

Eisenstein, montage, and ‘filmic writing’

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‘only words interest me’

Jacques Derrida¹

It has become something of a cliché to suggest that film studies is at a juncture. Nevertheless, if this is indeed the case, the ‘future of film studies’ can hardly be determined (were this even desirable) without attending to the historical, institutional, and epistemological prejudices that have shaped its past. Arguably, one of the most profound influences on film studies to date has been the long-standing tradition of thinking about ‘word’ and ‘image’, or the expressible and the visible (without assuming any direct mapping between these pairs), as not only differing, but opposing categories of representation, while tending to privilege the former. What has come to constitute the canon of film theory has remained very much within this intellectual paradigm, having as it does the primary objective of reading film as ‘text’.

It is in light of this that I wish to re-investigate Eisenstein’s interest in the ideogram as a model for film language, and to argue that when this interest was re-visited in the 1980s - most notably in the work of the French film theorist Marie-Claire Ropars-Wuilleumier - its potential productivity as an alternative to the linguistic sign as a model for film language was undercut by the powerful, not to mention paradoxical, anti-ocular inflection of film theory at this time. In short, an examination of the way in which Eisenstein’s theoretical writings were refigured with a more textual emphasis during this period of film studies could

illuminate the intellectual prejudices that have shaped – and restricted – our thinking on the subject.

One of the key concerns of film theory since the late 1960s has been a critique of the specularity of cinema as inherently ideological. This was supported by the anti-ocular inflection of the theories of both Lacan and Althusser, which, along with Saussurean structural linguistics, comprised the most formative influences on film studies during this period. In fact, what has come to constitute the canon of film theory has been shaped, contrary to what one might expect, by what Martin Jay has described as the widespread anti-ocularcentrism of 20th century French thought. The following extract summarises Jay's argument and as such is worth quoting at length:

Although definitions of visuality vary from thinker to thinker, it is clear that ocularcentrism aroused ... a widely shared distrust. Bergson's critique of the spatialization of time, Bataille's celebration of the blinding sun and the acephalic body, Breton's ultimate disenchantment with the savage eye, Sartre's depiction of the sadomasochism of the "look," Merleau-Ponty's diminished faith in a new ontology of vision, Lacan's disparagement of the ego produced by the mirror-stage, Althusser's appropriation of Lacan for a Marxist theory of ideology, Foucault's strictures against the medical gaze and panoptic surveillance, Debord's critique of the society of the spectacle, Barthes's linkage of photography and death, Metz's excoriation of the scopic regime of the cinema, Derrida's double reading of the specular tradition of philosophy and the white mythology, Irigaray's outrage at the privileging of the visual in patriarchy, Levinas's claims that ethics is thwarted by a visually based ontology, and Lyotard's identification of postmodernism with the sublime foreclosure of the visual – all of these evince, to put it mildly, a palpable loss of confidence in the hitherto "noblest of the senses" (Jay, 1996: 588).

Jay suggests that these had a kind of 'cumulative effect', and that 'Critiques of specific historical manifestations of visuality worked ... to discredit vision per se.' In short, anti-visual rhetoric became axiomatic in 20th century French thought with implications

extending well beyond any one discipline or any one field. In the work of many film theorists since the 1960s the unquestionable influence of many of these divergent strands manifested itself as an antipathy toward the supposedly uncritical 'filmic fascination' encouraged by the spectacle of cinema. Remaining within the traditional epistemological paradigm of understanding words and images as not only differing, but opposing, modes of representation - with a bias toward the former - this occasioned an emphasis on radical montage (or, as it was renamed, 'cinematic writing'), as a way of undermining the supposed false immediacy and intelligibility of iconic representation.

For instance, in tracing the radical re-orientation and politicisation of the film journal *Cahiers du cinéma* after 1968, Jim Hillier highlights the ways in which this was fundamentally based in a critique of the visual status of cinema.² Hillier draws our attention to a two-part editorial in 1969 entitled 'Cinéma/ideologie/critique', by Jean-Louis Comolli and Jean Narboni, which outlined the journal's new position. This saw the cinema as the inevitable culmination of the 'frenzy of the visible' (Comolli, 1980: 122), the implications of which were spelt out by Serge Daney in a 1970 *Cahiers* article. Here Daney encouraged us to:

call into question what both serves and precedes the camera: a truly blind confidence in the visible, the hegemony, gradually acquired, of the eye over the other senses, the taste and need a society has to put itself in spectacle, etc. ... The cinema is thus bound up with the Western metaphysical tradition of seeing and vision whose photological vocation it realizes (quoted in Comolli, 1980: 125).

The ideological operation of cinema could be located in its 'reality-effect', which of course is not reality at all but the 'vague, unformulated, untheorized, unthought-out world of the dominant ideology' concealed in the illusionism of its images (Comolli & Narboni, 1976: 25).

A year later, Jean-Louis Baudry's hugely influential 'The Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus' reformulated the same basic position in more explicitly psychoanalytic terms.³ The central tenet of Baudry's position is

that in a specular operation similar to the Lacanian mirror-stage the cinematic apparatus functions ideologically to produce a subject that misrecognises itself as the centre of the represented world.⁴ The 'eye' is identified with the ideological subject and the ideological operation of cinema is such that the 'eye-subject', in its identification with the camera, is unfettered by limits of body or space or time, producing the illusion of the 'transcendental subject' (Baudry, 1985: 537).⁵ Thus, the spectator identifies less with what is represented than with the spectacle itself, and those enclosed in the space of projection and reflection find themselves (though they cannot 'know' it), 'chained, captured, or captivated' (Baudry, 1985: 538). This is reminiscent of the terms in which Barthes articulated his relief 'Upon Leaving the Movie-Theater', in a 1975 article of the same name. Here Barthes spoke of the film image as a 'lure', saying:

I am locked in on the image as though I were caught in the famous dual relationship which establishes the imaginary. ... [T]he image ... ensnares me, captures me. I am riveted to the representation, and it is this bond which is the basis of the naturalness (pseudo-nature) of the filmed/represented scene. In the final analysis, does not the image have, by statute, all the characteristics of the ideological? (Barthes, 1980: 3).

The identification and imprecation of the film image as inherently ideological was further bolstered by feminist interventions which castigated the spectacle of mainstream cinema as not only thoroughly saturated in bourgeois ideology but also complicitous with the 'male gaze'. Like French feminist literary theorists such as Luce Irigaray, Hélène Cixous and Julia Kristeva, all of whom argued against the primacy of the visual in Western culture, film theorists such as Laura Mulvey argued that mainstream cinema reproduces an inherently patriarchal visual economy.⁶ An important aspect of Mulvey's thinking was the alignment of 'woman' with 'image' and of 'image' with the Lacanian 'imaginary'. Mulvey emphasised the importance of 'the fact that it is an image that constitutes the matrix of the imaginary, of recognition/misrecognition and identification, and hence of the first articulation of the I' (Mulvey, 1985: 308). In psychoanalytic

film theory it followed from this that language was associated with the realm of the symbolic and, consequently, identified as a way of breaking the spell of narcissistic specular investment. Christian Metz, for example, began his psychoanalytically informed reflection on cinema, *The Imaginary Signifier* (1975), by defining psychoanalytic film theory as 'an attempt to disengage the cinema-object from the imaginary and win it for the symbolic' (Metz, 1975: 3). This supported the idea that so-called cinematic 'specular tranquillity' would collapse with the exposition of 'the inscription of the film-work' (Baudry, 1985: 540). In short, with the exposition of *film as a kind of writing*.

Of course, there is a long history of comparisons between film and literature. Robert Stam has documented the frequency of 'film language' and 'film writing' metaphors in early film criticism, in the work of the Russian theorist Béla Balázs, or of the Russian Formalists for instance. Stam also points out the way in which the idea of 'film language' was the basis for many 'grammars of the cinema', such as Raymond Spottiswoode's 1935 *Grammar of Film*. The idea of film language being structured in a similar way to written or verbal language was also a fundamental part of both Kuleshov's and - as we shall see - Eisenstein's theories of montage. Theories of authorship were also often based on literary comparisons, as in Alexandre Astruc's 1948 article, 'La caméra-stylo', where the 'film language' metaphor becomes that of 'film writing', or the writer Alfred Andersch's assertion in the 1950s 'that the eye of the camera only starts seeing when a literary consciousness is behind it' (quoted in Elsaesser, 1989: 43). But, as Stam notes, these pre-semiotic discussions of 'film language' were mainly analogical and limited to the idea of 'film style' or 'expressivity'. It was of course Barthes and more particularly Metz who significantly altered the state of play in the 1960s and '70s by looking to language as literally the model for film. To be sure, filmmakers and theorists had looked to models of language for inspiration prior to the semiotic turn - Eisenstein's ideograms come immediately to mind - but never before had there been such a concerted effort to force film to fit the paradigm of phonetic language.

This is understandable perhaps in light of the fact that Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics* (1915) could be understood as the

seminal theoretical text of the twentieth century, insofar as it has generated some of this century's most exciting theoretical work, extending Saussure's structural model into areas as diverse as literature, social anthropology, psychoanalysis, or, in the case of Barthes, using it to account for virtually any system of signs. It is hardly surprising then that film scholars should attempt to extend the linguistic model to film. Nor is it hard to imagine why this endeavour, at least in its initial, more straightforward stages, should be relatively quickly abandoned.

The textual emphasis was not abandoned however, but was extended to cover the idea of 'writing' as the critique of the phonetic model of writing introduced by Derrida, and to incorporate Eisenstein's theories of cinematic montage as a kind of ideogrammatic filmic writing. In this context, what Derrida's concept of 'writing' (*écriture*) offered was a more sophisticated and complex model than the Saussurean model of speech, while at the same time avoiding the charge of phonocentrism (privileging speech over writing). His linguistic, or more properly speaking grammatological, emphasis satisfied the widespread anti-ocular impulse, though, in practice, as writing is no less visible than pictures, the distinction often boiled down to one between graphic and figurative modes of representation, with a tendency to favour the former. The influence of this on re-interrogations of Eisenstein on the ideogram meant that Eisenstein's important insistence on the emotional impact of the film image - because, not in spite of, its visual status - was sidelined in favour of an almost exclusive emphasis on abstraction.

In the work of Marie-Claire Ropars-Wuilleumier, Derrida's and Freud's and Eisenstein's common interest in the ideogram as a potentially radical alternative to the phonetic sign provides the point of interest as well as a possible point of departure for film theory. If writing is defined a system of signs, there can be no writing in the Saussurean sense as long as the graphic trace keeps a relation of resemblance with what is not then signified, but drawn or represented. The alternative appeal of the ideogram for Derrida, as Laura Oswald puts it, is 'as a model of semiosis occurring in space, outside the body, in a visual medium' (Oswald, 1986: 317-318). Freud, for his part, compared Chinese writing, and pictographic writing in general, to the activity of the

dream-work, a comparison Derrida fully approved as ‘the writing of dreams exceeds phonetic writing’ (Derrida, 1972: 101).

In the *Traumdeutung*, the interpretation of dreams is initially proposed as an act of decoding or reading. The turning point for Derrida is when Freud rejects the idea of a ‘dream-code’ existing prior to the dream through which we can interpret the dream-work, and instead moves towards the idea of the dream as a sort of originary psychical ‘writing’.⁷ Now the dreamer invents his or her own grammar; no dream lexicon exists prior to the dream. The same image may hide a different meaning when it occurs in different people or in different contexts. For Freud, this is analogous to Chinese writing as both the dream symbols and the symbols of Chinese writing may have multiple meanings, with only the context determining the interpretation in both cases. Derrida made his distinction between ‘ordinary writing’ and ‘psychical’ or ‘originary writing’ on this basis, the latter ‘prefigur[ing] the meaning of writing in general’ (Derrida, 1972: 89). Phonetic writing is complicit with the ‘logos (or the time of logic)’ which is dominated by the principle of non-contradiction and presence, but in the stage of dreams concatenations are possible which no longer obey the linear temporal logic of verbal representations. Freud’s metaphors of pictograms, rebuses and hieroglyphs, and non-phonetic writing in general, allude to the strangeness of these logico-temporal relations: ‘The dream-content’ writes Freud, ‘is expressed as it were in a pictographic script (*Bilderschrift*)’ (quoted in Derrida, 1972: 101). But, Derrida insists, the ‘*Bilderschrift*: [is] not an inscribed image but a figurative script, an image inviting not a simple, conscious, present perception of the thing itself ... but a reading’ (Derrida, 1972: 102).

Ropars, in turn, notes Eisenstein’s ‘very “derridien” insistence on looking for a linguistic model in non-alphabetic forms, a model which is not subordinated to spoken language’ (quoted and translated in Oswald, 1986: 318). Thus, she argues, the point of intersection between Derrida’s reading of the Freudian dream-work as a kind of psychical or originary writing, and Eisenstein’s theories of montage as a kind of cinematographic writing, is that like the writing of dreams cinematographic writing cannot be accounted for by the signifier/signified model. In filmic montage the ‘concept’ is not produced by the association of a signifier and

signified but by the combination of images, where the individual iconic referent is subordinated to the meanings produced by the relations between the images (and sounds) in the film. Like the principles of Chinese ideograms, which combine pictures of 'things' to express otherwise undepictable 'concepts' (e.g. 'dog' + 'mouth' = 'to bark'), in film montage a shot or strip of film is transformed by being cemented to another shot or strip of film, producing new levels of intellectual and emotional meaning. In other words, meaning is produced in the structural relations of the filmic system, rather than in the relation of image to 'reality'. Therefore, as D.N. Rodowick suggests, if the possibility of a filmic writing is inhibited by its iconicity, what the ideogram represents, both to Eisenstein and Ropars, is the possibility of a writing made up of iconic units that combine to form a symbolic system (Rodowick, 1985: 43).

The reliance on a visual as opposed to a phonetic model opens up the question of the polyvalency of the cinematic signifier, and indicates an awareness of the multiple levels of signification operating within film. Since, in montage, cinematic signification is produced by the association of two or more signifiers rather than in the relation between signifier and signified, from the outset the cinematic sign is inscribed with division and the threat of a split, which a deconstructive approach would work to exploit. This is not to suggest however that Eisenstein's use of the ideogram in his theoretical writings anticipates Derrida's deconstruction of stable and singular meanings. On the contrary, Eisenstein does not advocate what might now be called 'the free play of the signifier'; instead his aim is 'to forge *accurate* intellectual concepts from the dynamic clash of opposing passions' (Eisenstein, 1949: 46, my italics). Indeed, according to Laura Oswald, the differences between Eisenstein and Derrida are nowhere more apparent than in their respective interpretations of ideogrammatic writing. For Derrida, the appeal of the ideogram is that it deconstructs the supposed internal closure between voice and meaning in the phonetic sign. For Eisenstein, on the other hand, the ideogram is not the site of a radical deconstruction of meaning or presence or origins; on the contrary, as Oswald points out, Eisenstein's references to ideogrammatic writing are usually situated 'within an ideal of closure between form and meaning in filmic figures'.

In other words, Eisenstein seeks to shut down the possibility of polyvalence, and to narrow the gap between signifier and signified in the development of film as an ideogrammatic discourse. This is evident she argues, when he writes: '[the montage cell] can only be read in juxtaposition, just as the ideogram acquires its specific significance, meaning, and even pronunciation ... only when combined with a separately indicated reading - an indicator for the exact reading - placed alongside the basic hieroglyph' (quoted in Oswald, 1986: 321). Thus, Oswald maintains that Eisenstein's use of the ideogrammatic model differs fundamentally from that of Derrida in advocating the process whereby a preferred meaning prevails over the systematic destabilisation of meaning (Oswald, 1986: 321-322).

It is true that for Eisenstein the distinction between referential and non-referential systems of signification involves not only a quantitative but a qualitative judgement, as the passage from iconic representation to symbolic signification is held to produce not only different, but *higher*, levels of meaning. This involves a level of didacticism which has frequently been rejected by subsequent film theorists and filmmakers alike. But the realisation of his model of intellectual montage in his film practice is also profoundly *cinematic*, in that it relies for its affects on dynamic movement, both within shots and between shots, as well as on a wealth of orchestrated and incidental textural detail, which ultimately exceeds any single, preferred, 'meaning'. Its impact is not only intellectual, but also emotional and visceral, and these levels of affect can neither be separated from, nor reduced to, each other.

In addition, the importance of his idea of filmic montage as a kind of ideogrammatic writing is that it foregrounds the fundamental heterogeneity of filmic discourse and allows for the interpenetration of iconicity and abstraction. This is not to suggest that the ideogram is fully adequate as a model for film. While it is iconic it does not share the film image's indexical status, nor does it allow for the possibility of movement, nor for the particularly cinematic possibilities of the combination of sound and image. The appeal of the ideogram for Eisenstein however is that it suggests a kind of condensed transition from one mode of representation to another. Montage is the model for 'a cinema

seeking a maximum laconism for *the visual representation of abstract concepts*' (Eisenstein, 1949: 30, italics mine). What is important to remember in this is that the visibility of the shot or 'montage cell' is not negated in its combination with other montage cells but in fact lends the intellectual concept thus produced an even greater emotional resonance. Eisenstein finds an analogy for this in the Japanese *haiku*, where ideograms are combined to great effect. Like the emotional effects produced by montage, which cannot be fully accounted for in terms of their 'meaning', in the *haiku*, 'if the finely ground edges of the intellectually defined concepts formed by the combined ideograms are blurred ... , in *emotional quality*, the concepts have blossomed forth immeasurably' (Eisenstein, 1949: 32). The problem is that when Eisenstein was re-read within the context of an intellectual culture notable for its anti-specular stance, the outcome was a critical perspective that abandoned his emphasis on the reciprocal relationship between iconicity and intellection, in favour of the prioritisation of linguistic and/or textual models at the expense of the visual field.

Although writing for Ropars clearly means something more than merely the notation systems of phonetic languages, there is an associative rhetoric in her writing, which tends toward the superiority of graphic over figurative representation. As a result, while her refiguring of Eisenstein's model of montage into a theory of cinematic writing pushes the boundaries of previous attempts to establish a grammar of film, it does little to undermine the epistemological privilege accorded to theories of the text in the post-'68 period. This is evident in the at times overstated relations established between cinema and writing (in its literal sense) in her textual analyses, as well as in the emphasis placed on radical montage as a way of re-writing film as 'text'.

In offering montage as a model for a *reading practice* of both filmic and literary texts, Ropars overturns the traditional approach whereby the analysis of film has been based on that of the literary text. Her interest in the interpenetration of graphic writing and *cinécriture* is not simply the operation of bringing literary analysis to bear on the film text, but of investigating the reciprocal effects of filmic textuality on literary textuality. According to Ropars, the appeal of a derridean reading of montage is that exerts itself as

much at the expense of representation as of signification, or, more precisely, it assures the dismantling of both systems. These two systems are equally conveyed by the written text as by the filmic text, even if this is less visible in the written text. Ropars identifies a process of 'destruction' at work in both literary and filmic texts, but fears that the 'atomization' which she describes in the literary text as it bears on the specific nature of the linguistic sign (i.e. the combination of letters split by the possible combination with other signs) is difficult to find an exact equivalent of in film, whose disintegration is to be found at the structural level of the relations between images rather than in the images themselves. The filmic text, on the other hand, makes the simultaneity of contrary actions evident by the simultaneous unfolding of the two tracks (sound and image) in a contrary relation. The systems of signification can neither be reduced to, nor separated from, one another, and their coexistence introduces a fundamental heterogeneity into discourse. But when Ropars advocates setting up the filmic text as an operator of reading of the literary text, this is not because of its visual status, but in spite of it. '*Le texte moderne*', she writes, 'lets a (filmic) viewing of the text intervene only when the threat of blindness is right behind the intervening' (translated and quoted in Gandelman, 1992: 233-234). The disruptive and discontinuous power of montage thus operates 'as a warning against optical illusions, which would comfort the spoken by the seen' (Ropars, 1985: 22).

If cinema offers the particular possibilities of combining graphic and figurative representations, as well as (in sound cinema at least) combining sound and image, then it must also offer the possibility of their dissociation. Mainstream narrative film more often than not stitches over these gaps by synchronising sound and image and by structuring the narrative according to a linear causal logic. Thus Ropars concentrates on those films in which one can detect 'privileged fracture zones' and can 'define the remarkable relationships seen forming between the activity of writing, conceived in the hieroglyphic form of editing, and written representation, understood as mere graphic figuration' (Ropars, 1982: 147). Exemplary of this are the films and theories of Eisenstein, as well as those of modernist filmmakers such as Margeurite Duras, Alain Resnais, and Jean-Luc Godard. But while Ropars' treatment of films such as Godard's *À Bout de Souffle*

(1959) and Marguerite Duras's *India Song* (1974) is grounded in an ideogrammatic method that strives to accommodate film's mixture of phonic, graphic and figural matters of expression, ultimately this results in the transcription of the scenography of the image tracks into essentially linguistic structures of repetition and difference.

In *Le texte divisé* (1981), Ropars offers a painstakingly close analysis of Duras's *India Song*.⁸ At one point, she relies on anagrammatic 'evidence' to support her reading, of which the following is an example:

repeated several times, associated with Laos, the name Savannakhet sounds even stranger since it contains, in the center the first name *anna*, and, at either end, the two initial letters of Stretter; with these two letters gone, what is left is retter, the reduced mark of the double infinitely turned in on itself Savannakhet, the hidden name of the point of origin, provides, while holding it back, the name of Anne-(Marie) St(retter), which "Bir/manie" might complete, if *r* is substituted for *n* to make *marie* ... Stein begins the same as Stretter and also as "stérile"; and the beggar, "folle," née labas, in "Laos," multiplies the letters of Lola; as does the network of *l*'s built up around Bengal (*Elle les laisse, les vend, les oublie*") and punctuated by Calcutta (quoted in Brunette & Wills, 1989: 70).

While at one level this constitutes an attempt to highlight the disseminative and indeed explosive stakes of implementing montage as a theoretical tool disassembling the apparent unity of linguistic and filmic material, the problem is that the affective principle of Eisenstein's theory and practice is abandoned in favour of a level of abstraction only available in the form of a kind of secondary revision, when the film is reconstituted as 'writing'. 'Writing' of course is not limited to its literal sense – the graphic traces of signs – but operates on two different registers, as intertextual citation and as radical montage or 'hieroglyphic editing'. This creates an opposition between cinema's representation of itself (citation) and an implementation of cinematographic writing, which, in Godard's case at least, Ropars describes as implying a direct consideration of the written form: 'Godard's film asserts itself as writing inasmuch as it practices

dismantling writing while drawing its resources from it' (Ropars, 1982: 159). This in turn creates an opposition between two kinds of films - American and Godardian: the former relating to the image (and to the imaginary), the latter 'filled with the text'. Although Ropars is quick to reject this crude dichotomy, maintaining that in both cases the cinema is fundamentally linked to the sign as well as to the image, these two registers are not equal in her analyses; a qualitative judgement is implied.

If film as 'writing' is defined by the plurality of its modes of expression, then Ropars' re-reading of Eisenstein spotlights the irreducible heterogeneity of the filmic matter as, for Eisenstein, montage works as much within shots as between them, indicating the impossibility of disentangling its levels of signification in precisely the same way as the units of language – words – can be split by its combinations of letters. Indeed, Eisenstein insisted that 'The film-frame can never be an inflexible *letter of the alphabet*', but must always remain a multiple-meaning *ideogram*' (Eisenstein, 1949: 65). Yet when Ropars appeals to Eisenstein's interest in the ideogram in an attempt to account for the 'otherness' that is always at work in systems of signification, her analyses are situated within the longstanding intellectual paradigm that understands the written or the readerly as inherently superior to the figurative or merely visible (without implying any direct mapping between these pairs). In short, this idea of a kind of filmic writing based on a model of montage does not work *with* the image, but *against* it.

As Ropars puts it, 'the seizure of the text by the film renders particularly acute the stakes of a discursive activity that appeals to images only in order to annul the work of the imaginary' (Ropars, 1985: 22). This not only indicates film theory's indebtedness to psychoanalysis, as mentioned above, but, in a broader context, reveals the extent to which film studies was shaped by the anti-specular stance of French thought at this time. For Ropars, as for many others during this period of film studies, film approaches the highest expression of its aesthetic (and ideological) possibilities only when, through the reconstitutive power of montage, the figurative content of films, like that of dreams, is understood as 'a form of writing, a signifying chain in scenic form' (Derrida, 1972: 102).

As such, for theorists such as Ropars, the allure of Eisenstein's use of the ideogram is that it lends itself to appropriation within an intellectual context which, for the reasons outlined, considered theories of 'writing' to be more appropriate than visual models for the study of film. What was lost in the process, and what film theory needs to regain, is an Eisensteinian emphasis on the efficacy of *images*. While it has its limitations, what a reconsideration of Eisenstein's ideogrammatic method could offer is an example of an approach to film that goes some way toward recognising the distinctiveness of the cinematic image, and which encourages an intellectual and sensuous curiosity of new modes of visual simulation, stimulation and communication (as well as phonic and graphic experience) which does not automatically privilege language over perception, nor confuse figuration with representation. This is especially necessary at a time when the very idea of 'film' is being complicated by the emergence of the electronic and digital arts, demanding new ways of conceptualising the visual and the graphic, the analogical and the digital, their relationship and their function in film - and its imminent technological transformations - as differing but not mutually exclusive modes of experience.

¹Peter Brunette and David Wills, 'The Spatial Arts: An Interview with Jacques Derrida.' *Deconstruction and the Visual Arts: Art, Media, Architecture*. Eds. Brunette & Wills. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994: 19.

² See Hillier, *Cahiers du Cinéma: Vol. 2 1960-68*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986.

³See also Jean-Louis Baudry, 'The Apparatus: Metapsychological Approaches to the Impression of Reality in Cinema.' *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: A Film Theory Reader*. Ed. P. Rosen. New York: Columbia UP, 1986: 299-318. First published in French in 1975.

⁴For a discussion of the psychoanalytic foundations of apparatus theory see Jacques-Alain Miller, 'La suture (Elements de la logique du signifiant).' *Les cahiers pour analyse* 1 (Jan-Feb 1966): 37-49, translated as 'Suture: Elements of the Logic of the Signifier.' *Screen* 18.4 (Winter 1977-78): 24-34. For an early application of this to cinematic apparatus theory see Jean-Pierre Oudart 'Cinema and Suture.' *Screen* 18.4 (Winter 1977-78): 35-47. For the most well known version of 'suture' in apparatus theory see Daniel Dayan, 'The Tutor-Code of Classical Cinema.' *Film Quarterly* 28.1: 22-31, and in response to this, William Rothman, 'Against the System of Suture.' Nichols, 1976: 451-59.

⁵See also Jean-Louis Comolli, 'Technique and Ideology: Camera, Perspective, Depth of Field.' Nichols, 1985: 40-57. First published in French in *Cahiers du*

cinéma 229, 230, 231, 233 (1970-71). For a history that disputes the continuity between Renaissance and modern scopic regimes, see Jonathan Crary, 'Techniques of the Observer.' *October* 45 (Summer 1987): 3-35.

⁶See Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema.' *Movies and Methods*. Vol. 1. Ed. B. Nichols Berkeley: California UP, 1976: 305-315. First published in 1975.

⁷For an investigation of the oscillation between these two interpretative methods in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, see N. Rand & M. Torok, 'Questions to Freudian Psychoanalysis: Dream Interpretation, Reality, Fantasy.' *Critical Inquiry* 19 (Spring 1993): 567-594.

⁸An earlier version of part of this book appears in English as 'The Disembodied Voice (*India Song*).' Trans. K. Smith. *Yale French Studies* 60.1 (1980): 241-268. It is not available in English translation in its entirety.

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