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Il'ia Kukulin. Mashiny zashumevshego vremeni: Kak sovetskii montazh stal metodom neofitsial'noi kul'tury. Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2015. 535 pp. ISBN 978-5-4448-0245-8.

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Il'ia Kukulin's book presents an expanded treatment of the montage techniques employed by many twentieth-century writers and artists that he has already explored in several previous publications. This well-researched book offers an insightful and thoughtful account of different types of montage devices, ranging from Russian avant-garde artists' and filmmakers' experiments, to the documentary strategies in post-Soviet poetry involving elegiac juxtapositions of mnemonic narratives with photographs from the past. It exemplifies well Peter Burger's pronouncement in his *Theory of the Avant-Garde* that "without the avant-garde notion of montage numerous realms of contemporary aesthetic experience would be inaccessible" (1984:22).

According to Kukulin, in the 1920s Soviet montage evolved as part of the monumental style, but in the postwar period it became used for marginal experiments in life writing, visual arts, and poetry. The book also explores the link between montage devices and historical consciousness. One of Kukulin's concluding remarks suggests that while montage was used by authors in the 1920s and 1930s as a tool to overcome their displacement from their historical contexts, from the 1970s to the 2000s it became favored by those authors who were affected either by a belief in the effacement of history or by some ontological insecurities that made their understanding of history problematic (p. 485). Another important conclusion is related to claims about the new construction of the self shaped by such phenomena as social media, computer games, and new perceptions of temporal and spatial categories. The construction of the self in various contemporary narratives, affirms Kukulin, appears to be nonlinear and similar to a stroboscopic effect (p. 486). Kukulin also claims that the correlation between montage devices and the representation of contemporaneity in Russian and Western cultures is determined by the intense feeling of living on the edge of time and by the estrangement from the self triggered by traumatic events of the past—whether imagined or remembered (p. 492). Undoubtedly, Kukulin's study shines with erudition and provides many fascinating examples of the use of montage devices in Russian and Western contexts over the last hundred years, suggesting that the many points of convergence between different cultural traditions allow us to see Russian culture as an eclectic mix of intellectual and cultural influences. The book refreshingly moves away from a discussion of postmodern aspects of Russian contemporary culture—in the style of Mikhail Epstein's examination of Russian postmodernism and its origins—to a more transnationally oriented conceptual framework.

Since Kukulin's book is far from being an exhaustive examination of the use of montage devices in Russian modernist and postmodernist culture, gaps are inevitable in such an ambitious project. To my mind, the book would have benefited from a more comprehensive and more focused engagement with Sergei Eisenstein's theory of montage in the intellectual context of the 1920s and 1930s and a lucid explanation of its impact on Russian and Western filmmakers. Despite the numerous references to Eisenstein scattered throughout the book, it is not clear how his vision of montage as an aesthetic practice of combination and overlap suggests a new way of seeing and perceiving culture. The reader would have benefited from a clear explanation of Eisenstein's theory and its context. I for one find highly problematic the claim by Dmitry Mirsky that Eisenstein's creative practice of cutting individual shots and putting them together was based "primarily on a scientific calculation" (1931:529). Kukulin also seems to see Eisenstein more within a context of Soviet propaganda art. Yet Eisenstein's theory of montage was shaped both by scientific and theosophical traditions. For example, he wrote on his interest in the fourth dimension in relation to Kabuki theater performances he had observed (Eisenstein 1988). Eisenstein was also influenced by the Russian theosopher, sculptor, and poet Boris Zubakin (1894–1938), whose order of Rosicrucian Knights he joined in August 1920 after attending Zubakin's lecture on Henry Bergson's theory of the comic.

Although Kukulin mentions briefly the 1976 James Curtis article about Bergson's influence on Russian formalism and complains about the lack of studies on Bergson and Russian culture (p. 187), he fails to mention Hilary Fink's pioneering 1999 book *Bergson and Russian Modernism,* as well as Aage A. Hansen-Löve's extensive discussion of Bergson's influence on Russian formalism in his seminal work *Russkii formalizm* (2001:193–197).

It is also surprising that Kukulin mentions in passing some montage-like techniques in Alexander Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* (p. 83) without acknowledging the fact that, in his draft versions of several articles on Pushkin and montage, Eisenstein identified several montage-like elements in Pushkin's long poems *The Bronze Horseman* and *Poltava*. I have developed Eisenstein's approaches to Pushkin's poetry and applied them to the analysis of *Eugene Onegin* and Russian twentieth-century urban poetry in my book *Montaging Pushkin: Pushkin and Visions of Modernity in Russian Twentieth-Century Poetry* (Smith 2006).

Another curious omission is related to Sergei Tret'iakov, whose play *Roar, China!* is mentioned in Kukulin's book twice (pp. 36, 100). It is a pity that Kukulin does not analyze Tret'iakov's 1926 experimental discussion-play (banned for censorship reasons) *I Want a Baby!*, in which several montage devices are used in the style of the many experiments undertaken by German and Swiss Dadaists. It would have also been useful to explain how the art of photomontage, started after World War I by the Berlin Dadaists, influenced Tret'iakov's aesthetic views in the 1930s on photomontage as a conscious alteration of the immediate meaning of a photograph. It inspired Eisenstein to adapt photomontage techniques into the filmic mode and had a considerable impact on Boris Arvatov's theory of modernity. In accordance with Arvatov's theoretical model, the subject is formed both by the process of using objects in ev-

eryday life and by making them in the sphere of production. Arvatov's name is missing from Kukulin's study altogether.

Although Kukulin's book contains an extensive treatment of experimental poetry produced between the 1960s and 1990s, examples of visual poetry created by Elizabeth Netzkowa (also known as Mnatsakanova) were not included in his analysis, despite her texts often combining verbal, musical, and visual images.

Nevertheless, Kukulin's study is a valuable contribution to our understanding of montage's kaleidoscopic vision that compresses many views into one and which enables the viewer to experience unfolding time. It will be of interest to researchers specializing in twentieth-century film studies, visual culture, and literary studies. Likewise, it will be valuable for sociologists who work on the cultural identity of Russian liberal intellectuals and their vision of national "imagined community" conveyed in many important artistic samizdat and semiofficial works in the 1970s and 1980s with the help of montage techniques—as discussed in Kukulin's book. Russian liberal intellectuals experienced a major crisis of social identity in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Not only did it affect their vision of the newly emerging independent Russia, but it also influenced their aesthetic values and creative strategies: by establishing direct links with Russian avant-garde culture, they managed to reinstate their role as intellectuals. Their new pastiche-like narratives of the past will continue to link cultural innovation to social and political change for many years to come.

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