

Rachel Moore was strongly impressed by Epstein's observations and conclusions in his effort to define cinematic art, claiming that he "aligns his pure cinema with primitive language" (Moore, 2000: 30). In order to gain a new concept that suits her own theoretical pursuit, she quotes Epstein from his early writings on cinema (*Le Cinématographe vu de l'Etna* - 1926): "Moreover cinema is a language, and like all languages it is animistic; in other words, it attributes a semblance of life to the objects it defines. The more primitive a language, the more marked this animistic tendency. There is no need to stress the extent to which the language of cinema remains primitive in its terms and ideas" (Epstein, 1974: 140¹). Drawing on this, she compares the naming of a thing with a word to "the representation of a thing on film". What film does is, as she says, the activity of "visual naming", which has an even stronger "animistic" impact than just naming with words. This line of reasoning is further exposed in her, already mentioned in previous chapter, dealing with Eisenstein, who wrote about "inner speech" as a form of "pre-logical speech". In Eisenstein's cinematic practice one can observe the effect of such hypotheses as his illustrious and largely celebrated *montage* transfers thinking in and through images into his films. I will not follow Rachel Moore much further from here in her highly interesting deliberation on the topic of language, image, magic, logic and so forth through commenting on a number of writers, which brings her finally to the semi-logical notion of "cinematic discourse". Let me just make a somewhat crude point on what beckons the notion of "primitive language?" It obviously marks the effect of cinema as a crucial agency within mass culture in a most basic Benjaminian sense. In the field of art or aesthetics it causes a confusion concerning that kind of distinction, which, as Bourdieu would have it, is inscribed in the constitution of bourgeois art. Even the illiterate members of a society are able to "read" a film.

Film as Art in Epstein's Vision

In any case, Epstein's work, which comprises of his (theoretical) texts and his films, took place between the coordinates of cinema and massively transformed the ways of sensing, which had already entered the *aesthetic regime*, increasingly penetrated by movements of modernism. Epstein's reflections on film as art follow the lead of Louis Delluc and his notion of *photogénie*. It is not surprising that Epstein in his own historical and aesthetic context finds it necessary to formulate a difference that distinguishes

1 Translation from Moore (2000: 30).