

film as a “young art” from other arts like literature, theatre, and painting. As Epstein puts it: “/.../ every art builds its forbidden city, its own exclusive domain, autonomous, specific, and hostile to anything that does not belong” (Epstein, 1974: 137<sup>2</sup>). Therefore, Epstein strives for “photogenic aspects of the world” which would provide the distinction of cinema as art. As a newcomer to the aesthetic regime only twenty-five years old cinema needs to establish itself:

*It is a new enigma. Is it an art or something less than that? A pictorial language, like the hieroglyphs of ancient Egypt, whose secrets we have scarcely penetrated yet, about which we do not know all that we do not know? Or an unexpected extension to our sense of sight, a sort of telepathy of the eye? Or a challenge to the logic of the universe, since the mechanism of cinema constructs movement by multiplying successive stoppages of celluloid exposed to a ray of light, thus creating mobility through immobility, decisively demonstrating how correct the false reasoning of Zeno of Elea was? (Epstein, 1974: 138<sup>3</sup>)*

The point concerning the role of immobility is of utmost importance as movement in cinema accentuates stoppages and *vice versa*. Epstein’s evoking of Zeno of Elea clearly heralds that there was an instantaneous reciprocated proclivity between cinema and philosophy. In a continuation of movement, the interruption as immobility often appears in still frames, which gives rise to an anticipation of movement. Therefore, such still frames happen to be very expressive in many close-ups. Consequently, the language metaphor becomes, through this, even more credible. Epstein’s efforts to establish cinema as an art theoretically abundantly attained results in his own work as a cinematographer. “Epstein’s exhaustive explorations of the sensibility the modern world requires to perceive it puts him at the advance front of the modernist project, in both artistic and theoretical terms” (Moore, 2012: 184).

I think that there is no doubt that Epstein did work on changing perception within already decisively transformed conditions for perception due to cinema. Many fragments of his films resemble what would a few decades later be described as experimental cinema. An example of Epstein’s film *La Glace à Trois Face* (The Three-Sided Mirror – 1927) is one

2 Translation from Keller & Paul (2012: 293).

3 Translation from Keller & Paul (2012: 293).