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Cinema of Interval: Sergei Eisenstein's Theory and Practice of Montage

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In the history of cinema, various attempts have been made to conceive of cinema primarily as a form of expressing thought rather than as a representation of reality. Sergei Eisenstein is always considered as a pioneer of the former, conceptual model. In both theory and practice, he endeavored to set up the dialectical synthesis of thought and image as the basic principle of cinema, and montage as the indispensable method to realize this principle. In this essay, I will discuss how montage has been conceived and developed within the paradigm of thought which Gilles Deleuze characterizes as "interval" in his two cinema books. I will focus this issue specifically on Eisenstein along with the textual analysis of *Battleship Potemkin* (1927).

1. Griffith vs. Eisenstein

When Edwin Porter's *The Great Train Robbery* (1903) was released to the American audience during the pre-nickelodeon era, it quickly became the most popular and commercially successful film of the time.

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Along with its commercial success, the most remarkable achievement of this film was its use of parallel montage by which Porter successfully laid out a thematic paradigm of good and evil in the film narrative.

Composed of fourteen scenes in all, *The Great Train Robbery* develops three separate sequences. The first sequence (arranged from scene 1 to 9) deals with a chronological ordering of the bandits' robbery and escape. The bandits threaten a telegraph operator in a rural railroad station and force him to stop an approaching train (scene 1); they attack not only the messenger in the mail car but also the fireman and the engineer in the locomotive, disconnecting the engine from the passenger cars (scene 2 to 5); after holding up the passengers outside the coaches, the bandits move off into the distance, first by the disconnected locomotive and then on horseback (scene 6 to 9). The second sequence (scene 10 to 11) comes back to the end of the first scene and develops the opposite side of the robbery situation. The telegraph operator, who has been tied, gagged and unconscious on the floor, is now rescued by his young daughter (scene 10) and rushes to the dance hall where the members of the town posse are dancing to their pleasure (scene 11).

The first and the second sequences develop two separate situations that take place simultaneously in two different locations. For the first time in the history of narrative cinema, Porter uses a parallel editing technique to make this temporal repetition possible in the narrative structure of the film. The effect of this innovative technique was to set up a thematic paradigm of good and evil leading to a duel between them. The chasing scenes of the third sequence (scene 12 to 13) are the culminating points of the duel where the posse chases the bandits

and finally punishes them by death. Thus, the overall structure of film narrative converges on the duel between good and evil, ending up with the final defeat of evil. This type of narrative was very popular in theaters at the time, but Edwin Porter was the first filmmaker to adapt it successfully on the screen by using an innovative editing method.

A few years later, the new techniques that Porter introduced for the first time in his short films were used for full-length feature films in America. D.W. Griffith was one of the leading pioneers in the compositional method known as "parallel montage." In *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), the climax sequence is typically referred to as exemplary of this method. Culminating with the battle between the Klansmen and the black mob, this sequence develops three simultaneous situations in parallel: (1) in his office, the black Lieutenant Governor (George Siegmann) forcibly threatens the Congressional leader Austin Stoneman (Ralph Lewis) and his daughter Elsie (Lillian Gish); (2) the black mob attacks the Cameron family who have taken refuge in the cabin; (3) the Klansmen led by Ben Cameron (Henry B. Walthall) ride to the rescue not only of Elsie and her father but also of the Camerons in the cabin. The three situations alternately cut back to one another, accumulating the filmic tension resulting in the climax where the Klansmen defeat the black mob both in the town and in the cabin. Here, the first two situations are given as the culminating points of conflict between the white and the black, developing through the tragic stories of two white families (the Stonemans and the Camerons). These culminating points of conflict converge on the duel between the Klansmen and the black mob. Accompanied by the fast horse-galloping of the Klansmen, the accelerated rhythm of parallel montage reaches its highest point in the duel of the third situation. This duel

ends up with the Klansmen's victory over the black mob. And this victory restores the hierarchical relationship between the white and the black people presented at the beginning of the film.

As above, Griffith's method of parallel montage operates in two ways. First, in the technical aspect, parallel montage speeds up the rhythm of the filmic sequence by alternating each simultaneously occurring segment rapidly. This rapid alternation of segments provides the effect of heightening the narrative tension between segments. Second, in the thematic aspect, parallel montage divides the original situation into two opposed sides (e.g., Black vs. White in *The Birth of a Nation*). The opposed sides of the situation proceed in parallel, but they come across each other in the form of a duel. All the forces of the conflict are removed during the duel, and the original unity of the earlier situation is restored. Viewed from these two aspects of parallel montage, Griffith not only constitutes the narrative structure as the assemblage of alternating segments rather than as the chronological linkage of actions, but he also sets up "a great organic unity" (Deleuze 1986:30) of the narrative structure which Deleuze sees as the essential feature of Griffith films.

> The organism is, firstly, unity in diversity, that is, a set of differentiated parts; there are men and women, rich and poor, town and country, North and South, interiors and exteriors, etc. These parts are taken in binary relationships which constitute *a parallel alternate montage*, the image of one part succeeding another according to a rhythm ... [T]he parts must necessarily act and react on each other in order to show how they simultaneously enter into conflict and threaten the unity of the organic set, and how they overcome the conflict or restore the unity. From some parts actions arise which oppose good and bad, but from other parts convergent actions arise which come to the aid of the

> good: through all these actions the form of a duel develops and passes through different stages... The convergent actions tend towards a single end, reaching the site of the duel to reverse its outcome, to save innocence or reconstitute the compromised unity(30-1).

Basically, Deleuze analyzes the narrative structure in Griffith's films by three stages of development: the original unity, the conflict, and the restored unity. Deleuze sees this type of narrative development as "organic," because the narrative proceeds linearly in removing the conflict and reconstituting the original unity at the end. Here, the function of parallel montage is to develop the intermediary stage of conflict placed between the original unity and the restored unity.

This method of parallel montage, which had been called "American montage" since the first generation of American cinema, was challenged later by the Soviet filmmakers of the 1920s, notably by Sergei Eisenstein. In fact, Eisenstein also conceived of montage as the essential method to achieve the organic unity of the film structure, but his approach to montage and organic unity was quite different from what Griffith and other American filmmakers attempted. In his critical response to Griffith's notion of parallel montage, Eisenstein wrote,

> [T]rue rhythm presupposes above all organic unity. Neither a successive mechanical alternation of cross-cuts, nor an interweaving of antagonistic themes, but above all a unity, which in the play of inner contradictions, through a shift of the play in the direction of tracing its organic pulse - that is what lies at the base of rhythm. This is not an outer unity of story, bringing with it also the classical image of the chase-scene, but that inner unity, which can be realized in montage as an entirely different system of construction, in which so-called parallel montage can figure as one of the highest or particularly personal variants.

> For us the microcosm of montage had to be understood as a unity, which in the inner stress of contradictions is halved, in order to be re-assembled in a new unity on a new plane, qualitatively higher, its imagery newly perceived. (1949:235-36)

For Eisenstein, montage should not eliminate a part of the parallel sides in order to restore the original unity from the conflict in the duel. Instead, it should create a new unity from all the contradictions by transforming them "qualitatively" from a conflicting situation into a new unity. The creation of a new unity is a dialectic process because this unity is generated by translating one opposite into another, not by juxtaposing one after another in parallel. Consequently, all the contradictory segments are "qualitatively" transformed into a new organic unity through this translating process creating what Eisenstein calls "absolute change of dimension."

2. Organic Unity

Deleuze's analysis of Eisenstein's concept of montage provides a unique understanding of how montage sets up the relationship between image and thought in the film. According to Deleuze, Eisenstein's montage launches three moments of translation which are related to one another in the fashion of Hegelian dialectics. The first moment indicates a gradational transition from image to thought, or from percept to concept. At this moment, the role of montage is to evoke a shock effect in the mind and subsequently to make the mind "think the Whole" (1989:158). This is a moment where the emotional resonance of "I FEEL" is elevated into the intellectual resonance of

"the cinematographic I THINK" (158). While the emotional resonance of "I FEEL" is concerned with the perception of each shot, the intellectual resonance of "the cinematographic I THINK" formulates the idea of the whole which is conceivable only on the thinking process without being shaped in a particular form.

The second moment of translation, which goes in reverse from thought to image, or from the concept to the affect, constitutes the relationship between the whole and its parts in the opposite direction. This time, the idea of the whole reacts to the parts, expressing itself in the form of the sensory images. In contrast to the first moment of translation which sets up a boundary between the sensory image and the abstract concept, the second moment blurs that boundary by bringing the abstract concept back to the sensory and emotional images. However, the first and the second moments of translation cannot be arranged in a logical order of action and reaction to each other, because it is almost impossible to determine which comes first between image and thought. From this ambiguity, Deleuze sees that these moments are reciprocal and simultaneous, heading for "the third moment" where "the concept is in itself in the image, and the image is for itself in the concept" (1989:161).

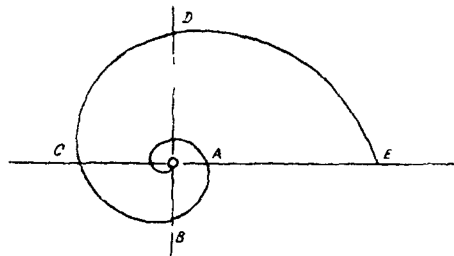
An identity between image and concept reflects a truly Hegelian teleology in Eisenstein's concept of montage. For Eisenstein, montage is the principle for constructing an open totality in movement. It functions as a basic thread running through two poles of filmic composition, that is, the organic and the pathetic. The organic is concerned with the composition of the film structure as a whole, while the pathetic is involved in an on-going process of registering a leaping point in various filmic sequences. As Deleuze points out, Eisenstein's

montage operates between these two poles of filmic composition, creating meanings according to a dialectical principle of "the quantitative process and the qualitative leap: the passage from one quality to another and the sudden upsurge of the new quality" (1986:37). Here, the quantitative process sets up the organic growth of the whole, and the qualitative leap marks out the pathetic interval. The whole never stops growing, but at the same time, the whole is constantly changing itself, and thereby, generating a new unity through a leaping point at the turn of each sequence of the film.

In the first chapter of his book *Nonindifferent Nature*, Eisenstein argues in detail for these concepts of organic unity and pathos. In defining these concepts and applying them to the analysis of his own film *Battleship Potemkin*, Eisenstein puts an emphasis on how all the elements of a work can "permeate" (10) the creation of the whole in every aspect. In addition to this basic argument on the organic unity of the whole and its parts, Eisenstein discusses further "the structural rhythm" of the work which, he thinks, should be able to correspond to "the rhythm of the basic laws of natural phenomena" (15). By applying the basic principle of the organic living things to the structure of filmic images, Eisenstein affirms that the images should grow and change the whole in the organic rhythm of film structure as the living things do.

Eisenstein suggests that the best way of expressing "growth" is to follow the mathematical principle of "golden section." For him, the golden section is considered to be the "formula" of growth which is essential to understanding natural phenomena as well as artificial ones (i.e., films) in the organic unity. Originating from Euclid's theory of geometry, the idea of golden section presupposes a "division of a line into two parts such that the ratio of the larger to the smaller segment

is equal to the ratio of the original line to the larger segment."[1] When applied to this principle of a constant ratio between the whole and its parts as well as the individual parts themselves, the process of organic growth "flows along a turning spiral" (16), as shown in the diagram below (17).



This diagram shows two typical aspects of movement-image in the filmic composition of organic growth. On the one hand, since each part (OA, OB, OC, etc.) is equally determined by its length from the central point O, the relation of one part to another is expressed by the ratio of two straight lines in comparison. As indicated in the diagram, the ideal ratio is the golden section which sets up a formula of "OA/OB = OB/OC = OC/OD ... = 0.618" (18). On the other hand, in this diagram, the whole of all the relations of the parts is expressed in a spiral where each curving movement itself is virtually immeasurable. This spiral is always open insofar as a given phenomenon continues its organic growth. In Eisenstein's theoretical term, this open spiral line indicates "the filmic fourth dimension," or a form of time which is

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1) Quoted from *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia.* According to this reference book, Euclid shows how to *divide a line in mean and extreme ratio* in what we would call a point of golden section in his book (*Book VI,* Proposition 30).

"spatially inexpressible, and only emerging and existing in the fourth dimension" (1949:69). Taking these two aspects into consideration, the path of the actual measurements (OA, OB, OC, etc.) determines each particular relationship between one part and another, while the path of the spiral progression reveals the idea of the whole. Here, the whole is itself indivisible and immeasurable, but expressible in the thread of the relations of the parts. In this sense, the rule of golden section can be applied to both the spatial relation of one part to another and the temporal relation of the whole to its parts.

Through the detailed analysis of *Battleship Potemkin*, Eisenstein develops his argument about how the rule of golden section can determine the organic proportion in the actual composition of film structure. For this purpose, first of all, he provides a synopsis in which he enumerates a series of turning points from each part of the film.

> Part I - "Men and Maggots": Exposition of the action. The situation on the battleship. Maggoty meat. Discontent among the sailors.
> Part Ⅱ - "Drama on the Quarterdeck" "Hands on deck!" Refusal to eat the maggoty soup. Scene with the tarpaulin. "Brothers!" Refusal to shoot. Mutiny. Revenge on the officers.
> Part Ⅲ - "The Dead Man Appeals": Mists. Vakulinchuk's corpse in the Odessa port. Lament over the body. Meeting of insurrection. Raising the red flag.
> Part IV - "The Odessa Steps": Fraternization of the shore with the battleship. The yawls with provisions. The shooting on the Odessa steps. The battleship firing on the "Germans' H.Q."
> Part V - "Meeting the Squadron": Night of expectation. Meeting the squadron. Engines. "Brothers!" Refusal of squadron to shoot. Battleship passes victoriously through the squadron. (1987:13)[2]

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2) Some titles given in the essay are slightly different from those in the actual film. For example, the title changes into Drama in the Harbour in Part Ⅱ, and A

Eisenstein basically sets up two arguing points from this synopsis. First, by analyzing the "Brothers!" motifs of Part Ⅱ and Part V, he raises the issue of how a "cell" of an organism can expand itself with the changing whole. In Part Ⅱ, the "Brothers!" motif is placed as a culminating point of tension between the officers' attempt to execute the dissenters and the mutiny of the crew against the execution. The execution scene increases the tension of conflict between the officers and the crew through a series of close-ups alternating the commanding officer with the sailors of the firing squad and Vakulinchuk. A series of crosscutting sets up two opposite groups in parallel. On the one hand, there are the commanding officers with a smirk of authority and a priest holding a cross. On the other hand, there are a group of sailors from the firing squad, hesitant but still following the officer's command, and also another group of sailors watching the situation. The balance of tension between the two sides is broken by Vakulinchuk's shouting: "Brothers! Who are you shooting at?" The sailors from the firing squad react to Vakulinchuk by pulling down their guns. As Eisenstein remarks, Vakulinchuk's act of shouting is situated in a culminating point of the film structure, transforming a cell of organism of the battleship (Vakulinchuk and a small group of mutinous sailors) into the whole organism of the battleship both qualitatively and quantitatively.

In Part V, the "Brothers!" motif is used again, but this time, the tension for the organic development is generated from a unit of

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Dead Man Calls For Justice in Part Ⅲ. In fact, each translated version of Eisensteins writings and each study on him provide slightly different translations of the titles. Thus, it seems that the titles in Russian remain the same and look different because of translation.

conflict larger than that of Part Ⅱ. The battleship Potemkin, which functioned as a whole organism in Part Ⅱ, now functions as a cell of a larger organism, that is, the squadron of the tsarist navy. When the admiralty squadron approaches the mutinous Potemkin, the dramatic tension of conflict is increased by the preparation of the firing from both sides. When the Potemkin signals "Brothers!" by flags at a highly intensive point of the situation, the squadron responds by lowering the muzzles of cannons. This is another turning point where a cell of organism expands itself into a whole organism.

Viewed from these two examples, the relationship between a cell and a whole develops in a centrifugal way from a small group of sailors to the whole battleship (in Part Ⅱ), and also from one battleship to the whole squadron (in Part V). This pattern of growth in the film structure reflects exactly the notion of organic growth which Eisenstein expressed in the diagram of "golden section." Furthermore, along the spiral curve of the structural development grows the main theme of the film which Eisenstein designates as "fraternity and revolution." For Eisenstein, the spiral growth of the theme never stops within the limit of the film length, but expands itself into the real world.

> Over the heads of the battleship's commanders, over the heads of the tsar's admirals of the fleet, finally over the heads of the censors of bourgeois countries surges the fraternal "hurrah" of the film as a whole, just as within the picture the feeling of fraternity flies from the mutinying battleship over the sea to the shore. The organic unity of the film, conceived in a cell within the film, not only goes on, spreading through the film as a whole, but it goes far beyond the limits of the film itself(13).

Here, it is quite noticeable that the principle of organic unity not only makes possible the organic composition of the filmic structure, but also places the film as an organism in the outside world where it is translated into a bigger changing whole. Thus, for Eisenstein, the film is not a mere inanimate material in the celluloid form, but a living organism which "grows" infinitely by the dialectical relationship between cells and their ever-changing whole.

The second issue that Eisenstein raises from the structural analysis of *Battleship Potemkin* is how the dialectical mode of opposition can be realized in the film structure. For Eisenstein, the organic growth of cinematic movement necessarily involves a dialectical synthesis of two opposed elements in each sequence of the film. Thus, in order to produce a synthetic moment, each sequence of the film needs a jumping point which demarcates a break between two opposed elements.

> [T]he jump at each point is not simply a sudden jump to *another* mood, to another rhythm, to *another* event, but each time it is a transition to a *distinct opposite*. Not contrastive, but *opposite*, for each time it gives *the image of that same theme from the opposite point of view and at the same time unavoidably grows out of it*(14).

In *Battleship Potemkin*, a jumping point divides each part into two sub-sections which serve as two opposite aspects to be synthesized for a larger unity. In Part I, the close-up of maggoty meat functions as a jumping point, turning the obedient mood to the discontented and disobedient mood. In Part Ⅱ and V, the shouting of "Brothers!" becomes a jumping point, since it breaks the hesitancy of sailors into fraternal feelings. In Part Ⅲ, several shots of clenched fists makes the

feeling of mourning jump to the feeling of rage. And in Part IV, the subtitle "Suddenly" puts an end to the fraternal actions of Odessa people and the Potemkin sailors and cuts to the Odessa massacre scenes. As a whole, the theme of fraternity and revolution in this film grows from the smallest unit of narrative movement (Vakulinchuk and a small group of sailors) into the larger ones (from all the sailors of the battleship to the people in Odessa, and finally to the whole squadron), and each jumping point functions as a necessary element of this thematic growth by marking out the opposition for a bigger unity.

Aside from the jumping points that are intended to bring out an opposition for the thematic growth, Eisenstein sets up another two breaking points which he calls "caesuras." The first caesura comes at the beginning of Part Ⅲ, a scene that portrays the misty and tranquil scenery of the Odessa harbor at dawn of another day after the battleship mutiny. Concerned with the dialectic composition of the whole, Eisenstein certainly intends this scene to be a kind of spatio-temporal interval between the first half of the film (generating the theme of fraternity and revolution through the mutiny of battleship) and the second half (expanding the same theme through the people of Odessa and the squadron).

> For the film as a whole, this episode [of the dead Vakulinchuk and the Odessa mists] plays the same role of the pause before a transition that is played by separate shots within the separate parts. Actually, from this moment on, the theme, having broken the circle bound by the sides of one mutinous battleship, also explodes, enveloping the whole city, which is ***opposing*** the ship topographically but merging with it emotionally, only, however, to be cut off from it by soldier's boots on the steps at the very moment when the theme returns again to the drama at sea(14-5).

According to this statement, Eisenstein divides the whole sequence of the film into three major settings. It begins with the battleship on the sea, moves to the city of Odessa and then returns to the sea for the battleship and the squadron. The first point of "caesura" that Eisenstein is mentioning here marks off the boundary between the end of the first setting (the battleship) and the beginning of the second (the city of Odessa). This breaking point operates as an oppositional boundary between the sea and the land. Furthermore, considering that its time is set around dawn, the first caesura also alludes to the tonal opposition between darkness and light. From this oppositional point of pause, the filmic sequence curves into a new dimension (the sorrow and rage of the people of Odessa) and develops its tension into a new situation (the massacre on the Odessa steps).

While explaining the first scene of Part Ⅲ as the basic caesura of the film, Eisenstein once again emphasizes the importance of the golden section rule in the composition of film structure. For Eisenstein, the ratio of 2:3, which is the ratio of golden section, is observed in the point "between the end of the second and beginning of the third part of the five-act film," and this basic caesura indicates "the *zero* point of a pause in the action" (22). It is described as "the zero point" because it initiates a new situation framed in a new dimension. In conjunction with this zero point, Eisenstein sets up the second point of caesura at the end of Part Ⅲ where the red flag is raised on the mast of the battleship. The composition of this second caesura also follows the ratio of golden section by which a breaking point divides the last two parts from the previous three parts in the ratio of 3:2. This time, in contrast to the first caesura inserted as the "zero" point of the following conflict, the second caesura functions as "the culmination

point" where the people of Odessa and the battleship sailors are coalescing into one unit of the same fraternal feelings. These two caesuras, marked as the points of golden section in the whole structure of the film, are the moments of the interval which make possible the qualitative leap from one opposite to the other. In other words, the zero point of the first caesura takes a leap from the sorrow of the battleship sailors to that of the people of Odessa, while the culmination point of the second caesura leads to a leap of merging two separate developments of the fraternity theme into one. In both cases, the spiral of the organic unity 'grows' through oppositions, and thus, expresses the movement of the Whole or the One, "which divides itself in two and recreates a new unity" (1986:33).

3. Pathos and Four Methods of Montage

As various points of interval make the qualitative leaps from one sequence to another, and consequently express the movement of the changing whole, each qualitative leap is directed to produce a moment of pathos either inside or outside the film structure. First of all, Eisenstein approaches pathos as a state of "ecstasy" which means "out of a state" (*ex stasis*) in its Greek origin. Viewed from this etymological sense of "ecstasy," pathos is an experience of "being beside oneself" (1987:27). Here, Eisenstein remarks that "being beside oneself" is "a transition to something else, to something different in quality, to something opposite to what preceded it (no motion – to motion, no sound – to sound, etc.)" (27). Thus, pathos is marked off as a point of translation where an opposite qualitatively jumps into another.

Pathos, generated in the point of qualitative jump, can be understood

in two different ways. On the one hand, pathos is a state at which the audience can arrive from their watching experience:

> *[P]athos* is what forces the viewer to jump out of his seat. It is what forces him to flee from his place. It is what forces him to clap, to cry out. It is what forces his eyes to gleam with ecstasy before tears of ecstasy appear in them. In word, it is everything that forces the viewer to 'be beside himself(27).

Here, Eisenstein emphasizes pathos primarily for its emotional effect on the audience. This notion of the emotional effect on the audience has consistently captured Eisenstein from the time that he worked as a stage manager of the Russian avant-garde theater in the early 1920s. In "The Montage of Attractions," one of the early essays which he wrote to explain the concept of montage in the context of the stage directing, Eisenstein defines "attraction" as "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" (1998:30). This notion of attraction or the emotional shock shows how pathos must be generated without deviating from the organic unity of the filmic/theatrical structure.

Along with this effect on the audience outside the text, on the other hand, pathos is also considered as a means to express the unity of opposite elements and the qualitative change in the dialectical process of filmic composition. In this case, pathos is a term to be examined from within the text. In a similar way that the audience can achieve pathos, the characters can also achieve it within the film structure. A classic example of pathos that Eisenstein provides from the theatre is

the case of King Lear whose frenzy goes "beyond the limits of the characters into 'frenzy' of nature itself - into the storm" (1987:29).

In both the audience (outside the film) and the characters (within the film), pathos is a "psycho-physiological" experience that realizes the sensory-motor unity in perception. As a filmmaker, Eisenstein suggests four categories of montage to get to this particular state of feelings. Defined as metric, rhythmic, tonal, and overtonal, these categories are arranged in the gradational order, from the primitive motor effect to a more intense resonance of sensory effect. Metric montage is the most rudimentary method of all, because it is concerned only with the physical length of the shot. This method operates in terms of the metric formula which determines a certain geometric proportion between the length of each shot and the whole length of the sequence. Eisenstein remarks that this metric relationship creates the "pulse-beat" of the film as well as the "pulse-beat" of the audience, and furthermore, it makes these two pulse-beats "in unison" (1949:116).

Rhythmic montage, as a variant of metric montage, adds some specific quality to the physical length of the shot. Specifically, this method deals with the rhythmic composition of the shot in accordance with "the specific quality of the shot" (117). Eisenstein takes "The Odessa Steps" scene of *Battleship Potemkin* as an outstanding example of this method. The scene begins with the chaotic movement of the Odessa citizens, who are driven down the steps by the soldiers. In these initial shots of the scene, the chaotic movement of the Odessa citizens is opposed to the rhythmic movement of soldiers who are also marching down the steps. In the following shots, these two downward movements are opposed to an upward movement of a bereft mother carrying her dead child in her arms against the tide of the soldiers as

well as the fleeing people marching downward. After the mother falls from the soldiers' gunfire, both the chaotic movement of the people and the rhythmic movement of the soldiers heading down the steps are accelerated in tempo, merging with the rhythm of a baby carriage uncontrollably rolling down the steps. At this merging point, the rhythmic montage not only builds up the culmination of tragic tension, but also launches another qualitative leap which opposes the whole suppressive situation to the consolidated reaction of the battleship against it.

Now, the third category, defined as tonal montage, is a further development of rhythmic montage, since it acts on the "rhythmic vibrations [of emotion] that do not produce spatial transpositions" (118). The scene of the Odessa harbor mist in *Battleship Potemkin* is given as an example of it. Interposed between the mutiny of the battleship and the Odessa citizens' mourning of Vakulinchuk's death, this scene begins with an iris shot of the dark and distant Odessa harbor from the sea, continues to portray a landscape of the misty harbor at the break of dawn, and ends with a medium shot of the prow of a large steamship anchored on the pier. Through the juxtaposition of various images of the misty harbor, the scene develops not only the tonal variations in the degree of lighting, but also the rhythmic vibrations such as "the scarcely perceptible ripple on the water, the slight bobbing of vessel at anchor, the slowly swirling mist, the seagulls landing slowly on the water" (118). Thus, each image in this scene functions as a layer of "melodically emotional coloring" (120) which portends the whole emotional resonance in the following scenes.

When the tonal development of the shot reaches its highest point of emotional resonance, Eisenstein argues, there occurs a conflict

"between the tonal principle of the shot (the dominant) and the overtonal" (120). Here, the notion of 'the overtonal' indicates something that goes beyond the composition of individual tonal images. In Eisenstein's definition, the overtonal is "the physiological sum total of the resonance of the shot *as a whole*, as a complex unity of all its component stimulants" (113). In this respect, Eisenstein considers the overtonal montage as a method to evoke the "feeling" of the shot which synthesizes all kinds of audio-visual composition. If the visual perception of "I see" and the sound perception of "I hear" are expressed through the metric, rhythmic, and tonal montages, a direct physiological perception of "I feel" can be achieved through the overtonal montage.

4. From Emotion to Thought

For Eisenstein, montage means more than a compositional technique. In a broad sense, montage itself is another name of cinema, because "the essence of cinema" lies "not in the shots [or the images] but in the relationships between the shots [or the images] just as in history we look not at individuals but at the relationships between individuals, classes, etc." (1949:120). Since the shot-relations in cinema are always expressed in the form of movement, all four types of montage explained above function as a means of expressing various levels of movement. Here, Eisenstein assumes that each type of montage achieves one level of movement in a gradational order. In metric and rhythmic montages, movement is expressed by the physical dimension of actions and reactions. In tonal and overtonal montages, the higher level of movement is expressed by the emotional resonance of visual (over)tones. However, this emotional resonance is not the highest effect

of montage that Eisenstein intended to produce. In fact, the ultimate goal of montage for him was to create "the cinema of ideas" which could synthesize both emotional and intellectual elements in the filmic composition. In a lecture given at the Sorbonne in 1930, he argued:

> I do not know if I am explaining myself sufficiently clearly but I think the idea is intelligible enough on its own. It is a matter of producing a series of images that is composed in such a way that it provokes an affective movement which in turn triggers a series of ideas. ***From image to emotion, from emotion to thesis.*** [Italics mine.] In proceeding in this way there is obviously a risk of becoming symbolic: but you must not forget that cinema is the only concrete art that is at the same time dynamic and can release the operations of the thought process. The thought process cannot be stimulated in the same way by the other arts, which are static and which can only provoke a thought response without really developing it. I think that this task of intellectual stimulation can be accomplished through cinema. This will also be the historic artistic achievement of our time because we are suffering from a terrible dualism between thought (pure philosophical speculation) and feeling (emotion)(1988:199).

In this long argument about the synthesis of thought and feeling, Eisenstein is evidently criticizing the separation of thought and feeling in the modern mind, in a way very similar to Bergson's criticism of idealism and materialism for separating mind from matter at the turn of the century. For Eisenstein, thought, like feeling, is a kind of physical activity of the brain and the nervous system in the human body, rather than an activity whose foundation would be essentially different from that of feeling. The only difference is that thought is the physiological process of a "higher" nervous activity than feeling. This notion of the hierarchical difference between thought and feeling led

him to experiment with a new category of montage which could elevate all kinds of emotional effects into those of an intellectual and conceptual level.

It is quite interesting to see that Japanese haiku poetry and its language were among the most inspiring factors for the invention of this new category of montage – i.e., intellectual montage. In particular, Eisenstein was impressed by the way that the ideograms were producing an utterly new meaning through the collision of ideas from unit to unit and also from line to line. While explaining how an idea can derive "from the collision between two shots that are independent of one another," Eisenstein introduces Japanese kanji "in which two independent ideographic characters ('shots') are juxtaposed and *explode* into a concept" (1998:95).

Eye + Water = Crying (目 + 水 = 涙)
Door + Ear = Eavesdropping (門 + 耳 = 聞)
Mouth + Dog = Barking (口 + 犬= 吠)
Mouth + Bird = Singing (口 + 鳥 = 鳴) (95-6)[3)]

In this analysis of ideographic articulation, Eisenstein focuses on the associative power of the interval '+' which makes possible the translation ('=') of two independent images into a unified concept. Consequently, for him, this notion of interval '+' explains the very operation of intellectual montage because it draws a new concept from the given images.

With respect to the analogy between montage and ideogram, we should take notice of one thing that might lead to a misunderstanding

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3) Kanjis in parentheses are my insertion.

of Eisenstein's montage method. As Jacques Aumont points out, "filmic writing," which Eisenstein draws from the curious encounter between cinema and ideographic writing, has been open to debate around two opposite perspectives on the nature of cinema - one that configures cinema as "the direct figuration of reality," and the other as "the direct filmic expression of abstract ideas" (147-51). Most critiques of Eisenstein's method, either with the realist perspective or with the conceptual perspective, are based on a presumption that "filmic writing" is a linguistic method. However, what Eisenstein originally intended to express by the "ideographic inspiration" of the montage method was "movement" on emotional and intellectual levels of perception, rather than filmic transformation of a figurative language.

> [w]e know that the phenomenon of movement in film resides in the fact that still pictures of a moving body blend into movement when they are shown in quick succession one after the other... The incongruity in contour between the first picture that has been imprinted on the mind and the subsequently perceived second picture - the conflict between the two - gives birth to ***the sensation of movement, the idea that movement has taken place*** [Italics mine]... The eye follows the direction of an element. It retains a visual impression which then collides with the impression derived from following the direction of a second element. The conflict between these directions creates the dynamic effect in the apprehension of the whole(1998:96).

This notion of movement in conflict (as well as in the whole) reflects exactly the way in which Eisenstein conceives of the idea of montage from Chinese ideographic writing. For Eisenstein, the film should not be understood as a mere succession of moving images from one shot to another, but as a complex structure which not only keeps

each shot in action but also creates what he calls "attraction" (or a kind of pathetic moment) on emotional and intellectual levels of perception. At each sequence of the film, attraction constitutes a whole that is open and changing through the relations of individual shots. And montage is none other than a means of generating "attractions" from this ever-changing whole.

Considering that Eisenstein's system of cinema is rooted in the principle of spiral movement, it is clearly expected that image and thought should operate along the same 'spiral' line, rather than be split apart in parallel. This is why Eisenstein suggests the idea of "sensory thought"[4] to explain the intellectual montage in the reciprocal movements of image and thought. A remarkable feature of "sensory thought" is that it is an on-going process of thinking "unformulated into the logical constructions" (1949:130). For Eisenstein, if the translation of image into thought is manipulated by any presupposed logic, the result would be the subordination of the sensory to the spiritual. Against this hierarchical configuration of thought over image, Eisenstein affirms that abstract thought should be embodied in the sensory images, and vice versa. In this sense, Eisenstein's notion of sensory thought promulgates the identical relationship between image and thought.

In Eisenstein's system of intellectual cinema, the identity of image and thought externalizes "the sensory-motor unity of nature and man"

4) In *Film Form*, Jay Leyda translates this term as sensual thinking, and David Bordwell slightly changes it into sensuous thought in *The Cinema of Eisenstein*. The current term sensory thought in my essay is taken from Deleuzes *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*. I am taking this translation, because it looks more suitable to the context that Eisenstein develops for the relationship between abstract thought and sensory image.

(Deleuze 1989:162) along the ascending spiral of centrifugal force of the film. Indeed, in both theory and practice, Eisenstein firmly argues that "nature" not only provides basic laws for the organic composition of the film, but also expresses itself in the form of the whole which brings out the experience of totality (or ecstasy) in the film text, the audience, and surely Eisenstein himself. The organic world to embody this "nature" can be compared to the world of Georg Lukacs' wistful dream, where "the fire that burns in the soul is of the same essential nature as the stars; the world and the self, the light and the fire, are sharply distinct, yet they never become permanent strangers to one another" (29). Like the essential identity of the external light and the internal fire in Lukacs' epic world, Eisenstein's "nature" pursues a "non-indifferent" relationship with man and world. And the concept of montage operates as an interval to thread all the sensory images through the whole of this "non-indifferent" nature.

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[Abstract]

In the history of cinema, Sergei Eisenstein is always considered as a pioneer to conceive of cinema primarily as a form of expressing thought rather than as a representation of reality. For him, montage is the indispensable method to construct an open totality of thought and image in movement. It functions as a basic thread running through two poles of filmic composition, that is, the organic and the pathetic. The organic is concerned with the composition of the film structure as a whole, while the pathetic is involved in an ongoing process of registering a leaping point in various filmic sequences.

The ultimate goal of montage for Eisenstein is to create the cinema of ideas which can synthesize both emotional and intellectual elements in the filmic composition. In his system of intellectual cinema, the identity of image and thought externalizes the sensory-motor unity of nature and man along the ascending spiral of centrifugal force of the film. Indeed, in both theory and practice, Eisenstein firmly argues that nature not only provides basic laws for the organic composition of the film, but also expresses itself in the form of the whole which brings out the experience of totality in the film text, the audience, and surely Eisenstein himself.