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The Spectatorship of the Proletariat

Jonathan L. Beller

Revolutionary ideology, the coherence of the separate, of which Leninism represents the greatest voluntaristic attempt, supervising a reality which rejects it, with Stalinism returns to its truth in incoherence. At that point ideology is no longer a weapon, but a goal. The lie which is no longer challenged becomes lunacy. Reality as well as the goal dissolve in the totalitarian ideological proclamation: all it says is all there is. This is a local primitivism of the spectacle, whose role is nevertheless essential in the development of the world spectacle. The ideology which is materialized in this context has not economically transformed the world, as has capitalism which reached the stage of abundance; it has merely transformed perception by means of the police.

—Guy Debord, Society of the Spectacle

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Prologue

Because today capital “thinks” several cycles in advance of itself, or, to put it another way, because it has several historical stages of its own development simultaneously available to itself that can be utilized in varying proportions, one could well argue that isolated labor strikes are made productive for capital and that phenomena such as the general strike or Samir Amin’s “de-linking” are impossible. The argument for the productive value of the strike for capital would not in itself necessarily be to ignore what Jacques Derrida has recently called “Marx’s injunction.” In discussing the capitalization of the resistance to capital, given perhaps its most dramatic form in and after 1989, one might still hear the ghostly admonitions of the “specter of Marx,” which, for Derrida “reaffirms the question of life and death.” Furthermore, one might hear the moans and intimations of such an absent presence without oneself becoming as dead as Marxism is purported to be.

Though this essay is in no way directly concerned with the viability of the labor strike per se, it is most definitely concerned with the objective of the strike, that is, the reappropriation of historically sedimented human labor (the means of production) by disenfranchised individuals and groups. Such reappropriation of historically sedimented labor and of living labor, I suggest, is, in fact, going on all the time; it is endemic to social change. As Antonio Negri argues, in endeavoring to establish the subjectivity of labor in history, not only does labor produce capital, but labor, in its resistance to capital exploitation forces structural and technological innovations in capitalism. Though this is surely the case, we have lacked, since the advent of cinema in particular, a specific theory that accounts for the development of certain new regimes for the production of cultural and economic value

2. Derrida read from his then forthcoming book The Specter of Marx on 4–5 October 1993, at Duke University. Drawing heavily on Hamlet and Marx, Derrida suggests that when the time is out of joint, that is, when différences reigns, the specter of the past appears in order to raise the question of inheritance. What are the dead calling for? In our disjoined time, the specter that appears is the specter of Marx. For Derrida, who seems to be attempting to think an alternative way to impel the course for historical movement without resorting to metaphysics or utopia, the specter of Marx demands a reaffirmation of the question of life and death by raising questions of inheritance and justice. The world is the trace of past generations; for whom is it?
via mental activity; we do not yet know how to account for the present-day
dynamics of value production and appropriation that operate through the
conversion of mental activity into social force. The capitalization of mental
activity is an enabling factor in capital's ability to continue all previous forms
of violation. By looking at the recycling of the resistance to capital by capital
(the making productive of the strike against capital by capital) our affective
production of hegemony may be foregrounded, and possibilities for the dis-
ruption of coercion and exploitation may be foregrounded as well. Toward
those ends (and perhaps to the surprise of some), I would like to discuss
the development of mass media during the time of early modern cinema,
more specifically, those particular developments that can be found to crys-
tallize in Sergei Mikhailovich Eisenstein's 1924–1925 film The Strike. For
it was here, precisely, in revolutionary cinema, that capital's encroachment
into the visual sphere met with resistance. And yet, in spite of its intentions,
The Strike, like capital itself, participates in producing a new regime of the
sensorium by advancing an increasing integration of machines and culture,
of labor and perception. We can use The Strike to mark an emergent socio-
historical change in the character of what Marx called "sensuous labor"
and, by direct implication, to mark as well a new strategy for the production
and appropriation of value.

To talk here about the political economy of the reorganization of
society in terms of the simultaneously economic and cultural value nec-
essary for the reclaiming and restructuration of communicative pathways
(media), and of sexual identities, of groups, of subjects, of time, and of insti-
tutional power, et cetera, and the management of the world of objects,
in short, social organization in general, would be to get far ahead of the
task at hand, in spite of the fact that these are the terms in which such a
discussion will ultimately take place. As a prelude to new possibilities in
a discussion of culture and economy, I have set myself the task of show-
ing how what might be thought of as the political economy of organization
comes into being.

3. The Strike was produced in April–November of 1924 and released in April of 1925. See
the excellent chronology of Eisenstein's life in David Bordwell, The Cinema of Eisenstein
4. I am suggesting here that the formation of identities, coteries, markets, subjects,
groups, factions, et cetera, are to be thought of as the formation of political blocs. This
formation requires labor, which, in its product (and also in its production), may stand in
some oppositional relationship to the dominant. Ideology is only one of the factors of
amalgamation.
The Strike remains an important film in cinema history for reasons inherent in its design and function as a mediator of social forces. It is a work of art conceived as a productive technology. For this reason, I am less interested in the “meaning” of The Strike as a text to be read and interpreted in the traditional way, and rather more interested in the specific significance of The Strike as an index of the potentialities of film technology during the 1920s and following.

For the Stalinist state to take its final form, the potential dictators had to be made over into spectators; their labor power had to be taken from them before, and through, their eyes. Bent by the exigencies of capital, the work of Eisenstein was, when understood on the largest historical canvas, the conversion of workers into spectators. To see this significance, it is necessary to “think” The Strike in a new way—not merely to interpret it but to understand it as a mediation, a form of agency. Hence, the kind of meanings in The Strike that, for example, allegorize the circumstances around the suicide of the worker-organizer whose stolen micrometer, according to the film, might be imagined to have initiated the wave of strikes under the 1907 czarist regime, are only of secondary importance here. That the micrometer was secretly stolen by the factory foreman in order to harass the workers and to create an excuse for increased surveillance in the factory seems to me, despite its practical and historical validity, as unimportant in the present context as Eisenstein’s ingenious idea of employing such an instrument—designed to measure tiny differences—to function as the cinematic sign for an infinitesimally small, yet crucial, moment in a larger process: the unjust removal of the micrometer serves as the flash point for a worldwide confrontation between labor and capital. These aspects of Eisenstein’s film, though brilliant, must be stripped away if we are to approach the significance of The Strike in a new way, that is, at the level of its consequences for political economy.

To begin the journey beyond meaning to significance, let us look at the worker’s suicide note: “Comrades, the program accused me of thievery. I am not guilty but I cannot prove it. I cannot face being kicked out of the factory and branded a thief. I’ve decided to end it all and remember: I am not guilty.” In the moments before the workers find their unfortunate comrade hanging from a beam, one shoe dangling off a foot that has now gone limp after convulsing, the camera shows him humiliated by the hypocritical foremen and managers in the management office. As the suspected labor
organizer storms heatedly out of the office unable to find justice, the film, almost by way of contrast, provides spectators with the same tracking shot of the factory shown at the start of the film, when, as the intertitle told us, "all [wa]s quiet." The workers, lined up in rows from one end of the factory to the other, are stationed at their various spinning, stamping, pressing, and cutting machines, linked to an overhead power train by long, suspended leather belts. It is a long, beautiful shot that, in its synchronized complexity, reveals simultaneously the concrete organization of the factory and the relation of workers to power. Workers are on the receiving end of a power coming down from above, and they must manufacture according to the spatial and temporal (and by implication, economic) organization of the factory. The suspended belts function as parts or tools linking the workers' labor to a centralized source that increases their productivity (for the capitalist) and, simultaneously, as the film has been showing us, results in exploitation, sowing resentment and finally death for the worker. The belts, as machines, imply a whole system of interlocked operations, and they function emblematically, that is, at the most literal level, as a sign for the transformation of power into relations of production, and, conversely, as a sign for the transformation of the relations of production into power relations.

The next shot is a close-up of hands putting a slipknot in the belt, which, as we will realize a moment later, The Strike's suicide has removed from his own pants in order to use it to hang himself. This belt, also a machine, which, in this case, had held up the worker's pants, is turned into an instrument of the worker's destruction, like the power belts in the factory. The abrupt cut argues that, like the factory structure itself, the belt that might otherwise have been a useful tool helps to rob the worker of his life, but in this instance not just little by little in the form of labor time stolen day after day but all at once. The worker, unable to find justice in the "proper" use of the belt, initiates an activity of destruction when he seeks it. In this case, the failure of justice results in the suicide/murder of the worker; the organizational structure of the factory has taken the worker's life. The belt, which ought to be a tool for the worker, confronts him as his enemy. This intensification and acceleration of the logic of the factory—the factory's taking of a worker's life in an instant—is the dynamite that sets off the strike. The instantaneous death of the poor factory worker, a death that robs him of all future sensuous activity and hence all future creativity and productivity, becomes the catalyst of the strike, because it reveals the slower truth for labor in the factory: to hang from the end of a belt is to be dead. The fact that an instrument that makes measurements as small as a micrometer does could
be used to torment a man, and the fact that this small-scale torment sets off a strike, shows simultaneously the power of the capitalists, the scales on which their power operates, and the immanence of the workers’ discontent. The instant consumption of all of the suicide’s labor time, present and future, by the struggle between the worker and the management over the right to dispose of it, produces the value that solidifies the proto-union’s organizational efforts up until that point and drives its members to strike.

These are the kinds of meaning that, though they at once show the extraordinary power of Eisenstein’s creative mind and an aspect of his understanding of the relations between labor and power, I am interested in here only as they expand beyond themselves and point toward the growing agency of the organization of things. The strikers’ affective appropriation of the labor power expended in the worker’s death reveals that Eisenstein has a new theory of the relationship between value transfer and organizational form. Such revolutionary organization is, as we shall see, not so much a meaning but a historical watershed, at once a tremendous source of new semiotic possibility as well as the origin of a new dynamic of social production. It is true that in this discussion of The Strike, it will be necessary to traverse the course of a few more similarly signifying structures and even, if only by accident, to give a reading of The Strike. However, the reading is not foremost. It is the more general and more significant phenomenon of the conversion of organized movement to a nearly immaterial signifying stratum that concerns me here, and after that, it is the affective and material function of this nearly immaterial signifying stratum in social production. In this essay, such an insight is more important than narratological dwelling. Even Eisenstein himself was interested in the force of his films far more than in their particular contents. “Nobody believes that the content of a newspaper consists of a report about the Kellog Pact, a scandal from the Gazette de France or an account of an everyday event. . . . The content [soderzhanie] of a newspaper is the principle by which the contents [soderzhimoe] of the paper are organized and processed, with the aim of processing the reader from a class-based standpoint.”

5 “The principle of the organization of thinking is in actual fact the ‘content’ of the work” (Writings, 1:154). With this in mind, it is obvious that the kind of knowledge a critical reading alone produces is available in any number of places; indeed, what I have said about the actual “meaning” of The Strike thus far only reproduces the hackneyed

(if still goat-getting) claims of a hoary Marxism. It is not that readings are insignificant; they just produce a different kind and theory of work. Reading, especially as a bourgeois literary-critical practice, consists of the reassembling of textual events in a plodding and reflective way. It is after the fact, "a revolution behind," as Baudrillard says. I oppose this practice here, as does Eisenstein, to the immediacy of perception, affect, and activation: the modality of analysis versus the modality of event, the modality of theory versus the modality of practice. The register of concepts is only elliptically connected to the viscerality that is to be our province. In pursuit of this viscerality, we should note that as reading traditionally diverts our attention from the material operations of the text in order that we "understand," there remain those empty signs, those generally discarded shells of language that are perhaps best grasped in their totality as a technology of affect. Thought, as the philosophers use the term, is only one of the dimensions of affect, and perhaps not the most important one.

Though there is a great deal of difference between the technology of written language and of cinema, it is possible to think the continuity between consciousness and corporeality by partially shielding ourselves for a moment from the seductions of meaning and the pyrotechnics of images in order "to think" with the rationality of capital. It is by thinking like capital that we might think beyond thought. We are trying to understand what capital feels like, or, rather, to know what capital is "thinking" while we feel. Eisenstein, remember, regarded "cinema as a factor for exercising emotional influence over the masses," because it could deliver "a series of blows to the consciousness and emotions of the audience" (Writings, 1:39). I am interested here in the continuities between the development of Eisenstein's cinema and the development of capital. The cold rationality of capital helps us to understand the heat of social warfare.

Written language as a technology for the deterritorialization of consciousness was, as Hegel told us two hundred years ago, the condition of possibility for poetry, the highest art (followed in bulkiness by music, painting, sculpture, and architecture). For Hegel, the more completely art escaped from matter, mass, and spatialization, the more fully world spirit found its expression: "Poetry is, in short, the universal art of the mind, which has become essentially free, and which is not fettered in its realization to an externally sensuous material, but which is creatively active in the space and time belonging to the inner world of ideas and emotions." 6

6. The citation finishes, "Yet it is precisely in this its highest phase, that art terminates, by transcending itself; it is just here that it deserts the medium of a harmonious presentation
The Hegelian dialectic asserted that advancing societies would, out of their own organizational processes, materialize ever more dematerialized issues of consciousness. As world spirit came into being through the medium of history, the historical development of modes of expression allowed for the materialization of dematerialized Idea: the rarefied consciousness called poetry required the historico-material development of the world. By calling attention to the dematerialization of consciousness in written language and the read text with this thumbnail sketch of the Hegelian history of media, rather than just taking a generalized dematerialization of consciousness as a postmodern given, it becomes possible to think about lexical organization not merely as the index to a hermeneutic process called reading but as a historically embodied process of corporeal conversion. The eloquence of various stages of expression (mediation) has wrought changes upon our corporeal organization. Dematerialized consciousness comes out of social development and feeds into it. Architecture, sculpture, painting, music, and poetry are, for Hegel, ascending developmental paradigms in the history of the expression of Idea, because, increasingly, Idea escapes from materiality. However, apparent independence from matter, as Marx taught us, is precisely dependent upon material organization. Cinema, arguably, combines the expressive abilities of all earlier art forms, while being even more immaterial: mere sound and light. If in the Hegelian paradigm cinema supersedes poetry, and even “the prose of thought,” Walter Benjamin’s famous words supply the necessary materialist qualification: “[N] in the studio the mechanical equipment has penetrated so deeply into reality that its pure aspect freed from the foreign substance of equipment is the result of . . . special procedure[s]. The equipment-free aspect of reality here has become the height of artifice; the sight of immediate reality has become an orchid in the land of technology.”

The orchid in the land of technology as an expression of immediacy and of the production of affect helps us to understand the technology of expressivity as technology for corporeal reorganization. Bodies must be trained to interface with affect machines through the overcoming of certain

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physical encumbrances. Film's special role in the development of industrial capitalism lays the groundwork for the full commodification of the sensorium as it produces affects. Beginning in Eisenstein's period, cinema dematerializes industrial processes as consciousness and projects it into bodies. Film internalizes industrial movement and manifests it as (a form of) consciousness. This form of consciousness is projected into bodies through the eye. Bodies then internalize industrial movement, making it the form of their own consciousness. Film turns movement into thoughts and feelings, or, more generally, affect.

That the dematerialization of signifying strata historically emerges in a full-blown form (as consciousness, as cinema, as capital) simultaneously with forms of organization theory concerned with the material embodiment of organization is not a paradox. The more abstracted and ethereal the signifying stratum—that is, the greater the possibilities of expression without the appearance of apparatus—the more dependent the expression on the development of material and social organization. Anyone who has ever wanted to get information from a computer disk but who has not had access to a computer at a particular moment understands the socio-techno-historical embeddedness of signification on material organization. Without the complete history of the formation of the computer, that is, without the computer and everything its existence implies, the information on the disk would be useless. Marx observed the same dependence of significance on social organization in the relation he drew between the development of capital and the organization of bourgeois society. The more abstract capital became (as money, as debt), the more rigid and concrete, the more embodied, bourgeois (capitalist) society became. With the increasing organization of bodies themselves (manners, culture), along with the increasing organization of the physical, intellectual, and visual pathways they and their deterritorialized pieces traverse, comes the apparent dematerialization of expression.

The important thing to see in Eisenstein is his recognition of the principle he saw behind regimes of organized movement. Eisenstein's conscious effort to put that principle into practice as movie is expressed as follows: "An attraction," wrote Eisenstein, "is in our understanding any demonstrable fact (an action, an object, a phenomenon, a conscious combination and so on) that is known and proven to exercise a definite effect on the attention and emotions of the audience and that combined with others possesses the characteristics of concentrating the audience's emotions in any direction dictated by the production's purpose" (Writings, 1:41). Eisenstein
was interested in control through the organization of attraction. “The method of agitation through spectacle consists in the creation of a new chain of conditioned reflexes by associating selected phenomenon with the unconditioned reflexes they produce” (Writings, 1:45). The script is “in our view a prescription or a list of montage sequences and combinations by means of which the author intends to subject the audience to a definite series of shocks, a prescription that summarizes the general projected emotional effect on the audience and the pressure that will inevitably be exerted on the audience’s psyche” (Writings, 1:46). Because “the montage approach [is] the essential, meaningful and sole possible language of cinema, completely analogous to the role of the word in spoken material” (Writings, 1:46), the juxtaposition of moving fragments became, for Eisenstein, a tool for the reorganization of the audience’s psyche. The idea of montage, then, is the abstraction of industrial process, and cinema is its conscious utilization. In Eisenstein’s famous phrase, direction is “the organization of the audience through organized material” (Writings, 1:65).

The fact that The Strike thematizes the general phenomenon of movement as signification and that film theoreticians from Eisenstein to Pasolini were preoccupied with film language indicates their transitional places in a paradigm shift from signification to simulation (from meaning to stimulation) and provides a working periodization of this shift. This is the period of modern cinema, after which meaning recedes before pure affect (Jaws). What I want to emphasize about The Strike in particular, however, is that it is perhaps the first film that rigorously adopts the emerging paradigm of movement as signification to be the fundamental animating principle of its own organization. In so doing, The Strike attempts to incorporate the spectator into its very movement, its moving. As the worker in the Fordist factory becomes a component in the factory’s orchestra (orchestration) of movement, a part in the machine, so also does the spectator become a component in the movement machines of Eisenstein. These films inflict their movement on and into the spectator, who, though capable of reading their “meaning,” realizes their significance only in and as bodily activity. The spectator embodies the resultant force of the motion transferred to him or her—a general situation of machine culture that envelops, and in certain ways exceeds, any particular meaning.

Eisenstein harnessed the dematerialization of material movement as not only meaning but as a direct extension of social force and developed its possibilities. Such an achievement makes The Strike an ideal case study for the contention pursued here that cinema, subjectivity, and corporeality
come to operate on a continuum correlated via what Eisenstein calls a “manufacturing logic.” If this is correct, it should turn out that the significance of *The Strike* is that not only interpretation but consciousness, and viscerality itself, is, in our period, cinematic, that is, endemic, to a manufacturing logic that incorporates the body. This manufacturing logic, characterized simultaneously by the rational control of motion and the regulated production of consciousness, turns out to be the logic of commodification. In the money economy, movement via circulation is the equivalent of commodification. I am suggesting that, increasingly, affect is the result of organized circulation; this circulation is a commodification effect. As disturbing a notion as the invasion of consciousness by the logistics of capital may be, it raises in the present a question that for some will be equally ghastly: “What is Marxism?”

2

Commenting on *The Strike* in “The Problem of the Materialist Approach to Form,” Eisenstein confirms our argument thus far regarding the relationship between movement and expression:

In *The Strike* we have the first instance of revolutionary art where the form has turned out to be more revolutionary than the content... The historical revolutionary material—the *manufactured* past of contemporary revolutionary reality—was for the first time treated from a correct *point of view*: its characteristic movements were investigated as stages in a single process from the point of view of its “manufacturing” essence. The discovery of the manufacturing logic and the exposition of the technique of the methods of a struggle... that is the formal requirement I put to Proletkult in determining the content of the seven parts of the cycle *Towards the Dictatorship*. (*Writings*, 1:59)

Richard Taylor suggests that “the implication [of the phrase ‘manufactured past’] is that the past has prepared the present like a factory process (*Writings*, 1:307 n. 2). What is at stake here for Eisenstein is the self-conscious utilization of Marx’s discovery of the human production of human society—not merely as a *theory* of history and social production but rather as a

8. As Richard Taylor tells us, “*The Strike* was originally intended as one of the episodes in that larger cycle,” *Towards the Dictatorship*, which was never completed (*Writings*, 307 n. 3).
method, or, better, a mode, of production. Eisenstein wants to use what is nascent both in the methods of industry and in its workers to make history. It is often suggested that revolutions fail to realize their utopian longings while succeeding in innovating a shift in the mode of production. Eisenstein’s revolution in form was no exception. That the past manufactures the present seems correct, but that the present manufactures the past was equally important to Eisenstein. He saw the revolutionary filmmaker’s role as taking this relationship and turning it into a method capable of manufacturing the future. To manufacture history, Eisenstein employed the latest industrial methods.

In Eisenstein’s words, “the revolutionary quality of The Strike was exemplified by the fact that it took its renewing principle not from the ranks of ‘artistic phenomena’ but from those that are directly utilitarian: specifically, the principle of the construction of the exposition of the manufacturing processes in the film” (Writings, 1:60). To show that the workers’ strike as a revolutionary activity is itself something manufactured is, for Eisenstein, “a choice that is significant because it goes beyond the limits of the aesthetic sphere . . . , all the more so because what was in material terms correctly ascertained was precisely that sphere whose principles alone define the ideology of the forms of revolutionary art just as they have defined revolutionary ideology in general: heavy industry, factory production and the forms of the manufacturing process” (Writings, 1:60). The strike must be manufactured out of the conditions that give rise to its necessity.

The sphere of production, then, according to Eisenstein, is that which is manifest in The Strike in the content, certainly, but also, even more dramatically, in the form. One misses the significance of The Strike if one sees it merely as an exposition of the conditions of a strike. The film is itself conceived as a tool. It is, as it were, the third of three belts, this last one feeding off of the power train of the new (cinematic) mode of production to transfer powers to the workers in a new way. “Revolutionary form is the product of correctly ascertained technical methods for the concretisation of a new attitude and approach to objects and phenomena—of a new class of ideology—of the true renewal not just of the social significance but also of the material-technical essence of cinema. . . . It is not by revolutionising the forms of the stagecoach that the locomotive is created but through a proper technical calculation of the practical emergence of a new and previously non-existent kind of energy—steam” (Writings, 1:60–61). The steam of Eisenstein’s cinema, its “new kind of energy,” is, he suggests, the organization of the masses through organized material—a new phenomenology
of objects produced via industrial processes. This is the theory and practice of Eisenstein's historical materialism. For Eisenstein, cinema is not a mere representation of revolutionary practice but is directly engaged in the sphere of production. This theory of production is not empty rhetoric, because, as Eisenstein aptly puts it, this production produces “a new class of ideology,” a suture with the social world that is of a new type. Eisenstein, who trained as an architect and an engineer, is designing machines to manufacture a new social order. With his characteristic knack for structural precision and his usual economy of means, Eisenstein sums up his views on the purposeful integration of machines, a proletariat rapidly emerging from agrarian life, and revolutionary art: “In our conception a work of art is first and foremost a tractor ploughing over the audience’s psyche in a particular class context” (Writings, 1:62). For Eisenstein, the cinema is a machine that transforms mental life and, as we shall see, subordinates it to a new logic.

3

Lenin’s words stressing the importance of organization are quoted at the opening of The Strike: “The strength of the working class lies in organization. Without organization of the masses the proletariat is nothing. Organized it is everything. Organization means unity of action, unity of practical operations.” Following this organizational directive, The Strike sets out to catalog various moments in the organization of the revolutionary proletariat at the same time as it strives itself to be a moment in the organization of the revolutionary proletariat. It constructs a continuity between the past and the present, and portrays the proletariat's revolutionary role in the reorganization of society. Indeed, the opening of the film is staged as the struggle between two communicative regimes that have at stake the resolution of a schism between two competing models for the practical organization of the workers and the state. The capitalist owners, for their part, have telephones, the power structure of the factory itself, and spies who report back to management. Ultimately, the owners can depend on the state in the form of police and military power for the enforcement of their hold over the workers. The capitalists, along with their managers, machines, spies, and police, form an entrenched organizational network. It is a living architecture of power. Meanwhile, the workers have for themselves only what they can create out of the conditions of their existence. In the fantastic shot sequence showing the interlocking components of the czarist state and the regime of private property, a factory foreman, who
early on believes trouble to be brewing, calls his superior, who then calls his superior on up to the capitalist owners and the military police. As the call goes up the ladder of command, talking heads listen to a phone in one ear while picking up a phone for the other ear in order to send the message on up the line. It is here that the film not only shows the technological immediacy of the connections between capitalist industrial management and other forms of state power but suggests that peoples' functions within that mediating network are determined by their position in the organizational array. In a certain way, the telephone has more agency than its user—at least when its users are capitalists or the lackeys of capitalists engaged in the oppression of forces (workers) that threaten to transform the organizational integrity of their systems. This telephonic medium functions somewhat like cinema does in the hands of Eisenstein. The bureaucrats' heads mechanically transmit the message just as the capitalists and their state can do nothing but attempt to suppress the strike. The telephone cable, thin as it is, embodies tremendous organizational force. That the call reaches its final destination at the military commander, who has at his disposal the public records (maps of the city and images of spies whose photographs immediately begin to move), goes to show that the call for coercive counter-revolutionary force will animate already existing structures on its way back down the hierarchy toward its oppressive realization.

Unaware of impending defeat, the workers use their life-energy to organize by word of mouth, by pamphleteering, and under the cover of art. During leisure time by the water, the handsome leaders argue and plot while reposed on an anchor. Their fraternal bond forged in working together for a common cause is perhaps, for Eisenstein, the libidinal core of a revolutionary society. We get several shots of men in repose taking advantage of "leisure" time to organize. Sitting among a tremendous mountain of piled iron train wheels, the workers, planning yet again, seem to draw inspiration from a material intimation regarding base and superstructure: rolling stock cannot roll without its wheels. In a factory bathroom, they are again conspiring until, upon the unwanted entry of the boss's foreman, they tear down their pants and face the urinals or sit on the pots in individual stalls—"innocently" going about their business. And under the superimposed cover of an accordion that opens and closes as if breathing a message in and out, we see bands of workers and their families walking, singing, and talking among themselves as a title states "spreading the word." On printed leaflets, too, the workers call for an immediate strike. This is the organization of the workers' countermovements. They are building revolutionary consciousness and a revolution.
In solidarity with the workers’ use of their own spaces and creative force to assemble a strike, *The Strike* organizes the myriad movements and patterns of daily life to orchestrate a message. However, this message is not only meant to be understood, that is, it is not, as the above paragraph might seem to imply, merely a handbook of revolutionary activity. As the capitalists and the workers attempt to outmaneuver each other using their networks of organization and communication, it becomes clear that in the case of the workers, it is movement itself that is their medium of communication. They express themselves in the concrete reorganization of their surroundings. This reorganization is, as it were, the film-language of *The Strike*. The placing of things in motion is the form of this society’s expression. Capitalists orchestrate movement according to their interests, while workers try to orchestrate their own form of movement. To move differently in a society of highly regimented motion is already to express something else. Alternative motions may defy, or even exceed, the dominant social order. Indeed, it is the workers’ goal in *The Strike* to rip the factory out of the capitalist’s network of organization and control, and to incorporate it into their own. They move to make its moving parts move for them.

In *The Strike*, the reorganization of movement (space and time) is made eloquent. Set apart from the capitalists, who are caricatures, and their spies, who are named for animals, the humans who appear as “The People” (whom, in Eisenstein’s films, Roland Barthes notes, are “always lovable”9) are the only ones able to exercise autonomous agency. In moving for themselves, the people claim their humanity. It is as if revolutionary movement itself begins to reverse Marx’s description of the animalistic conditions imposed by capitalism, in which “what is animal becomes human and what is human becomes animal.”10 For Marx, the animalistic conditions of the workers’ lives under capitalism exist because all of the workers’ creative energy (human labor) belongs to the capitalist. Though in their exploitation of workers the capitalists behave inhumanely, they appropriate the human attributes of the workers whom they have caged. The worker, in being able only to reproduce his or her own subsistence, is reduced to an animal, as “an animal only produces what it immediately needs for itself or its young. . . . An animal produces only itself whilst man reproduces the whole of nature.”11 However, the workers’ movements, organized for revo-

lutionary change, produce something beyond immediate subsistence and reveal that it is the capitalists and their lackeys who, through their lack of agency, are capable of producing only themselves. The workers' movements in *The Strike* reveal the capitalists' animal nature. It is as if the spell that turned the workers into animals by freezing their humanity in the objects they made and that now cage them could be broken through the reorganization of movement. In Eisenstein, humanity remains a specter, while the world is under capital's enchantment.

It is not for its own sake that I have raised the animal/human dichotomy present in Eisenstein, Marx, and, as will become important for us shortly, the imaginary of this period. Because capital was, in fact, *producing* animality, Eisenstein's concern with the relationship between animals, humans, and social organization was, at the turn of the century, part of a widely debated problematic. This constellation of capital, animality, and humanity suggests the powers of metamorphosis latent in the communicative aspects of movement, since reorganization potentially breaks the spell of capital, of animality. The important point here is to see the conjunction of capital and animality with the process of communication. For Eisenstein, communication arises as a result of the organization of production and functions as a form of production. Furthermore, it transpires directly in the movement of materials. That movement is itself communication is made most explicit in a scene in *The Strike* that occurs once the work stoppage is under way and some of the workers in the foundry refuse to join. An angry mob of striking workers picks up the raw materials of what will soon be a hail of cobblestones and, heaving them, breaks jagged holes in the windows of the foundry. There is no doubt about what they are doing in making the stones fly: they are sending a message that even an animal could understand—"Get out!"

That the movement of material is made expressive in Eisenstein is only slightly less extraordinary than the fact that it actually occurs via the dematerialization of the movement of material. But this dematerialization of material movement is the moment that goes beyond the mere meaning of the film in the sense that I indicated previously and marks its significance for the reorganization of the material and the materiality of signification. It is here, in the abstraction of material movement away from materiality, and in the ensuing phenomenological and visceral effects, that the cinematic mode of production comes into full presence. From now on, perception will be more or less consciously engineered according to the protocols of circulating materials. Because *The Strike* is itself a materialization of the
movements that have begun to inhere in social organization as language, it
is the materialization of a “language.” Language is, however, as inadequate
a term as meaning, inasmuch as what is accomplished in The Strike is less
the speaking about something and more the transferring of its very motion,
the transferring of revolutionary movement.

In “The Third Meaning,” Roland Barthes uses Eisenstein stills to ar-
rive at a concept of the filmic, which surpasses the realm of the signified.
For Barthes, “the third meaning,” that which he calls “the obtuse meaning,”
is that which exceeds language—a “signifier without a signified.” In his
words, “the third meaning—theoretically locatable but not describable—can
now be seen as a passage from language to significance and the found-
ing act of the filmic itself.” I am suggesting that “filmic” encounters take
place in a translinguistic environment, which at once utilizes thought and
is beyond it. Cinema is a technology for the organization of the scene of
this encounter—let us provisionally call this space the space of the Real.
Material reorganization of the world of capital and animality is, for Eisen-
stein, designed to produce psychic reorganization, physical reorganization,
and, hence, social reorganization. That this organizational force material-
izes in, and as, the dematerialization of material movement only suggests
that there is a new kind of energy for the transformation of the material
organization of society—steam! The gaseous film in all its airy immateriality
extends the circulation of movement beyond its immediate place and time
and into the arena of its employment—the social and the sensuous.

4

In The Imaginary Signifier, Christian Metz announces his psycho-
analytic investigation of capitalist cinema as an effort “to disengage the
cinema-object from the imaginary and to win it for the symbolic, in the hope
of extending the latter by a new province, an enterprise of displacement, a
territorial enterprise, a symbolic advance.” The symbolic advance he in-

12. Barthes, “The Third Meaning,” 326. It is worth noting that this definition is the ant-
thesis of the prevalent definition of the sublime, “a signified without a signifier.” See, for
example, Jean-François Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition (Minneapolis: University of
Britton, Anwyl Williams, Ben Brewster, and Alfred Guzzetti (Bloomington: Indiana Uni-
iversity Press, 1982), 3.
tends entails extending the language of theory into the territory of cinema, since, for him, “cinema is a technique of the imaginary.” In the winning of cinema for the symbolic, Metz wants to be able to articulate epistemologically that which occurs in the encounter between the cinema and the psyche. For Metz, the cinema performs tasks in the space of the imaginary that can be descriptively and logically analyzed. In short, Metz intends to figure symbolically the interface between the cinema and the body.

The parallel of Metz’s work with my own effort can be found in my attempt to show that what is known about cinema in some empirical way (by watching and reflecting) and what is experienced can be expressed in another code. For Metz, this code is theory—the symbolic. By way of introducing what follows, what I would like to add here to Metz is that the experience of cinema not only can be but indeed is being expressed in another code—though it is a type of code for which not all the units are meaningful for us. More and more thoroughly, these units have quantifiable and statistical significance for capital. If, as Georg Simmel writes, “money may be compared to language, which also lends itself to the most divergent directions of thought and feeling,” the reverse is also true. In taking the form of industry, that is, in being an extension of it, film-language takes the form of capital. Thus, I do not want to enter the territory of cinema only to provide a theory of cinema; I want to show how capital has been developing a “theory” of cinema all along through the articulation of its form. Though the meanings of cinema are found in language, its significance is not language; its significance is in the symbolic known as capital. In principle, all of the possibilities, affects, and experience available in the cinema are capable of being symbolized as capital—in other words, converted to exchange-value at some earlier or later stage of social production. Or such might be an abridged history of mediation since Eisenstein.

The aforementioned shift from language as the arbiter of value to what is ultimately cinematic capital as the arbiter of value—that is, the shift from linguistic code being conceptualized as the bedrock of reality to simulation as the affect of capitalized reality—is experienced as a shift by the subject, that is, by the sensorium. The most generic name for this new kind of experience resulting from the erosion of the stability of language is

17. See my essay, “Cinema, Capital of the Twentieth Century,” *Postmodern Culture* 4, no. 3 (May 1994). Available at pmc@unity.ncsu.edu.
“the postmodern condition”—the phenomenology of which is described by the term simulation. In the shift away from a linguistic code that is signaled by simulation, another quite different code remains, the code of exchange-value, that is, the code of commodification. Indeed, to speak figuratively (for to show the myriad ways in which exchange-value is becoming the obverse of not just cinema in the sense in which we ordinarily understand it but of perception and thought would be to establish a new political economy and a new aesthetics, not to mention a new psychology), capital’s assembly line (as the montage of capital) not only provides the form for cinema, capital provides the formal model for the basic cinematic unit, the frame. The cinema is the concrete realization of what is already implicit in Marx: all things pass through the frame of capital. As Gilles Deleuze tells us, “The frame ensures a deterritorialization of the image” because it “gives a common standard of measurement to things which do not have one—long shots of countryside and close-ups of the face, an astronomical system and a single drop of water.”18 In short, Deleuze suggests that the frame functions like money, as the general equivalent. The cutting up of reality according to the abstract logic of the frame suggests that the cinema is both a consequence and a source of fragmentation. Robert Bresson writes, “This [fragmentation] is indispensable if one does not want to fall into representation [which capital surely does not]. See beings and things in separate parts. Render them independent in order to give them a new dependence” (my emphasis).19 Such disarticulation from traditional relationships and reorganization into new relationships enact the very process of capital.20 Indeed, the process of cinema is the process of capital. With the cinematic orga-

20. “The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society. Conservation of the old modes of production in unaltered forms, was, on the contrary, the first condition of existence for all earlier industrial classes. Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind.” See Marx, Marx-Engels Reader, 476.
nization of the world, the logic of capital moves us beyond representation and into simulation. In Deleuze’s words, “Money [becomes] the obverse of all the images that the cinema shows and sets in place.” The images have begun to move like money, and their affects demand the organizational work of capital. Eisenstein’s exquisitely articulate resistance to this new regime of organized movement, and its attendant regime of the sensorium, also brought it into being.

Steven Shaviro, whose work is part of an attempt to explore the new aesthetics mentioned parenthetically above, forcefully states in *The Cinematic Body* that “when the real is fragmented as a result of being permeated with machines, the opposition between subjectivity and objectivity, between the observer and the observed, vanishes.” Such a phenomenological condition, however, thought to be endemic to postmodernism, is, in general, only *suggestively* allied with postindustrial society. A correspondence between economics and consciousness is taken for granted—shifts in consciousness are taken as *signs* of economic shifts. I am suggesting here that the dematerialization of industrial process as cinema can be taken to mark the inauguration of consciousness’s conversion process—its generalized conversion to the commodity form. In cinema lies a key to the structure and relations, the physics and the metaphysics, the subjectivity and objectivity, in short the underlying logic of postindustrial society. The organization of consciousness is coextensive with the organization of postindustrial society, and the media are the belts that forge these organizing connections. At this point, I am only trying to show that what occurs in, and as, cinema inaugurates a shift in the economics of social production, but if it can be shown that such a shift achieves critical mass in cinema, then it can be argued that cinema is not merely a *specific phenomenon* in which the sensorium becomes subject (subjugated) to a code existing beyond itself and indeed beyond “natural language” but the general case—the culmination and the paradigm of a historical epoch that supersedes the bourgeois mode of production by introjecting industrial process directly into the mindscape. The cinematic mode of production is born.

Shaviro comments that opposed to semantic and psychoanalytic film theory, which “remains . . . so preoccupied with the theme of ideology and representation” and “regards . . . editing primarily as a technique for pro-

ducing such an illusion by suturing the spectator and perspectivizing the
gaze . . . . [a] wide variety of cinematic pleasures are predicated explicitly
upon the decentered freeplay, the freedom from the constraints of subjec-
tivity that editing and special effects make possible."23 Although I agree
with Shaviro up to a point, I also see such new forms of experience as
essential modes of perception for existence in the nonsynchronous, schizo-
phrenic milieu of postmodern society. They are the conditions of possibility
for its perpetuation—a technology of management. In the cinema, we learn
to cope with contradiction and discontinuity. By this, I mean to show that
the affects produced by cinema are themselves engaged in manufacturing
biosocial interfaces in late capitalism.

Benjamin writes of a Baudelaire, who “speaks of a man who plunges
into the crowd as into a reservoir of electric energy. Circumscribing the
experience of the shock, he calls this man ‘a kaleidoscope equipped with
consciousness.’ Whereas Poe’s passers-by cast glances in all directions
which still appeared to be aimless, today’s pedestrians are obliged to do so
in order to keep abreast of traffic signals. Thus, technology has subjected
the human sensorium to a kind of training. There came a day when a new
and urgent need for stimuli was met by the film. In a film, perception in the
form of shocks was established as a formal principle. That which deter-
mines the rhythm of production on a conveyor belt is the basis of the rhythm
of reception in the film.”24 Though with today’s television and e-mail, as
the terms and conditions of movement through space have evolved beyond
those met by the pedestrian, technology continues to train us to interface
with the environment. The present analysis questions how “there came a
day” when cinema, and later media in general, performed this entraining.
It also explains the consequences of media’s relation to “production on a
conveyor belt.” Today, in desperate measures to keep our world from flying
apart at the contradictions, we are perhaps more apt to restrain the im-
 pact of shock with suture and continuity; however, discontinuity, illogic, and
schizophrenia have their functions, also, as, to take but one example, the
entirety of Noam Chomsky’s recent World Orders Old and New25 implies.
As Paul Virilio writes, “Videos and walkmans are reality and appearance
in kit form: we use them not to watch films or listen to music, but to add

25. Noam Chomsky, World Orders Old and New (New York: Columbia University Press,
1994).
vision and soundtracks, to make us directors of our own reality."\textsuperscript{26} Such manufacturing of interfaces between bodies and machines requires labor from bodies and is productive of value—both cultural and economic. Social organization does not happen automatically; it requires work, labor power. Remarkably, it was Eisenstein who inaugurated the building of machines best suited to take advantage of this. Eisenstein's intention was to foster the 1917 Revolution by using \textit{The Strike} to organize the labor necessary for its continuation and development. What he achieved, however, was the revolutionizing of a machine that would give capital a new hold on the living labor called perception.

In Deleuze's \textit{Cinema} books, which, as I have suggested elsewhere, might have gone under the name \textit{Cinema} in our century for reasons similar to those that prompted Marx to write under the name of \textit{Capital} in the last, Deleuze writes that a cinema that has surpassed movement and has become a cinema of time "restores belief in the world," calling such belief "our only link."\textsuperscript{27} Returning to our discussion of Metz, I would like to suggest that it is this "belief" that manifests itself in a variety of forms (none of which necessarily take the form of unified subjectivity or ideology), that is, even now, developing out of and into a new code, that is in the process of becoming symbolized. This symbolization is subjectively experienced as the production of new affects, desires, identity formations, et cetera. It is also experienced as the sublimity of the status quo. Objectively, it is digitalized, statisticized, militarized, and economic—it has the capacity in theory and practice to trump natural language. I am referring in the most literal way to the pricing of belief, and more generally of affect, by capital: to wit, the Orwellian language of contemporary nationalism and the aestheticization of culture. What are corporations and politicians buying when they buy "air-time" if not, in the words of Antonio Negri, "productive social cooperation."\textsuperscript{28} It is in response to the horror made possible by the increasing domination of the "natural" world and "natural language" by the affects of such economic calculus that Adorno wonders if there can be poetry after Auschwitz. No one, however, wondered if there could be movies. As global trends from statistical marketing to new social movements to the new fundamentalisms

\textsuperscript{27} Deleuze, \textit{Cinema 2}, 172.
imply inasmuch as they represent the formation of nontraditional forms of social agency and action, belief is bought and sold, it organizes, it produces, it is, in short, labor. The labor of belief is one of the strong forms of what I call the productive value of human attention.

Through this general discussion, I am attempting to render an architeconetics of the relationship between cinema, conceived as an advancement over the industrial mode of production, and human bodies. It is my hypothesis that cinema becomes, in its interaction with, and incorporation of, bodies, a mode of production in its own right. Cinema is a paradigm shift in the relation between organization and representation and is the characteristic effect of capitalized movement in general. As we shall see toward the end of this essay, when Eisenstein’s relationship to reflexology and Taylorization is discussed, film discovers new ways to do things to bodies. It is less representation than presentation. Cinema as a process, a complex of movement, bodies, and consciousness, which I will refer to as cinematic process, becomes the dominant mode of production itself. Not all production passes through cinema in the institutional sense, but global production is organized as cinema is. Consciousness is dominated by the organization of movement—the organization of materials produces affect. In the cinematic organization of global production and reproduction, this logic will be interiorized in, and as, the postmodern to the extent that for the postmodern sensorium the world is a world of images. Cinema provides the architeconetics of the logistics of perception for capital. Indeed, it represents their fusion. Hence, the cinematic has been machning the postmodern for nearly a century. In this sense, we can say that during the twentieth century, much of the world is literally in cinema, much in the way that the futurists intended to put the spectator inside the painting.  

In other words, what Ken Surin calls “the consumption of society by capital” is made possible by the cinema and cinematic organization. Reification, to take one example, is only a first-order approximation of the phenomenology of capital-driven movement. As capital envelops the environment, the entirety of affect can (potentially) be correlated with capital. Unlike Metz, then, I am not seeking to cause by theory what transpires in the imaginary to emerge in, or as, the symbolic. My project here is to isolate the organizational transforma-

tion of (in psychoanalytic language) the imaginary and the symbolic by the Lacanian Real, what in Jamesonian Marxism is known as History. Such a project takes the form of an indexical articulation of the industrialization of the sensorium; it is a necessarily schematic registration of a shift in the mode of production and the attendant transformation of the regime of value. Ideology, consciousness, cinema, et cetera, are not reflections of the material base—for production passes through them. Given the association of History with the Real, one can see that The Strike, as a product of the “manufactured past,” is, over and above its imaginary content that can be symbolized in, and as, a reading, a historical formation; it is, in a way that exceeds all its myriad gestures and interpretations, immersed in the space of the Real. At a level oftentimes distinct from meaning, cinema is on a continuum with the Real. That Real (History as organization) is cut into the Spectator as a development of the unconscious with imaginary, symbolic, and numismatic effects.

Though other film theorists have argued that one encounters the Real in the cinema, none have shown that the logic of the Real manifests itself in cinema. Of course, the notion that there is a logic to the Real runs counter to traditional notions of the Real itself; however, the Real (in Lacan’s phrase, “that which eludes symbolization”) is neither immutable nor ontologically given but historical. From the allegorical strategies of reading developed, for example, by Jameson and Terry Eagleton, which owe a tremendous debt to Althusser’s idea of the Real as the mode of production, one can deduce that if the film is immersed in the space of the Real, then it is part of the mode of production. The Real is the manufacturing essence of the social—what hurts, in Jameson’s phrase, but also what heals, and finally what moves. In the present mode of production, it is correct to say that, for Lacan, repetition is the encounter with the Real; but it is more useful, perhaps, to say that in Fordist and post-Fordist societies, repetition is the Real. Meals, machine-guns, movie-film, DNA, and binary code all support such a claim.

Metz, I would suggest, only scratches the surface of a notion of the cinema as an agent of the Real when he touches on the structuring of the psyche by cinema, noting that “the cinematic institution is not just the cinema industry (which works to fill cinemas, not to empty them), it is also a mental machinery—another industry—which spectators ‘accustomed to the

cinema' have internalized historically and which has adapted them to the consumption of films.”

Though Metz is right to state that cinema actively machines certain mentalities, the film industry does not, as Metz would have it, merely create its own consumers. Although cinema most assuredly has psychological repercussions for spectators, the “mental machinery” of the psyche has never been external to political economy. The cinema is a technology that develops in dialectical relation to the psyche’s changing function in political economy. Gramsci already argued along similar lines when he asserted that Fordist manufacturing requires for the worker a new “psychosocial nexus.” Mental phenomena have always been a part of the production process, but cinema posits consciousness (perception?) as a general equivalent. Consciousness becomes the medium and the frame that allows for the interface of bodies and society in the coming postindustrial society. Cinema opens consciousness to the playful tyranny of exchange-value previously reserved (on a global scale) for bodies laboring only in a traditional sense. Cinema insists that consciousness (perception) work on exchange-value as exchange-value passes through it. Indeed, cinema is an elaboration of a process that was already taking place, albeit in primitive forms. It is a technology for mining consciousness (mental activity) of value.

Though there is still much to say regarding this point, I would like to put forth some of the claims and consequences that follow from the idea of the projection through the eye of the manufacturing logic of produc-

32. Metz, The Imaginary Signifier, 7.
34. I equivocate between consciousness and perception here because I have not yet worked out the basis upon which to mark the distinction, and this is not the place to do it. For now, let me say that consciousness is beginning to resemble money, “the vanishing mediator”; thought and perception express relations of capital. Marx’s tripartite definition of money as measure of value, means of circulation, and as representation of wealth (i.e., as capital) culminates in money’s achieving a consciousness of its own. “Money in its final perfected determination now appears in all respects as a contradiction which resolves itself, which drives itself to its own resolution. As the general form of wealth, it is confronted by the whole world of riches. It is their pure abstraction—hence comprehended as such, it is mere imagination. Where wealth appears to exist as such in a quite material, tangible form, it has its existence merely in my mind, is a sheer figment of the imagination. Midas.” The citation is from Karl Marx, Grundrisse, in Collected Works, vol. 28 (New York: International Publishers, 1986), 166. I am suggesting not only that workers in capitalism have the Midas touch but that spectators in late capitalism have the Midas gaze. Whatever we look at turns to gold, for someone.
tion for exchange-value by cinema (as well as other media, which are the developments of cinema):

1. Cinema is at once an organizational paradigm of social relations, a necessary technology for the conversion of the commodity form into an image, and a prototechnology for the capitalization of human attention. It is, in short, the paradigmatic technology for the commodification of human life up until the age of television, or, more accurately (because finally, all of this is about forms of domination), televisual communication, competition, labor, and warfare. As private property, according to Marx, is not at first the cause of alienated labor but the effect, neither is cinema the cause of objects turning into images but the effect of their transformation. The conversion of objects into images is immanent in the commodity; it is their specter. Cinema is an elaboration of the spectral aspects of the commodity in motion.

2. The cinematic mode of production relies on a tandem structuring of perception and organization that results in the commodification of each—capital becomes the arbiter of the value of various organizational forms. It does this in the intensification of the circulation of the commodity-image. Tautologically, though accurately, stated, the more value the tandem structuring of perception and organization produces, the more value it has. Cinema as cinema (as opposed to cinema as capital) is the perceptual ex crescence of the material organization of an entire society. Cinema as cinema is the institutional matrix of bodies, perception, and industry, while cinema as capital is that institution functioning at once in its politico-economic dimension and as the paradigm for the totality of political economy. Capital-cinema posits, finally, the political economy of the society of the spectacle. Consciousness is the screen on which the regime of commodity movement carves its visceral speculations. Increasingly, all things are absorbed by cinema (capital) and appear on (or disappear from, depending on what is required) the screen of perception.

3. Therefore, the “symbolizing advance” I intend concerning what Metz calls cinema’s “second machine, i.e., the social regulation of the spectators’ metapsychology,”35 extends far beyond the concept of cinema’s adaptation of spectators to the consumption of films, and indeed beyond psychology itself. I am interested in the structural, psychological, libidinal,

35. Metz, The Imaginary Signifier, 7. The first and second machines elaborated by Metz are both part of what I refer to as “cinema as cinema.” Only when understood in their politico-economic dimensions are they to be understood as “cinema as capital.”
and corporeal adaptation of spectators to the protocols of global production. This conversion of spectating, generally conceived as a consumer activity, into a socially productive activity depends on the establishing of media as a *worksite* of global production. Today, mass media functions as a deterritorialized factory, where the maintenance and retooling of a transnational, transsubjective infrastructure composed of human beings, factories, cottage industries, service sectors, as well as programmed software and electronic hardware is essential to the valorization of capital. The cinematicity of objects is harnessed as an alternative force and used to intensify production. The cinema and its technological descendants extract the labor for the maintenance and calibration of the social totality. Without television, as well as fax-modems, telephones, computers, and digitized, computerized money, production would grind to a halt. Each of these media burrows its way into the flesh of the globe. 36 “The media” orchestrate production through the fleshy media of mind and body, while appearing as culture (or, for that matter, “democracy”). Cultural imperialism is not just culture in a one-dimensional sense, it is imperialism. As such, it puts into play all of traditional imperialism’s dynamics of value exploitation (gated neighborhoods, police-states, unbearable working conditions, etc.), but it also puts up other barriers, as well (invisible walls that are visceral, ideological, perceptual), and extends the range of the body’s malleability (through rhythm, desire, learning). The putting of non-Western and otherwise peripheral populations on line with the system’s language of Western capitalism (the world-system) is an inexorable function of television. In short, the hypothesis here is that mass media, taken as a whole, is the deterritorialized factory, in which spectators do the work of making themselves over in order to meet the libidinal, political, temporal, corporeal, and, of course, ideological protocols of an ever intensifying capitalism. This hypothesis concerning population control

36. “Computer programming is really a branch of moviemaking,” Theodor Nelson said, quoted in Howard Rheingold’s *Virtual Reality* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991), 176. See also 286. “Computers are theater. Interactive technology, like drama, provides a platform for representing coherent realities in which agents perform with cognitive, emotional and productive qualities. . . . Two-thousand years of dramatic theory and practice have been devoted to an end which is remarkably similar to that of the fledgling discipline of human-computer interaction design; namely, creating artificial realities in which the potential for action is cognitively, emotionally, and aesthetically enhanced” (quoted in Brenda Laurel, *Computers as Theater* [Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishers, 1991]). Rheingold groups together these and other such citations under the provocative heading “The Reality-Industrial Complex.”
does not rule out alternative practices; indeed, resistance often must take
place (as it traditionally has) in the very arena of domination. This aspect
of political confrontation is indeed precisely why Eisenstein was forced to
use cinema to combat the encroachment of capital—capital was already
invading perception. Television and other mass media are, more than any-
thing else, technologies of social organization. What we do “there” today
(moving our heart strings, internalizing rhythms, learning the codes of fash-
ion and behavior, learning, above all, to fit in) is partially, in Marx’s lan-
guage, “necessary labor.” However, we also perform surplus labor, which
becomes available as surplus value. More generally, this description of our
activity characterizes productive participation in the cinematic machine of
commodity circulation and distribution. The struggle over the appropria-
tion and distribution of the value produced and channeled via spectatorial
labor (most spectacularly and concretely manifested in the questions of
where the military hardware comes from and how it is used, but also visible
as the vicissitudes of television news coverage, foreign policy, public opin-
on, institutional posts, and of all things created by the capturing of human
attention [and human attending]) is arguably the most important struggle
facing the coming century. Marx’s Capital is, above all else, an analysis of
how the general population’s life is stolen from itself. The commodification
of the public sphere and the attendant commodification of the sensorium re-
turns the struggle with capitalism to the senses. Commodification, which
derives its historical conditions of possibility from the induction of exchange-
value in circulating use-values, a process that gave the use-value a spec-
tral presence, finds its development in the production of image-value. The
image marks the increasing eloquence of the specter of the commodity.
Cinema is the possibility of the domestication of this very specter. Of course,
such eloquence, such force, has its effect on the dynamics of human orga-
nization. The Strike, which contests the encroachment of capital on its own
terms, marks an aggressive advance in the battle for the body according to
the logistics of modern capitalism.

Because it falls outside of the orthodoxy of the labor theory of value
and its rather nineteenth-century version of value-productive activity, spec-
tatorial labor, which I will develop as a concept elsewhere under the hy-
pothesis of the productive value of human attention, is only now beginning
to be perceptible. The invisibility of the productive value of human atten-
tion, for Marx, is not a mere oversight; rather, it is an index of the historical
development of the market economy. Bound by a particular historical con-
ception of space, Marx cannot think of the prosthetic extension of factory
work outside of the space of the factory itself. The cinema has not yet been invented. Thus, for him, the circulation of capital is “the image of a process occurring behind it,” not the production process itself.\textsuperscript{37} For Marx, circulation is part of the process of production but not production itself; circulation is not the scene of labor. Today, the Nielsen ratings, for example, show that attention is becoming formally commodified, as was labor under capital: what advertisers will invest in a certain media pathway depends on these ratings, because they index the quantity of attention available for production. Spectatorial labor gives up its attention to the specter of the object and merges with it, increasing its value. Such commodification, already in place, demands a theory adequate to the sophistication of its practice. Given the long-standing “suspicion” regarding the perniciousness of the capitalist media, it is somewhat surprising that it has taken this long to suggest the possibility of a detailed political economy of its production of domination. However, the invisibility of domination has been one of the necessary aims and conditions of its production.

The concept of the economic alienation of sensual labor (and hence the senses) has been with us since the 1840s. In a formulation that might have inspired Benjamin’s “orchid in the land of technology,” Marx tells us in \textit{The German Ideology} that German philosophy’s “man” “does not see how the sensuous world . . . is, not a thing given direct from all eternity, remaining ever the same, but the product of industry and of the state of society; and, indeed, in the sense that it is an historical product, the result of the activity of a whole succession of generations, each one standing on the shoulders of the preceding one, developing its industry and its intercourse, modifying its social system according to the changed needs. Even the objects of the simplest ‘sensuous certainty’ are only given through social development, industry and commercial intercourse.”\textsuperscript{38} That television and telecommunications are seen only as instruments of circulation suggests that Marx’s concept of circulation—the mediation of value described above (“the image of a process occurring behind it”)—needs to be rethought. Marx’s rather cinematic trope signals that, in and of itself, circulation cannot produce value because the creation of surplus value takes place at a deeper level, in the production process itself, in other words, at the worksite. However, I am suggesting that the production process no longer occurs uniquely \textit{behind}

\textsuperscript{37} Marx, \textit{Grundrisse}, 28:186.

\textsuperscript{38} Marx, \textit{Marx-Engels Reader}, 170. In \textit{Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844}, Marx notes, “The forming of the five senses is a labor of the entire history of the world down to the present” (\textit{Marx-Engels Reader}, 89).
the image created by the commodity form in motion (what Marx here calls the movement of money); it occurs in the dynamics of the image itself—in its circulation, movement, incorporation.

In our experience with the fetish character of the image, we know one of the forms this invisible labor of vision takes. This is more readily understandable when one realizes that, today, all things are, in addition to whatever else they are, images. Put another way, all objects are signs. As we read them (Coke bottles, sneakers, automobiles, whatever), we produce their signification. The image is perceived not only in and of itself but as a consequence of the perception of others. The density of this perception of others is part of the quality of the image—its caché. In perceiving the fetish component of the image, we perceive the value accrued to it from the looks of others. Thus, we perceive that the media, as a deterritorialized factory, has become a worksite for global production. The value of our look also accrues to the image; it sustains the fetish. This new type of production is not a happy accident of the postmodern condition, a fortuitous cyber-buzz, but a cipher of the transformed dynamics of the global mode of production. It is, at the same time, an innovation that works to stave off the falling rate of profit, since it increases the sites at, and times during, which value may be extracted. Cinema is an innovation in productive efficiency. Though I cannot develop this point here, let me simply say that if the circulation of capital is not simultaneously grasped as productive and exploiting, then there is no more Marxism.\textsuperscript{39} Marxism is the active dialectical critique of the price of society. Despite Baudrillard's claim in \textit{For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign} that it is the sober dialectic that collapses when all objects circulate and, as a result, become mediators, that is, ambiguous signs in polysemous movement, the jury is still out on the fate of the dialectic.\textsuperscript{40} With all due respect to the Godard of Marxism, in cinematic spectatorship we are dealing with what the sociologists today call "disguised wage labor."

\textsuperscript{39} If one still believed in Marx's notion of species-being, one might be tempted to paraphrase the Marx of the 1840s: Our senses no longer belong to us. Like sensuous labor, our senses are alienated from us and us from them. Our sensual activity is taken from us, and then used against us. The more we sense, the poorer we become, and the richer the capitalists (celebrities of all stripes) become. One can only hope to succeed by sensing nothing. Of course, such rhetorical forms posit a humanity that no longer exists, that is only a spectral trace (or so our senses tell us).

This study of Eisenstein, then, concerns itself with the industrial and physiological conditions of possibility for the claim that to look is to labor. How does industrial society fashion (posit, and then presuppose) workers as spectators and then spectators as workers? The psychological affects interrogated by Metz remain a highly relevant aspect of a general theory of cinema, even as, in the postmodern, psychology itself, as an autonomous arena of thought, begins to corrode. However, objects, the integrity of bodies as well as of traditions and of (certain aspects of) the nation-state, also corrode during the twentieth century; all that is solid melts into film. To put this general theory of cinema in the context of Metz’s discussion, it will be necessary to think the unthought of his textualized cinema described as an “institution [that] as a whole has filmic pleasure alone as its aim.”

As I have been trying to suggest, many other politico-economic things besides the spectator’s pleasure are accomplished in the exchange between spectators and films. Moreover, the circuit traversed by spectatorship is far more complex than the relation described by Metz—unless, perhaps, one takes his statement regarding “filmic pleasure” to be an incomplete expression of the consciousness-effect of present-day global organization. His metaphor of cinema as an internal machine could then be read as an intimation of the cinematic mode of production itself. This misreading, which depicts the “great Globe (of globalization) itself” as an institution that has as its sole aim the production of the pleasures of the global spectacle as the gateway to the profit system, is partially correct. “Filmic pleasure,” then, is an effect and a necessary condition of the world-system. Such a misreading would make of Metz’s efforts to win cinema for the symbolic a remarkably intuitive, yet finally unsuccessful, effort to chart the commodification of the image. The symbolic, in the psychoanalytic sense, is a rudimentary form of commodification, a realm of cutting and rendering that is in practice similar to commodification but in form analogical—not fully digitized. One might be tempted to read the symbolic itself as an allegory of the Real, in other words, as the mode of production. The language of phonemes and graphemes, however, is, from the present perspective of postmodern production, simply low tech; they belong to the modern. Although, from the standpoint of late capitalism, the symbolic is protocommodification, it is, as intellectual work readily bears witness in the ages of cinema and television,

41. Metz, The Imaginary Signifier, 7.
commodifiable and commodifying. Words, too, have changed; they have become cinematic. We structure phenomena and circulate their images in the marketplace of ideas. Cinema is, for Metz, an encounter in the imaginary, which can be won for the symbolic. In the view I am elaborating here, cinema as cinema is an exemplary form of a generalized system of relations that is fully inscribed in the mode of production today, an affect machine inducing new forms of labor for the new state of capital. In other words, it has already been won for the symbolic—it is the archetypical medium in the battle for the body waged (via “seduction,” but, more generally, enframing) for the symbolic of capital (money, or human attention, depending upon which moment in the dialectic production is being thought from).

The twentieth century marks the emergence of the struggle for the body in the realm of the visible. Today, consumption is productive not because it is part of the necessary circulation and destruction of objectified labor time (value) that takes place elsewhere and that is essential for the valorization of capital but because it is labor power itself that appropriates and valorizes commodities to particular ends, which are themselves productive of images. In giving his or her attention to an object, the spectator modifies both him- or herself and it, thereby producing and reproducing the ever developing infrastructure of the status quo.

6

The movement toward the twenty-first century brings with it the emergence of the visual as a realm of political struggle and hence as a realm of political economy. However, the commodification of the visible world is consonant with the fact that the most barefaced regimes of power have undergone, during our expiring century, a sort of transformation: from military dictatorship to military spectatorship. The groundwork is laid early on for this shift to military spectatorship in the development of the eye as a pathway for the regulation of the body. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the eye becomes the preeminent link between body and world.43

42. Hence the connections being made between cinema, the gaze, and consumption in historical studies. See, for example, Anne Friedberg, Window Shopping: Cinema and Postmodernism (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).
But there are other significant developments in corporeal regulation that coalesce as cinema.

Eisenstein's cinematic practice, inasmuch as it is an endeavor to organize bodies, is not idiosyncratic but emerges out of a conceptual framework that was shared by other important innovators of his period. Especially important for us here are two other organization theorists, Ivan Petrovich Pavlov and Frederick Winslow Taylor. In the remainder of this essay, I shall endeavor to sketch the manner in which Eisenstein's work is a synthesis of the most important aspects of Pavlov and Taylor's findings. Taken together, the shared elements of their work represent the emergence of a new strategy for the controlled organization of bodies and society. Pavlov is concerned with the microprocesses of the biological organism; Taylor, with the macroprocesses of the social organism; and Eisenstein, with the synthesis of the two. Their work, predicated on techniques of selection, repetition, and conditioning, as well as on the logic of the location and isolation of discrete processes that can then be mechanically coordinated, develops technologies capable of putting bodies in line with the new protocols of intensifying industrialization.

In the failure of the dictatorship of the proletariat to come into being in the Soviet Union of the 1920s and in the grave disappointment known as state capitalism, we find the first fruits of an organizational practice that, in effect, renders the conversion of the proletariat from potential dictators (sayers) into spectators (watchers). In the absence of the libidinal (cinematic) incentives of the free market, cinema itself was explicitly called upon to "motivate" workers. "Of all the arts, film is for us the most important," Lenin is reported to have said (Writings, 1:155). Stalin went so far as to describe the artist as "an engineer of the soul." It is, finally, in the form that this motivation/engineering took that we discover the production of the spectatorship of the proletariat. Such a phenomenon occurred simultaneously in the West, and indeed reigns today, but we can detail its emergence more readily in the Soviet Union.

In many ways, which were partially unnecessary in the West, cinema had to compensate for the lack of a fully industrialized milieu. It had to extract some of the work on Soviet sensoriums that the cinematic organization of daily life extracted in the Western industrialized world. Because

44. As is well known, both Lenin and Stalin emphasized the preeminent place of cinema in Soviet culture.
Soviet cinema had to bear a greater responsibility for achieving industrialization by adjusting workers to their tasks (and to their task of watching) than did cinema in the West, one finds in the Soviet cinema of the late twenties a more concentrated form of the tendencies of cinema generally to convert the worker into a spectator first and, later, to make him or her produce on-line, in the worksite of the sensorium and the public sphere, that is, during spectating, as spectator. In Eisenstein’s work, early-twentieth-century means of production (industrial and scientific) are reengineered as means of representation—industrial technologies and manufacturing logic codify as cinema and yield a method of representation. However, in the hands of Eisenstein, this new means of representation remained quite self-consciously a means of production. Representation was designed with social production foremost in mind. The dual (dialectical) function of Eisenstein’s cinema achieves the maturation of the conditions immanent early on in the cinematic mode of production, because it regulates consciousness via industrial means for the sake of industrial development. This is not to say that the cinematic mode of production begins with Eisenstein, or that it even requires him, only that his work is paradigmatic of the structure and function of a mature cinema. The inauguration of a spectatorial economy in which spectators and spectatorial labor are directly involved in production is an important step forward in the realization of processes that are the pre-conditions of postmodern culture and economy. But let me here broaden the base of my argument.

In stating the overriding motivation for the entirety of his work, Pavlov writes in *Conditioned Reflexes* that, for the future, “it may be hoped that some of the more complex activities of the body, . . . [such] as ‘playfulness,’ ‘fear,’ ‘anger,’ and so forth, will soon be demonstrated as reflex activities of the subcortical parts of the brain.” 46 The rationalization of the function, the full predictability, and the final controllability of affect implied by Pavlov’s statement are in many ways the ultimate goals of his work. For example, Pavlov dramatizes the struggle of the scientific quest for control on the occasion of finding in a dog that “simply could not remain quiet when it was constrained” for experiments, what he dubs “a special freedom reflex,” which could only be “overcome by setting off another against it—the reflex for food.” 47 Though couched in a rhetoric of objective inquiry, Pavlov’s goals


47. “We began to give the dog the whole of its food in the stand. At first the animal ate but little, and lost considerably in weight, but gradually it got to eat more until at last the
of mental and corporeal control may be compared here with Taylor's avid description of the fruits of scientific management in important ways. For Taylor, "scientific management consists in a complete revolution in the mental attitude and the habits of all those engaged in the management, as well [as] the workmen." Science and industry (whose technologies are, at the turn of the century, on a convergence course that only materializes fully in the political economy of the contemporary military-industrial complex—that is, in the technology Howard Rheingold refers to in a celebratory manner as "The Reality-Industrial Complex") have, each in their own way, the regulation of brain function on their agendas. Both science and industry were attempting to find social methods of physiological regulation. While Pavlov wants to map and control the neuronal network, Taylor wants to redesign the industrial productive apparatus to similar ends. Each of their endeavors requires a similar ideology of manipulation and control, which puts the priorities of the thinking scientist before those of the "object" of study. Each develops scientific forms of consciousness (as science) and other, quite different forms of consciousness for the organisms subjected to, and affected by, their science. Though Pavlov and his battalion of scientists speculated on the long-range implications of their work for animals and humans, there is, in their writings, little or no registration of the experiences of the experimental subjects, animal or human. Indeed, the goal of reflexology was to understand the organism by bypassing subjectivity. It must have seemed to most of the scientists that their more immediate task was only to reconceive the structure of the lower animals, not to impose it. However, the violence of their methods speaks otherwise. A similar relation inheres in Taylor's system: while workers were often conceived of as animals (Taylor's "trained gorilla") and treated accordingly, there was never any question among scientific managers that scientists were human researchers furthering human goals and knowledge. Managers and scientists had only to reconceive their roles; workers and animals, on the other hand, had to be reconceived.

It is important to reiterate here that Eisenstein synthesizes the organizational aspects of Taylorization and Pavlovian logic as cinematic practice. One sees the general form of the synthesis of neuronal and industrial research, of Pavlovian logic (what Eisenstein refers to in his own writings

whole ration was consumed. At the same time the animal grew quieter during the course of the experiments: the freedom reflex was being inhibited." Pavlov, CR, 11–12.
48. Frederick Winslow Taylor, The Principles of Scientific Management (New York: Norton Library, 1967), 131. This work is hereafter cited parenthetically as SM.
49. Rheingold, Virtual Reality, 129ff.
as “reflexology”) and Taylorization, in Eisenstein’s famous phrase, “Reforging someone else’s psyche is no less difficult and considerable a task than forging iron” (Writings, 1:49). The type of reforging that engages Eisenstein has physical, psychological, and industrial dimensions. Cinema is the conjunction of these social formations. Because the “manufacturing essence” of cinematic movement meets and then incorporates the body of the spectator by mediating between the microstructures (neuronal networks) and the macrostructures (the world-system) in which the human animal is immersed, then, it follows that Eisenstein’s cinema is an extension of capital logic into the bodies it regulates. As will be seen, reflexology and Taylorization correspond to various crises in the development of the productive forces of society—crises of intensifying capitalism. Eisenstein’s extension to the cinema of Pavlov’s and Taylor’s functionalist “solutions” to these crises of capital (the control of populations for the sake of profit) is at the same time an extension of capital logic into the cinema. The translation of the organizational logic of scientific method to the body via the cutting together of industry and the eye is an aggressive effort to organize a spectator proper.

Consider for a moment the truth content found in the well-known photograph of Eisenstein giving one of his rare smiles as he shakes hands with Mickey Mouse. Eisenstein’s ostensible political project was oriented toward the obliteration of capitalist relations, however, his (necessary?) belief that there were laws of production existing somehow above or beyond their presentation (theory that translates into practice rather than theory as practice) would betray him. Ultimately, the early films are propaganda machines (of a very complex kind) designed to capture the imagination of the masses. For as rooted in the social fabric as The Strike is, and seems, the artist’s point of view comes from a different place, and an alienated one. In his writings, Eisenstein was always engaging in the play of light and shadow, always boasting or insulting or prevaricating. He was relentlessly ironic. Of course, this pose is the vantage point of his besieged genius, but it was also the lived testament of his failure. The Strike and Potemkin, at least,

are finally utopian carrots. This pretense of possible utopia makes the machines Eisenstein built Wizard-of-Oz–like, greater than the man who built them. In film history, such a relation makes for fantastic cinema; in national history, when the machine is greater than the people, it is Stalinism that is made. Like Moses, Eisenstein and his “beloved” workers would never enter the promised land. But then again, neither would anyone else.

Eisenstein stood outside his work, trying to manipulate the Real from the symbolic, trying to change History, in Jameson’s sense of the word, via political theory. Such a conceptual architecture is also common to the thought of Pavlov and Taylor; it reveals the scientific aspect of their work. History is to political theory what environment is to science and what the market is for scientific management, the ground of theoretical inquiry and experimentation, and the site of practical application. Eisenstein, Pavlov, and Taylor each engage in the practical conceit that their innovations require—in Althusser’s words, “the understanding of the overdetermining force of one structure on another.” 51 We can descry this relation in Eisenstein’s assertion of “the ideological character of form,” for example, which implies that form is an instance or an iteration of a particular type of consciousness, practice, or worldview. 52 The necessary corollary here is that his revolutionary worldview should determine artistic form. His deep-felt sense of the truth of this statement, the equivalent of believing Marx’s dictum that “Great men make history but only such history as they can make,” while simultaneously believing oneself to be a great man, ought to be known as the Stalinist’s bind. For Eisenstein, his perception of the correct practices for the development of socialism had direct formal consequences on his work. 53

51. Louis Althusser, in Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar, Reading Capital (London and New York: Verso, 1990). That “science” is also the method of dialectical materialism is a troubling issue, indeed.
52. “Form is always ideology. And form always turns out to be real ideology. That is, ideology that really applies and not what passes for ideology in the idle prattle of the talkers” (Writings, 1:241).
53. Barbara Herrnstein Smith may help us to unpack Eisenstein’s self-privileging. She writes, “The decisive moves in the generation and maintenance of [a] double discourse of value are commonly made under the quasi-logical cover of We must distinguish between: for example, we must distinguish between mere price and intrinsic value, between mere consumers and discriminating critics, between true artistic creativity and technological skill, and so forth. The question posed here and throughout this study is must we and indeed can we? (The attendant question ‘Who are “we”?’ is of course as relevant here as everywhere else.)' See Contingencies of Value (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 127. Eisenstein pushes the matter of taste, selection, and discrimination to its limits; he is someone who knows, and "we" are those who need to be shown.
Similarly, for Pavlov, there exists an overcoding machine that will determine, and has determined, the structure of the nervous system. This machine, which, for Pavlov, presents itself as a baseline reality in the form of the natural environment and the process of natural selection, is immanent in the very idea of “conditioned reflexes.” The nervous system develops in an environment that determines its structure through functional selection; some responses are hardwired, others have a degree of variability that can be altered by conditioning. The nervous system can therefore be mapped by noting the effects on behavior of controlled stimuli. As with Eisenstein, Pavlov believes in a hierarchy of structure. Natural selection and environment overdetermine the structure of the nervous system: animals find their niches. For Pavlov, by controlling the elements of the selective environment, one eventually controls the brain.

For Taylor, the untheorized, but still overarching, structure that overdetermines the logistics of labor is capitalist relations and the falling rate of profit. Although the falling rate of profit is not theorized by Taylor, combating it is precisely what he means by “efficiency.” (Gramsci recognizes the same exigencies in the innovations of Fordism, seeing it “as the ultimate stage in the process of progressive attempts to overcome the law of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall.”) Scientific management is a strategy for Taylor but also a destiny, an ethos, a “philosophy.” Management, according to this philosophy, is the medium via which labor will be tailored to meet the objective and overarching exigencies of a capitalism intensified via science. For Taylor, management and the laborer are media that, for its expansion, capitalism requires in order to reorganize the structure of labor. For Pavlov, the nervous system and, finally, the science of reflexology are media that natural selection requires in order to reorganize the structure of animal responses; for Eisenstein, film and the spectator were the media that socialism required in order to reorganize the structure of society. In a manner germane to the ethos of all three “scientists,” Taylor calls for “the substitution of science for the individual judgement of the workman” (SM, 114) and uses scientific management effectively to wrest control of the shop floor from labor. The same limiting effect on the individual organism's agency championed by scientific management is also found in Pavlov's management of the brain, or, for that matter, Eisenstein’s management of the spectator. The key in all three cases was the manipulation of life force in accord with agency imposed from outside the individual organism.

Although in the name of revolution the workers in *The Strike* were represented as men, they were being treated like dogs—more specifically, like Pavlov’s dogs. From Taylor’s “trained gorilla,” Pavlov’s dogs and chimpanzees, and Eisenstein’s proletariat (who are always lovable, like dogs), we can see that all three of their techniques target the agency and cognitive experience of subaltern “animals.”

8

Pavlov’s work on conditioned reflexes, along with the technical means that he used to establish experiments and controls, were well known and tremendously influential in postrevolutionary Russia. For Pavlov, “a stimulus appears to be connected of necessity with a definite response, as cause with effect” (*CR*, 7). His input/output concept of organisms, human and otherwise, did not so much bypass the psyche as conceive of it as a machine-like residue of cause and effect. The brain was thought of as a mediating artifact, however complex, of stimulation, and, hence, as a scientifically malleable formation. The nervous system was a developing medium for the translation of signalled stimuli into responses. “Reflexes, like the driving belts of machines of human design may be of two kinds—positive and negative, excitatory and inhibitory. . . . Physiologists are succeeding more and more in unravelling the mechanism of these machine-like activities of the organism and may reasonably be expected to elucidate and control it in the end” (*CR*, 8). Into the psyche, Pavlov projects the organizational principles of mechanization. He diagrams a “manufacturing essence” internal to the body, a machinic communication system connected by belts and pulleys *within the body* that has a structure much like the image of Eisenstein’s factory in *The Strike*. The image of the factory was also an image of the nervous system. The historical project was to alter its organization. Tragic as it may be, nervous system, factory, and cinema manufactured what is now a past, which, in 1989, was brought on-line with official capitalism.

The introjection of the formal organization of manufacturing into the nervous system was in some respects the paramount achievement of Pavlov’s work. At the close of a series of public lectures delivered, appropriately, at the Military Medical Academy in Petrograd during the spring of 1924, Pavlov wrote, “In concluding this series of lectures . . . which have set as their object a purely physiological interpretation of the activity of the higher nervous system . . . [w]e have indisputably the right to claim that our investigation of this extraordinarily complex field has followed the right direction,
and that, although not a near, nevertheless a complete, success awaits it" (CR, 410). This “complete success” is twofold: the total mapping of the manufacturing essence of the higher nervous system, and a corresponding victory over the brain—its total control. If the human being could be conceived as a group of machines, it could be modified as one.

Even more eagerly received than the work of Pavlov was Taylor's theory of scientific management. This doctrine, whose oxymoronically stated objective was “to secure the maximum prosperity for the employer, coupled with the maximum prosperity for the employee” (SM, 9), quickly became a national and then an international theory of organization known in Europe as Americanism. Like Pavlov's concept of the human body, in which “the whole activity of the organism should conform to definite laws” (CR, 7), Taylor posits the same ideals for industrial management: “When men, whose education has given them the habit of generalizing and everywhere looking for laws, find themselves confronted with a multitude of problems, such as exist in every trade and which have a general similarity one to another, it is inevitable that they should try to gather these problems into certain logical groups, and then search for some general laws or rules to guide them in their solution. . . . The philosophy of scientific management places their solution in the hands of management” (SM, 103). This excavation of laws, with an eye toward a trinity of efficiency, predictability, and social control, informs a conceptualization of industrial production that is at one with Pavlov's conceptualization of the laws governing the function of the human organism. In both cases, the laws can be discovered and manipulated for “productive” ends. Eisenstein synthesized the “philosophy” of laws governing industrial production and the “science” of laws governing the nervous system in order to create machines that, for the sake of helping the young Soviet state to compete with capitalism, would “forge the audience’s psyche.”

The combination of the fleshy microstructures posited by Pavlov and of the industrial macrostructures posited by Taylor finds expression in the following words of Eisenstein: “I am a civil engineer and mathematician by training. I approach the making of a motion picture in much the same way as I would approach the equipment of a poultry farm or the installation of a water system. My point of view is thoroughly utilitarian, rational, materialis-
tic.” 55 Eisenstein invokes engineering not as mere expressive rhetoric, that is, as analogy, but as a method. *The Strike* functions as an excellent example of this method. Throughout his career, and even beyond what some see as a shift in his preoccupations with the mechanistic reflexology of Pavlov and Bekhterev to ideas of organicity and unity,56 Eisenstein pursues this vision of cinema and reiterates it as late as 1937: “I am regarded as one of the most ‘inhuman’ of artists. The description of the human being has never been either the central or the most fundamental concern of my works. In my basic cast of mind I have always been more pre-occupied with movement—mass movements, social movements, dramatic movement—and my creative interest has always been more keenly directed towards movement itself.”57

In many respects, the words of one of Eisenstein’s cold war critics remains correct: Soviet Cinema represented “a triumph over humanity.” 58 The triumph of movement over humanity, equally well indexed by Taylor’s slogan, “In the past the man has been first; in the future the system must be first” (SM, 7), indexes two distinct phases of social development. The shift from the first (humanity) to the second (movement) is clear; it is the crisis called modernism, the transformation of traditional societies into machine societies, of organic life into life plagued by shock and constrained by Max Weber’s iron cage of reason. However, in Taylor’s second phase, the “future,” there are two separate moments of systemic dominance that must be differentiated. In Stage 1 of this future, Taylor posits the worker as a part of the productive machine and represents him as such. In cinema history, one of the most extraordinary early representations of his imperative “the system must be first” can be found in the representation of the worker on the assembly line in Chaplin’s *Modern Times*. As a worker, Chaplin’s movements are represented as being dictated and then conditioned by machine technology. But Eisenstein, who initiates a transition from Stage 1—

the *positing* that human function can be controlled by rationally designed machines—to Stage 2—the *presupposition* that human function can be controlled by rationally designed machines—did not *represent* the human being as a part in the machine; rather, *he presupposed it as such*, taking a primarily behavioristic approach toward his audience. The conception of a mechanical fit of human being in a social and cinematic system was incorporated into Eisenstein’s cinematic strategy, not as a matter of representation but as a matter of practice. Eisenstein thought it possible to “envision in both theory and in practice a construction, with no linking plot logic, which provokes a chain of the necessary unconditioned reflexes which are, at the editor’s will, associated with . . . predetermined phenomena and by this means to create the chain of new conditioned reflexes that these phenomena constitute” (*Writings*, 1:49). For him, “this [accomplishment] signifies a realization of the orientation [of the spectator] towards the thematic effect i.e., a fulfillment of the agitational purpose” (*Writings*, 1:49). *The audience is already built into the system, part of the raw material on which the social machine may work.*

10

“A work of art is first and foremost a tractor ploughing over the audience’s psyche in a particular class context” (*Writings*, 1:62). This phrase shows that, for Eisenstein, human subjects not only are homogenized as raw material by cinema but are made interchangeable, exchangeable. As with the carefully conditioned dogs of Pavlov, and the workers who made it through the brutal weeding-out processes of Taylor, Eisenstein’s “audience is known and selected in advance for its homogeneity” (*Writings*, 1:41). “The script,” for Eisenstein, like the carefully controlled experiments of Pavlov, and like Taylor’s daily directions written to the workers, “expresses the purpose of the experience that the audience must undergo” (*Writings*, 1:134). It is “a ‘prescription’ that summarizes the general projected emotional effect on the audience and the pressure that will inevitably be exerted on the audience’s psyche” (*Writings*, 1:46). Such prescribed

59. A typical example of Taylor’s selection process can be found in his description of his work at the ball bearing factory. “For the ultimate good of the girls as well as the company . . . it became necessary to exclude all girls who lacked a low ‘personal coefficient.’ And unfortunately this involved laying off many of the most intelligent, hardest working, and most trustworthy girls merely because they did not possess the quality of quick perception followed by quick action” (*SM*, 89–90).
techniques of mechanical manipulation also begin to show that, in effect, Taylor’s workers and Pavlov’s dogs may be thought of as earlier types of audiences, as experimental spectators. Eisenstein, Pavlov, and Taylor create machines that, as they met objective necessities, produced subjective effects. These effects were necessary to their machines’ function. By conceiving the masses as interchangeable components of the cinematic machine, Eisenstein endeavored to engineer a cinema that would engineer a population. The echo of Pavlov can be heard in Eisenstein’s words: “We want to restore the qualitatively differentiated and the alienated and individualized into something that is quantitatively correlated” (Writings, 1:156). This “restoration” is much like the effect of the money economy on the object world: objects, though qualitatively different as use-values, may be “quantitatively correlated” as exchange-values. Eisenstein’s films are intent upon converting workers into subjects—subjects of history, perhaps, but subjects whose behavior he could control.  

As director, Eisenstein saw his responsibility as “the organization of the audience through organized material” (Writings, 1:63). Structurally, the director here has the same role as Taylor’s manager and Pavlov’s scientist. Like Taylor’s efforts to “organize” his workers, and Pavlov’s efforts to organize his dogs, Eisenstein’s cinema can be seen as a first effort to lock onto the spectator’s sensorium in a scientifically calculated way. That workers, spectators, and animals were imagined as a single amalgamation is not simply an idiosyncrasy of Eisenstein or of this analysis. Wherever instrumental rationality pressed, animality appeared. We may discern this general case here, in 1924, when Maxim Gorky wrote: “The fundamental obstacle in the path of Russia’s progress towards Europeanisation and culture is the zoological individualism of the peasantry.”

As I have noted, the calculated orchestration of the audience’s emotions and activities, so much a part of Eisenstein’s filmwork, was, in many ways, in direct contradiction to the explicit thematics of Eisenstein’s films. Thematically, his films emphasized workers’ autonomy and their revolutionary role. Given the historical path of the Soviet “experiment,” however, Eisenstein’s cybernetic incorporation of the spectator into the cinematic

60. The modern subject is a spectator, the postmodern subject is a schizophrenic; some ornery paranoids remain.
61. One only has to assemble a short list of canonical modern authors to remark the all-pervasiveness of animals as figures for marginalized subjects at the turn of the century: Mann, Wells, Kafka, Ibsen, Bulgakov, among others.
machine runs counter to the films’ explicit ideologies. His mobilization of the masses conceived of spectators as fuel for his engines of change—to be blunt, a new form of labor to be harnessed, “steam!”—and he harnessed them through a vision of their own humanity. Even if the workers had a revolutionary role, it had, in the end, little to do with their autonomy. Eisenstein, I believe, knew this in spite of his hope to the contrary, hence his irony.

This assertion is not to claim that Eisenstein was not part of a revolution, only that in the historical long view, the revolution of which he was a part largely differs from the one thematized in his early films. The production of film as a factory for laboring sensoriums is today widespread. Presciently, Eisenstein felt that the spectator was inevitably conditioned by the cinematic apparatus, even warning that “th[e] pure method of training the reflexes through performance effect deserves the careful attention of people organizing educational films and theater that quite unconsciously cram children with an entirely unjustified repertoire of reflexes trained through performance” (Writings, 1:49). Hence, it is not only ideology in the sense of false consciousness that the spectator is subject to but a physical attuning. For Eisenstein, the solution to this danger was that the spectator should be properly made over by placing the cinematic apparatus in the capable hands of a politically correct director. Filmed material was to be found “(as in The Strike) [by] snatching fragments from our surroundings according to a conscious and pre-determined plan calculated to launch them at the audience in the appropriate combination, to subjugate it to the appropriate association with the obvious final ideological motivation” (Writings, 1:63). Such an experience was to reenergize the workers, giving them the ideological motivation, as well as the physical ability, to meet the demands of the production process. That they were being exploited as they made “their” revolution was, and remains, a problem for history to solve.

“The organization of the audience through organized material” also accurately describes the strategy of Pavlov’s work on his audience of dogs. The phrase also describes the strategy of the method regarding Pavlov’s audience of students, military men, doctors, and scientists, who are, according to the theory of reflexology, on a continuum with the dogs that served as examples. Here, I have two senses of the word organization in mind: (1) the production of organs themselves, through their identification and through the determination and delimitation of their function; and (2) the extension of such an “organizing” principle to the institutional and bureaucratic process of the research itself. Organization implies the organization of both the nervous system and of knowledge itself in accord with scientific
rationality. The principles of organization projected onto the dogs’ nervous systems contain in miniature—holographically, as it were—the architecture of the bureaucratic and institutional organization of Pavlov’s scientific research in general. In the research, and in the object of research, there is an uncanny mirroring effect that amounts to an epistemological tautology.

Pavlov partitioned out his research to many different students and doctors, each with his own reflex to explore, each with his own dog or monkey to corporeally cut and—I might as well say it—edit. The same mechanical principles of division and functionalism thought to organize the brain of the dog also organized the research itself. Like individual nerve synapses, the scientists would convene, reporting the state of their stimuli in order to make (scientific) consciousness. The research, organized as described, took place on an object organized by the same logic and provided a rational picture of a rational system that could then be generalized to the human brain. In other words, the spread of organizational partitions begins to make the observer look like the observed until, finally, they are one and the same. The knowledge of the brain is organized like the brain itself. In this circuit of relations, the structure of scientific knowledge itself becomes manifest proof of its claims regarding the structure of the brain. The structure of legitimacy (science) ratifies legitimate structures (reflexes). This relation extends the logic of rationality into the dual provinces of knowledge and the body. The direct relation between the organization of the object (the nervous system) and the organization of the medium for the perception of the object (science) takes the form of the idea that knowledge is structured like the brain. Object (the nervous system) and media (science), science proudly

63. Jim Beniger writes in his stunning book, The Control Revolution: Technological and Economic Origins of the Information Society (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1986), “Foremost among all the technological solutions to the crisis of control—in that it served to control most other technologies—was the rapid growth of formal bureaucracy” (279). “With the rapid development of rationalization and bureaucracy came the succession of dramatic new information processing and communication technologies that contained the continuing control crisis of industrial society in production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services” (285). In this section, I am endeavoring to show how bureaucratic organization invades both knowledge and the body and emerges as media. Media itself becomes the conduit of organization; it is organization in principle. The ultimate consequences of this fact can be gleaned from Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media (New York: Pantheon, 1988). Manufacturing Consent brilliantly documents how the technology for the organization of knowledge and bodies (and therefore money and arms), once in place, functions in particular case scenarios.
announces, each have a rationalized manufacturing essence, a like organization. This like organization, however violently imposed, creates the effect of a harmonious relation between observer and observed.

To emphasize the full significance of the organization of a spectator, it will be necessary for me to return to Dziga Vertov’s *Man with a Movie Camera*. In “The Circulating Eye,” I showed how *Man with a Movie Camera* posits cinema as a specific mode of production’s highest form of self-articulation. This extraordinary film inaugurates, for Vertov, a revolutionary epoch that goes beyond mere man: humanity with a *movie camera*. Technologically mediated, perception opens for Vertov possibilities of social transparency regarding the mode of production, collectivity, and critique. In “The Circulating Eye,” I suggest that it is, in effect, the convergence of the industrial processes that produce commodities and of the industrial processes that produce images that makes Vertov possible. Not only does cinema depend on industrial technologies, it takes the form of the assembly line; moreover, the assembly line takes the form of cinema. The dynamics of the object (ordinarily reified under the regime of commodification) and the dynamics of the image coalesce and are unified in one process: cinema. Vertov reveals this relation. Each object/image is in circulation, each is produced in industrial processes, each signifies, and each has value. In Vertov, each image is a socially produced object, and each object is an image. It is in the circulation of these object-images that consciousness is produced. Using the technology of capital, Vertov endeavors to institute cinematically a form of circulation alternative to the reificatory circulation of capital(ism).

The significance of Vertov’s object-images for my discussion of Eisenstein is as follows: *The production of the spectator from the worker (the spectator-worker) in Eisenstein will be the other side of the convergence of commodity (industrial object) and image (the object-image) in Vertov, its dialectical antithesis. Thus, the spectator and the image replicate at a de-materialized (higher) level the relationship between labor and commodities. The being-integrated processes of vision and work coalesce in the spectator, as do the being-integrated processes of representation and commodity production in the image. The generalized form of the commodity-image that*

64. See my essay “The Circulating Eye,” *Communication Research* 20, no. 2 (April 1993): 298–313, or, for a more recent version, see chap. 1 of *The Cinematic Mode of Production* (forthcoming).
one finds posited in Vertov requires, antithetically, the generalized form of the worker-spectator posited in Eisenstein.

Keeping in mind the convergence of image and commodity, on the one hand, and of labor and vision, on the other, we may better grasp how the relations of capital become steadily dematerialized. As I am attempting to show, the organizational movement of capital has a tendency toward cinema. Even before the invention of cinema proper, the movement of capital was cinematic. It should be possible, therefore, to read a text such as Marx's Grundrisse as a form of early cinema. There especially, capital is the frame through which the metamorphosis of the world appears. That the organization of capitalist production is becoming the organization of the cinematic production of society is true not only in cinema proper but also in science and industry. Because of the overall tendency of capital to pass between the poles of image (commodity) and spectator (worker) through the media (circulation), science and industry begin to resemble cinema. In Eisenstein’s period, the dominant mode of production becomes the dominant mode of representation, and, in doing so, it achieves a qualitative shift. When the industrial means of production become means of representation, they inaugurate a new mode of production. What Eisenstein makes from Pavlov and Taylor serves as a demonstration in miniature of what cinema makes from the money economy and what the money economy makes out of cinema. In placing the commodity-image in dialectical relation to the worker-spectator, cinema becomes the organizational paradigm of capital. In the process, the society of the spectacle supersedes bourgeois society; the industrial mode of production is superseded by the cinematic mode of production.

True to the critique of Eisenstein made by Vertov, Eisenstein endeavors to make the spectator over in the form of the image.65 The dominant

65. Insisting, in “The Factory of Facts,” that “the growing adoption of kino-eye’s external manner by the ‘acted’ film (Strike and Potemkin) is only an isolated incident, a random reflection of the ever-growing kino-eye movement” (Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov, ed. and intro. Annette Michelson, trans. Kevin O’Brien [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984], 58), Vertov gives his assessment of acted cinema: “You find yourself in a small but extraordinary land where all human experiences, behavior, and even natural phenomena are strictly controlled and occur at precisely determined times. At your command and whenever you wish, rain may fall, a thunderstorm or tempest arise. If you like, the downpour will stop. The puddles will immediately dry up. The sun will shine forth. Perhaps even two or three suns. If you wish, day will turn to night. The sun into the moon. Stars will appear. Winter will replace summer. Frost patterns will cover the windows. You can, if you choose, sink or save ships at sea. Cause fires and earthquakes. Make wars
vector of expression in Eisenstein is not an effort to articulate the totality of social relations, in which the spectator is a producer of the conditions of possibility of the image itself, as in Vertov. Rather, Eisenstein’s films work wholly within the said totality, occluding its dynamics by positing it as a concept, or as somewhat less than a concept, as an ideal, a goal to be achieved. Hence, Eisenstein renders invisible the subtle dependence of the social totality upon an infinity of interactions, leaving it to the province of theoreticians such as himself. *The Strike*, unlike *Man with a Movie Camera*, is not an effort to articulate the viewers’ places in the social totality so that viewers might understand themselves as a creative part of a variegated social fabric and base their actions on that understanding; Eisenstein dismissed this contemptuously as contemplation. *The Strike* is an effort to put the viewers in their place utilizing an image that assumes a prior and superior knowledge of totality. Thus, his films are, in many ways, antithetical to Vertov’s. The violence of Eisenstein’s cinema comes from the effort to force an unspecified, but supposedly shared, past and present into an equally unspecified, but projected, future. His films are machines for particular situations, and they are designed to get the job done. Eisenstein, the planner, wants to effect a change within totality by harnessing a force. He puts himself in the position of the avant-garde, however, since he assumes the position of the one who knows the nature of that totality and the direction necessary for it to move in order for it to achieve its goals. As Eisenstein said, commenting on Vertov’s films, “It is not film-eye we need but film-fist!” (*Writings*, 1:64). Because Eisenstein conceives of his films not merely as a representation of revolutionary practice but as revolutionary practice orchestrated according to methods that he might have described, by using Taylor’s phrase, as “the one best way,” he runs the risk run by all avant-gardes: the making of the wrong revolution. Eisenstein wrote, “There is only one way for making any film: the montage of attractions,” and in his work, he found it unnecessary, or impossible, to incorporate a dynamic self-representation of totality open to critique, as did Vertov; in its stead, he supplied a monolithic image (*Writings*, 1:65). He treated his viewers like subjects in his image, subjects with the same formation as himself, but lesser

and revolutions. Human tears and laughter obey your command. Passion and jealousy. Love and hatred. According to your strict schedule, people fight and embrace. Marry and divorce. Are born and die. Die and come to life. Die again and again come to life. Or kiss endlessly in front of the camera until the director is satisfied. We are at a film studio where a man with a megaphone and script directs the life of a fake land” (283). I read this passage not only against Eisenstein but against Stalin as well.
inasmuch as they required no theory, no consciousness of the image's formation. That was for the filmmaker. Viewers were to realize the goals of the film. Directed, as it were, from above, The Strike submits the psyche to a new phase of industrialization that assumed a lesser degree of individual agency for workers and spectators alike. This reduction of individual agency, for the sake of mass agency (what Eisenstein called “correlation,” and elsewhere “subjugation”), was the goal.

12

What is perhaps most extraordinary about Pavlov's work is that the rationalized stimuli perpetrated on the dogs—aural tones, violent lacerations, shades of light and dark, acid enemas, electric shocks, amputations, et cetera—and the development of methods for the accounting of responses, were only a prelude of things to come in science, cinema, and in society generally. The gulags, the concentration camps, and U.S. imperialist wars during the twentieth century are only the most pronounced realizations of the emerging technologies of population control. Not only do Pavlov's experiments with electricity, lamps, and knives give a new meaning to the surgical cinema mentioned by Walter Benjamin,66 but the process of cutting culture into bodies as endemic to mediation is becoming clearer. Such a concept of culture is now generally understood since Michel Foucault's work on discourse, or, even more appropriately here, the work of Elaine Scarry (especially her book The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World67), but the role of media, which does much of the work done by discourse and war, remains to be explored. Opinion polls, market research, credit profiles, viewer surveys, and television programming in general are today's statisticized equivalents of methods of accounting for pain. Though on the surface such forms of accounting may not seem as painful, they are at present endemic to a society that thrives on generalized pain inasmuch as pain is productive, just as is labor, starvation, or killing in war. All such orchestrations of corporeality are, at present, endemic to social production and reproduction; they are myriad responses to the stimulus of capital. The modification of bodies through pain (as well as exemption from pain, even pleasure) is synonymous with the logistical development of the mechanics of capital. Today, stimulus-response logic, the rationalized

orchestration of stimulation, is known in the vernacular as programming. Whether in computers or televisions, programming converts movements into data and data into images, which then feed back into and influence movements. Consciousness is influenced by material organization in the circulation of value. Though this is an old story, it has reached new proportions, cinematic proportions. Because the value produced in mediation accrues back to the proprietors of the media, cinema and television today function to reconcile the irreconcilable: capitalism and democracy. As we see in the work of Taylor, who insisted upon the necessity of regulating the habits of workers both within and outside the workplace (he wanted to regulate their morality, their drinking habits, even their dreams), the rationalized and instrumental orchestration of stimulation arises simultaneously with the rationalized and instrumental orchestration of movement. In full-blown cinema, these two registers are combined. This combination is the condition of possibility for democracy under capitalism.

Table 1 summarizes the comparison of Pavlov and Taylor with Eisenstein thus far. That Eisenstein, Pavlov, and Taylor all utilized montage requires some elaboration. For Pavlov, “external stimuli [that] have been from the very birth of the animal transmitted to a definite center, can, notwithstanding, be diverted and made to follow another route, becoming linked up by the nervous connection to another center, provided always that this second center is physiologically more powerful than the first” (CR, 36). Strong, repeated stimuli, what Pavlov called “signalization,” can resequence behavior. It should not come as a surprise that such cutting and editing processes are also endemic to industrial production (assembly-line production, global distribution), penetrating, finally, the totality of social practices. Indeed, montage can be isolated as the principal conceit and the principal practice of modernization. Through generalized fragmentation and assemblage, the “montage of attractions” produces the unity (as well as the tyranny) of capital.

Montage, as the cutting and coupling of fragments, was, during the period when cinema was dominant, the Ur-form of assemblage. Taylor’s own original form of editing and montage goes well beyond the literal use he made in his research of the movie camera and the stopwatch. It can be seen from the manner in which he began to edit his production: “First, Find say 10 or 15 different men (preferably in as many separate establishments and different parts of the country) who are especially skillful in doing the particular work to be analyzed. Second, Study the exact series of elementary operations or motions which each of these men uses in doing the
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work which is being investigated, as well as the implements each man uses. 

Third. Study with a stop-watch the time required to make each of these elementary movements and then select the quickest way of doing each element of the work. Fourth. Eliminate all false movements, slow movements, and useless movements. Fifth. After doing away with all unnecessary movements, collect into one series the quickest and best movements as well as the best implements” (SM, 117–18; last emphasis mine). Taylor edits the labor process like a film. As in Pavlov’s experimental elimination of unknown variables and Eisenstein’s elimination of material, which programs “an un-justified repertoire of reflexes,” Taylor edited his material for an economy of action. 68

Like the achievements of Taylor and Eisenstein, which are easily understood as responses to crises within capitalism, Pavlov’s Conditioned Reflexes pertains to a particular crisis of capitalism, as well. The theater of cruelty, played first to Pavlov’s audience of dogs and later to his audience of scientists, utilized a variety of cinematic techniques, not the least

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68. The exigencies of such a generalized economy of action are emphasized by Gramsci in his essay “Americanism and Fordism,” when, speaking of the future of the industrial proletariat, he predicts, “A forced selection will ineluctably take place; a part of the old working class will be pitilessly eliminated from the world of labour, and perhaps from the world tout court.” See Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, 303. Global reorganization, it seems, requires some radical cutting and pasting. As science approached cinema by imposing the economy of its representation on its object, and as industry approached cinema by imposing the economy of its movement on its object, dogs and workers encountered the rationalized shocks, which Benjamin has elsewhere described as the shock characteristic of modern life.
of which was cutting. Such cutting of movements and of workers was also characteristic of the assembly line, the *chaine de montagne*. In industrial process, capital is cut into pieces to buy raw materials that are then cut up and combined to produce commodities. Each cut and splice sends value down a different production pathway in order to modify and streamline the product. The products are reassembled as the unity of capital. Workers, as Marx shows, are also products. In the case of Pavlov, the product whose mode of production needed to be altered was quite simply the “zoological peasantry.”

The surgical alteration of brains and spinal columns, the extirpation of cortices, and vivisection in the manner depicted in H. G. Wells’s *Island of Doctor Moreau* all lead up to a reinvention of animals that, since Darwin, have been placed on a developmental continuum with humans. In Pavlov, the continuum can be immediately discerned from the way in which he phylogenetically extends the findings of his experiments to humans—the “complete success” he mentions. To substantiate his claims concerning the relevance of his work to human life, Pavlov also experimented on children and mentally “deficient” persons as intermediate links in the chain of being that extends from humans to the lowest organisms. One could argue here that Pavlovian experiments on animals understood as evolutionary precursors of humans coincide with the social experiments being done on peasants “freed up” from their lands in Russia and, more generally, with the emergence of all sorts of new natives during the Age of Empire. *These peoples, as “raw materials,” had to be retooled for the purposes of “civilization.”* Eisenstein desired to produce the “quantitative correlation” of those who were to pass as the revolutionary proletariat as energetically as others called for “the civilizing influence” of capital. These impetuses toward exchangeability (the machinic interchangeability of individual bodies) should be compared with the globalizing program of television to convert populations into juridical subjects, “consumers” with “rational” needs. Because of the historical moment of Pavlov’s experiments and the emergence of

70. I am indebted here to Neferti X. M. Tadiar for this insight into H. G. Wells’s *Island of Doctor Moreau*, which I have here transposed to Pavlov.
71. Annette Michelson has argued that Pavlov’s work has its origins in the Enlightenment and traces it back to La Mitré’s *L’homme Machine*. La Mitré “abolishes the dualism of Descartes (whom Pavlov claims invented the idea of the reflex) and works in the tradition of Locke.” Michelson also traces his work forward, as it were, to Vsevolod Meyerhold,
huge populations being first separated from the land by the money economy and then, once free, needed for wage labor (or state capitalism) by industrial production, Pavlov's experiments resonate with these other efforts to determine how one might manipulate liminally human, "zoological" populations with technology. To assert this intention simply reverses the assumed polarity of scientific purpose. Rather than conduct research in a set of controlled experiments to discover the outer world, the point becomes to conduct research on the outer world in order to discover a set of controls.

13

As with the technologies that media moguls develop for their particular publics, Pavlov continually returns to the contest between the ingenuity of the instrument makers in developing precision instruments and the extraordinary discernment of dogs' senses. The instruments must match the range and complexity of the dogs' nervous system. The goal of machining more and more finely honed instruments, which are able to further isolate particular nervous functions, becomes the production of more and more precise controls. In Pavlov's work, "the investigation of the cerebral hemispheres is brought into line with the investigations conducted in other branches of natural science . . . [;] their activities are studied as purely physiological facts, without any need to resort to fantastic speculations as to the existence of any possible subjective state in the animal which may be conjectured on analogy with ourselves" (CR, 16). Because, for Pavlov, the nervous system is objectively rational, he allows himself in his writings many occasions to lament the inconclusiveness of a set of shocks, lacerations, and stimuli that result in the dog's "micturation and defecation in the stand," as well as "violent neurotic-like outbursts" and death. Often Pavlov recommends that another year-long series of experiments using redesigned instruments be conducted on a new dog. Pavlov's inability to feel anything for the dogs he traumatized translates into Taylor's failure to identify with the workers he cut or pasted, even though he himself emerged

Eisenstein's mentor and friend, and argues persuasively that Eisenstein inherits the Enlightenment. Annette Michelson spoke at Duke University in March 1993 on Pudovkin's chilling Mechanics of the Brain, a film shot in Pavlov's laboratories. She also showed the film. Although I had been thinking about the constellation of Eisenstein, Pavlov, and Taylor in relation to rationalization for some time, her lecture and the film persuaded me of the viability of the project. I owe a great debt to her work, which I would like to acknowledge here. See especially her work on Dziga Vertov, Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov.
from the working class. He treated workers as labor without consciousness. Such treatment had certain objective goals in mind, namely, increasing the efficiency of value production. But he also had certain subjective goals in mind: "As there is practically no stimulus of whatever strength that cannot, under certain conditions, become subjected to internal inhibition, so also there is none which cannot produce sleep. Very powerful electric shocks applied to the skin . . . led, after many months of use in the experiments of Dr. Erofeeva, to a progressively increasing internal inhibition in spite of continuous reinforcement, and in the experiments of Dr. Petrova they became the most effectual agents in inducing sleep" (CR, 252). Regular electronic shocks produce sleep; Clockwork Orange-like, the systematic application of pain inhibits the "freedom reflex" and annihilates the power to resist.72

If the scientific rationalization of body processes can be read as a response to psycho-economic anxiety about emergent populations and manifests the need to manipulate populations with machine-like precision, Eisenstein expresses the same anxiety in his representation of spies and the lumpen as animals in The Strike. In the film, only the capitalists and the revolutionary masses have human consciousness, and, as we have noted, the capitalists only marginally, since they respond almost automatically to stimulus. Even more like animals, The Strike's lumpen live in holes in the ground and can be easily conditioned (with sex and liquor) to follow the capitalists. Recall also that the spies of the capitalists are animals as well, trained dupes of the ruling class. Endemic to such animality is the aggressive and violent aspect of Eisenstein's cinema; however, the contradiction

72. Gramsci proposes certain limits to such intensive repetition. In industrial work, "The only thing completely mechanized is the physical gesture; the memory of the trade, reduced to simple gestures repeated at an intense rhythm, 'nestles' in the muscular and nervous centres and leaves the brain free and unencumbered for other occupations. One can walk without having to think about all the movements needed in order to move, in perfect synchronization, all the parts of the body, in the specific way that is necessary for walking. The same thing happens and will go on happening in industry with the basic gestures of the trade. One walks automatically, and at the same time thinks about whatever one chooses. American industrialists have understood too well this dialectic inherent in the new industrial methods. They have understood that 'trained gorilla' is just a phrase, that 'unfortunately' the worker remains a man and even that during his work he thinks more or at least has greater opportunities for thinking, once he has overcome the crisis of adaptation without being eliminated: and not only does the worker think, but the fact that he gets no immediate satisfaction from his work and realises that they are trying to reduce him to a trained gorilla, can lead him into a train of thought that is far from conformist." See Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, 309–10.
here is that the proletariat, figured as humans, are treated as animals. As in capitalism, organization is won through the perfecting of animality. For H. G. Wells and Pavlov, animals have to be cut up in order to attain human form; similarly, for Eisenstein, awakening spectators to their human state requires that they be shocked and stimulated as animals are. Animals, the raw material of humanity, have a proximity to labor, the raw material of industrialized society. Labor, like animals, is without real consciousness; hence, a predictable behavior must be forged. In Eisenstein's work, the iron cage of reason captures the animals by sending them calculated signals. The violent transformation (via cutting and editing) of organisms conceived as animals into humanoids constitutes these animals as spectators. In one gesture, scientifically managed signalization constitutes spectators and asks them to find an image for their world in a human face.

Working within the framework of capital's manufacture of the relationship between animality and humanity, Eisenstein sees his films as a form of vivisection, a hewing of fragments from world historical reality with "the axe of the lens" and arranging them in such a way as to forge the audience's psyche. "In cinema, by selective treatment [the director] recarves reality" (Writings, 1:64).  

14

We have seen how industrial production and scientific rationality were aspiring toward cinema, and how cinema was, in many respects, the fulfillment of the logic nascent in the practices of industry and science. Cinema marks the moment when the dominant mode of production becomes the dominant mode of representation. This representation itself surpasses representation as such, passing into a technology for the rational production of affect and becoming part of the general cycle of production.

The meshing of the microprocesses of the biological organism outlined by Pavlov with the macroprocesses of the socio-industrial organism outlined by Taylor in the cinema of Eisenstein is predicated upon the logic of isolated organs, rationalized functions, repetition, selection, and condi-

73. Eisenstein also spoke of the classic "mists" in Potemkin as functioning as the "cows" in The Strike, that is, as "a sharply honed razor that will cut the viewer 100 per cent in the place that needs it at a particular moment" (Writings, 1:68). In a reply to Vertov, he writes, "We must cut with our cine-fist through to the skulls, cut through to final victory and now, under the threat of an influx of 'real life' and philistinism into the Revolution, we must cut as never before! Make way for cine-fist!" (Writings, 1:64).
tioning. The extension of this logic to the body through the eye shows that a cybernetic integration of social mechanisms is occurring; radically different mechanisms are being shot through with systemic compatibility. In computer talk, industry, the nervous system, and representation are all beginning to speak a compatible language, a compatible machine- or systems-language. After Eisenstein, the cinema as a logistics of production and sensation rapidly develops and extends to a point in which all of its subtle affects and increasing complexity are able to extract a growing portion of the labor of social production. In the rational throes of profit, a consciousness is born. This consciousness is at once linguistic and visceral, discursive and “filmic”—it is our very seeing. The assertions of Metz that the cinema and the spectator are both locked into the circulation of capital remains correct. But the dynamics and consequences of this circulation extend beyond the imaginary and the symbolic and into the Real.

**Epilogue**

For Capital, the worker does not represent a condition of production, but only labor. If capital can get it performed by machinery, or even by water or air, _tant mieux_. And what capital appropriates is not the worker, but his labor—and not directly but by means of exchange.

—Marx, _Grundrisse_

The true definition of a productive worker consists in this: a man who requires and demands absolutely no more than is necessary to enable him to bring his capitalist the greatest possible advantage.

—Marx, _Grundrisse_

The surplus value of capital rises, but in an ever diminishing ratio to the development of productivity. Thus the more developed capital is, the more surplus labor it has already created, the more tremendously must it develop productivity if it is to valorize itself, i.e., to add surplus value even in small proportion.

—Marx, _Grundrisse_

I have tried to suggest here that dialectical development of productivity drives relations of capital into the media—the meaning of dialectics as mediation is today actualized as media if not understood as such. Though all previous stages of development still obtain (there remain today pockets of feudal societies, Asiatic societies [in Marx’s sense], and slavery, as well
as tremendous populations working in industry), capital seeks new ways of valorizing itself by increasing its efficiency, its ability to withhold itself from producers, and labor time. In cinema, and now in TV, spectatorial producers no longer receive money in exchange for their labor (attention) but are paid in another type of image—company scrip. By helping us to perform the necessary production and reproduction of the workers—of ourselves—the affects received in exchange for our attention endeavor to help us meet certain needs as they strive to ensure our domination. Willing to see almost anything, willing to believe almost anything (even the triumph of capitalism [a belief that helps to produce that triumph]), and needing to be a little different every day, we modify ourselves as we watch. Remade daily, we go about our diurnal course in a more or less docile manner, even though we are outraged. The latest “vanishing form of subsistence,” as Marx called the money paid to workers in exchange for their labor, is “entertainment,” the consciousness of choice. We valorize the organization of society in our very bodies as we add value to the media by watching it and make ourselves over in socially acceptable forms. In the twentieth century, the vanishing mediator takes on the form of media itself.

In 1924, Eisenstein wrote in “The Montage of Film Attractions,” “We see that the methods of processing the audience are no different in the mechanics of their realization from other forms of work movement and they produce the same real, primarily physical work on their material—the audience” (Writings, 1:56). By 1928, at the age of thirty, he had released The Strike, Battleship Potemkin, and October, and had written some of the most important works of film theory to date. Also, in 1927 and 1928, while finishing October and working on The General Line, Eisenstein wrote “Notes for a Film of Capital,” a film he would never make. If it is correct to say that historical truth exists only as irony, then perhaps Eisenstein never made Capital because he had already made it in The Strike.

The spectatorship of the proletariat raises once again the specter of humanity, but this time on the screen of consciousness. Today, the cinematic specter—humans becoming images becoming cyborgs—raises, along with the questions regarding the production of value, the question of the legacy of the human body. Given all the pathways of its interface with the socius, to whom or to what will it belong? Robert Reich’s “immaterial labor” and Deleuze’s “society of control” are indicators that we are in the presence

of “the real subsumption of labor under capital instead of the formal sub-
sumption of labor under capital.” 76 If this is the case, then surely the fate of
bodies—who occupies them, who thinks or feels in them, what they want,
et cetera—is again in question. If we are occupied by cinematic conscious-
ness, what is the value of our seeing, our thought? The specter haunting
the (movie) house of capital will never disappear, because it is the persis-
tence of unfulfilled promises made to the suffering, the laboring, and the
dead. Though Eisenstein's revolution was finally a revolution in and over
the imagination, consciousness still perceives a realm of freedom, even if only
in its absence. What struggles are yet to be waged at the edge of thought
and feeling?

In this analysis and indictment of the media-system, I have tried to
open a way through political economy to investigate how many of the small-
scale pleasures and freedoms we enjoy are simultaneously used against us
and against others. I also hope that this essay will raise questions against
the egocentric and imperialistic works that currently celebrate the liber-
tory power of mass media. Capital's micrometry of our sensual satisfaction
functions systemically to ensure that the energy of our “freedom reflex” is
ever more precisely controlled, absorbed, and set against us. According
to its logic, our satisfactions are to take place enframed by the network of
capital, or not at all. Such satisfactions should be partial, at best, since not
the least part of them is enabled by the continued invisibility (alienation) of
most of humanity's pain. In the presence of new technologies for the strict
regulation of suffering and death, and for the global calibration and synchro-
nization of violent exploitation in all its historical forms, one realizes that
the “New World Order,” as a military-industrial spectacle nearly a century
in the making, is no mere phrase; it is the massively mediated crowning of
a new order of capital. It is necessarily, then, the harbinger of new forms of
revolution.

76. I owe this formulation to Michael Hardt. Ken Surin extends the argument: "The cur-
rent phase of capitalist expansion has created a social order in which all the conditions
of production and reproduction have been directly absorbed by capital—by consuming
society capital itself has become entirely social in nature. Capital has to extend the logic
of command over productive cooperation to envelop the whole of society in order to en-
able further the extraction of new forms of surplus value, new forms it has to invent as a
way of dealing with the crisis of the Fordist or Keynesian paradigm of accumulation." See