

pendently inspired to consider how to more effectively reach the people, and thereby to demonstrate the social consciousness that was, avowedly, a universal subscription.

The incomprehensibility of much montage cinema contradicts the intentions of its original development, which were, if we are to very carefully take Eisenstein's formulation of intellectual montage as being at least partly typical, to communicate through juxtaposition certain ideas to the audience.<sup>60</sup> And although the fact may be effaced by auteurist celebrations of the Soviet avant-garde, the audience was always theorized as the key to and the reason for montage.

Here is an excerpt from Eisenstein's earliest statement on the subject, "The Montage of Attractions," written in 1923.

Theatre's basic material derives from the audience: the moulding of the audience in a desired direction [or mood] is the task of every utilitarian theatre. . . . *An attraction* [in our diagnosis of theatre] is any aggressive moment in theatre, i.e. any element of it that subjects the audience to emotional or psychological influence, verified by experience and mathematically calculated to produce specific emotional shocks in the spectator in their proper order within the whole. These shocks provide the only opportunity of perceiving the ideological aspect of what is being shown, the final ideological conclusion.<sup>61</sup>

"Attraction" presupposes audience involvement. Individual shots, as attractions, are a stimulation by which the spectator senses similarity or contrast, which are then joined as appropriate.

It is in this notion of the appropriate that montage aesthetics become vulnerable, however. Propaganda was the means by which the regime communicated the articles of its faith, and in order for it to be successful, that communication was supposed to be accessible. A consistent inaccessibility was seen as an important failing and was certainly a complicating tension in much montage cinema. The avant-garde, in Soviet practice and in general, seems by very nature prone to opaqueness.

Beyond a not insignificant failure in reaching or serving a large lay audience, difficulty does not necessarily invalidate the work of this, or any other, period. The real problem may actually