of remnants of the monarchy were essential for the Bolsheviks to create a new Russian culture that the people would support.

Although the destruction of symbols depicted in Eisenstein's films created visual metaphors which were beneficial to the Party, his reliance on objects as visual allegories over time undermined the Bolshevik's goals for the direction of cinema as propaganda. The Bolshevik Party realized that the future of the nation depended on the youth. Cinema was popular with the younger generations and a useful tool for indoctrination and

education.[73] The Party began to take control over the film industry in the late 1920s and favored a style of social realism which emphasized young, energetic protagonists who were often guided by wiser Party members.[74] Eisenstein's pedagogy remained the same throughout his works—he relied on techniques and themes of visual metaphors including the destruction of religious and monarchical symbols—until he was forced to change.

CONCLUSION

The visual metaphors of Eisenstein's early films effectively inform on the teachings of the revolution through the use of setting motifs that critique and remind people of the harsh socio-economic conditions before the revolution, the deconstruction of the value and symbols of the Russian Empire, and the power of the organized masses in affecting positive change. Eisenstein used a variety of film techniques to create visual metaphors that conveyed messages of revolution. The characteristics of the settings of each film were allegorical to the worker's struggle and aspirations. The significance of the means of production in revolutionary ideology was emphasized by the use of the landscape motifs serving as characterization for the protagonists. Where the hero was the collective proletariat, motifs of industry, agriculture, and animals revealed their collective condition. Eisenstein used the juxtaposition of visual metaphors to deconstruct the cultural norms and values of the Russian Empire. The contrast between the subjects of two shots would create a third idea or concept for the audience. Eisenstein coined this 'intellectual montage" and used it to criticize the Provisional Government and religion. In drawing comparisons between all religions, or between Alexander Kerensky and a mechanical peacock, he critiqued the norms and character of the government before the Revolution, emphasizing for the audience the fallacy of the old way of living. The dichotomy between wide shots and close-ups allowed Eisenstein to portray the masses as the protagonist, and symbolized the toxic individualism of the upper class antagonists. Only martyrs were given their own shots; their sacrifices to the revolution granted them glorified personhood. This way of portraying the honoring of those who died in the revolution appeases audiences should they too be called upon to serve the party. Although Eisenstein consistently served the Bolshevik pedagogy of revolution through depictions of the destruction and devaluation of symbols of the monarchy and religion, his use of visual metaphors were criticized for being too complex for the masses to be an effective tool of propaganda for the Party.

The artistic freedom which Eisenstein experienced at the beginning of his film career allowed him to express a revolutionary pedagogy that portrayed the collective populace as protagonists. By the late 1920s the established Bolshevik pedagogy had changed to favoring depictions of individual heroes and wise leaders of the revolution. The Bolshevik Party no longer favored Eisenstein's methods of depicting the masses as heroes through obscure visual allegories. Eisenstein was criticized for "thingism." His use of objects undermined the prescribed narrative of Social Realism. Eisenstein's intellectual development of film theory was ultimately contradictory to certain mandates of Bolshevism, but without the visual metaphors of his early films, Eisenstein's personal revolutionary ideology would be indecipherable.

ENDNOTES

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3. Ibid.
4. Sergei Eisenstein, *Strike* (USSR: Goskino 1925) Fig. 3.
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6. David. Bordwell, *The Cinema of Eisenstein* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 24.
7. Ibid. Ronald Bergan, *Eisenstein, A Life in Conflict* (Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press, 1999).
8. Youngblood, *Movies for the Masses*, 169.
9. Taylor, *The Politics of the Soviet Cinema*, 5.
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11. Ibid, 4.
12. Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 11.
13. Eisenstein, *Strike*.
14. Sergei Eisenstein, *Battleship Potemkin* (USSR: Goskino, 1925).
15. Taylor, *The Politics of the Soviet Cinema*, 96.
16. Sergei Eisenstein, *October: Ten Days that Shook the World* (Soviet Union: Mosflim, 1928).
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19. Sergei Eisenstein, *The General Line* (Soviet Union: Sovkino, 1929).
20. quoted in Goodwin, *Eisenstein, Cinema, and History*, 50.
21. Eisenstein, *Strike*, Fig. 1.
22. Eisenstein, *Strike*, Fig. 2.
23. Ibid, Fig. 3.
24. Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution*, 10.
25. Eisenstein, *Strike*, Fig. 4.
26. Ibid, Fig. 5, 6.
27. Eisenstein, *Strike*, Fig. 7.
28. Ibid, Fig. 8.
29. Ibid, Fig. 9.
30. Ibid, Fig. 10, 11.
31. Ibid, Fig. 12.
32. Bordwell, *The Cinema of Eisenstein*, 60.
33. Eisenstein, *Battleship Potemkin*, Fig. 13.
34. Ibid, Fig. 14.
35. Bergan, *Eisenstein, A Life in Conflict*, 134.
36. Eisenstein, *October*, Fig. 15.
37. Bergan, *Eisenstein, A Life in Conflict*, 131.
38. Goodwin, *Eisenstein, Cinema, and History*, 50.
39. Eisenstein, *The General Line*, Fig. 16, 17.
40. Goodwin, *Eisenstein, Cinema, and History*, 112.
41. Bergan, *Eisenstein, A Life in Conflict*, 155.
42. Goodwin, *Eisenstein, Cinema, and History*, 112.
43. Bergan, *Eisenstein, A Life in Conflict*, 326.
44. Taylor, *The Politics of the Soviet Cinema*, 13.
45. Eisenstein, *October*, Fig. 18.
46. Ibid, Fig. 19, 20.
47. Eisenstein, *October*, Fig. 21, 22.
48. Marie Seton, *Sergei M. Eisenstein: A Biography* (London: Dobson, 1987).
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50. Eisenstein, *October*, Fig. 23.
51. Bordwell, *The Cinema of Eisenstein*, 45 .
52. Eisenstein, *October*, Fig. 24.
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54. Eisenstein, *October*, Fig. 25.
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56. Bergan, *Eisenstein, A Life in Conflict*, 20, 26.
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66. Ibid, Fig. 31.
67. Youngblood, *Soviet Cinema in the Silent Era*, 82.
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