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Studien

Film: Signs & Discourse

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ISSS

filmischer Zeichen unter Rekurs auf Lacan (Schmid) oder zu jüngsten semio-feministischen Auseinandersetzungen mit Filmtheorie (Jutz & Preschl), von einer detaillierten Erörterung der filmischen Gestaltungsmittel auf Basis der Peirceschen Phaneroskopie (Burzlaff) zur formallogisch fundierten Analyse schauspielerischen Agierens (Osadnik & Plesnar); eine von Peirce inspirierte Beschäftigung mit dem Realen und dem Fiktionalen (Deledalle) steht neben der Hinterfragung der Konstitution einer filmischen „Traumbild“-Atmosphäre (Haltof); Zusammenhänge zwischen dem ikonischen und dem narrativen Text (Gwóźdź) werden ebenso erörtert wie die Rolle der Farbe im Film zwischen dramaturgischer und ästhetischer Funktion (Wulff); verschiedene Methoden einer differenzierten Analyse werden an einer einzigen Sequenz (Schlemmer), an einem Film (Nosbers) und an der (Nicht-)Darstellung einer Filmfigur (Quinn) in verschiedenen Genres demonstriert.

Trotz aller Unterschiede weisen viele der hier präsentierten Arbeiten gemeinsame Züge auf: die detaillierte Auseinandersetzung mit Teilkomponenten des visuellen Materials, die hart am Konkreten arbeitende Analyse sowie die Theoriebildung unter ständigem Rekurs auf das einzelne filmische Produkt.

Und gerade diese Vorgangsweisen werden die Filmsemiotik wohl auch in Zukunft vorantreiben und zur Reife bringen.

Jeff Bernard, Gloria Withalm

Judit BÁRDOS

Russian Formalists and Film Art

Summary:

Bárdos discusses the importance of the Russian formalist school in the development of film and film theory; these scholars developed an approach to discussion and appreciation of film that was independent of previous literature-based approaches. Film was viewed as a dynamic composition whose impact and authenticity are effected by its functioning as an organic unit; the concepts conditionality, authenticity, particularity (among others) and their place in Russian formalist thought are extensively analysed.

Zusammenfassung:

Bárdos beschreibt die Wichtigkeit der Schule des Russischen Formalismus für die Entwicklung sowohl des Films als auch der Filmtheorie. Hier wurde ein Zugang zur Diskussion und Einschätzung des Films erschlossen, der unabhängig von früheren literaturorientierten Ansätzen war. Der Film wurde als dynamische Komposition betrachtet, deren beeindruckende Wirkung und Authentizität durch ihre Funktionsweise im Sinne einer organischen Einheit hervorgerufen wird. Es werden in der Folge die Kategorien der Konditionalität, Authentizität, Besonderheit (nebst anderen) sowie deren Platz im Denken des Russischen Formalismus ausführlich analysiert.

In the beginning of the twenties directors, actors, writers, and other associates enthusiastically took part in the birth of the motion picture, the "most important art". While in 1922 and 1923 even the necessary pre-conditions for the creation of the film industry were lacking, by 1924-25 great masterpieces were being created, followed by a wave of sophisticated film art. In other words, a sophisticated and complex *film culture* was developed, including various artistic movements, discussion on aesthetics, artistic experiments and their theoretical foundations. It was an age marked by intense revolutionary fervor; the existence of a genuine artistic community and a fertile artistic atmosphere; the spirit of experimentation; the popularity of motion pictures, their social impact and great potential for influence on social affairs. Taken as a whole, these factors had a great impact on creative artists of various genres of expression, as well as on scholars. A great many writers, poets, artists, and composers came under the influence of film art: they worked on scripts, scenarios, musical scores, essays, or film reviews. Within that large community of film workers, the literary historians of the Russian formalist school formed a unique area of activity.

"Undiscovered perspectives of a new art form had attracted these people. The very fact that filmmakers went to the street; that film became a 'vulgar genre', as they said — we might say today — a democratic art. Orthodoxy had no appeal at that time. It might not have even occurred to Tynjanov to look down upon film art from the height of literary culture. He came to Sevzapkino just to learn. This is why he could also teach", wrote Kozincev. This liberal attitude was characteristic of all the scholars at the time. They accepted as duty the role to serve film art and to enthusiastically pursue a collective form of creativity. The concept of any job being "inferior" was foreign to them; on the contrary, they accepted any task needed. Tynjanov had personal contacts with "FEKS" (Fabric of Eccentric Players) directors Kozincev, Trauberg, and Jutkevič; he was an editor, proofreader, and critic of their writings and film projects. He also wrote two of their scenarios, and was a lecturer of literary history at their studio. Viktor Šklovskij was formerly a co-auteur of various films and had also worked as a scriptwriter and dramaturgist. Adrian Piotrovskij worked as a scriptwriter, dramaturgist, literary adviser, chief producer, and organizer; he also contributed to film art by attracting many talented young people to this studio, educating and supporting them lovingly and thoroughly. The Faculty of Film Art within the Institute of Art History in Leningrad was led by Piotrovskij, while "Foundation of Film Art" was

taught by Tynjanov and "Stylistics of Film" was taught by Boris Eichenbaum.

The fact that these tasks undertaken so enthusiastically were done behind the scenes might be one of the reasons why these early theoretical film works are not widely known and why a thorough analysis of these great scholars of literature is still a forthcoming task of academic scholarship. Nevertheless, the group published a great variety of essays on film art, contributed to discussions about film art, and also published a textbook of film theory, *Poetics of Film* (1927). Šklovskij and Piotrovskij published several books on film, which was not an uncommon activity at that time, as the newborn art form already had an immense specialized literature. Various periodicals were issued, as well as original theoretical works and translations of foreign textbooks. The degree to which these scholars of literature remain largely unknown may also be due to the fact that they did not constitute an organic school or trend; they did not emphasize their own ingenuity, individuality or theoretical significance in an age of avant-garde declarations, various artistic programs, experiments, and pronounced individualism. Without a definitive "ars theoretica" their works were footnotes or critical remarks on the new art form in addition to their everyday work and they probably did not especially care to count these essays within their *oeuvres* or within the theory of film as an organic body. Today, seeing their work from a historical perspective, we can discover the common theoretical and conceptual ground of their articles and essays and we can also reveal their great achievements as scholars of silent film and the general aesthetics of film art. Their concept of art and their critical ideas are considered today to be genuine and inspiring.

FOUNDATIONS OF THEIR APPROACH TO ART

Russian formalists refuted any distinction between content and form. Instead of the concept of "content" they referred to "material" or texture, e.g., the sum of facts, objects, motivations, and ideas serving as a ground for artworks. Instead of the term "form" they referred to "*pryom*", meaning the instruments, methods, approaches, and processes involved in producing a work of art. An artist or author creates his work of art out of some material, texture, via specific means such as repetition, suspension, contrast, or conflict, and this material by itself outside of the realm of art becomes a texture, a basic constituent of artistic creation.

Construction is then composed by interrelationships of specific means. Although some sort of duality between texture and artistic means still remains, this new pair of categories has nevertheless contributed to a rather sophisticated approach to the composition of artworks, for it rejects the earlier static view whereby form was considered to be exterior to material and texture. Hence, any work of art was to be considered a dynamic structure composed of various levels. Tynjanov's contribution to Šklovskij's basis principles was the concept of historic character: which everyday social events turn out to be an artistic expression, which ones are transferred from marginality into the very centre of art — this is all a function of historical processes. When a fact enters into the structure of artworks, as a result of its dynamic character it will in turn become distorted and be credited with a new meaning and form; it will also acquire a new function and as an organic part of a composition it will enter into a system of interrelationships with various other factors. There is no unchanging, fixed, direct texture or rough fact in a work of art, only an artistic fact with specific meanings and functions formed and organized in an artistic manner through various artistic instruments.

Through this concept they could overcome the traditional film theories based in immediacy and authenticity. The very essence of moving pictures had fascinated early audiences and theoreticians by its illusion of authenticity; it was as if the real world passed before their very eyes on the large screen. It was the early Russian scholars who finally stated that genuine authenticity was but an illusion. In the textbook *KINEMATOGRAPH* Sidorov had stated as early as 1919 that photography as a texture was merely some sort of abstraction, a "conditionality", for it lacked space, depth of focus, colour and sound; however, these very shortcomings might serve as grounds for artistic creation. Employing artistic means, two-dimensional pictures might suggest space relationships and contribute to the creation of the "conditionality" necessary to any sort of artistic experience.

A starting point for the formalist scholars of literature had been the fact that any work of art constitutes a complex, multilevel structure, something more than mere authenticity, more than just referring to a realistic impression of reality addressed to various senses. Instead, it is a creation of an artistic conditionality based on one sense — vision. Film art makes complex relationships perceptible, communications within the realm of visualization elevate its expressiveness and refer to a realm not

directly visible — the realm of the emotional, conceptual, and atmospheric. Although this concept had not been expressed by these scholars as doctrine, it became manifest through their approaches to literature and the arts. For this reason an approach inherent in another form of art — literature — had been fruitful; early film scholars and creative filmmakers conceived motion pictures as something new and uniquely cinematographic manifested by the *authenticity* of photography. They pioneered the development of film theory by introducing the concept of artistic *conditionality* which formed the base for the appreciation and study of film, and a proper approach to solving theoretical problems.

APPROACHES TO FILM ART

Standards of film appreciation for Russian formalists had come from the need for conditionality. They did not attempt to emulate the methods of literary scholarship; on the contrary, they emphasized differences between literature and film. Šklovskij referred to film as a form of expression presenting visible, solid forms of reality that consequently cannot develop the sophisticated network characterizing the verbal texture of literature. Hence, its communication system of concepts and images is a rather indirect one when compared to the directly perceived visual texture of photography. A multifold relation to objects covered characterizing literary style cannot be realized in film art. However, filmmakers still can reach some fullness of communication, interrelationship of various elements; they can suggest a sophisticated creative relationship. This fullness has also been a *criterion for artistic values*; the more multifold, the more organic a film's composition is, the higher its aesthetic value. There is no "rough fact" to be observed, as Dziga Vertov declared in his artistic manifesto, because anything can become fact in motion picture. If fragments of reality are too close to rough facts, they cannot become organic components of a work of art; they are not inspired with an interrelationship and the film's value will be decreased. Russian formalists considered film to be a dynamic composition; they focused on this composition as an organic unit instead of the primary authenticity of all parts, and they also recognized that the actual impact and authenticity of all parts are a function of composition as an organic unit.

The legitimacy inherent in that approach enabled them to take the correct approach in assessing various contemporary motion pictures. They criticized naturalism whereby some films insisted upon being life-like, lack-

ing an artistic composition, and they defended other pictures that expressed a unique artistic vision with a higher level of conditionality and in possession of a rather sophisticated composition. Šklovskij pointed out some contradictions of Vertov's ideas in two essays "Where will Vertov Go?" and "Semantics of Film Art". Vertov, an archenemy of feature films, a prophet of documentaries, presents primary facts and information not as a chronicle, but deprives this rough material of its chronicle character by simply re-shaping it instead of applying even a minimal level of editing. He is not deliberate enough, does not organize a work of art out of that raw material, does not build an artistic construction, instead presents a collage of parts without reference to each other. Vertov's work lacks a creative relationship to subject matter and therefore he can neither captivate nor orient the spectators' attention.

Šklovskij and Piotrovskij soon discovered the significance and originality of Ėjzenštejn's approach. They analyzed his plot building practice, his artistic approach towards raw material, and the central role of montage in his construction. Šklovskij analysed the interior development of Ėjzenštejn's *oeuvre* and he reacted sensibly to problems of this *oeuvre*. He considered Ėjzenštejn's *Octobre* to be the height of intellectual method; however, he discovered its intellectual shortcomings and its discontinuous character: "The Age of Baroque is over", he wrote in his essay "The End of Baroque". Piotrovskij also emphasized that, following pioneers and experimental filmmakers, Ėjzenštejn and Dovženko had revolutionized film art; they had developed an original film style as well as a new type of historical film without precedent in bourgeois film art.

In their film reviews, Šklovskij, Piotrovskij and Tynjanov recognized aesthetic and historical values in contemporary film art: the greatness and genuineness of Ėjzenštejn, Dovženko, Pudovkin, Kozincev, and Trauberg, the significance as well as the contradictions of Vertov's experiments. As we can recall, these extremely critical statements of that approach were not without courage and not necessarily obvious at that time. These scholars established a system of film appreciation reinforced afterwards through film history: a major standard to reveal the specific universe of each film; a multifold composition arranging interrelationships of components; a specific relation of an auteur to objects presented within the film analysed. Not only their approach and ideas survived but also their message to us that a sophisticated appreciation of film requires not only some specific film education, but also a cinematographic approach

recognizing genuine film art, through various forms of expression. Furthermore, a proper education for all artistic forms makes one sensible and receptive to specific means utilized in cinematographic art. In fact, this time, scholars of literature emphasized the need to create a genuine cinematographic universe when adapting literary works, instead of a servile reproduction of the original. When sound films and especially films emphasizing the dialogue suffered its growing pains in the early thirties, it was a quite unpopular subject among scholars of literature. They had expected an utterly independent art form, not one following in the footsteps of literature. By that time interest in film among scholars of literature began to decline, with the exception of Šklovskij.

To turn back to the twenties: the relationship between scholars of literature and film art was more than writing film reviews. Their contribution to filmmakers of "FEKS" was the rare case of a parallel relationship between artistic practices and theories — unlike "Minerva's Owl" beginning its flight after sundown. This theory did not necessarily study features of declining artistic forms generalizing these features afterwards. On the contrary, it preceded and enriched artistic practices.

Tynjanov was the scriptwriter for Kozincev's and Trauberg's *The Cloak* and *The Club of the Big Deed*. Hence, he had the opportunity to turn his theory into practice: first, that feature film is not merely a narration of some story but rather a multifold organic composition whereby the meaning of the individual components and images is a function of their contribution to the whole; second, his concept of the "filmic translation" of literature when the artistic aim is not a reconstruction of parts (in the case of historical films, of the historic events themselves), but rather a recollection of the *Zeitgeist* of the age presented through the artistic means of cinematography; in other words, to create a genuine world of cinematography. Tynjanov recalled in his essay "Libretto of The Cloak" how this film's composition was developed by deliberately arranging various motifs from Gogol'. Tynjanov himself, not only as an historian and theorist of literature but also as an innovator in the historical novel genre, and author of short stories, exerted great impact on Kozincev and Trauberg through his concept of history. His approach had determined the atmosphere and style of *The Cloak* and *The Club of the Big Deed*. A term of literary scholarship; the principle of "*ostronenye*" (reaching particularity) had its direct impact on moving pictures made by the group "FEKS". They considered one of the basic inspirations in development of

art the fact that through canonization, consolidation of any motive its artistic impact diminishes and its reception gradually becomes automatized. That motive in question will become meaningful, expressive, significant when a created particularity has elevated it over an automated sensitivity, common background and system of relationships. Artistic movements of the twenties were characterized by most strident, extreme, provocative forms of expression by such masters as Mejerhol'd, Kozincev, and Ėjzenštejn in their stage directing, that also characterized methods of montage in contemporary Russian films and fine arts; for these artists and authors had aimed for a forceful, sweeping impact on their audiences; in their view, art had a direct role in transforming reality and consciousness. This concept had been manifestly declared in Ėjzenštejn's essay "Montage of Attractions" and Vygotskij's "The Psychology of Art". The idea of extravagant forms and contrasts as a source of artistic expression and impact had just been "in the air" at that time. Nevertheless, the specific concepts of formalists had their particular, unique character even without that general framework, for they considered not conflicts and contrasts themselves as a basic element of expression and impact, but rather the removal of objects from their ordinary environment and the subsequent placement into an unusual context. Films made by the eccentric group "FEKS" were inspired by this concept. We can, for instance, recall this process of "making something particular" in *Devil's Wheel*, where a love story takes place not in its typical milieu, but on a roller coaster; or in *The Club of the Big Deed* where various events of a revolt in the nineteenth century take place not within some historical setting or neutral environment, but in a pub. People and objects have new relationships, emotions are expressed through unusual gestures, and so on.

A central term of essays and articles written by the Russian formalists was *conditionality*. This concept renewed all basic theoretical problems, such as analyzing movement, space-time relations, the specific character of film art. The photography of movement was, at the time, a great technical achievement. Early theorists of film art enthusiastically celebrated the ability of motion pictures to render and communicate movement — crowd scenes as well as a quiver of leaves. Šklovskij, on the other hand, emphasized in his book *Literature and Film* (1923) that film had a future as an art form only if it surpasses the naturalistic photography of movement by structuring an artistic symbol system and by treating movement as a "conditional system of signs".

Russian formalists did not seek a unique condition for *particularity of film art* that would distinguish it from other artistic forms of expression. On the contrary, they analysed the relation of film to other arts and its impact on the traditional forms of expression. A good example of this approach was Piotrovskij's *The Impact of Film on the Arts*. When comparing film to other arts, he started from the assumption that film is no more an "immediate reality" than a theatrical performance or a painting; it has similarly created its conditionality, its "homogeneous texture", its "own unique universe" (to use today's term). Starting from this basic feature of all forms of expression, the shared aspects rather than superficial differences in forms and instruments are revealed; but through this analysis significant differences were revealed, too, the very criteria that makes silent film an independent art, its basic aesthetic features. Tynjanov, in his essay "Motion Pictures, Words, Music", analyzed features of creating *space and time dimensions* through film art. Unlike actual space, in which players are present as blood and flesh human beings, and in which a developing narrative line exists, film is an "abstract form of expression": it is not related to an actual space; there is neither scenery, depth of the stage, an actual human body, nor a human voice present. Most extreme jumps in space, time, as well as a multi-scene, parallel story lines are possible. Since that time, of course, modern theater has also developed a similarly deliberate structuring of space and time; however, these solutions are not inherently given in the dramatic arts: they constitute rather recent developments and to a certain extent reflect the impact of film art and modern epical treatment.

Ėjchenbaum's approach to differences between film and literature started from a condition of *reception* outlined in his essay "Literature and Film"). The process of reception of a film operates in reverse to that of reading: the viewer starts from the manifest, visible object and reaches interpretation, analysis, interlocking various elements, constructing an "interior conversation", thus building in his/her mind a private "inner film". Silent film does not lack sound, speech, the verbal element, language; it merely lacks the "audible world", as Ėjchenbaum recognized (and also Tynjanov, article cited). Film appeals not directly to intellect, but rather to the "transmental spheres" through a dream-like sense, a quasi-real atmosphere of sounds, voices, and musical emotions. This concept is a forerunner to our contemporary idea of the atmospheric unit as centre of film. Introducing the term "transmental", Ėjchenbaum had not entirely left film to the subjective realm; what is more, he stated that

motion picture became a social phenomenon and form of expression when it related that transmental sphere to specific contents. Content, the meaning of films, has not been concentrated in words; nor is it identical with events seen on the screen; it is rather a particular content, a photogenic texture expressed through mimesis, gestures, reductions in perspective, similar to the content of music and poetry. Hence, when comparing film to literature, we can recognize the very specific feature of film art. Ejchenbaum, unlike early theorists, discovered this specific character not in one isolated factor, but rather in photogeneity, as well as in montage, social content of film, and also in the process whereby film art is addressed in a well-defined way to a well-defined psychological sphere of personality.

In his essay "Poetics of Film", Ejchenbaum followed his analysis of perception of film. "Conditions of filmic discourse encourage the viewer to feel himself completely isolated — conditions of a viewer are close to an individual, intimate contemplation." A film viewer sitting in the theater does not consider or feel himself as a member of a group or a participant in a collective reception, sharing some common experience but he/she shares an individual identification with the players. (This feature is also inherent in artistic means of film, in the potentiality of "subjective" and moving camera, in that the viewer can "see" through the eyes of any filmic character or can "move" with the camera.) Simply viewing a motion picture, however, does not constitute a collective experience; traditionally developed theatrical filmviewing is merely a function of practical and financial considerations. Ejchenbaum, as a pioneer of theory, recognized early on that film is not necessarily a popular art; its mass character is only superficial, external, a quantitative factor; a function of capital and profit-seeking business formation. It is not inherent in the essential features of reception and creation in filmmaking. The concept of a *homogeneous audience* is but an illusion, as well as the notion of forming a temporary *community*, despite the fact that this illusion had contributed to the early success and popularity of motion pictures. Early theorists (such as Béla Balázs) had seen some interrelationship between that "democratic art" breaking linguistic barriers to reaching the audiences-at-large, who did not require any specific educational background to experience motion pictures, and the idea of a new folk art joining social classes or even uniting nations. By the end of the twenties, the Russian revolution had been consolidated, and film art and film theory

had also left their "infancy" behind, entering into their "adolescence", giving birth to a more radical consideration of the social impact of film art.

The most elaborate discussion of theoretical considerations of specific cinematographic features by Russian formalists can be found in their textbook *Poetics of Film*. In their essays, Ejchenbaum and Tynjanov offered sophisticated aesthetic elaborations on these features.

Russian film theory in the twenties is generally considered to be the age of absolutism of montage theory. However, it was neither general nor unified. It was characteristic of the Russian formalists, as well as Ejzenštejn, who had just started extending and elaborating this theory in a very sophisticated manner. In which respect, then, is the film-specific analysis of *Poetics of Film* modern?

Early scholarship of film theory sought a single specific feature of film art that distinguished it from other forms of expression. Delluc found it in photogeneity; Arnheim in the psychological conditions of reception; Balázs in technical potentialities (i.e., changing distance or angles); while the French avant-garde found this basic feature in pictorial qualities, effects of light, shadow and rhythm. Vertov emphasized genuine documentary character and authenticity, while Kulešov and the young Ejzenštejn featured montage. Hence, these pioneering theories focused either on methods of forming individual shots (composition, light) or on their relationships (changing shots, montage). Russian formalists first pointed out that organization, shots, and montage cannot be separated from each other; they have their interrelationships and overlapping; that each component, shooting as well as montage, is determined by an auteur's relation to his/her subject. This relationship organizes the whole texture, creating interrelationships and functions of individuals shots, parts, takes, scenes, within the whole composition. They did not recognize one particular component as a specific feature of film art; rather, they analysed how cinematographic composition was to be developed. Photography with its graphic features, photogeneity and the dynamic process organizing images into film, features, speed, rhythm of this process: this is *montage*. *Composition* is formed by these two components. Filmmaking is an organic whole, a form of expression, a system of signs. Russian formalists preceded Bazin when they considered film to be a form of expression (language); however, they did not overemphasize this analogy in the way that some recent scholars of semiotics have. Film language, according to the formalists, is a continuous structure, a system

of signs; nevertheless, its individual components — shot, frame, image — cannot be mechanically applied to the components of verbal language — word, sentence — as equivalents.

The Russian formalists' emphasis on function within composition has re-valuated photogenicity and montage themselves. Ejchenbaum and Tynjanov recognized that there is no "photogenic object" in and of itself; it assumes such a quality through angles, composition, light; that is, *photogeneity* is a function of a film's construction and style. Any object can be photogenic if we show it in another perspective, taken out of the context of immediate reception and approached as a strange object. Film becomes a form of expression, Ejchenbaum wrote, when a sense of distance from the object presented is developed; when filmmakers begin to "deform" the usual vision through composition shots, various combinations of light, angles; common narrative standards, characters, situations are "deformed" via montage. Ejchenbaum discovered that the basic feature of development of film art is constituted by filmmakers' process of shedding their initial "primitive naturalism" — the notion of creating the illusion of reality — in favour of realizing the courage to "deform", to develop their individual stylistic cues (such as panning, specific angles, etc.).

Ejchenbaum wrote that the function of montage (montage can vary from the simple joining of events to the suggestion of conceptual relations or the development of a film's own time, space and rhythm) is determined even within the framework of individual images, just as the meaning of individual components is determined by *composition as an organic unit*. Shots, angles, and montage can accelerate or decelerate *rhythm*. This rhythm deviates from narrative development; the crossing or even conflicting of these two speeds creates a specific *cinematographic time*. The higher the difference between speed of montage and that of narrative development, the higher the emotional tension of the audience (for instance: the accelerated speed of the chase contrasted with the previous slow developments of events in the famous montage of Griffith's *Intolerance*).

Tynjanov emphasized that the more motion pictures give up the naturalistic reproduction of reality, the more they will firmly utilize sensual "reduction" and conditionality; the more they will constitute a genuine form of expression. Films used to be black and white, two-dimensional and silent. They lacked depth, colour and sound. Technical

development had already flashed some perspective of three dimensional picture, colour and sound; the possibility of addressing motion pictures to other, additional senses is possible, thus enabling a reproduction of the real world increasingly similar to the actual perception of reality itself. Tynjanov clearly recognized that on the one hand a precise naturalistic reproduction is not possible, but on the other hand, it would also be redundant. It is not possible, for each form of expression focuses on some select sense and cannot match the abundance of real life perception in its variety and abundance of detail. It would also be redundant, because reaching an abundance is not the goal of artistic expression. On the contrary, a work of art has its impact within the realm of one organ of sense, using its means in a developed, intensified way.

"[The] poor and flat, colourless quality of film turned out to be a positive real artistic instrument", Tynjanov wrote. If we do not possess colour, alternation of exposure of various grade and direction could serve as an expressive instrument of style. The "flat" character of the two-dimensional image served the possibility of simultaneous sequences, panning, and the specific Russian school of montage: namely, the possibility of connecting two shots in order to create a powerful effect through conceptual or emotional association. The "poorness" of film is in fact a constructive principle of film exactly in the same way how other forms of expression are based on sensual homogeneity.

In the sixties, long after the Russian formalists (and independent of them), George Lukács and Kracauer pointed out that film has indeed been close to everyday world but this nearness is not something inherent but it has rather been constructed through a complex intervention by the auteur. Film theory has still not produced a thorough analysis of film art which is able to discuss this seemingly genuine, spontaneous, but nevertheless organized and mediated authenticity, and to explain how this structure is developed. Ejchenbaum's concept of the "transmental" spheres (which is essentially an equivalent of Lukács' concept of atmospheric unity) is also worthy of further discussion. Many discuss this term but no thorough research has taken place to reinforce or refute this concept. Film theory has not surpassed the assumption of atmospheric unity as a central term of film art. Defining the precise content, meaning, and significance of the term atmospheric unit, and its relation to creating concepts and spiritual aspects, need further discussion.